The Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night

Translated by
JOHN PAYNE

Illustrated by
ADOLPHE LALAUZE & ALBERT LETCHFORD

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VOLUME I.

Prefatory Note.

THE present is, I believe, the first complete translation of the great Arabic compendium of romantic fiction that has been attempted in any European language comprising about four times as much matter as that of Galland and three times as much as that of any other translator known to myself; and a short statement of the sources from which it is derived may therefore be acceptable to my readers. Three printed editions, more or less complete, exist of the Arabic text of the Thousand and One Nights; namely, those of Breslau, Boulac (Cairo) and Calcutta (1839), besides an incomplete one, comprising the first two hundred nights only, published at Calcutta in 1814. Of these, the first is horribly corrupt and greatly inferior, both in style and completeness, to the others, and the second (that of Boulac) is also, though in a far less degree, incomplete, whole stories (as, for instance, that of the Envier and the Envied in the present volume) being omitted and hiatuses, varying in extent from a few lines to several pages, being of frequent occurrence, whilst in addition to these defects, the editor, a learned Egyptian, has played havoc with the style of his original, in an ill-judged attempt to improve it, producing a medley, more curious than edifying, of classical and semi-modern diction and now and then, in his unlucky zeal, completely disguising the pristine meaning of certain passages. The third edition, that which we owe to Sir William Macnaghten and which appears to have been printed from a superior copy of the manuscript followed by the Egyptian editor, is by far the most carefully printed and edited of the three and offers, on the whole, the least corrupt and most comprehensive text of the work. I have therefore adopted it as my standard or basis of translation and have, to the best of my power, remedied the defects (such as hiatuses, misprints, doubtful or corrupt passages, etc.) which are of no infrequent occurrence even in this, the best of the existing texts, by carefully collating it with the editions of Boulac and Breslau (to say nothing of occasional references to the earlier Calcutta edition of the first two hundred nights), adopting from one and the other such variants, additions and corrections as seemed to me best calculated to improve the general effect and most homogeneous with the general spirit of the work, and this so freely that the present version may be said, in great part, to represent a variorum text of the original, formed by a collation of the different printed texts; and no proper estimate can, therefore, be made of the fidelity of the translation, except by those who are intimately acquainted with the whole of these latter. Even with the help of the new lights gained by the laborious process of collation and comparison above mentioned, the exact sense of many passages must still remain doubtful, so corrupt are the extant texts and so incomplete our knowledge, as incorporated in dictionaries, etc, of the peculiar dialect, half classical and half modern, in which the original work is written.

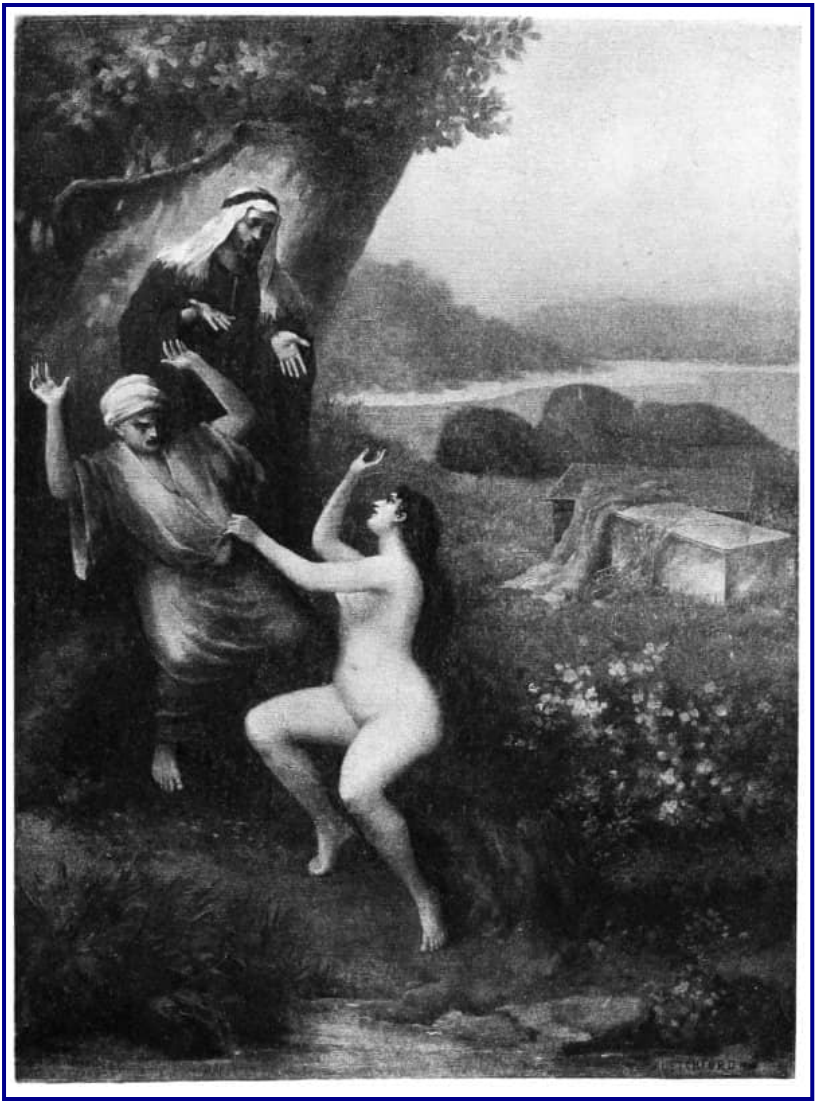
One special feature of the present version is the appearance, for the first time, in English metrical shape, preserving the external form and rhyme movement of the originals, of the whole of the poetry with which the Arabic text is so freely interspersed. This great body of verse, equivalent to at least ten thousand twelve-syllable English lines, is of the most unequal quality, varying from poetry worthy of the name

to the merest doggrel, and as I have, in pursuance of my original scheme, elected to translate everything, good and bad (with a very few exceptions in cases of manifest mistake or misapplication), I can only hope that my readers will, in judging of my success, take into consideration the enormous difficulties with which I have had to contend and look with indulgence upon my efforts to render, under unusually irksome conditions, the energy and beauty of the original, where these qualities exist, and in their absence, to keep my version from degenerating into absolute doggrel.

The present translation being intended as a purely literary work produced with the sole object of supplying the general body of cultivated readers with a fairly representative and characteristic version of the most famous work of narrative fiction in existence, I have deemed it advisable to depart, in several particulars, from the various systems of transliteration of Oriental proper names followed by modern scholars, as, although doubtless admirably adapted to works having a scientific or non-literary object, they rest mainly upon devices (such as the use of apostrophes, accents, diacritical points and the employment of both vowels and consonants in unusual groups and senses) foreign to the genius of the English language and calculated only to annoy the reader of a work of imagination. Of these points of departure from established usage I need only particularize some of the more important; the others will, in general, be found to speak for themselves. One of the most salient is the case of the short vowel fet-heh, which is usually written [a breve], but which I have thought it better to render, as a rule, by [e breve], as in "bed" (a sound practically equivalent to that of a, as in "beggar," adopted by the late Mr. Lane to represent this vowel), reserving the English a, as in "father," to represent the alif of prolongation or long Arabic a, since I should else have no means of differentiating the latter from the former, save by the use of accents or other clumsy expedients, at once, to my mind, foreign to the purpose and vexatious to the reader of a work of pure literature. In like manner, I have eschewed the use of the letter q, as an equivalent for the dotted or guttural kaf (choosing to run the risk of occasionally misleading the reader as to the original Arabic form of a word by leaving him in ignorance whether the k used is the dotted or undotted one, — a point of no importance whatever to the non-scientific public, — rather than employ an English letter in a manner completely unwarranted by the construction of our language, in which q has no power as a terminal or as moved by any vowel other than u, followed by one of the four others) and have supplied its place, where the dotted kaf occurs as a terminal or as preceding a hard vowel, by the hard c, leaving k to represent it (in common with the undotted kaf generally) in those instances where it is followed by a soft vowel. For similar reasons, I have not attempted to render the Arabic quasi-consonant aïn, save by the English vowel corresponding to that by which it is moved, preferring to leave the guttural element of its sound (for which we have no approach to an equivalent in English) unrepresented, rather than resort to the barbarous and meaningless device of the apostrophe. Again, the principle, in accordance with which I have rendered the proper names of the original, is briefly (and subject to certain variations on the ground of convenience and literary fitness) to preserve unaltered such names as Tigris, Bassora, Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus, etc., which are familiar to us otherwise than by the Arabian Nights and to alter which, for the sake of mere literality, were as gratuitous a piece of pedantry as to insist upon writing Copenhagen Kjobenhavn, or Canton Kouang-tong, and to transliterate the rest as

nearly as may consist with a due regard to artistic considerations. The use of untranslated Arabic words, other than proper names, I have, as far as possible, avoided, rendering them, with very few exceptions, by the best English equivalents in my power, careful rather to give the general sense, where capable of being conveyed by reasonable substitution of idiom or otherwise, than to retain the strict letter at the expense of the spirit; nor, on the other hand, have I thought it necessary to alter the traditional manner of spelling certain words which have become incorporated with our language, where (as in the case of the words genie, houri, roe, khalif, vizier, cadi, Bedouin, etc. etc.) the English equivalent is fairly representative of the original Arabic.

I have to return my cordial thanks to Captain Richard F. Burton, the well-known traveller and author, who has most kindly undertaken to give me the benefit of his great practical knowledge of the language and customs of the Arabs in revising the manuscript of my translation for the press.



The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night

IN the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Praise be to God, the Lord of the two worlds, and blessing and peace upon the Prince of the Prophets, our lord and master Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve with abiding and continuing peace and blessing until the Day of the Faith! Of a verity, the doings of the ancients become a lesson to those that follow after, so that men look upon the admonitory events that have happened to others and take warning, and come to the knowledge of what befell bygone peoples and are restrained thereby. So glory be to Him who hath appointed the things that have been done aforetime for an example to those that come after! And of these admonitory instances are the histories called the Thousand Nights and One Night, with all their store of illustrious fables and relations.

It is recorded in the chronicles of the things that have been done of time past that there lived once, in the olden days and in bygone ages and times, a king of the kings of the sons of Sasan, who reigned over the Islands of India and China and was lord of armies and guards and servants and retainers. He had two sons, an elder and a younger, who were both valiant cavaliers, but the elder was a stouter horseman than the younger. When their father died, he left his empire to his elder son, whose name was Shehriyar, and he took the government and ruled his subjects justly, so that the people of the country and of the empire loved him well, whilst his brother Shahzeman became King of Samarcand of Tartary. The two kings abode each in his own dominions, ruling justly over their subjects and enjoying the utmost prosperity and happiness, for the space of twenty years, at the end of which time the elder king yearned after his brother and commanded his Vizier to repair to the latter's court and bring him to his own capital. The Vizier replied, "I hear and obey," and set out at once and journeyed till he reached King Shahzeman's court in safety, when he saluted him for his brother and informed him that the latter yearned after him and desired that he would pay him a visit, to which King Shahzeman consented gladly and made ready for the journey and appointed his Vizier to rule the country in his stead during his absence. Then he caused his tents and camels and mules to be brought forth and encamped, with his guards and attendants, without the city, in readiness to set out next morning for his brother's kingdom. In the middle of the night, it chanced that he bethought him of somewhat he had forgotten in his palace; so he returned thither privily and entered his apartments, where he found his wife asleep in his own bed, in the arms of one of his black slaves. When he saw this, the world grew black in his sight, and he said to himself, "If this is what happens whilst I am yet under the city walls, what will be the condition of this accursed woman during my absence at my brother's court?" Then he drew his sword and smote the twain and slew them and left them in the bed and returned presently to his camp, without telling any one what had happened. Then he gave orders for immediate departure and set out a'once and travelled till he drew near his brother's capital when he despatched vaunt-couriers to announce his approach. His brother came forth to meet him and saluted him and rejoiced exceedingly and caused the city to be decorated in his honour. Then he sat down with him to converse and make merry; but King Shahzeman could not forget the perfidy of his wife and grief

grew on him more and more and his colour changed and his body became weak. Shehriyar saw his condition, but attributed it to his separation from his country and his kingdom, so let him alone and asked no questions of him, till one day he said to him, "O my brother, I see that thou art grown weak of body and hast lost thy colour." And Shahzeman answered, "O my brother, I have an internal wound," but did not tell him about his wife. Said Shehriyar, "I wish thou wouldst ride forth with me a-hunting; maybe it would lighten thy heart." But Shahzeman refused; so his brother went out to hunt without him. Now there were in King Shahzeman's apartments lattice-windows overlooking his brother's garden, and as the former was sitting looking on the garden, behold a gate of the palace opened, and out came twenty damsels and twenty black slaves, and among them his brother's wife, who was wonderfully fair and beautiful. They all came up to a fountain, where the girls and slaves took off their clothes and sat down together. Then the queen called out, "O Mesoud!" And there came to her a black slave, who embraced her and she him. Then he lay with her, and on likewise did the other slaves with the girls. And they ceased not from kissing and clipping and cricketing and carousing until the day began to wane. When the King of Tartary saw this, he said to himself, "By Allah, my mischance was lighter than this!" And his grief and chagrin relaxed from him and he said, "This is more grievous than what happened to me!" So he put away his melancholy and ate and drank. Presently, his brother came back from hunting and they saluted each other: and Shehriyar looked at Shahzeman and saw that his colour had returned and his face was rosy and he ate heartily, whereas before he ate but little. So he said to him, "O my brother, when I last saw thee, thou wast pale and wan, and now I see that the colour has returned to thy face. Tell me how it is with thee." Quoth Shahzeman, "I will tell thee what caused my loss of colour, but excuse me from acquainting thee with the cause of its return to me." Said Shehriyar, "Let me hear first what was the cause of thy pallor and weakness." "Know then, O my brother," rejoined Shahzeman, "that when thou sentest thy vizier to bid me to thee, I made ready for the journey and had actually quitted my capital city, when I remembered that I had left behind me a certain jewel, that which I gave thee. So I returned to my palace, where I found my wife asleep in my bed, in the arms of a black slave. I slew them both and came to thee; and it was for brooding over this affair, that I lost my colour and became weak. But forgive me if I tell thee not the cause of my restoration to health." When his brother heard this, he said to him, "I conjure thee by Allah, tell me the reason of thy recovery!" So he told him all that he had seen, and Shehriyar said, "I must see this with my own eyes." "Then," replied Shahzeman, "feign to go forth to hunt and hide thyself in my lodging and thou shalt see all this and have ocular proof of the truth." So Shehriyar ordered his attendants to prepare to set out at once; whereupon the troops encamped without the city and he himself went forth with them and sat in his pavilion, bidding his servants admit no one. Then he disguised himself and returned secretly to King Shahzeman's palace and sat with him at the lattice overlooking the garden, until the damsels and their mistress came out with the slaves and did as his brother had reported, till the call to afternoon prayer. When King Shehriyar saw this, he was as one distraught and said to his brother, "Arise, let us depart hence, for we have no concern with kingship, and wander till we find one to whom the like has happened as to us, else our death were better than our life." Then they went out by a postern of the palace and journeyed days and nights till they came

to a tree standing in the midst of a meadow, by a spring of water, on the shore of the salt sea, and they drank of the stream and sat down by it to rest. When the day was somewhat spent, behold, the sea became troubled and there rose from it a black column that ascended to the sky and made towards the meadow. When the princes saw this, they were afraid and climbed up to the top of the tree, which was a high one, that they might see what was the matter; and behold, it was a genie of lofty stature, broad-browed and wide-cheated, bearing on his head a coffer of glass with seven locks of steel. He landed and sat down under the tree, where he set down the coffer, and opening it, took out a smaller one. This also he opened, and there came forth a damsel slender of form and dazzlingly beautiful, as she were a shining sun, as says the poet Uteyeh:

She shines out in the dusk, and lo! the day is here,
And all the trees flower forth with blossoms bright and clear,
The sun from out her brows arises, and the moon,
When she unveils her face, cloth hide for shame and fear.
All living things prostrate themselves before her feet,
When she unshrouds and all her hidden charms appear;
And when she flashes forth the lightnings of her glance,
She maketh eyes to rain, like showers, with many a tear.

When the genie saw her, he said to her, "O queen of noble ladies, thou whom indeed I stole away on thy wedding night, I have a mind to sleep awhile." And he laid his head on her knees and fell asleep. Presently the lady raised her eyes to the tree and saw the two kings among the branches; so she lifted the genie's head from her lap and laid it on the ground, then rose and stood beneath the tree and signed to them to descend, without heeding the Afrit. They answered her, in the same manner, "God on thee excuse us from this." But she rejoined by signs, as who should say, "If you do not come down, I will wake the Afrit on you, and he will kill you without mercy." So they were afraid and came down to her, whereupon she came up to them and offered them her favours, saying, "To it, both of you, and lustily; or I will set the Afrit on you." So for fear of him, King Shehriyar said to his brother Shahzeman, "O brother, do as she bids thee." But he replied, "Not I; do thou have at her first." And they made signs to each other to pass first, till she said, "Why do I see you make signs to each other? An you come not forward and fall to, I will rouse the Afrit on you." So for fear of the genie, they lay with her one after the other, and when they had done, she bade them arise, and took out of her bosom a purse containing a necklace made of five hundred and seventy rings, and said to them, "Know ye what these are?" They answered, "No." And she said, "Every one of the owners of these rings has had to do with me in despite of this Afrit. And now give me your rings, both of you." So each of them took off a ring and gave it to her. And she said to them, "Know that this genie carried me off on my wedding night and laid me in a box and shut the box up in a glass chest, on which he clapped seven strong locks and sank it to the bottom of the roaring stormy sea, knowing not that nothing can hinder a woman, when she desires aught, even as says one of the poets:

I rede thee put no Faith in womankind, Nor trust the oaths they lavish all in vain:
For on the satisfaction of their lusts Depend alike their love and their disdain.

They proffer lying love, but perfidy Is all indeed their garments do contain.
Take warning, then, by Joseph's history, And how a woman sought to do him bane;
And eke thy father Adam, by their fault To leave the groves of Paradise was fain.

Or as another says:

Out on yon! blame confirms the blamed one in his way.
My fault is not so great indeed as you would say.
If I'm in love, forsooth, my case is but the same
As that of other men before me, many a day.
For great the wonder were if any man alive
From women and their wiles escape unharmed away!"

When the two kings heard this, they marvelled and said, "Allah! Allah! There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! We seek aid of God against the malice of women, for indeed their craft is great!" Then she said to them, "Go your ways." So they returned to the road, and Shehriyar said to Shahzeman, "By Allah, O my brother, this Afrit's case is more grievous than ours. For this is a genie and stole away his mistress on her wedding night and clapped her in a chest, which he locked with seven locks and sank in the midst of the sea, thinking to guard her from that which was decreed by fate, yet have we seen that she has lain with five hundred and seventy men in his despite, and now with thee and me to boot. Verily, this is a thing that never yet happened to any, and it should surely console us. Let us therefore return to our kingdoms and resolve never again to take a woman to wife; and as for me, I will show thee what I will do." So they set out at once and presently came to the camp outside Shehriyar's capital and, entering the royal pavilion, sat down on their bed of estate. Then the chamberlains and amirs and grandees came in to them and Shehriyar commanded them to return to the city. So they returned to the city and Shehriyar went up to his palace, where he summoned his Vizier and bade him forthwith put his wife to death. The Vizier accordingly took the queen and killed her, whilst Shehriyar, going into the slave girls and concubines, drew his sword and slew them all. Then he let bring others in their stead and took an oath that every night he would go in to a maid and in the morning put her to death, for that there was not one chaste woman on the face of the earth. As for Shahzeman, he sought to return to his kingdom at once; so his brother equipped him for the journey and he set out and fared on till he came to his own dominions. Meanwhile, King Shehriyar commanded his Vizier to bring him the bride of the night, that he might go in to her; so he brought him one of the daughters of the amirs and he went in to her, and on the morrow he bade the Vizier cut off her head. The Vizier dared not disobey the King's commandment, so he put her to death and brought him another girl, of the daughters of the notables of the land. The King went in to her also, and on the morrow he bade the Vizier kill her; and he ceased not to do thus for three years, till the land was stripped of marriageable girls, and all the women and mothers and fathers wept and cried out against the King, cursing him and complaining to the Creator of heaven and earth and calling for succour upon Him who heareth prayer and answereth those that cry to Him; and those that had daughters left fled with them, till at last there remained not a single girl in the city apt for marriage. One day the King ordered the Vizier to bring him a maid as of wont; so the Vizier went out and made search for a girl, but found not one and returned home

troubled and careful for fear of the king's anger. Now this Vizier had two daughters, the elder called Shehrzad and the younger Dunyazad, and the former had read many books and histories and chronicles of ancient kings and stories of people of old time; it is said indeed that she had collected a thousand books of chronicles of past peoples and bygone kings and poets. Moreover, she had read books of science and medicine; her memory was stored with verses and stories and folk-lore and the sayings of kings and sages, and she was wise, witty, prudent and well-bred. She said to her father, "How comes it that I see thee troubled and oppressed with care and anxiety? Quoth one of the poets:

'Tell him that is of care oppressed,
That grief shall not endure alway,
But even as gladness fleeteth by,
So sorrow too shall pass away.'"

When the Vizier heard his daughter's words, he told her his case, and she said, "By Allah, O my father, marry me to this king, for either I will be the means of the deliverance of the daughters of the Muslims from slaughter or I will die and perish as others have perished." "For God's sake," answered the Vizier, "do not thus adventure thy life!" But she said, "It must be so." Whereupon her father was wroth with her and said to her, "Fool that thou art, dost thou not know that the ignorant man who meddles in affairs falls into grievous peril, and that he who looks not to the issue of his actions finds no friend in time of evil fortune? As says the byword, 'I was sitting at my ease, but my officiousness would not let me rest.' And I fear lest there happen to thee what happened to the ox and the ass with the husbandman." "And what happened to them?" asked she. Quoth the Vizier, "Know, O my daughter, that

Story of the Ox and the Ass

There was once a merchant who was rich in goods and cattle, and he had a wife and children and dwelt in the country and was skilled in husbandry. Now God had gifted him to understand the speech of beasts and birds of every kind, but under pain of death if he divulged his gift to any one; so he kept it secret for fear of death. He had in his byre an ox and an ass, each tied up in his stall, hard by the other. One day, as the merchant was sitting near at hand, he heard the ox say to the ass, 'I give thee joy, O Father Wakeful! Thou enjoyest rest and attention and they keep thy stall always swept and sprinkled, and thine eating is sifted barley and thy drink fresh water, whilst I am always weary, for they take me in the middle of the night and gird the yoke on my neck and set me to plough and I toil without ceasing from break of morn till sunset. I am forced to work more than my strength and suffer all kinds of indignities, such as blows and abuse, from the cruel ploughman; and I return home at the end of the day, and indeed my sides are torn and my neck is flayed. Then they shut me up in the cow-house and throw me beans and straw mixed with earth and husks, and I lie all night in dung and stale. But thy place is always swept and sprinkled and thy manger clean and full of sweet hay and thou art always resting, except that, now and then, our master hath occasion to ride thee and returns speedily with thee; and but for this thou art always resting and I toiling, and thou sleeping and I waking; thou art full and I

hungry and thou honoured and I despised.' 'O broadhead,' answered the ass,' he was in the right who dubbed thee ox , for thou art stupid in the extreme, nor is there in thee thought or craft but thou showest zeal and cost thine utmost endeavour before thy master and fearest and killest thyself for the benefit of another. Thou goest forth at the time of morning prayer and returnest not till sundown and endurest all day all manner of afflictions, now blows now fatigue and now abuse. When thou returnest, the ploughman ties thee to a stinking manger, and thou friskest and pawest the ground and buttest with thy horns and bellowest greatly, and they think thou art content. No sooner have they thrown thee thy fodder than thou fallest on it greedily and hastenest to fill thy belly with it. But if thou wilt follow my counsel, it will be the better for thee and thou wilt get twice as much rest as I. When thou goest forth to the furrow and they lay the yoke on thy neck, lie down, and do not rise, even if they beat thee, or only rise and lie down again; and when they bring thee home, fall prostrate on thy back and refuse thy fodder, when they throw it thee and feign to be sick. Do this for a day or two and thou wilt have rest from toil and weariness.' The ox thanked the ass greatly for his advice and called down blessings on him; and the merchant heard all that passed between them.

Next day the ploughman took the ox and yoked him to the plough and set him to work as usual. The ox began to fall short in his work, and the ploughman beat him till he broke the yoke and fled, following out the ass's precepts; but the man overtook him and beat him till he despaired of life. Yet for all that, he did nothing but stand still and fall down till the evening. Then the ploughman took him home and tied him in his stall; but he withdrew from the manger and neither frisked nor stamped nor bellowed as usual, and the man wondered at this. Then he brought him the beans and straw, but he smelt at them and left them and lay down at a distance and passed the night without eating. Next morning, the ploughman came and found the straw and beans untouched and the ox lying on his back, with his stomach swollen and his legs in the air; so he was concerned for him and said to himself, 'He has certainly fallen ill, and this is why he would not work yesterday.' Then he went to his master and told him that the ox was ill and would not touch his fodder. Now the farmer knew what this meant, for that he had overheard the talk between the ox and the ass as before mentioned. So he said, 'Take that knave of an ass and bind the yoke on his neck and harness him to the plough and try and make him do the ox's work.' So the ploughman took the ass and made him work all day beyond his strength to accomplish the ox's task; and he beat him till his skin and ribs were sore and his neck flayed with the yoke. When the evening came and the ass resumed home, he could hardly drag himself along. But as for the ox, he had lain all day, resting, and had eaten his fodder cheerfully and with a good appetite; and all day long he had called down blessings on the ass for his good counsel, not knowing what had befallen him on his account. So when the night came and the ass returned to the stable, the ox arose and said to him, 'Mayst thou be gladdened with good news, O Father Wakeful! Through thee, I have rested today and have eaten my food in peace and comfort.' The ass made him no answer, for rage and vexation and fatigue and the beating he had undergone; but he said to himself, 'All this comes of my folly in giving another good advice; as the saying goes, "I was lying at full length, but my officiousness would not let me be." But I will go about with him and return him to his place, else I shall perish.' Then he went to his manger weary, whilst

the ox thanked him and blessed him. "And thou, O my daughter," said the Vizier, "like the ass, wilt perish through thy lack of sense, so do thou oft quiet and cast not thyself into perdition; indeed I give thee good counsel and am affectionately solicitous for thee." "O my father," answered she, "nothing will serve me but I must go up to this king and become his wife." Quoth he, "An thou hold not thy peace and bide still, I will do with thee even as the merchant did with his wife." "And what was that?" asked she. "Know," answered he, "that the merchant and his wife and children came out on the terrace, it being a moonlit night and the moon at its full. Now the terrace overlooked the byre; and presently, as he sat, with his children playing before him, the merchant heard the ass say to the ox, 'Tell me, O Father Stupid, what dost thou mean to do tomorrow?' 'What but that thou advisest me?' answered the ox. 'Thine advice was as good as could be and has gotten me complete rest, and I will not depart from it in the least; so when they bring me my fodder, I will refuse it and feign sickness and swell out my belly.' The ass shook his head and said, 'Beware of doing that!' 'Why?' asked the ox, and the ass answered, 'Know that I heard our master say to the labourer, "If the ox do not rise and eat his fodder today, send for the butcher to slaughter him, and give his flesh to the poor and make a rug of his skin." And I fear for thee on account of this. So take my advice, ere ill-hap betide thee, and when they bring thee the fodder, eat it and arise and bellow and paw the ground with thy feet, or our master will assuredly slaughter thee.' Whereupon the ox arose and bellowed and thanked the ass, and said, 'Tomorrow, I will go with them readily.' Then he ate up all his fodder, even to licking the manger with his tongue.

When the merchant heard this, he was amused at the ass's trick, and laughed, till he fell backward. 'Why dost thou laugh?' asked his wife; and he said, 'I laughed at something that I saw and heard, but it is a secret and I cannot disclose it, or I shall die.' Quoth she, 'There is no help for it but thou must tell me the reason of thy laughter, though thou die for it.' 'I cannot reveal it,' answered he, 'for fear of death.' 'It was at me thou didst laugh,' said she, and ceased not to importune him till he was worn out and distracted. So he assembled all his family and kinsfolk and summoned the Cadi and the witnesses, being minded to make his last dispositions and impart to her the secret and die, for indeed he loved her with a great love, and she was the daughter of his father's brother and the mother of his children. Moreover, he sent for all her family and the neighbours, and when they were all assembled, he told them the state of the case and announced to them the approach of his last hour. Then he gave his wife her portion and appointed guardians of his children and freed his slave girls and took leave of his people. They all wept, and the Cadi and the witnesses wept also and went up to the wife and said to her, 'We conjure thee, by Allah, give up this matter, lest thy husband and the father of thy children die. Did he not know that if he revealed the secret, he would surely die, he would have told thee.' But she replied, 'By Allah, I will not desist from him, till he tell me, though he die for it.' So they forbore to press her. And all who were present wept sore, and there was a general mourning in the house. Then the merchant rose and went to the cow-house, to make his ablutions and pray, intending after to return and disclose his secret and die.

Now he had a cock and fifty hens and a dog, and he heard the latter say in his lingo to the cock, 'How mean is thy wit, O cock! May he be disappointed who reared

thee! Our master is in extremity and thou clappest thy wings and crowest and fliest from one hen's back to another's! God confound thee! Is this a time for sport and diversion? Art thou not ashamed of thyself?' 'And what ails our master, O dog?' asked the cock. The dog told him what had happened and how the merchant's wife had importuned him, till he was about to tell her his secret and die, and the cock said, 'Then is our master little of wit and lacking in sense; if he cannot manage his affairs with a single wife, his life is not worth prolonging. See, I have fifty wives. I content this one and anger that, stint one and feed another, and through my good governance they are all under my control. Now, our master pretends to sense and accomplishments, and he has but one wife and yet knows not how to manage her.' Quoth the dog, 'What, then, should our master do?' 'He should take a stick,' replied the cock, 'and beat her soundly, till she says, "I repent, O my lord! I will never again ask a question as long as I live." And when once he has done this, he will be free from care and enjoy life. But he has neither sense nor judgment.'

When the merchant heard what the cock said, he went to his wife (after he had hidden a rattan in an empty store-room) and said to her, 'Come with me into this room, that I may tell thee my secret and die and none see me.' So she entered gladly, thinking that he was about to tell her his secret, and he locked the door; then he took the rattan and brought it down on her back and ribs and shoulders, saying, 'Wilt thou ask questions about what is none of thy business?' He beat her till she was well-nigh senseless, and she cried out, 'By Allah, I will ask thee no more questions, and indeed I repent sincerely!' And she kissed his hands and feet. Then he unlocked the door and went out and told the company what had happened, whereat they rejoiced, and mourning was changed into joy and gladness. So the merchant learnt good management from a cock, and he and his wife lived happily until death.

And thou, O my daughter," added the Vizier, "except thou desist from this thing, I will do with thee even as the merchant did with his wife." "I will never desist," answered she, "nor is it this story that can turn me from my purpose; and an thou yield not to me, I will go up myself to the King and complain to him of thee, in that thou grudges the like of me to the like of him." Quoth her father, "Must it be so?" And she answered "Yes." So being weary of striving with her and despairing of turning her from her purpose, he went up to King Shehriyar and kissing the earth before him, told him about his daughter and how she would have him give her to him that next night; whereat the King marvelled and said to him, "How is this? By Him who raised up the heavens, if thou bring her to me, I shall say to thee on the morrow, 'Take her and put her to death.' And if thou kill her not, I will kill thee without fail." "O king of the age," answered the Vizier, "it is she who will have it so; and I told her all this, but she will not hear me and insists upon passing this night with thy highness." "It is well," answered Shehriyar; "go and make her ready, and tonight bring her to me." So the Vizier returned to his daughter and told her what had passed, saying, "May God not bereave us of thee!" But Shehrzad rejoiced with an exceeding joy and made ready all that she needed, and said to her sister Dunyazad, "O my sister, note well what I shall enjoin thee. When I go up to the Sultan, I will send after thee, and when thou comest to me and seest that the King has done his will of me, do thou say to me, 'O my sister, an thou be not asleep, tell us some of thy delightful stories, to pass away the watches of

this our night.' Do this and (God willing) it shall be the means of my deliverance and of the ridding of the folk of this calamity, and by it I will turn the King from his custom." Dunyazad answered, "It is well." And the Vizier carried Shehrzad to the King, who took her to his bed and fell to toying with her. But she wept, and he said to her, "Why dost thou weep?" "O king of the age," answered she, "I have a young sister and I desire to take leave of her this night and that she may take leave of me before the morning." So he sent for Dunyazad, and she waited till the Sultan had done his desire of her sister and they were all three awake, when she coughed and said, "O my sister, an thou be not asleep, tell us one of thy pleasant stories, to beguile the watches of our night, and I will take leave of thee before the morning." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad, "if the good king give me leave." The King being wakeful, was pleased to hear a story and said, "Tell on." Whereat she rejoiced greatly and said, "It is related, O august king, that

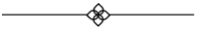
The Merchant and the Genie.

THERE was once a merchant, who had much substance and traded largely in foreign countries. One day, as he was riding through a certain country, whither he had gone to collect what was due to him, there overtook him the heat of the day and presently he espied a garden before him; so he made towards it for shelter and alighting, sat down under a walnut tree, by a spring of water. Then he put his hand to his saddle bags and took out a cake of bread and a date and ate them and threw away the date stone, when behold, there started up before him a gigantic Afrit, with a naked sword in his hand, who came up to him and said, 'Arise, that I may slay thee, even as thou hast slain my son.' 'How did I slay thy son?' asked the merchant, and the genie replied, 'When thou threwest away the date stone, it smote my son, who was passing at the time, on the breast, and he died forthright.' When the merchant heard this, he said, 'Verily we are God's and to Him we return! There is no power and no virtue but in God, the Most High, the Supreme! If I killed him, it was by misadventure, and I prithee pardon me.' But the genie said, 'There is no help for it but I must kill thee.' Then he seized him and throwing him down, raised his sword to strike him: whereupon the merchant wept and said, 'I commit my affair to God!' and recited the following verses:

Fate has two days, untroubled one, the other lowering,
And life two parts, the one content, the other sorrowing.
Say unto him that taunteth us with fortune's perfidy,
'At whom but those whose heads are high doth Fate its arrows fling?'
If that the hands of Time have made their plaything of our life,
Till for its long protracted kiss ill-hap upon us spring,
Dost thou not see the hurricane, what time the wild winds blow,
Smite down the stately trees alone and spare each lesser thing?
Lo! in the skies are many stars, no one can tell their tale,
But to the sun and moon alone eclipse brings darkening.
The earth bears many a pleasant herb and many a plant and tree:
But none is stoned save only those to which the fair fruit cling.
Look on the sea and how the waifs float up upon the foam,
But in its deepest depths of blue the pearls have sojourning.

'Cut short thy speech,' said the genie, 'for, by Allah, there is no help for it but I must kill thee.' 'Know, O Afrit,' replied the merchant, 'that I have a wife and children and much substance, and I owe debts and hold pledges: so let me return home and give every one his due, and I vow by all that is most sacred that I will return to thee at the end of the year, that thou mayest do with me as thou wilt, and God is witness of what I say.' The genie accepted his promise and released him, whereupon he returned to his dwelling-place and paid his debts and settled all his affairs. Moreover, he told his wife and children what had happened and made his last dispositions, and tarried with his family till the end of the year. Then he rose and made his ablutions and took his winding sheet under his arm and bidding his household and kinsfolk and neighbours

farewell, set out, much against his will, to perform his promise to the genie; whilst his family set up a great noise of crying and lamentation. He journeyed on till he reached the garden, where he had met with the genie, on the first day of the new year, and there sat down to await his doom. Presently, as he sat weeping over what had befallen him, there came up an old man, leading a gazelle by a chain, and saluted the merchant, saying, 'What ails thee to sit alone in this place, seeing that it is the resort of the Jinn?' The merchant told him all that had befallen him with the Afrit, and he wondered and said, 'By Allah, O my brother, thy good faith is exemplary and thy story is a marvellous one! If it were graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as a warning to those that can profit by example.' Then he sat down by his side, saying, 'By Allah, O my brother, I will not leave thee till I see what befalls thee with this Afrit.' So they sat conversing, and fear and terror got hold upon the merchant and trouble increased upon him, notwithstanding the old man's company. Presently another old man came up, leading two black dogs, and saluting them, inquired why they sat in a place known to be haunted by Jinn, whereupon the merchant repeated his story to him. He had not sat long with them when there came up a third old man leading a dappled she-mule, and after putting to them the same question and receiving a like answer, sat down with them to await the issue of the affair. They had sat but a little while longer, when behold, there arose a cloud of dust and a great whirling column approached from the heart of the desert. Then the dust lifted and discovered the genie, with a drawn sword in his hand and sparks of fire issuing from his eyes. He came up to them and dragged the merchant from amongst them, saying, 'Rise, that I may slay thee as thou slewest my son, the darling of my heart!' Whereupon the merchant wept and bewailed himself and the three old men joined their cries and lamentations to his. Then came forward the first old man, he of the gazelle, and kissed the Afrit's hand and said to him, 'O genie and crown of the kings of the Jinn, if I relate to thee my history with this gazelle and it seem to thee wonderful, wilt thou grant me a third of this merchant's blood?' 'Yes, O old man,' answered the genie, 'if thou tell me thy story and I find it wonderful, I will remit to thee a third of his blood.' Then said the old man, 'Know, O Afrit, that



The First Old Man's Story.

THIS gazelle is the daughter of my father's brother and my own flesh and blood. I married her whilst she was yet of tender age and lived with her near thirty years, without being blessed with a child by her. So I took me a concubine and had by her a son like the rising full moon, with eyes and eyebrows of perfect beauty; and he grew up and flourished till he reached the age of fifteen, when I had occasion to journey to a certain city, and set out thither with great store of merchandise. Now my wife had studied sorcery and magic from her youth: so, I being gone, she turned my son into a calf and his mother into a cow and delivered them both to the cowherd: and when, after a long absence, I returned from my journey and inquired after my son and his mother, my wife said to me, "Thy slave died and her son ran away, whither I know not." I abode for the space of a year, mournful-hearted and weeping-eyed, till the coming of the Greater Festival, when I sent to the herdsman and bade him bring me a fat cow for the purpose of sacrifice. So he brought me the very cow into which my wife had changed my concubine by her art; and I tucked up my skirts and taking the knife in my hand, went up to the cow to slaughter her; but she lowed and moaned so piteously, that I was seized with wonder and compassion and held my hand from her and said to the herd, "Bring me another cow." "Not so!" cried my wife. "Slaughter this one, for we have no finer nor fatter." So I went up to her again, but she cried out, and I left her and ordered the herdsman to kill her and skin her. So he killed her and flayed her, but found on her neither fat nor flesh, only skin and bone. Then I was sorry for having slain her, when repentance availed me not; and I gave her to the herd and said to him, "Bring me a fat calf." So he brought me my son in the guise of a calf; and when he saw me, he broke his halter and came up to me and fawned on me and moaned and wept, till I took pity on him and said to the man, "Bring me a cow and let this calf go." But my wife cried out at me and said, "Not so: thou must sacrifice this calf and none other to-day: for it is a holy and a blessed day, on which it behoves us to offer up none but a good thing, and we have no calf fatter or finer than this one." Quoth I, "Look at the condition of the cow I slaughtered by thine order; we were deceived in her, and now I will not be persuaded by thee to slay this calf this time." "By the great God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," answered she, "thou must without fail sacrifice this calf on this holy day! Else thou art no longer my husband nor am I thy wife." When I heard this harsh speech from her, I went up to the calf, knowing not what she aimed at, and took the knife in my hand.'" Here Shehrzad perceived the day and was silent; and her sister said to her, "What a charming and delightful story!" Quoth Shehrzad, "This is nothing to what I will tell thee to-morrow night, if the King let me live." And the King said to himself, "By Allah, I will not kill her, till I hear the rest of the story!" So they lay together till morning, when the King went out to his hall of audience and the Vizier came in to him, with the winding-sheet under his arm. Then the King ordered and appointed and deposed, without telling the Vizier aught of what had happened, much to the former's surprise, until the end of the day, when the Divan broke up and he retired to his apartments.

And when it was the second night

Dunyazad said to her sister Shehrzad, "O my sister, finish us thy story of the merchant and the genie." "With all my heart," answered she, "if the King give me leave." The king bade her "Say on." So she began as follows: "It has reached me, O august king and wise governor, that the first old man continued his story as follows: 'O lord of the Kings of the Jinn, as I was about to kill the calf, my heart failed me and I said to the herdsman, "Keep this calf with the rest of the cattle." So he took it and went away. Next day the herd came to me, as I was sitting by myself, and said to me, "O my lord, I have that to tell thee will rejoice thee, and I claim a reward for good news." Quoth I, "It is well." And he said, "O merchant, I have a daughter, who learnt the art of magic in her youth from an old woman who lived with us, and yesterday, when I took home the calf that thou gavest me, she looked at it and veiled her face and fell a-weeping. Then she laughed and said to me, 'O my father, am I become of so little account in thine eyes that thou bringest in to me strange men?' 'Where are the strange men?' asked I. 'And why dost thou weep and laugh?' Quoth she, 'The calf thou hast there is our master's son, who has been enchanted, as well as his mother, by his father's wife. This is why I laughed: and I wept for his mother, because his father slaughtered her.' I wondered exceedingly at this and the day had no sooner broken than I came to tell thee." When (continued the old man) I heard the herdsman's story, O genie, I went out with him, drunken without wine for stress of joy and gladness, and accompanied him to his house, where his daughter welcomed me and kissed my hand; and the calf came up to me and fawned on me. Said I to the girl, "Is it true what I hear about this calf?" "Yes, O my lord," answered she, "this is indeed thy son and the darling of thy heart." So I said to her, "O damsel, if thou wilt release him, all that is under thy father's hand of beasts and goods shall be thine!" But she smiled and said, "O my lord, I care not for wealth, but I will do what thou desirest upon two conditions, the first that thou marry me to this thy son, and the second that thou permit me to bewitch the sorceress and imprison her (in the shape of a beast); else I shall not be safe from her craft." I answered, "Besides what thou seekest, thou shalt have all that is under thy father's hand, and as to my wife, it shall be lawful to thee to shed her blood, if thou wilt." When she heard this, she took a cup full of water, and conjured over it; then sprinkled the calf with the water, saying, "If thou be a calf by the creation of the Almighty, abide in that form and change not: but if thou be enchanted, return to thine original form, with the permission of God the Most High!" With that he shook and became a man: and I fell upon him and said to him, "For God's sake, tell me what my wife did with thee and thy mother." So he told me what had befallen them and I said to him, "O my son, God hath sent thee one to deliver and avenge thee." Then I married him to the herdsman's daughter, and she transformed my wife into this gazelle, saying to me, "I have given her this graceful form for thy sake, that thou mayest look on her without aversion." She dwelt with us days and nights and nights and days, till God took her to Himself; and after her death, my son set out on a journey to the land of Ind, which is this merchant's native country; and after awhile, I took the gazelle and travelled with her from place to place, seeking news of my son, till chance led me to this garden, where I found this merchant sitting weeping; and this is my story.' Quoth the genie, 'This is indeed a rare story, and I remit to thee a third part of his blood.' Then came forward the second old man, he of the two greyhounds, and said to the genie, 'I will tell thee my story with these two dogs, and if thou find it still

rarer and more marvellous, do thou remit to me another third part of his blood. Quoth the genie, 'I agree to this.' Then said the second old man, 'Know, O lord of the Kings of the Jinn, that

The Second Old Man's Story.

THESE two dogs are my elder brothers. Our father died and left us three thousand dinars, and I opened a shop that I might buy and sell therein, and my brothers did each the like. But before long, my eldest brother sold his stock for a thousand dinars and bought goods and merchandise and setting out on his travels, was absent a whole year. One day, as I was sitting in my shop, a beggar stopped before me and I said to him, "God assist thee!" But he said to me, weeping, "Dost thou not recognize me?" I took note of him, and behold, it was my brother. So I rose and welcomed him and made him sit down by me and inquired how he came in such a case: but he answered, "Do not ask me: my wealth is wasted and fortune has turned her back on me." Then I carried him to the bath and clad him in one of my own suits and took him to live with me. Moreover, I cast up my accounts and found that I had made a thousand dinars profit, so that my capital was now two thousand dinars. I divided this between my brother and myself, saying to him, "Put it that thou hast never travelled nor been abroad." He took it gladly and opened a shop with it. Presently, my second brother arose like the first and sold his goods and all that belonged to him and determined to travel. We would have dissuaded him, but he would not be dissuaded and bought merchandise with which he set out on his travels, and we saw no more of him for a whole year; at the end of which time he came to us as had done his elder brother, and I said to him, "O my brother, did I not counsel thee not to travel?" And he wept and said, "O my brother, it was decreed: and behold, I am poor, without a dirhem or a shirt to my back." Then I carried him to the bath and clad him in a new suit of my own and brought him back to my shop, where we ate and drank together; after which, I said to him, "O my brother, I will make up the accounts of my shop, as is my wont once a year, and the increase shall be between thee and me." So I arose and took stock and found I was worth two thousand dinars increase, in excess of capital, wherefore I praised the Divine Creator and gave my brother a thousand dinars, with which he opened a shop. In this situation we remained for some time, till one day, my brothers came to me and would have me go on a voyage with them; but I refused and said to them, "What did your travels profit you, that I should look to profit by the same venture?" And I would not listen to them; so we abode in our shops, buying and selling, and every year they pressed me to travel, and I declined, until six years had elapsed. At last I yielded to their wishes and said to them, "O my brothers, I will make a voyage with you, but first let me see what you are worth." So I looked into their affairs and found they had nothing left, having wasted all their substance in eating and drinking and merrymaking. However, I said not a word of reproach to them, but sold my stock and got in all I had and found I was worth six thousand dinars. So I rejoiced and divided the sum into two equal parts and said to my brothers, "These three thousand dinars are for you and me to trade with." The other three thousand I buried, in case what befell them should befall me also, so that we might still have, on our return, wherewithal to open our shops again. They were content and I gave them each a thousand dinars and kept the like myself. Then we provided ourselves with the necessary merchandise and equipped ourselves for travel and chartered a ship, which we freighted with our goods. After a month's voyage, we came to a city, in which we

sold our goods at a profit of ten dinars on every one (of prime cost). And as we were about to take ship again, we found on the beach a damsel in tattered clothes, who kissed my hand and said to me, "O my lord, is there in thee kindness and charity? I will requite thee for them." Quoth I, "Indeed I love to do courtesy and charity, though I be not requited." And she said, "O my lord, I beg thee to marry me and clothe me and take me back to thy country, for I give myself to thee. Entreat me courteously, for indeed I am of those whom it behoves to use with kindness and consideration; and I will requite thee therefor: do not let my condition prejudice thee." When I heard what she said, my heart inclined to her, that what God (to whom belong might and majesty) willed might come to pass. So I carried her with me and clothed her and spread her a goodly bed in the ship and went in to her and made much of her. Then we set sail again and indeed my heart clove to her with a great love and I left her not night nor day and occupied myself with her to the exclusion of my brothers. Wherefore they were jealous of me and envied me my much substance; and they looked upon it with covetous eyes and took counsel together to kill me and to take my goods, saying, "Let us kill our brother, and all will be ours." And Satan made this to seem good in their eyes. So they took me sleeping beside my wife and lifted us both up and threw us into the sea. When my wife awoke, she shook herself and becoming an Afriteh, took me up and carried me to an island, where she left me for awhile. In the morning, she returned and said to me, "I have paid thee my debt, for it is I who bore thee up out of the sea and saved thee from death, by permission of God the Most High. Know that I am of the Jinn who believe in God and His Apostle (whom God bless and preserve!) and I saw thee and loved thee for God's sake. So I came to thee in the plight thou knowest of and thou didst marry me, and now I have saved thee from drowning. But I am wroth with thy brothers, and needs must I kill them." When I heard her words, I wondered and thanked her for what she had done and begged her not to kill my brothers. Then I told her all that had passed between us, and she said, "This very night will I fly to them and sink their ship and make an end of them." "God on thee," answered I, "do not do this, for the proverb says, 'O thou who dost good to those who do evil, let his deeds suffice the evil doer!' After all, they are my brothers." Quoth she, "By Allah, I must kill them." And I besought her till she lifted me up and flying away with me, set me down on the roof of my own house, where she left me. I went down and unlocked the doors and brought out what I had hidden under the earth and opened my shop, after I had saluted the folk and bought goods. At nightfall, I returned home and found these two dogs tied up in the courtyard: and when they saw me, they came up to me and wept and fawned on me. At the same moment, my wife presented herself and said to me, "These are thy brothers." "Who has done this thing unto them?" asked I; and she answered, "I sent to my sister, who turned them into this form, and they shall not be delivered from the enchantment till after ten years." Then she left me, after telling me where to find her; and now, the ten years having expired, I was carrying the dogs to her, that she might release them, when I fell in with this merchant, who acquainted me with what had befallen him. So I determined not to leave him, till I saw what passed between thee and him: and this is my story.' 'This is indeed a rare story,' said the genie, 'and I remit to thee a third part of his blood and his crime.' Then came forward the third old man, he of the mule, and said, 'O genie, I will tell thee a story still more astonishing than the two thou hast heard, and do thou remit to me the remainder of

his blood and crime.' The genie replied, 'It is well.' So the third old man said, 'Know, O Sultan and Chief of the Jinn, that

The Third Old Man's Story.

THIS mule was my wife. Some time ago, I had occasion to travel and was absent from her a whole year; at the end of which time I returned home by night and found my wife in bed with a black slave, talking and laughing and toying and kissing and dallying. When she saw me, she made haste and took a mug of water and muttered over it; then came up to me and sprinkled me with the water, saying, "Leave this form for that of a dog!" And immediately I became a dog. She drove me from the house, and I went out of the door and ceased not running till I came to a butcher's shop, where I stopped and began to eat the bones. The butcher took me and carried me into his house; but when his daughter saw me, she veiled her face and said to her father, "How is it that thou bringest a man in to me?" "Where is the man?" asked he; and she replied, "This dog is a man, whose wife has enchanted him, and I can release him." When her father heard this, he said, "I conjure thee by Allah, O my daughter, release him!" So she took a mug of water and muttered over it, then sprinkled a little of it on me, saying, "Leave this shape and return to thy former one." And immediately I became a man again and kissed her hand and begged her to enchant my wife as she had enchanted me. So she gave me a little of the water and said to me, "When thou seest her asleep, sprinkle her with this water and repeat the words thou hast heard me use, naming the shape thou wouldst have her take, and she will become whatever thou wishest." So I took the water and returned home and went in to my wife. I found her asleep and sprinkled the water upon her, saying, "Quit this form for that of a mule." And she at once became a mule; and this is she whom thou seest before thee, O Sultan and Chief of the Kings of the Jinn!' Then he said to the mule, 'Is it true?' And she nodded her head and made signs as who should say, 'Yes, indeed: this is my history and what befell me.'" Here Shehrzad perceived the day and was silent. And Dunyazad said to her, "O my sister, what a delightful story is this of thine!" "This is nothing," answered Shehrzad, "to what I will tell thee to-morrow night, if the King let me live." Quoth the King to himself, "By Allah, I will not put her to death till I hear the rest of her story, for it is wonderful." And they lay together till the morning. Then the King rose and betook himself to his audience-chamber, and the Vizier and the troops presented themselves and the Court was full. The King judged and appointed and deposed and ordered and forbade till the end of the day, when the Divan broke up and he returned to his apartments.

And when it was the third night

and the King had taken his will of the Vizier's daughter, Dunyazad said to her sister, "O my sister, finish us thy story." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad. "Know, O august King, that when the genie heard the third old man's story, he marvelled exceedingly and shook with delight and said, 'I remit to thee the remainder of his crime.' Then he released the merchant, who went up to the three old men and thanked them; and they gave him joy of his escape and returned, each to his own country. Nor is this more wonderful than the story of the Fisherman and the Genie." "What is that?" asked the King: and she said, "I have heard tell, O august King, that

The Fisherman and the Genie.

THERE was once a poor fisherman, who was getting on in years and had a wife and three children; and it was his custom every day to cast his net four times and no more. One day he went out at the hour of noon and repaired to the sea-shore, where he set down his basket and tucked up his skirts and plunging into the sea, cast his net and waited till it had settled down in the water. Then he gathered the cords in his hand and found it heavy and pulled at it, but could not bring it up. So he carried the end of the cords ashore and drove in a stake, to which he made them fast. Then he stripped and diving round the net, tugged at it till he brought it ashore. Whereat he rejoiced and landing, put on his clothes; but when he came to examine the net, he found in it a dead ass; and the net was torn. When he saw this, he was vexed and said: 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! This is indeed strange luck!' And he repeated the following verses:

O thou that strivest in the gloom of darkness and distress,
Cut short thine efforts, for in strife alone lies not success!
Seest not the fisherman that seeks his living in the sea,
Midmost the network of the stars that round about him press!
Up to his midst he plunges in: the billows buffet him;
But from the bellying net his eyes cease not in watchfulness;
Till when, contented with his night, he carries home a fish,
Whose throat the hand of Death hath slit with trident pitiless,
Comes one who buys his prey of him, one who has passed the night,
Safe from the cold, in all delight of peace and blessedness.
Praise be to God who gives to this and cloth to that deny!
Some fish, and others eat the fish caught with such toil and stress.

Then he said, 'Courage! I shall have better luck next time, please God!' And repeated the following verses:

If misfortune assail thee, clothe thyself thereagainst
With patience, the part of the noble: 'twere wiselier done.
Complain not to men: that were indeed to complain,
To those that have no mercy, of the Merciful One.

So saying, he threw out the dead ass and wrung the net and spread it out. Then he went down into the sea and cast again, saying, 'In the name of God!' and waited till the net had settled down in the water, when he pulled the cords and finding it was heavy and resisted more than before, thought it was full of fish. So he made it fast to the shore and stripped and dived into the water round the net, till he got it free. Then he hauled at it till he brought it ashore, but found in it nothing but a great jar full of sand and mud. When he saw this, he groaned aloud and repeated the following verses:

Anger of Fate, have pity and forbear,
Or at the least hold back thy hand and spare!
I sally forth to seek my daily bread

And find my living vanished into air.
How many a fool's exalted to the stars,
Whilst sages hidden in the mire must fare!

Then he threw out the jar and wrung out and cleansed his net: after which he asked pardon of God the Most High and returning to the sea a third time, cast the net. He waited till it had settled down, then pulled it up and found in it potsherds and bones and broken bottles: whereat he was exceeding wroth and wept and recited the following verses:

Fortune's with God: thou mayst not win to bind or set it free:
Nor letter-lore nor any skill can bring good hap to thee.
Fortune, indeed, and benefits by Fate are lotted out:
One country's blest with fertile fields, whilst others sterile be.
The shifts of evil chance cast down full many a man of worth
And those, that merit not, uplift to be of high degree.
So come to me, O Death! for life is worthless verily;
When falcons humbled to the dust and geese on high we see.
'Tis little wonder if thou find the noble-minded poor,
What while the loser by main force usurps his sovranty.
One bird will traverse all the earth and fly from East to West:
Another hath his every wish although no step stir he.

Then he lifted his eyes to heaven and said, 'O my God, Thou knowest that I cast my net but four times a day; and now I have cast it three times and have taken nothing. Grant me then, O my God, my daily bread this time!' So he said, 'In the name of God!' and cast his net and waited till it had settled down in the water, then pulled it, but could not bring it up, for it was caught in the bottom Whereupon, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God!' said he and repeated the following verses:

Away with the world, if it be like this, away!
My part in it's nought but misery and dismay!
Though the life of a man in the morning be serene,
He must drink of the cup of woe ere ended day.
And yet if one asked, 'Who's the happiest man alive?'
The people would point to me and 'He' would say.

Then he stripped and dived down to the net and strove with it till he brought it to shore, where he opened it and found in it a brazen vessel, full and stoppered with lead, on which was impressed the seal of our lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!). When he saw this, he was glad and said, 'I will sell this in the copper market, for it is worth half a score diners.' Then he shook it and found it heavy and said to himself, 'I wonder what is inside! I will open it and see what is in it, before I sell it.' So he took out a knife and worked at the leaden seal, till he extracted it from the vessel and laid it aside. Then he turned the vase mouth downward and shook it, to turn out its contents; but nothing came out, and he wondered greatly and laid it on the ground. Presently, there issued from it a smoke, which rose up towards the sky and passed over the face of the earth; then gathered itself together and condensed and quivered and

became an Afrit, whose head was in the clouds and his feet in the dust. His head was like a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs like masts, his mouth like a cavern, his teeth like rocks, his nostrils like trumpets, his eyes like lamps, and he was stern and lowering of aspect. When the fisherman saw the Afrit, he trembled in every limb; his teeth chattered and his spittle dried up and he knew not what to do. When the Afrit saw him, he said, 'There is no god but God, and Solomon is His prophet! O prophet of God, do not kill me, for I will never again disobey thee or cross thee, either in word or deed !' Quoth the fisherman, 'O Marid, thou sayest, "Solomon is the prophet of God." Solomon is dead these eighteen hundred years, and we are now at the end of time. But what is thy history and how comest thou in this vessel?' When the Marid heard this, he said, 'There is no god but God! I have news for thee, O fisherman!' 'What news?' asked he, and the Afrit answered, 'Even that I am about to slay thee without mercy.' 'O chief of the Afrits,' said the fisherman, 'thou meritest the withdrawal of God's protection from thee for saying this! Why wilt thou kill me and what calls for my death? Did I not deliver thee from the abysses of the sea and bring thee to land and release thee from the vase?' Quoth the Afrit, 'Choose what manner of death thou wilt die and how thou wilt be killed.' 'What is my crime?' asked the fisherman. 'Is this my reward for setting thee free?' The Afrit answered, 'Hear my story, O fisherman!' 'Say on and be brief,' quoth he, 'for my heart is in my mouth.' Then said the Afrit, 'Know, O fisherman, that I was of the schismatic Jinn and rebelled against Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), I and Sekhr the genie; and he sent his Vizier Asef teen Berkhiya, who took me by force and bound me and carried me, in despite of myself, before Solomon, who invoked God's aid against me and exhorted me to embrace the Faith and submit to his authority: but I refused. Then he sent for this vessel and shut me up in it and stoppered it with lead and sealed it with the Most High Name and commanded the Jinn to take me and throw me into the midst of the sea. There I remained a hundred years, and I said in my heart, "Whoso releaseth me, I will make him rich for ever." But the hundred years passed and no one came to release me, and I entered on another century and said, "Whoso releaseth me, I will open to him the treasures of the earth" But none released me, and other four hundred years passed over me, and I said, "Whoso releaseth me, I will grant him three wishes." But no one set me free. Then I was exceeding wroth and said to myself, "Henceforth, whoso releaseth me, I will kill him and let him choose what death he will die." And now, thou hast released me, and I give thee thy choice of deaths.' When the fisherman heard this, he exclaimed, 'O God, the pity of it that I should not have come to release thee till now!' Then he said to the Afrit, 'Spare me, that God may spare thee, and do not destroy me, lest God set over thee one who will destroy thee.' But he answered, 'There is no help for it, I must kill thee: so choose what death thou wilt die.' The fisherman again returned to the charge, saying, 'Spare me for that I set thee free.' 'Did I not tell thee,' replied the Marid, 'that is why I kill thee?' 'O head of the Afrits,' said the fisherman, 'I did thee a kindness, and thou repayest me with evil: indeed the proverb lieth not that saith:

"We did them good, and they the contrary returned:
And this, upon my life, is what the wicked do!
Who helps those, that deserve it not, shall be repaid
As the hyæna paid the man that helped her through."'

'Make no more words about it,' said the Afrit; 'thou must die.' Quoth the fisherman to himself, 'This is a genie, and I am a man; and God hath given me a good wit. So I will contrive for his destruction by my wit and cunning, even as he plotted mine of his craft and perfidy.' Then he said to the Afrit, 'Is there no help for it, but thou must kill me?' He answered, 'No,' and the fisherman said, 'I conjure thee, by the Most High Name graven upon the ring of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), answer me one question truly.' When the Afrit heard him mention the Most High Name, he was agitated and trembled and replied, 'It is well: ask and be brief.' Quoth the fisherman, 'This vessel would not suffice for thy hand or thy foot: so how could it hold the whole of thee?' Said the Afrit, 'Dost thou doubt that I was in it?' 'Yes,' answered the fisherman; 'nor will I believe it till I see it with my own eyes.'" Here Shehrzad perceived the day and was silent.

And when it was the fourth night

Dunyazad said to her sister, "O sister, an thou be not asleep, finish us thy story." So Shehrzad began, "I have heard tell, O august King, that, when he heard what the fisherman said, the Afrit shook and became a smoke over the sea, which drew together and entered the vessel little by little, till it was all inside. Whereupon the fisherman made haste to take the leaden stopper and clapping it on the mouth of the vessel, called out to the Afrit, saying, 'Choose what death thou wilt die! By Allah, I will throw thee back into the sea and build myself a house hard by, and all who come hither I will warn against fishing here, and say to them, "There is an Afrit in these waters, that gives those who pull him out their choice of deaths and how he shall kill them."' When the Afrit heard this and found himself shut up in the vessel, he knew that the fisherman had outwitted him and strove to get out, but could not, for Solomon's seal prevented him; so he said to the fisherman, 'I did but jest with thee.' 'Thou liest, O vilest and meanest and foulest of Afrits!' answered he, and rolled the vessel to the brink of the sea; which when the Afrit felt, he cried out, 'No! No!' And the fisherman said, 'Yes! Yes!' Then the Afrit made his voice small and humbled himself and said, 'What wilt thou do with me, O fisherman?' 'I mean to throw thee back into the sea,' replied he; 'since thou hast lain there already eighteen hundred years, thou shalt lie there now till the hour of judgment. Did I not say to thee, "Spare me, so God may spare thee; and do not kill me, lest God kill thee?" but thou spurnedst my prayers and wouldst deal with me no otherwise than perfidiously. So I used cunning with thee and now God has delivered thee into my hand.' Said the Afrit, 'Let me out, that I may confer benefits on thee.' The fisherman answered, 'Thou liest, O accursed one! Thou and I are like King Younan's Vizier and the physician Douban.' 'Who are they,' asked the Afrit, 'and what is their story?' Then said the fisherman, 'Know, O Afrit, that

Story of the Physician Douban.

THERE was once in a city of Persia a powerful and wealthy king, named Younan, who had guards and troops and auxiliaries of every kind: but he was afflicted with a leprosy, which defied the efforts of his physicians and wise men. He took potions and powders and used ointments, but all to no avail, and not one of the doctors could cure him. At last, there came to the King's capital city a great physician, stricken in years, whose name was Douban: and he had studied many books, Greek, ancient and modern, and Persian and Turkish and Arabic and Syriac and Hebrew, and was skilled in medicine and astrology, both theoretical and practical. Moreover he was familiar with all plants and herbs and grasses, whether harmful or beneficial, and was versed in the learning of the philosophers; in brief, he had made himself master of all sciences, medical and other. He had not been long in the town before he heard of the leprosy with which God had afflicted the King, and of the failure of the physicians and men of science to cure him; whereupon he passed the night in study; and when the day broke and the morning appeared and shone, he donned his richest apparel and went in to the King and kissing the ground before him, wished him enduring honour and fair fortune, in the choicest words at his command. Then he told him who he was and said to him, "O King, I have learnt what has befallen thee in thy person and how a multitude of physicians have failed to find a means of ridding thee of it: but I will cure thee, O King, and that without giving thee to drink of medicine or anointing thee with ointment." When the King heard this, he wondered and said to him, "How wilt thou do this? By Allah, if thou cure me, I will enrich thee, even to thy children's children, and I will heap favours on thee, and whatever thou desirest shalt be shine, and thou shalt be my companion and my friend." Then he gave him a dress of honour and made much of him, saying, "Wilt thou indeed cure me without drugs or ointment?" "Yes," answered Douban, "I will cure thee from without." Whereat the King marvelled exceedingly and said, "O physician, when wilt thou do as thou hast said? Make haste, O my son!" Quoth Douban, "I hear and obey: it shall be done tomorrow." And he went down into the city and hired a house, in which he deposited his books and medicines. Then he took certain drugs and simples and fashioned them into a mall, which he hollowed out and made thereto a handle and a ball, adapted to it by his art. Next morning he presented himself before the King and kissing the ground before him, ordered him to repair to the tilting ground and play at mall there. So the King mounted and repaired thither with his amirs and chamberlains and viziers, and hardly had he reached the appointed place when the physician Douban came up and presented him with the mall and ball he had prepared, saying, "Take this mall and grip the handle thus and drive into the plain and stretch thyself well and strike this ball till thy hand and thy body sweat, when the drugs will penetrate thy hand and permeate thy body. When thou hast done and the medicine has entered into thee, return to thy palace and enter the bath and wash. Then sleep awhile and thou wilt awake cured, and peace be on thee!" The King took the mall and mounting a swift horse, threw the ball before him and drove after it with all his might and smote it: and his hand gripped the mall firmly. And he ceased not to drive after the bail and strike it, till his hand and all his body sweated, and Douban knew

that the drugs had taken effect upon him and ordered him to return and enter the bath at once. So the King returned immediately and ordered the bath to be emptied for him. They turned the people out of the bath, and his servants and attendants hastened thither and made him ready change of linen and all that was necessary: and he went in and washed himself well and put on his clothes. Then he came out of the bath and went up to his palace and slept there. When he awoke, he looked at his body and found it clean as virgin silver, having no trace left of the leprosy: whereat he rejoiced exceedingly and his breast expanded with gladness. Next morning, he repaired to the Divan and sat down on his chair of estate, and the chamberlains and grandees attended on him. Presently, the physician Douban presented himself and kissed the earth before the king and repeated the following verses:

The virtues all exalted are, when thou art styled their sire:
None else the title dares accept, of all that men admire.
Lord of the radiant brow, whose light dispels the mists of doubt
From every goal of high emprize whereunto folk aspire,
Ne'er may thy visage cease to shine with glory and with joy,
Although the face of Fate should gloom with unremitting ire!
Even as the clouds pour down their dews upon the thirsting hills,
Thy grace pours favour on my head, outrunning my desire.
With liberal hand thou casteth forth thy bounties far and nigh,
And so hast won those heights of fame thou soughtest to acquire.

The King rose to him in haste and embraced him and made him sit down and clad him in a splendid dress of honour. Then tables of rich food were brought in, and Douban ate with the King and ceased not to bear him company all that day. When it was night, the King gave him two thousand diners, besides other presents, and mounted him on his own horse; and the physician returned to his lodging, leaving the King astonished at his skill and saying, "This man cured me from without, without using ointments. By Allah, this is none other than consummate skill! And it behoves me to honour and reward him and make him my companion and bosom friend to the end of time." The King passed the night in great content, rejoicing in the soundness of his body and his deliverance from his malady. On the morrow, he went out and sat down on his throne; and the grandees stood before him, whilst the amirs and viziers sat on his right hand and on his left. Then he sent for the physician, who came and kissed the ground before him, whereupon the King rose to him and made him sit by his side and eat with him, and ceased not to converse with him and make much of him till night; when he commanded five dresses of honour and a thousand diners to be given to him, and he returned to his house, well contented with the King. Next morning, the King repaired as usual to his council-chamber, and the amirs and viziers and chamberlains took their places round him. Now he had among his viziers one who was forbidding of aspect, sordid, avaricious and envious: a man of ill omen, naturally inclined to malevolence: and when he saw the esteem in which the King held Douban and the favours he bestowed on him, he envied him and plotted evil against him; for, as says the byword, "Nobody is free from envy" — and again— "Tyranny is latent in the soul: weakness hides it and strength reveals it." So he came to the King and kissed the earth before him and said to him "O King of the age, thou in whose bounties I have

grown up, I have a grave warning to give thee, which did I conceal from thee, I were a son of shame: wherefore, if thou command me to impart it to thee, I will do so." Quoth the King (and indeed the Vizier's words troubled him), "What is thy warning?" "O illustrious King," answered the Vizier, "the ancients have a saying, 'Whoso looks not to the issue of events, fortune is no friend of his :' and indeed I see the King in other than the right way, in that he favours his enemy, who seeks the downfall of his kingdom, and makes much of him and honours him exceedingly and is beyond measure familiar with him: and of a truth I am fearful for the King." Quoth King Younan (and indeed he was troubled and his colour changed), "Of whom dost thou speak?" The Vizier answered, "If thou sleepest, awake. I mean the physician Douban." "Out on thee!" said the King. "He is my true friend and the dearest of all men to me; seeing that he medicined me by means of a thing I held in my hand and cured me of my leprosy, which the doctors were unable to cure; and there is not his like to be found in this time, no, not in the whole world, East nor West; and it is of him that thou speakest thus! But from to-day I will assign him stipends and allowances and appoint him a thousand diners a month: and if I should share my kingdom with him, it were but a little thing. Methinks thou sayest this out of pure envy and wouldst have me kill him and after repent, as King Sindbad repented the killing of his falcon." "Pardon me, O King of the age," said the Vizier, "but how was that! Quoth the King, "It is said that

King Sindbad and His Falcon.

THERE was once a King of Persia, who delighted in hunting; and he had reared a falcon, that left him not day or night, but slept all night long, perched upon his hand. Whenever he went out to hunt, he took the falcon with him; and he let make for it a cup of gold to hang round its neck, that he might give it to drink therein. One day, his chief falconer came in to him and said, 'O King, now is the time to go a-hunting.' So the King gave orders accordingly and took the falcon on his wrist and set out, accompanied by his officers and attendants. They rode on till they reached a valley, where they formed the circle of the chase, and behold, a gazelle entered the ring; whereupon quoth the King, 'Whoso lets the gazelle spring over his head, I will kill him.' Then they drew the ring closelier round her, and behold, she came to the King's station and standing still, put her forelegs to her breast, as if to kill the earth before him. He bowed to her, but she sprang over his head and was off into the desert. The King saw his attendants nodding and winking to one another about him and said to his Vizier, 'O Vizier, what say my men?' 'They say,' answered the Vizier, that thou didst threaten to kill him over whose head the gazelle should spring.' 'As my head liveth,' rejoined the King, 'I will follow her up, till I bring her back!' So he pricked on after her and followed her till he came to a mountain and she made for her lair; but the King cast off the falcon, which swooped down on her and pecked at her eyes, till he blinded her and dazed her; whereupon the King threw his mace at her and brought her down. Then he alighted and cut her throat and skinned her and made her fast to his saddle-bow. Now it was the hour of midday rest and the place, where he was, was desert, and the King was athirst and so was his horse. So he searched till he saw a tree, with water dripping slowly, like oil, from its branches. Now the King's hands were gloved with leather; so he took the cup from the falcon's neck and filled it with the liquid and set it before himself, when behold, the falcon smote the cup and overturned it. The King took it and refilled it with the falling drops and set it before the bird, thinking that it was athirst: but it smote it again and overturned it. At this, the King was vexed with the falcon and rose and filled the cup a third time and set it before the horse: but the falcon again overturned it with its wing. Then said the King, 'God confound thee, thou most mischievous of fowls, thou wilt neither drink thyself nor let me nor the horse drink!' And he smote it with his sword and cut off its wings: whereupon it erected its head and made signs as who should say, 'Look what is at the top of the tree.' The King raised his eyes and saw at the top of the tree a brood of snakes, and this was their venom dripping, which he had taken for water. So he repented him of having cut off the falcon's wings and mounting, rode on till he reached his tents and gave the gazelle to the cook to roast. Then he sat down on his chair, with the falcon on his wrist: and presently the bird gasped and died: whereupon the King cried out in sorrow and lament for having slain the bird that had saved him from death, and repented him when repentance availed him not. This, then, is the story of King Sindbad; and as for thee, O Vizier, envy hath entered into thee, and thou wouldst have me kill the physician and after repent, even as King Sindbad repented." "O mighty King," answered the Vizier, "what harm has this physician done me that I should wish his death? Indeed I only do this thing in compassion for thee and that thou mayst know

the truth of the matter: else may I perish as perished the Vizier who plotted to destroy the king his master's son." "How was that? asked the King, and the Vizier replied, "Know, O King, that

The King's Son and the Ogress.

THERE was once a King's son who was passionately fond of the chase; and his father had charged one of his Viziers to attend him wherever he went. One day, the prince went out to hunt, accompanied by the Vizier, and as they were going along, they saw a great wild beast, whereupon the Vizier said to the prince, 'Up and after yonder beast!' So the prince rode after the beast and followed it, till he was lost to sight. After awhile, the beast disappeared in the desert, and the prince found himself alone, not knowing which way to turn. Presently he came upon a damsel, weeping, and said to her, 'Who art thou?' Quoth she, 'I am the daughter of one of the Kings of India, and I was journeying through this country, with a company of people, when sleep overcame me and I fell from my horse, not knowing what I did. My people did not note my fall and went on and left me; and now I am alone and bewildered.' When the prince heard this, he had pity on her case and took her up behind himself and they rode on, till they came to some ruins; when she said to him, 'O my lord, I wish to do an occasion here.' So he put her down, and she entered the ruins and tarried there till he became impatient and went in search of her; when he was ware that she was an ogress, and heard her say to her children, 'O my children, I have brought you to day a fat youth.' 'O mother,' answered they, 'bring him to us, that we may browse on him our bellyful.' When the prince heard this their talk, he trembled in every nerve and made sure of destruction and turned back. The ogress came out after him and finding him terrified and trembling, said to him, 'Why dost thou fear?' Quoth he, 'I have an enemy, of whom I am in fear.' 'Didst thou not say that thou wast a King's son?' asked she, and he answered 'Yes.' 'Then,'said she, 'why dost thou not give thine enemy money and so appease him?' He replied, 'Indeed he will not be satisfied with money nor with aught but life; and I fear him and am an oppressed man.' 'If thou be oppressed as thou sayst,' rejoined she, 'ask help of God; surely He will protect thee from thine enemy and from the mischief thou fearest from him.' So the prince raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'O Thou that answerest the prayer of the distressed, when they call on Thee, and dispellest evil from them, O my God, succour me against mine enemy and turn him back from me, for Thou indeed canst do whatsoever Thou wilt.' When the ogress heard his prayer, she departed from him and he resumed to the King his father and informed him of the Vizier's conduct: whereupon the King sent for the latter and put him to death. And thou, O King" (continued the envious Vizier), "if thou put thy trust in this physician, he will kill thee in the foulest fashion. He, verily, whom thou hast favoured and admitted to thy friendship, plots thy destruction: for know that he is a spy come from a far land with intent to destroy thee. Seest thou not that he cured thee of thy distemper from without, by means of a thing held in thy hand, and how canst thou be sure that he will not kill thee by some like means?" "Thou speakest sooth, O Vizier of good counsel!" said the King. "It must indeed be as thou sayst; this physician doubtless comes as a spy, seeking to destroy me; and indeed, if he could cure me by means of a handle held in my hand, he can kill me by means of something I shall smell. But what is to be done with him?" "Send after him at once," answered the Vizier, "and when he comes, strike off his head and play him false, ere he play thee false; and so shalt thou ward off his mischief and be at peace from him." "Thou art right, O Vizier," rejoined

the King and sent for the physician, who came, rejoicing, for he knew not what the Compassionate had decreed unto him. As the saying runs:

Thou that fearest ill fortune, be of good heart and hope!
Trust thine affairs to Him who fashioned the earth and sea!
What is decreed of God surely shall come to pass;
That which is not decreed never shall trouble thee.

When Douban entered, he recited the following verses:

If all the thanks I speak come short of that which is your due,
Say for whom else my verse and prose I make except for you?
You have indeed prevented me with many an unasked boon,
Blest me, unhindered of excuse, with favours not a few.
How then should I omit to give your praise its full desert
And celebrate with heart and voice your goodness ever new?
I will indeed proclaim aloud the boons I owe to you,
Favours, that, heavy to the back, are light the thought unto.

And also the following:

Avert thy face from trouble and from care
And trust in God to order thine affair.
Rejoice in happy fortune near at hand,
In which thou shalt forget the woes that were.
Full many a weary and a troublous thing
Is, in its issue, solaceful and fair.
God orders all according to His will:
Oppose Him not in what He doth prepare.

And these also:

Trust thine affairs to the Subtle, to God that knoweth all,
And rest at peace from the world, for nothing shall thee appal.
Know that the things of the world not, as thou wilt, befall,
But as the Great God orders, to whom all kings are thrall!

And lastly these:

Take heart and rejoice and forget thine every woe,
For even the wit of the wise is eaten away by care.
What shall thought-taking profit a helpless, powerless slave?
Leave it and be at peace in joy enduring fore'er!

When he had finished, the King said to him, "Dost thou know why I have sent for thee?" And the physician answered, "None knoweth the hidden things save God the Most High." Quoth the King, "I have sent for thee to kill thee and put an end to thy life." Douban wondered greatly at these words and said, "O King, wherefore wilt thou kill me and what offence have I committed?" "I am told," replied Younan, "that thou art a spy and comest to kill me, but I will kill thee first." Then he cried out to his swordbearer, saying, "Strike off the head of this traitor and rid us of his mischief!"

"Spare me," said Douban; "so may God spare thee; and kill me not, lest God kill thee!" And he repeated these words to him, even as I did to thee, O Afrit, and thou wouldst not spare me, but persistedst in thine intent to put me to death. Then the King said to Douban, "Verily I shall not be secure except I kill thee: for thou curedst me by means of a handle I held in my hand, and I have no assurance but thou wilt kill me by means of perfumes or otherwise." "O King," said Douban, "is this my reward from thee? Thou returnest evil for good?" The King replied, "It boots not: thou must die and that without delay." When the physician saw that the King was irrevocably resolved to kill him, he wept and lamented the good he had done to the undeserving, blaming himself for having sown in an ungrateful soil and repeating the following verses:

Maimouneh has no wit to guide her by,
Although her sire among the wise ranks high.
The man, who has no sense to rule his steps,
Slips, he the ground he treads on wet or dry.

Then the swordbearer came forward and bandaged his eyes and baring his sword, said to the King, "Have I thy leave to strike?" Whereupon the physician wept and said, "Spare me, so God may spare thee: and kill me not, lest God kill thee!" And he recited the following verses:

I acted in good faith and they betrayed: I came to nought:
They prospered, whilst my loyalty brought me to evil case.
If that I live, I will to none good counsel give again:
And if I die, good counsellors be curst of every race!

And he said to the King, "Is this my reward from thee? Thou givest me the crocodile's recompense." Quoth the King, "What is the story of the crocodile?" "I cannot tell it," answered Douban, "and I in this case; but, God on thee, spare me, so may He spare thee!" And he wept sore. Then one of the King's chief officers rose and said, "O King, grant me this man's life, for we see not that he has committed any offence against thee nor that he has done aught but cure thee of thy disorder, which baffled the doctors and sages." "Ye know not why I put him to death," answered the King: "it is because I believe him to be a spy, who hath been suborned to kill me and came hither with that intent: and verily he who cured me by means of a handle held in my hand can easily poison me in like manner. If I spare him, he will infallibly destroy me: so needs must I kill him, and then I shall feel myself safe." When the physician was convinced that there was no hope for him, but that the King would indeed put him to death, he said to the latter, "O King, if thou must indeed kill me, grant me a respite, that I may go to my house and discharge my last duties and dispose of my medical books and give my people and friends directions for my burial. Among my books is one that is a rarity of rarities, and I will make thee a present of it, that thou mayst lay it up in thy treasury." "And what is in this book?" asked the King. Quoth Douban, "It contains things without number: the least of its secret virtues is that if, when thou hast cut off my head, thou open the book, turn over six leaves and read three lines of the left-hand page, my head will speak and answer whatever questions thou shalt ask it." At this the King marvelled greatly and shook with delight and said, "O physician, will thy head indeed speak to me, after it is cut off?" And he answered,

"Yes, O King." Quoth the King, "This is indeed wonderful!" And sent him under guard to his house, where Douban spent the remainder of the day in setting his affairs in order. Next day, the amirs and viziers and chamberlains and all the great officers and notables of the kingdom came to the court, and the presence chamber was like a flower garden. Presently the physician entered, bearing an old book and a small pot full of powder; and sitting down, called for a dish. So they brought him a dish, and he poured the powder therein and levelled it. Then he said, "O King, take this book, but do not open it till my head has been cut off, placed on this dish and pressed down on the powder, when the blood will cease to flow: then open the book and do as I have enjoined thee." The King took the book and gave the signal to the headsman, who rose and struck off the physician's head and set it on the dish, pressing it down upon the powder, when the blood immediately ceased to flow, and the head unclosed its eyes and said, "Open the book, O King!" Younan opened the book and found the leaves stuck together; so he put his finger to his mouth and took of his spittle and loosened them therewith and turned over the pages in this manner, one after another, for the leaves would not come apart but with difficulty, till he came to the seventh page, but found nothing written thereon and said to the head, "O physician, there is nothing here." Quoth the head, "Open more leaves." So the King turned over more leaves in the same manner. Now the book was as poisoned, and before long the poison began to work upon the King, and he fell back in convulsions and cried out, "I am poisoned!" Whereupon the head repeated the following verses:

Lo, these once were kings who governed with a harsh and haughty sway!
In a little, their dominion was as if it ne'er had been.
Had they swayed the sceptre justly, they had been repaid the like,
But they were unjust, and Fortune guerdoned them with dole and teen.
Now they're passed away, the moral of their case bespeaks them thus,
"This is what your sins have earnt you: Fate is not to blame, I ween."

No sooner had it done speaking, than the King fell down dead and the head also ceased to live. And know, O Afrit (continued the fisherman), that if King Younan had spared the physician Douban, God would have spared him; but he refused and sought his death; so God killed him. And thou, O Afrit, if thou hadst spared me, I would spare thee; but nothing would serve thee but thou must put me to death; so now I will kill thee by shutting thee up in this vessel and throwing thee into the sea.' At this the Marid roared out and said, 'God on thee, O fisherman, do not do that! Spare me and bear me not malice for what I did, for men's wit is still better than that of Jinn. If I did evil, do thou good, in accordance with the adage, "O thou that dost good to him that does evil, the deed of the evil-doer suffices him." Do not thou deal with me as did Umameh with Aatikeh.' 'And what did Umameh with Aatikeh?' asked the fisherman. But the Afrit answered, 'This is no time to tell stories, and I in this duresse: let me out, and I will tell thee.' Quoth the fisherman, 'Leave this talk: I must and will throw thee into the sea, and thou shalt never win out again; for I besought thee and humbled myself to thee, but nothing would serve thee but thou must kill me, who had committed no offence against thee deserving this nor done thee any ill, but only kindness, in that I delivered thee from duresse. When thou didst thus by me, I knew thee for an incorrigible evil-doer; and know that, when I have thrown thee back into

the sea, I will tell every one what happened between me and thee and warn him, to the end that whoever fishes thee up may throw thee in again; and thou shalt remain in the sea till the end of time and suffer all manner of torments.' Quoth the Afrit, 'Let me out, for this is the season of generosity; and I will make a compact with thee never to do thee hurt and to help thee to what shall enrich thee.' The fisherman accepted his proposal and unsealed the vessel, after he had taken the Afrit's pledge and made him swear by the Most High Name never to hurt him, but on the contrary to do him service. Then the smoke ascended as before and gathered itself together and became an Afrit, who gave the vessel a kick and sent it into the sea. When the fisherman saw this, he let fly in his clothes and gave himself up for lost, saying, 'This bodes no good.' But he took courage and said to the Afrit, 'O Afrit, quoth God the Most High, "Be ye faithful to your covenants, for they shall be enquired of:" and verily thou madest a pact with me and sworest to me that thou wouldst do me no hurt. So play me not false, lest God do the like with thee: for indeed He is a jealous God, who delayeth to punish, yet letteth not the evil-doer escape. And I say to thee, as said the physician Douban to King Younan, "Spare me, so God may spare thee!"' The Afrit laughed and started off inland, saying to the fisherman, 'Follow me.' So he followed him, trembling and not believing that he should escape, and the Afrit led him to the backward of the town: then crossing a hill, descended into a spacious plain, in the midst of which was a lake of water surrounded by four little hills. He led the fisherman into the midst of the lake, where he stood still and bade him throw his net and fish. The fisherman looked into the water and was astonished to see therein fish of four colours, white and red and blue and yellow. Then he took out his net and cast and drawing it in, found in it four fish, one of each colour. At this he rejoiced, and the Afrit said to him, 'Carry them to the Sultan and present them to him, and he will give thee what shall enrich thee. And accept my excuse, for I know not any other way to fulfil my promise to thee, having lain in yonder sea eighteen hundred years and never seen the surface of the earth till this time. But do not fish here more than once a day; and I commend thee to God's care!' So saying, he struck the earth with his foot, and it opened and swallowed him up, whilst the fisherman returned, wondering at all that had befallen him, to his house, where he took a bowl of water and laid therein the fish, which began to frisk about. Then he set the bowl on his head and going up to the palace, as the Afrit had bidden him, presented the fish to the King, who wondered at them greatly, for that he had never seen their like, in shape or kind, and said to his Vizier, 'Give these fish to the cookmaid that the King of the Greeks sent us, and tell her to fry them.' Now this was a damsel that he had received as a present from the King of the Greeks three days before and of whom he had not yet made trial in cookery. So the Vizier carried the fish to the cookmaid and said to her, 'These fish have been brought as a present to the Sultan and he says to thee, "O my tear, I have reserved thee against my stress!" So do thou show us to-day thy skill and the excellence of thy cookery.' Then he returned to the Sultan, who bade him give the fisherman four hundred diners. So he gave them to him and he took the money in his lap and set off home, running and stumbling and falling and rising again and thinking that he was dreaming. And he bought what was needful for his family and returned to his wife, glad and happy. Meanwhile the cookmaid took the fish and cleaned them and set the frying-pan on the fire. Then she poured in oil of sesame and waited till it was hot, when she put in the fish. As soon as one side was

done, she fumed them, when lo, the wall of the kitchen opened and out came a handsome and well-shaped young lady, with smooth cheeks and liquid black eyes. She was clad in a tunic of satin, yarded with spangles of Egyptian gold, and on her head she had a silken kerchief, fringed with blue. She wore rings in her ears and bracelets on her wrists and rings on her fingers, with beazels of precious stones, and held in her hand a rod of Indian cane. She came up to the brazier and thrust the rod into the frying-pan saying 'O fish, are you constant to your covenant?' And when the cookmaid heard this she swooned away. Then the damsel repeated her question a second and a third time; and the fish lifted up their heads and cried out with one voice, 'Yes, yes:

Return, and we return: keep faith, and so will we: Or, if thou wilt, forsake, and we'll do like to thee!'

With this the damsel overturned the frying-pan and went out by the way she had come, and the wall closed up again as before. Presently the cookmaid came to herself and seeing the four fish burnt black as coal, said, 'My arms are broken in my first skirmish!' And fell down again in a swoon. Whilst she was in this state, in came the Vizier, to seek the fish, and found her insensible, not knowing Saturday from Thursday. So he stirred her with his foot and she came to herself and wept and told him what had passed. He marvelled and said, 'This is indeed a strange thing !' Then he sent for the fisherman and said to him, 'O fisherman, bring us four more fish of the same kind.' So the fisherman repaired to the lake and cast his net and hauling it in, found in it four fish like the first and carried them to the Vizier, who took them to the cookmaid and said to her, 'Come, fry them before me, that I may see what happens.' So she cleaned the fish and setting the frying-pan on the fire, threw them into it: and they had not lain long before the wall opened and the damsel appeared, after the same fashion, and thrust the rod into the pan, saying, 'O fish, O fish, are you constant to the old covenant?' And behold the fish all lifted up their heads and cried out as before, 'Yes, yes:

Return, and we return: keep faith, and so will we: Or, if thou wilt, forsake, and we'll do like to thee!'

Then she overturned the pan and went out as she had come and the wall closed up again. When the Vizier saw this, he said, 'This is a thing that must not be kept from the King. So he went to him and told him what he had witnessed; and the King said, 'I must see this with my own eyes.' Then he sent for the fisherman and commanded him to bring him other four fish like the first; and the fisherman went down at once to the lake and casting his net, caught other four fish and returned with them to the King, who ordered him other four hundred diners and set a guard upon him till he should see what happened. Then he turned to the Vizier and said to him, 'Come thou and fry the fish before me.' Quoth the Vizier, 'I hear and obey.' So he fetched the frying-pan and setting it on the fire, cleaned the fish and threw them in: but hardly had he turned them, when the wall opened, and out came a black slave, as he were a mountain or one of the survivors of the tribe of Aad, with a branch of a green tree in his hand: and he said, in a terrible voice, 'O fish, O fish, are you constant to the old covenant?' Whereupon they lifted up their heads and cried out' 'Yes, yes; we are constant:

Return, and we return: keep faith, and so will we: Or, if thou wilt, forsake, and we'll do like to thee!'

Then the slave went up to the pan and overturning it with the branch, went out as he had come, and the wall closed up as before. The King looked at the fish and found them black as coal; whereat he was bewildered and said to the Vizier, 'This is a thing about which it is impossible to keep silence; and indeed there must be some strange circumstance connected with these fish.' Then he sent for the fisherman and said to him, 'Hark ye, sirrah, whence hadst thou those fish?' 'From a lake between four hills,' answered he, 'on the thither side of the mountain behind the city.' 'How many days' journey hence?' asked the King; and the fisherman said, 'O my lord Sultan, half an hour's journey.' At this the King was astonished and ordering the troops to mount, set out at once, followed by his suite and preceded by the fisherman, who began to curse the Afrit. They rode on over the mountain and descended into a wide plain, that they had never before set eyes on, whereat they were all amazed. Then they fared on till they came to the lake lying between the four hills and saw the fish therein of four colours, red and white and yellow and blue. The King stood and wondered and said to his attendants, 'Has any one of you ever seen this lake before?' But they answered, 'Never did we set eyes on it in all our lives, O King of the age.' Then he questioned those stricken in years, and they made him the same answer. Quoth he, 'By Allah, I will not return to my capital nor sit down on my chair of estate till I know the secret of this pond and its fish!' Then he ordered his people to encamp at the foot of the hills and called his Vizier, who was a man of learning and experience, sagacious and skilful in business, and said to him, 'I mean to go forth alone to-night and enquire into the matter of the lake and these fish: wherefore do thou sit down at the door of my pavilion and tell the amirs and viziers and chamberlains and officers and all who ask after me that the Sultan is ailing and hath ordered thee to admit no one, and do thou acquaint none with my purpose.' The Vizier dared not oppose his design; so the King disguised himself and girt on his sword and going forth privily, took a path that led over one of the hills and fared on all that night and the next day, till the heat overcame him and he paused to rest. Then he set out again and fared on the rest of that day and all the next night, till on the morning of the second day, he caught sight of some black thing in the distance, whereat he rejoiced and said, 'Belike I shall find some one who can tell me the secret of the lake and the fish.' So he walked on, till he came to the black object, when he found it a palace built of black stone, plated with iron; and one leaf of its gate was open and the other shut. At this the King rejoiced and went up to the gate and knocked lightly, but heard no answer. So he knocked a second time and a third time, with the same result. Then he knocked loudly, but still no one answered; and he said to himself, 'It must be deserted.' So he took courage and entering the vestibule, cried out, 'Ho, people of the palace! I am a stranger and a wayfarer and hungry. Have ye any victual?' He repeated these words a second and a third time, but none answered. So he took heart and went on boldly into the interior of the palace, which he found hung and furnished with silken stuffs, embroidered with stars of gold, and curtains let down before the doors. In the midst was a spacious courtyard, with four estrades, one on each side, and a bench of stone. Midmost the courtyard was a great basin of water, from which sprang a fountain, and at the corners stood four lions of red gold, spouting forth water as it were pearls and jewels; and the place was full of

birds, which were hindered from flying away by a network of gold stretched overhead. The King looked right and left, but there was no one to be seen; whereat he marvelled and was vexed to find none of whom he might enquire concerning the lake and the fish and the palace itself. So he returned to the vestibule and sitting down between the doors, fell to musing upon what he had seen, when lo, he heard a moaning that came from a sorrowful heart, and a voice chanted the following verses:

I hid what I endured from thee: it came to light,
And sleep was changed to wake thenceforward to my sight.
O Fate, thou sparest not nor dost desist from me;
Lo, for my heart is racked with dolour and affright!
Have pity, lady mine, upon the great laid low,
Upon the rich made poor by love and its despite!
Once, jealous of the breeze that blew on thee, I was,
Alas! on whom Fate falls, his eyes are veiled with night.
What boots the archer's skill, if, when the foe draws near,
His bow-string snap and leave him helpless in the fight?
So when afflictions press upon the noble mind,
Where shall a man from Fate and Destiny take flight?

When the King heard this, he rose and followed the sound and found that it came from behind a curtain let down before the doorway of a sitting-chamber. So he raised the curtain and saw a young man seated upon a couch raised a cubit from the ground. He was a handsome well-shaped youth, with flower-white forehead and rosy cheeks and a black mole, like a grain of ambergris, on the table of his cheek, as says the poet:

The slender one! From his brow and the night of his jetty hair,
The world in alternate gloom and splendour of day doth fare.
Blame not the mole on his cheek. Is an anemone's cup
Perfect, except in its midst an eyelet of black it wear?

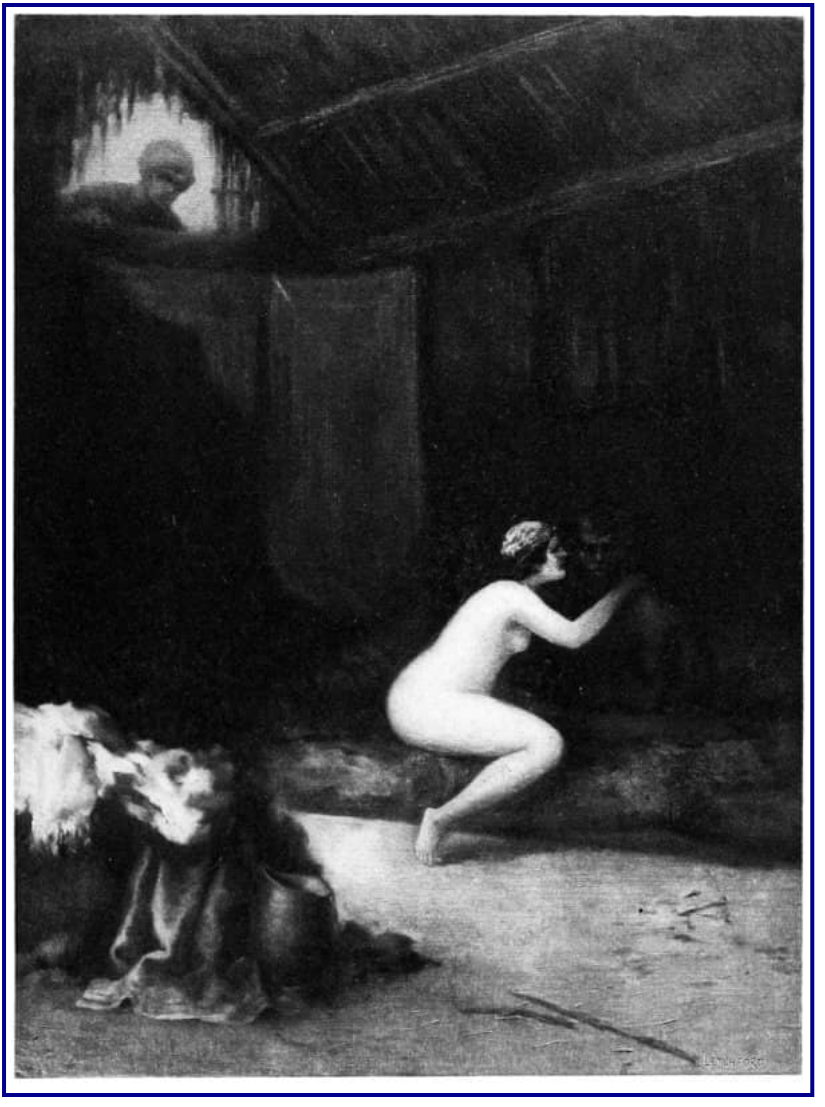
He was clad in a robe of silk, laced with Egyptian gold, and had on his head a crown set with jewels, but his face bore traces of affliction. The King rejoiced when he saw him and saluted him; and the youth returned his salute in the most courteous wise, though without rising, and said to him, 'O my lord, excuse me if I do not rise to thee, as is thy due; indeed, I am unable to do so.' 'I hold thee excused, O youth!' answered the King. 'I am thy guest and come to thee on a pressing errand, beseeching thee to expound to me the mystery of the lake and the fish and of this palace, and why thou sittest here alone and weeping.' When the young man heard this, the tears ran down his cheeks and he wept sore, till his breast was drenched, and repeated the following verses:

Say unto those that grieve, at whom doth Fate her arrows cast,
"How many an one hath she raised up but to lay low at last!
Lo, if ye sleep, the eye of God is never closed in sleep.
For whom indeed is life serene, for whom is Fortune fast?"

Then he gave a heavy sigh and repeated the following:

Trust thine affair to the Ruler of all that be
And put thought-taking and trouble away from thee:
Say not of aught that is past, "How came it so?"
All things depend upon the Divine decree.

The King marvelled and said to him, 'What makes thee weep, O youth?' 'How should I not weep,' answered he 'being in such a plight?' Then he put out his hand and lifted the skirt of his robe, and behold, he was stone from the waist downward. When the King saw this his condition, he grieved sore and lamented and cried out, 'Alas! alas!' and said, 'Verily, O youth, thou addest trouble to my trouble. I came to enquire concerning the fish; and now I am concerned to know thy history also. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Hasten therefore, O youth, and expound to me thy story.' Quoth the youth, 'Give me thine ears and understanding:' and the King replied, 'I am all attention.' Then said the youth, 'There hangs a strange story by these fish and by myself, a story which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, would serve as a warning to those who can profit by example. 'How so ?' asked the King and the youth replied, 'Know, O my lord, that



Story of the Enchanted Youth.

MY father was King of the city that stood in this place, and his name was Mohammed, Lord of the Black Islands, which are no other than the four hills of which thou wottest. He reigned seventy years, at the end of which time God took him to Himself, and I succeeded to his throne and took to wife the daughter of my father's brother, who loved me with an exceeding love, so that, whenever I was absent from her, she would neither eat nor drink till she saw me again. With her I lived for five years, till one day she went out to go to the bath, and I bade the cook hasten supper for us against her return. Then I entered the palace and lay down on the bed where we were wont to lie and ordered two slave-girls to sit, one at my head and the other at my feet, and fan me. Now I was disturbed at my wife's absence and could not sleep, but remained awake, although my eyes were closed. Presently I heard the damsel at my head say to the other one, "O Mesoudeh, how unhappy is our lord and how wretched is his youth, and oh, the pity of him with our accursed harlot of a mistress!" "Yes, indeed," replied Mesoudeh; "may God curse all unfaithful women and adulteresses! Indeed, it befits not that the like of our lord should waste his youth with this harlot, who lies abroad every night." Quoth the other, "Is our lord then a fool, that, when he wakes in the night and finds her not by his side, he makes no enquiry after her?" "Out on thee," rejoined Mesoudeh; "has our lord any knowledge of this or does she leave him any choice? Does she not drug him every night in the cup of drink she gives him before he sleeps, in which she puts henbane? So he sleeps like a dead man and knows nothing of what happens. Then she dresses and scents herself and goes forth and is absent till daybreak, when she returns and burns a perfume under his nose and he awakes." When I heard the girls' talk, the light in my eyes became darkness, and I thought the night would never come. Presently, my wife returned from the bath, and they served up supper and we ate and sat awhile drinking and talking as usual. Then she called for my sleeping-draught and gave me the cup: and I feigned to drink it, but made shift to pour it into my bosom and lay down at once and began to snore as if I slept. Then said she, "Sleep out thy night and never rise again! By Allah, I hate thee and I hate thy person; I am sick of thy company and I know not when God will take away thy life!" Then she rose and donned her richest clothes and perfumed herself and girt on my sword and opened the palace gate and went out. I rose and followed her, and she passed through the streets of the city, till she came to the gate, when she muttered words I understood not: and straight-way the locks fell off and the gate opened. She went forth and fared on among the rubbish heaps, I still following her without her knowledge, till she came to a reed fence, within which was a hut of brick. She entered the hut and I climbed up on the roof and looking down, saw my wife standing by a scurvy black slave, with blubber lips, one of which overlapped the other, like a coverlet, and swept up the sand from the gravel floor, lying upon a bed of sugar-cane refuse and wrapped in an old cloak and a few rags. She kissed the earth before him, and he raised his head to her and said, "Out on thee! why hast thou tarried till now? There have been some of my kinsmen the blacks here, drinking; and they have gone away, each with his wench; but I refused to drink on account of thine absence." "O my lord and my love and solace of my eyes," answered she, "dost thou not know that I am married to my

cousin, and that I hate to look upon him and abhor myself in his company. Did I not fear for thy sake, I would not let the sun rise again till his city was a heap of ruins wherein the owl and the raven should hoot and wolves and foxes harbour; and I would transport its stones behind the mountain Caf." "Thou liest, O accursed one!" said the black, "and I swear by the valour of the blacks (else may our manhood be as that of the whites!) that if thou tarry again till this hour, I will no longer keep thee company nor join my body to thine! O accursed one, wilt thou play fast and loose with us at thy pleasure, O stinkard, O bitch, O vilest of whites?" When I heard and saw what passed between them, the world grew dark in my eyes and I knew not where I was; whilst my wife stood weeping and humbling herself to him and saying, "O my love and fruit of my heart, if thou be angry with me, who is left me, and if thou reject me, who shall shelter me, O my beloved and light of mine eyes?" And she ceased not to weep and implore him till he forgave her. Then she was glad and rose and putting off her clothes, said to the slave, "O my lord, hast thou aught here for thy handmaid to eat?" "Take the cover off yonder basin," answered he; "thou wilt find under it cooked rats' bones, and there is a little millet beer left in this pot. Eat and drink." So she ate and drank and washed her hands and mouth; then lay down, naked, upon the rushes, beside the slave, and covered herself with the rags. When I saw this, I became as one distraught and coming down from the roof, went in by the door. Then I took the sword she had brought and drew it, thinking to kill them both. I struck first at the slave's neck and thought I had made an end of him; but the blow only severed the flesh and the gullet, without dividing the jugulars. He gave a loud gurgling groan and roused my wife, whereupon I drew back, after I had restored the sword to its place, and resuming to the palace, lay down on my bed till morning, when my wife came and awoke me, and I saw that she had cut off her hair and put on mourning garments. "O my cousin," said she, "do not blame me for this I have done; for I have news that my mother is dead, that my father has fallen in battle and that both my brothers are dead also, one of a snake-bite and the other of a fall from a precipice, so that I have good reason to weep and lament." When I heard this, I did not reproach her, but said to her, "Do what thou wilt: I will not baulk thee." She ceased not to mourn and lament for a whole year, at the end of which time she said to me, "I wish to build me in thy palace a tomb with a cupola and set it apart for mourning and call it House of Lamentations." Quoth I, "Do what seemeth good to thee." So she built herself a house of mourning, roofed with a dome, and a monument in the midst like the tomb of a saint. Thither she transported the slave and lodged him in the tomb. He was exceeding weak and from the day I wounded him he had remained unable to do her any service or to speak or do aught but drink; but he was still alive, because his hour was not yet come. She used to visit him morning and evening in the mausoleum and carry him wine and broths to drink and weep and make moan over him; and thus she did for another year, whilst I ceased not to have patience with her and pay no heed to her doings, till one day I came upon her unawares and found her weeping and saying, "Why art thou absent from my sight, O delight of my heart? Speak to me, O my life! speak to me, O my love!" And she recited the following verses:

My patience fails me for desire: if thou forgettest me,
My heart and all my soul can love none other after thee.
Carry me with thee, body and soul, wherever thou dost fare,

And where thou lightest down to rest, there let me buried be.
Speak but my name above my tomb; the groaning of my bones,
Turning towards thy voice's sound, shall answer drearily.

And she wept and recited the following:

My day of bliss is that whereon thou drawest near to me;
And that whereon thou turn'st away, my day of death and fear.
What though I tremble all the night and be in dread of death,
Yet thine embraces are to me than safety far more dear.

And again the following:

Though unto me were given all that can make life sweet,
Though the Chosroes empire, yea, and the world were mine,
All were to me in value less than a midge's wing,
If that mine eyes must never look on that face of thine!

When she had finished, I said to her, "O my cousin, let thy mourning suffice thee: for weeping profiteth nothing." She replied, "Thwart me not, or I will kill myself." So I held my peace and let her go her way: and she ceased not to mourn and weep for the space of another year. At the end of the third year, I came into the mausoleum one day, vexed at something that had crossed me and weary of this excessive affliction, and found her by the tomb under the dome, saying, "O my lord, I never hear thee speak to me, no, not one word. Why dost thou not answer me, O my lord?" And she recited the following verses:

O tomb, O tomb, have his beauties ceased, or does thy light indeed,
The sheen of the radiant countenance, no more in thee abound?
O tomb, O tomb, thou art neither earth nor heaven unto me:
How comes it then that sun and moon at once in thee are found?

When I heard this, it added wrath to my wrath, and I said, "Alas! how much more of this mourning?" and I repeated the following [parody of her] verses:

O tomb, O tomb, has his blackness ceased, or does thy light indeed,
The sheen of the filthy countenance, no more in thee abound?
O tomb, thou art neither kitchen-stove nor sewer-pool for me!
How comes it then that mire and coal at once in thee are found?

When she heard this, she sprang to her feet and said, "Out on thee, thou dog! it was thou that didst thus with me and woundedst the beloved of my heart and hast afflicted me and wasted his youth, so that these three years he hath lain, neither dead nor alive!" "O foulest of harlots and filthiest of whorish doxies of hired slaves," answered I, "it was indeed I who did this!" And I drew my sword and made at her to kill her; but she laughed and said, "Avaunt, thou dog! Thinkst thou that what is past can recur or the dead come back to life? Verily, God has given into my hand him who did this to me and against whom there was in my heart fire that might not be quenched and insatiable rage." Then she stood up and pronouncing some words I did not understand, said to me, "Let one half of thee by my enchantments become stone and the other half remain man." And immediately I became as thou seest me and have

remained ever since neither sitting nor standing and neither dead nor alive. Then she enchanted the city with all its streets and gardens and turned it into the lake thou wottest of, and the inhabitants, who were of four religions, Muslims, Christians, Magians and Jews, she changed to fish of various colours, the Muslims white, the Christians blue, the Magians red and the Jews yellow; and the four islands she turned into four mountains encompassing the lake. Moreover, the condition to which she has reduced me does not suffice her: but every day she strips me and gives me a hundred lashes with a whip, so that the blood runs down me and my shoulders are torn. Then she clothes my upper half in a shirt of hair-cloth and over that she throws these rich robes.' And he wept and repeated the following verses:

Lord, I submit myself to Thee and eke to Fate,
Content, if so Thou please, to suffer and to wait.
My enemies oppress and torture me full sore:
But Paradise at last, belike, shall compensate.
Though Fate press hard on me, I trust in the Elect,
The Accepted One of God, to be my advocate.

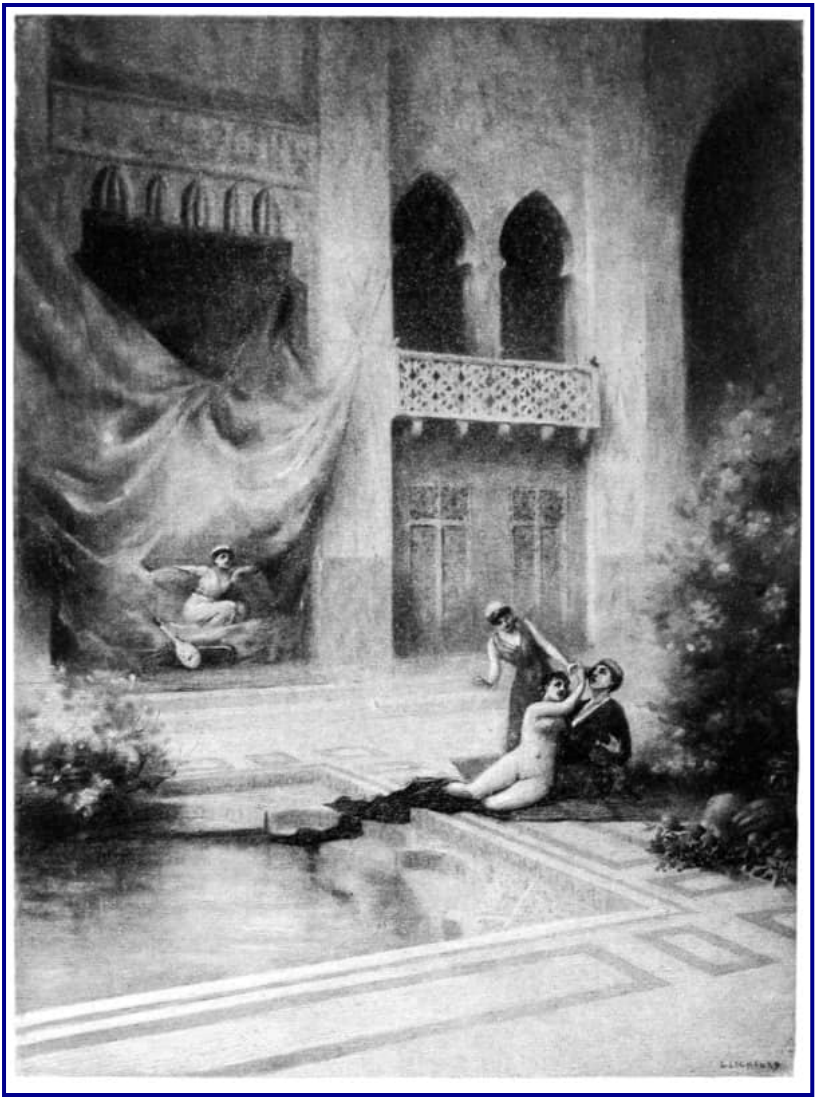
With this the King turned to him and said, 'O youth, after having rid me of one trouble, thou addest another to me: but tell me, where is thy wife and where is the wounded slave?' 'The slave lies in the tomb under the dome,' answered the youth, 'and she is in the chamber over against the gate. Every day at sunrise, she comes out and repairs first to me and strips off my clothes and gives me a hundred strokes with the whip; and I weep and cry out, but cannot stir to keep her off. When she has done torturing me, she goes down to the slave with the wine and broth on which she feeds him; and to-morrow at sunrise she will come.' 'O youth,' rejoined the King, 'by Allah, I will assuredly do thee a service by which I shall be remembered and which men shall chronicle to the end of time!' Then he sat down by the youth and talked with him till nightfall, when they went to sleep. At peep of day, the King rose and put off his clothes and drawing his sword, repaired to the mausoleum, where, after noting the paintings of the place and the candles and Lamps and perfumes burning there, he sought for the slave till he came upon him and slew him with one blow of the sword; after which he took the body on his back and threw it into a well that was in the palace. Then he returned to the dome and wrapping himself in the black's clothes, lay down in his place, with his drawn sword by his side. After awhile, the accursed enchantress came out and, going first to her husband, stripped him and beat him with the whip, whilst he cried out, 'Alas! the state I am in suffices me. Have mercy on me, O my cousin!' But she replied, 'Didst thou show me any mercy or spare my beloved?' And beat him till she was tired and the blood ran from his sides. Then she put the hair shirt on him and the royal robes over it, and went down to the dome with a goblet of wine and a bowl of broth in her hands. When she came to the tomb, she fell a-weeping and wailing and said, 'O my lord, speak to me!' And repeated the following verse:

How long ere this rigour pass sway and thou relent? Is it not yet enough of the tears that I have spent?'

And she wept and said again, 'O my lord, speak to me!' The King lowered his voice and knotting his tongue, spoke after the fashion of the blacks and said, 'Alack!

alack! there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High the Supreme!' When she heard this, she screamed out for joy and swooned away; and when she revived, she said, 'O my lord, can it be true and didst thou indeed speak to me?' The King made his voice small and said, 'O accursed woman, thou deservest not that I should speak to thee!' 'Why so?' asked she; and he replied, 'Because all day thou tormentest thy husband and his cries disturb me, and all night long he calls upon God for help and invokes curses on thee and me and keeps me awake from nightfall to daybreak and disquiets me; and but for this, I had been well long ago. This is what has hindered me from answering thee.' Quoth she, 'With thy leave, I will release him from his present condition.' 'Do so,' said the King, 'and rid us of his noise.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she, and going out into the palace, took a cup full of water and spoke over it certain words, whereupon the water began to boil and bubble as the cauldron bubbles over the fire. Then she went up to the young King and sprinkled him with it, saying, 'By the virtue of the words I have spoken, if thou art thus by my spells, quit this shape for thy former one.' And immediately he shook and rose to his feet, rejoicing in his deliverance, and said, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His apostle, may God bless and preserve him!' Then she said to him, 'Depart hence and do not return, or I will kill thee.' And she screamed out in his face. So he went out from before her, and she returned to the dome and going down into the tomb, said, 'O my lord, come forth to me, that I may see thy goodly form!' The King replied in a weak voice, 'What hast thou done? Thou hast rid me of the branch, but not of the root.' 'O my beloved, O my little black,' said she, 'what is the root?' 'Out on thee, O accursed one!' answered he. 'Every night, at the middle hour, the people of the city, whom thou by thine enchantments didst change into fish, lift up their heads from the water and cry to God for help and curse thee and me; and this is what hinders my recovery: so do thou go quickly and set them free, and after return and take me by the hand and raise me up; for indeed health returns to me.' When she heard this speech of the King, whom she supposed to be the slave, she rejoiced and said, 'O my lord, on my head and eyes be it, in the name of God!' Then she went out, full of joy, and ran to the lake and taking a little of the water in her hand, spoke over it words that might not be understood, whereupon there was a great stir among the fish; and they raised their heads to the surface and stood upright and became men as before. Thus was the spell dissolved from the people of the city and the lake became again a populous city, with its streets and bazaars, in which the merchants bought and sold, and every one returned to his employment; whilst the four hills were restored to their original form of islands. Then the enchantress returned to the King and said to him, 'O my lord, give me thy noble hand and arise.' 'Come nearer to me,' answered he, in a faint voice. So she came close to him, and he took his sword and smote her in the breast, that the steel came forth, gleaming, from her back. He smote her again and cut her in twain, and she fell to the ground in two halves. Then he went out and found the young King standing awaiting him and gave him joy of his deliverance, whereupon the youth rejoiced and thanked him and kissed his hand. Quoth the Sultan, 'Wilt thou abide in this thy city or come with me to mine?' 'O King of the age,' rejoined he, 'dost thou know how far it is from here to thy capital?' And the Sultan replied, 'Two and a half days' journey.' 'O King,' said the other, 'if thou sleepest, awake! Between thee and thy capital is a full year's journey to a diligent traveller; and thou hadst not come hither in

two days and a half, save that the city was enchanted. But, O King, I will never leave thee, no, not for the twinkling of an eye!' The Sultan rejoiced at his words and said, 'Praised be God, who hath bestowed thee upon me! Thou shalt be my son, for in all my life I have never been blessed with a son.' And they embraced each other and rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Then they returned to the palace, and the young King bade his officers make ready for a journey and prepare his baggage and all that he required. The preparations occupied ten days, at the end of which time the young King set out in company of the Sultan, whose heart burned within him at the thought of his long absence from his capital, attended by fifty white slaves and provided with magnificent presents. They journeyed day and night for a whole year, and God ordained them safety, till they drew near the Sultan's capital and sent messengers in advance to acquaint the Vizier with his safe arrival. Then came out the Vizier and the troops, who had given up all hope of the Sultan's return, and kissed the ground before him and gave him joy of his safety. So he entered his palace and sat down on his throne and the Vizier came in to him, to whom he related all that had befallen him with the young King: and the Vizier gave the latter joy of his deliverance. Then all things being set in order, the Sultan gave largesse to many of his people and sending for the fisherman who had brought him the enchanted fish and had thus been the first cause of the delivery of the people of the Black Islands, bestowed on him a dress of honour and enquired of his condition and whether he had any children, to which he replied that he had three children, two daughters and one son. So the King sent for them and taking one daughter to wife, married the other to the young King and made the son his treasurer. Moreover, he invested his Vizier with the sovereignty of the Black Islands and despatched him thither with the fifty officers, who had accompanied the young King thence, giving him robes of honour for all the amirs. So the Vizier kissed hands and set out for the Black Islands. The fisherman became the richest man of his time, and he and his daughters and the two Kings their husbands abode in peace till death came to them.



The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad.

THERE was once a porter of Baghdad who was a bachelor. One day, as he stood in the market, leant upon his basket, there came to him a lady, swathed in a wrapper of gold embroidered muslin, fringed with gold lace, and wearing embroidered boots and floating tresses plaited with silk and gold. She stopped before him and raising her kerchief, showed a pair of languishing black eyes of perfect beauty, bordered with long drooping lashes. Then she turned to the porter and said, in a clear sweet voice, 'Take thy basket and follow me.' No sooner had she spoken than he took up his basket in haste, saying, 'O day of good luck! O day of God's grace!' and followed her till she stopped and knocked at the door of a house, when there came out a Nazarene, to whom she gave a dinar, and he gave her in return an olive-green bottle, full of wine, which she put into the basket, saying to the porter, 'Hoist up and follow me.' Said he, 'By Allah, this is indeed a happy and fortunate day!' And shouldering the basket, followed her till she came to a fruiterer's, where she bought Syrian apples and Turkish quinces and Arabian peaches and autumn cucumbers and Sultani oranges and citrons, beside jessamine of Aleppo and Damascus water-lilies and myrtle and basil and henna-blossoms and blood-red anemones and violets and sweet-briar and narcissus and camomile and pomegranate flowers, all of which she put into the porter's basket, saying, 'Hoist up!' So he shouldered the basket and followed her, till she stopped at a butcher's shop and said to him, 'Cut me off ten pounds of meat.' He gave her the meat, wrapped in a banana leaf, and she put it in the basket, saying, 'Hoist up, O porter!' and went on to a grocer's, of whom she took pistachio kernels and shelled almonds and hazel-nuts and walnuts and sugar cane and parched peas and Mecca raisins and all else that pertains to dessert. Thence to a pastry-cook's, where she bought a covered dish and put therein open-work tarts and honey-fritters and tri-coloured jelly and march-pane, flavoured with lemon and melon, and Zeyneb's combs and ladies' fingers and Cadi's mouthfuls and widow's bread and meat-and-drink and some of every kind of sweetmeat in the shop and laid the dish in the basket of the porter, who said to her, 'Thou shouldst have told me, that I might have brought a mule or a camel to carry all these good things.' She smiled and gave him a tap on the nape, saying, 'Make haste and leave chattering and God willing, thou shalt have a good wage.' She stopped next at the shop of a druggist, where she bought rose-water and water-lily water and orange-flower water and willow-flower water and six other kinds of sweet waters and a casting bottle of rose-water mingled with musk, besides two loaves of sugar and frankincense and aloes-wood and ambergris and musk and saffron and candles of Alexandrian wax, all of which she put into the basket. Then she went on to a greengrocer's, of whom she bought pickled safflower and olives, in brine and fresh, and tarragon and juncates and Syrian cheese and put them all into the basket and said to the porter, 'Take up thy basket and follow me.' So he shouldered his load and followed her till she came to a tall handsome house, with a spacious court before it and a two-leaved door of ebony, inlaid with plates of glittering gold. The lady went up to the door and throwing back her kerchief, knocked softly, whilst the porter stood behind her, musing upon her beauty and grace. After awhile the door opened and both the leaves swung back; whereupon he looked to see who opened it, and behold, it was a damsel of dazzling beauty and symmetry, high-

bosomed, with flower-white forehead and rosy cheeks, eyes like those of gazelles or wild oxen and eyebrows like the crescent of the new moon of Ramazan, cheeks like blood-red anemones, mouth like Solomon's seal, lips red as coral and teeth like clustered pearls or camomile-petals, neck like an antelope's and bosom like a fountain, breasts like double pomegranates, belly like brocade and navel holding an ounce of benzoin ointment, even as says of her the poet:

Look at her, with her slender shape and radiant beauty! this
Is she who is at once the sun and moon of palaces!
Thine eyes shall ne'er see grace combine so featly black and white
As in her visage and the locks that o'er her forehead kiss.
She in whose cheeks the red flag waves, her beauty testifies Unto
her name, if that to paint her sweet seductions miss.
With swimming gait she walks: I laugh for wonder at her hips, But
weep to see her waist, that all too slight to bear them is.

When the porter saw her, his mind and heart were taken by storm, so that he well-nigh let fall the basket and exclaimed, 'Never in all my life saw I a more blessed day than this!' Then said the portress to the cateress, 'O my Sister, why tarriest thou? Come in from the gate and ease this poor man of his burden.' So the cateress entered, followed by the portress and the porter, and went on before them to a spacious saloon, elegantly built and handsomely decorated with all manner of colours and carvings and geometrical figures, with balconies and galleries and cupboards and benches and closets with curtains drawn before them. In the midst was a great basin of water, from which rose a fountain, and at the upper end stood a couch of juniper wood, inlaid with precious stones and surmounted by a canopy of red satin, looped up with pearls as big as hazel-nuts or bigger. Thereon sat a lady of radiant countenance and gentle and demure aspect, moonlike in face, with eyes of Babylonian witchcraft and arched eyebrows, sugared lips like cornelian and a shape like the letter I. The radiance of her countenance would have shamed the rising sun, and she resembled one of the chief stars of heaven or a pavilion of gold or a high-born Arabian bride on the night of her unveiling, even as says of her the poet:

Her teeth, when she smiles, like pearls in a cluster show,
Or shredded camomile-petals or flakes of snow:
Her ringlets seem, as it were, the fallen night,
And her beauty shames the dawn and its ruddy glow.

Then she rose and coming with a stately gait to meet her sisters in the middle of the saloon, said to them, 'Why stand ye still? Relieve this poor porter of his burden.' So the cateress came and stood before and the portress behind him and with the help of the third damsel, lifted the basket from his head and emptying it, laid everything in its place. Then they gave him two dinars, saying, 'Go, O porter!' But he stood, looking at the ladies and admiring, their beauty and pleasant manners, never had he seen goodlier, and wondering greatly at the profusion of wine and meat and fruits and flowers and so forth that they had provided and to see no man with them, and made no movement to go. So the eldest lady said to him, 'What ails thee that thou dost not go away? Belike, thou grudgest at thy pay?' And she turned to the cateress and said to

her, 'Give him another dinar.' 'No, by Allah, O lady!' answered the porter. 'I do not indeed grudge at my pay, for my right hire is scarce two dirhems; but of a truth my heart and soul are taken up with you and how it is that ye are alone and have no man with you and no one to divert you, although ye know that women's sport is little worth without men, nor is an entertainment complete without four at the table, and ye have no fourth. What says the poet?

Dost thou not see that for pleasure four several things combine,
Instruments four, harp, hautboy and gittern and psaltery?
And unto these, four perfumes answer and correspond,
Violets, roses and myrtle and blood-red anemone.
Nor is our pleasure perfect, unless four things have we,
Money and wine and gardens and mistress fair and free.

And ye are three and need a fourth, who should be a man, witty, sensible and discreet, one who can keep counsel.' When they heard what he said, it amused them and they laughed at him and replied, 'What have we to do with that, we who are girls and fear to entrust our secrets to those who will not keep them? For we have read, in such and such a history, what says Ibn eth Thumam:

Tell not thy secrets: keep them with all thy might.
A secret revealed is a secret lost outright.
If thine own bosom cannot thy secrets hold,
Why expect more reserve from another wight?

Or, as well says Abou Nuwas on the same subject:

The fool, that to men doth his secrets avow, Deserves to be marked with a brand on the brow.'

'By your lives,' rejoined the porter, 'I am a man of sense and discretion, well read in books and chronicles. I make known what is fair and conceal what is foul, and as says the poet:

None keeps a secret but the man who's trusty and discreet.
A secret's ever safely placed with honest folk and leal;
And secrets trusted unto me are in a locked-up house
Whose keys are lost and on whose door is set the Cadi's seal.

When the girls heard this, the eldest one said to him, 'Thou knowest that we have laid out much money in preparing this entertainment: hast thou aught to offer us in return? For we will not let thee sit with us and be our boon companion and gaze on our bright fair faces, except thou pay down thy share of the cost. Dost thou not know the saying:

Love without money
Is not worth a penny?'

'If thou have aught, my friend,' added the portress, 'then art thou something: but if thou have nothing, be off without anything.' Here the cateress interposed, saying, 'O sisters, let him be: for by Allah, he has not failed us to-day: another had not been so

patient with us. I will pay his share for him.' Whereupon the porter, overjoyed, kissed the earth and thanked her, saying, 'By Allah, it was thou didst handsel me this day! Here are the two dinars I had of you: take them and admit me to your company, not as a guest, but as a servant.' 'Sit down,' answered they; 'thou art welcome.' But the eldest lady said, 'By Allah, we will not admit thee to our society but on one condition; and it is that thou enquire not of what does not concern thee; and if thou meddle, thou shalt be beaten.' Said the porter, 'I agree to this, O my lady, on my head and eyes! Henceforth I am dumb.' Then arose the cateress and girding her middle, laid the table by the fountain and set out the cups and flagons, with flowers and sweet herbs and all the requisites for drinking. Moreover, she strained the wine and set it on; and they sat down, she and her sisters, with the porter, who fancied himself in a dream. The cateress took the flagon of wine and filled a cup and drank it off. Then she filled again and gave it to one of her sisters, who drank and filled another cup and gave it to her other sister: then she filled a fourth time and gave it to the porter, saying:

Drink and fare well and health attend thee still.
This drink indeed's a cure for every ill.

He took the cup in his hand and bowed and returned thanks, reciting the following verses:

Quaff not the cup except with one who is of trusty stuff,
One who is true of thought and deed and eke of good descent.
Wine's like the wind, that, if it breathe on perfume, smells as sweet,
But, if o'er carrion it pass, imbibes its evil scent.

And again:

Drink not of wine except at the hands of a maiden fair,
Who, like unto thee and it, is joyous and debonair.

Then he kissed their hands and drank and was merry with wine and swayed from side to side and recited the following verses:

Hither, by Allah, I conjure thee!
Goblets that full of the grape juice be!
And brim up, I prithee, a cup for me,
For this is the water of life, perdie!

Then the cateress filled the cup and gave it to the portress, who took it from her hand and thanked her and drank. Then she filled again and gave it to the eldest, who filled another cup and handed it to the porter. He gave thanks and drank and recited the following verses:

It is forbidden us to drink of any blood
Except it be of that which gushes from the vine.
So pour it out to me, an offering to thine eyes,
To ransom from thy hands my soul and all that's mine.

Then he turned to the eldest lady, who was the mistress of the house, and said to her, 'O my lady, I am thy slave and thy servant and thy bondman!' And repeated the

following verses:

There is a slave of all thy caves now standing at thy gate
Who ceases not thy bounties all to sing and celebrate.
May he come in, O lady fair, to gaze upon thy charms?
Desire and I from thee indeed may never separate.

And she said to him, 'Drink, and health and prosperity attend thee!' So he took the cup and kissed her hand and sang the following verses:

I brought my love old wine and pure, the likeness of her cheeks,
Whose glowing brightness called to mind a brazier's heart of red.
She touched the wine-cup with her lips, and laughing roguishly,
"How canst thou proffer me to drink of my own cheeks?" she said.
"Drink!" answered I, "it is my tears; its hue is of my blood;
And it was heated at a fire that by my sighs was fed."

And she answered him with the following verse:

If, O my friend, thou hast indeed wept tears of blood for me, I prithee, give them me to drink, upon thine eyes and head!

Then she took the cup and drank it off to her sisters' health; and they continued to drink and make merry, dancing and laughing and singing and reciting verses and ballads. The porter fell to toying and kissing and biting and handling and groping and dallying and taking liberties with them: whilst one put a morsel into his mouth and another thumped him, and this one gave him a cuff and that pelted him with flowers; and he led the most delightful life with them, as if he sat in paradise among the houris. They ceased not to drink and carouse thus, till the wine sported in their heads and got the better of their senses, when the portress, arose, and putting off her clothes, let down her hair over her naked body, for a veil. Then she threw herself into the basin and sported in the water and swam about and dived like a duck and took water in her mouth and spurted it at the porter and washed her limbs and the inside of her thighs. Then she came up out of the water and throwing herself into the porter's lap, pointed to her commodity and said to him, 'O my lord O my friend, what is the name of this?' 'Thy kaze,' answered he; but she said, 'Fie! art thou not ashamed!' And cuffed him on the nape of the neck. Quoth he, 'Thy catso.' And she dealt him a second cuff, saying, 'Fie! what an ugly word! Art thou not ashamed?' 'Thy commodity,' said he; and she, 'Fie! is there no shame in thee?' And thumped him and beat him. Then said he, 'Thy coney.' Whereupon the eldest fell on him and beat him, saying, 'Thou shalt not say that.' And whatever he said, they beat him more and more, till his neck ached again; and they made a laughing-stock of him amongst them, till he said at last, 'Well, what is its name amongst you women?' 'The sweet basil of the dykes,' answered they. 'Praised be God for safety!' cried he. 'Good, O sweet basil of the dikes!' Then they passed round the cup and presently the cateress rose and throwing herself into the porter's lap, pointed to her kaze and said to him, 'O light of mine eyes, what is the name of this?' 'Thy commodity,' answered he. 'Art thou not ashamed?' said she, and dealt him a buffet that made the place ring again, repeating, 'Fie! Fie! art thou not ashamed?' Quoth he, 'The sweet basil of the dykes.' 'No! No!' answered she, and beat him and

cuffed him on the nape. Then said he, 'Thy kaze, thy tout, thy catso, thy coney.' But they replied, 'No! No!' And he said again, 'The sweet basil of the dykes.' Whereupon they laughed till they fell backward and cuffed him on the neck, saying, 'No; that is not its name.' At last he said, 'O my sisters, what is its name?' And they answered, 'What sayest thou to the peeled barleycorn?' Then the cateress put on her clothes and they sat down again to carouse, whilst the porter lamented over his neck and shoulders. The cup passed round among them awhile, and presently the eldest and handsomest of the ladies rose and put off her clothes; whereupon the porter took his neck in his hand and said, 'My neck and shoulders are in the way of God!' Then she threw herself into the basin and plunged and sported and washed; whilst the porter looked at her, naked, as she were a piece of the moon or the full moon when she waxes or the dawn at its brightest, and noted her shape and breasts and her heavy quivering buttocks, for she was naked as God created her. And he said, 'Alack!' Alack!' and repeated the following verses:

If to the newly-budded branch thy figure I compare,
I lay upon my heart a load of wrong too great to bear;
For that the branch most lovely is, when clad upon with green,
But thou, when free of every veil, art then by far most fair.

When she heard this, she came up out of the water and sitting down on his knees, pointed to her kaze and said, 'O my little lord, what is the name of this?' 'The sweet basil of the dykes,' answered he; but she said, 'No! No!' Quoth he, 'The peeled barleycorn.' And she said, 'Pshaw!' Then said he, 'Thy kaze.' Fie! Fie!' cried she. 'Art thou not ashamed?' And cuffed him on the nape of the neck. And whatever name he said, they beat him, saying, 'No! No!' till at last he said, 'O my sisters, what is its name?' 'The khan of Abou Mensour,' answered they. And he said, 'Praised be God for safety! Bravo! Bravo! O khan of Abou Mensour!' Then the damsel rose and put on her clothes and they returned to their carousing and the cup passed round awhile. Presently, the porter rose and putting off his clothes, plunged into the pool and swam about and washed under his chin and armpits, even as they had done. Then he came out and threw himself into the eldest lady's lap and putting his arms into the portress's lap and his feet into that of the cateress pointed to his codpiece and said, 'O my mistresses, what is the name of this?' They laughed till they fell backward and one of them answered, 'Thy yard.' 'Art thou not ashamed?' said he. 'A forfeit!' and took of each a kiss. Quoth another, 'Thy pintle.' But he replied, 'No,' and gave each of them a bite in play. Then said they, 'Thy pizzle.' 'No,' answered he, and gave each of them a hug; and they kept saying, 'Thy yard, thy pintle, thy pizzle, thy codpiece!' whilst he kissed and hugged and fondled them to his heart's content, and they laughed till they were well nigh dead. At last they said, 'O our brother, and what is its name?' 'Don't you know?' asked he; and they said, 'No.' Quoth he, 'This is the mule Break-all, that browses on the basil of the dykes and gobbles up the peeled barleycorn and lies by night in the khan of Abou Mensour.' And they laughed till they fell backward. Then they fell again to drinking and continued after this fashion till the night came upon them, when they said to the porter, 'In the name of God, put on thy sandals and be off and let us see the breadth of thy shoulders!' Quoth he, 'By Allah, the leaving life were easier to me than the leaving you! Let us join the night to the day, and to-morrow we

will each go our own way.' 'My life on you!' said the cateress, 'let him pass the night with us, that we may laugh at him, for he is a pleasant rogue; and we may never again chance upon the like of him.' So the mistress of the house said to the porter, 'Thou shalt pass the night with us on condition that thou submit to our authority and that, whatever thou seest, thou ask no questions about it nor enquire the reason of it.' 'It is well,' answered he; and they said, 'Go and read what is written over the door.' So he went to the door and found the following words written thereon in letters of gold, 'He who speaks of what concerns him not, shall hear what will not please him.' And he said, 'Be ye witness against me that I will not speak of what concerns me not.' Then rose the cateress and prepared food, and they ate: after which they lighted the lamps and candles and strewed on the latter ambergris and aloes-wood; then changed the service and set on fresh fruits and flowers and wine and so forth and sat down again to drink. They ceased not to eat and drink and make merry, hobnobbing and laughing and talking and frolicking, till there came a knocking at the door: whereupon one of them rose and went to the door, without disturbing the party, and presently returned, saying, 'Verily, our pleasure is to be complete to-night.' 'How so?' asked the others, and she replied, 'There are three foreign Calenders at the door, with shaven heads and chins and eyebrows and every one blind of the right eye, which is a most extraordinary coincidence. Apparently they are fresh from a journey and indeed the traces of travel are evident on them; and the reason of their knocking at the door is this. They are strangers to Baghdad and this is their first coming to our city: the night surprised them and they could not find a lodging in the city and know no one with whom to take shelter: so they said to each other, "Perhaps the owner of this house will give us the key of a stable or outhouse and let us sleep there." And, O my sisters, each of them is a laughing-stock after his own fashion; and if we let them in, they will make us sport this night, and on the morrow each shall go his own way.' And she ceased not to persuade them, till they said, 'Let them come in, on condition that they ask no questions of what does not concern them, on pain of hearing what will not please them.' So she rejoiced and going to the door, returned with the three Calenders, who saluted and bowed low and held back; but the ladies rose to them and welcomed them and gave them joy of their safety and made them sit down. The Calenders looked about them and seeing a pleasant place and a table elegantly spread with flowers and fruits and green herbs and dessert and wine, with candles burning and perfumes smoking, and the three maidens, with their faces unveiled, said with one voice "Fore Allah, it is good!' Then they turned to the porter and saw that he was tipsy and jaded with drinking and dalliance. So they took him for one of themselves and said, 'He is a Calender like ourselves, either an Arab or a foreigner.' When the porter heard this, he rose and fixing his eyes on them, said, 'Sit still and do not meddle. Have you not read what is written on the door? It befits not folk, like yourselves, who come to us as mendicants, to loose your tongues on us.' 'We ask pardon of God, O fakir!' answered they. 'Our heads are before thee.' The ladies laughed and making peace between them, set food before the Calenders. When they had eaten, they all sat down again to carouse, the portress serving the new comers, and the cup passed round awhile, till the porter said to the Calenders, 'O brothers, have ye no story or rare trait to divert us withal?' The Calenders, being warm with wine, called for musical instruments; so the portress brought them a tambourine and a lute and a Persian harp; and each Calender took one

and tuned it and played and sang; and the girls joined in lustily and made a great noise. Whilst they were thus engaged, some one knocked at the gate and the portress rose and went to see who it was. Now the cause of this knocking was that, that very night, the Khalif Haroun er Reshid had gone down into the City, as was his wont, every now and then, to walk about for his diversion and hear what news was stirring, attended by his Vizier Jaafer and Mesrour his headsman, all three, as usual, disguised as merchants. Their way brought them to the house of the three ladies, where they heard the noise of musical instruments and of singing and merriment, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'I have a mind to enter this house and listen to this music and see the singers.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'these people are certainly drunk, and I fear lest some mischief betide us at their hands.' 'It matters not,' rejoined the Khalif; 'I must and will go in and I desire that thou contrive some pretext to that end.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the Vizier and going up to the gate, knocked, whereupon the portress came down and opened. Jaafer came forward and kissing the earth before her, said, 'O lady, we are merchants from Tiberias: we reached Baghdad ten days ago and sold our merchandise and took up our lodging at the khan of the merchants. Now we were bidden to-night to an entertainment at the house of a certain merchant, who set food before us and we ate and caroused with him awhile, till he gave us leave to depart and we went out, intending for our lodging; but being strangers in Baghdad, we lost ourselves and could not find our way back to our khan: so we hope, of your courtesy, that you will admit us to pass the night with you, and God will requite you.' The portress looked at them and saw that they were dressed like merchants and appeared respectable; so she returned to her sisters and repeated to them Jaafer's story, and they took compassion on the supposed strangers and bade her admit them. So she resumed and opened the gate to them, and they said, 'Have we thy leave to enter?' 'Enter,' answered she; whereupon the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour entered; and when the girls saw them, they rose and welcomed them and made them sit down and served them, saying, 'Ye are welcome as our guests, but on one condition.' 'What is that?' asked they; and the mistress of the house answered, 'It is that you be eyes without tongues and that, whatever you see, you enquire not thereof nor speak of that which concerns you not, lest you hear what will not please you.' 'Good,' answered they: 'we are no meddlers.' Then they sat down to carouse; whilst the Khalif looked at the three Calenders and marvelled for that they were all blind of the right eye, and gazed upon the ladies and was amazed at their beauty and goodliness. They fell to drinking and talking and said to the Khalif, 'Drink.' But he answered, 'Excuse me, for I am vowed to the pilgrimage.' Whereupon the portress rose and spreading a gold-embroidered cloth before him, set thereon a china bowl, into which she poured willow-flower water, with a spoonful of snow and some pounded sugar-candy. The Khalif thanked her and said to himself, 'By Allah, I will reward her to-morrow for her kind office!' Then they addressed themselves to carousel, till the wine began to work upon them, when the eldest lady rose and making an obeisance to her guests, took the cateress by the hand and said, 'Come, sisters, let us do our duty.' And they answered, 'It is well.' So the portress rose and cleared the middle of the saloon, after she had removed the table service and thrown away the remains of the banquet. Then she renewed the perfumes in the censers and made the Calenders sit down on a sofa by the dais and the Khalif and his companions on a sofa at the other end; after which she called to the porter,

saying, 'How dull and slothful thou art! Come and help us: thou art no stranger, but one of the household!' So he rose and girt his middle and said, 'What would you have me do?' And she answered, 'Stay where thou art.' Then the cateress rose and setting a chair in the middle of the room, went to a closet, which she opened, saying to the porter, 'Come and help me.' So he went to her and she brought out two black bitches, with chains round their necks, and gave them to him, saying, 'Take them.' So he took them and carried them to the middle of the saloon; whereupon the mistress of the house tucked up her sleeves and taking a whip, said to the porter, 'Bring me one of the bitches.' So he brought it to her by the chain; and the bitch wept and shook its head at the damsel, who brought the whip down on it, whilst the porter held it by the chain. The bitch howled and whined, but the lady ceased not to beat it till her arm was tired; when she threw away the whip and pressing the bitch to her bosom, kissed it on the head and wiped away its tears. Then she said to the porter, 'Take it back and bring the other.' He did as she bade him, and she did with the second bitch as she had done with the first. The Khalif's mind was troubled at her doings and his breast contracted and he could not restrain his impatience to know the meaning of all this. So he winked to Jaafer to ask, but the latter turned and signed to him as who should say, 'Be silent: this is no time for impertinent curiosity.' Then said the portress to the mistress of the house, 'O my lady, rise and go up to thy place, that I in turn may do my part.' 'It is well,' answered she and went up and sat down on the couch of juniper-wood, at the upper end of the dais; whilst the portress sat down on a chair and said to the cateress, 'Do what thou hast to do.' So the latter rose and going to a closet, brought out a bag of yellow satin, with cords of green silk and tassels of gold, and came and sat down before the portress. Then she opened the bag and took out a lute, which she tuned, and sang the following verses, accompanying herself on the lute:

Thou art my wish, thou art my end;
And in thy presence, O my friend,
There is for me abiding joy:
Thine absence sets my heart a-flame
For thee distraught, with thee possest,
Thou reignest ever in my breast,
Nor in the love I bear to thee
Is there for me reproach or shame.
Life's veil for me was torn apart,
When Love gat hold upon my heart
For Love still rends the veils in twain
And brings dishonour on fair fame.
The cloak of sickness I did on;
And straight my fault appeared and shone.
Since that my heart made choice of thee
And love and longing on me came,
My eyes are ever wet with tears,
And all my secret thought appears,
When with my tears' tumultuous flow
Exhales the secret of thy name.

Heal thou my pains, for thou to me
Art both disease and remedy.
Yet him, whose cure is in thy hand,
Affliction shall for ever claim,
Thy glances set my heart on fire,
Slay me with swords of my desire:
How many, truly, of the best
Have fallen beneath Love's sword of flame?
Yet may I not from passion cease
Nor in forgetting seek release;
For love's my comfort, pride and law,
Public and private, aye the same.
Blest eyes that have of thee their fill
And look upon thee at their will!
Ay, of my own unforced intent,
The slave of passion I became.

When the portress heard this foursome song, she cried out, 'Alas! Alas! Alas!' and tore her clothes and fell down in a swoon; and the Khalif saw on her body the marks of beating with rods and whips, and wondered greatly. Then the cateress rose and sprinkled water upon her and brought her a fresh dress and put it on her. When the company saw this, their minds were troubled, for they understood not the reason of these things. And the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Didst thou not see the marks of beating with rods upon the girl's body! I cannot keep silence nor be at rest, except I come at the truth of all this and know the story of this damsel and the two bitches.' 'O my lord,' answered Jaafer, 'they made it a condition with us that we should not speak of what concerns us not, under pain of hearing what should not please us.' Then said the portress 'By Allah! O my sister, come and complete thy service to me.' 'With all my heart!' answered the cateress and took the lute and leant it against her breasts. Then she swept the strings with her finger-tips and sang the following verses:

If we complain of absence, what alas! shall we say?
Or if longing assail us, where shall we take our way?
If, to interpret for us, we trust to a messenger,
How can a message rightly a lover's plaint convey?
Or if we put on patience, short is a lover's life,
After his heart's beloved is torn from him away.
Nothing, alas! is left me but sorrow and despair
And tears that adown my cheeks without cessation stray.
Thou that art ever absent from my desireful sight,
Thou that art yet a dweller within my heart alway,
Hast thou kept troth, I wonder, with one who loves thee dear,
Whose faith, whilst time endureth, never shall know decay?
Or hast thou e'en forgotten her who for love of thee,
In tears and sickness and passion, hath wasted many a day?

Alas! though Love unite us again in one embrace,
Reproach for thy past rigour with me full long shall stay.

When the portress heard this second song, she gave a loud scream and exclaimed, 'By Allah! it is good!' and putting her hand to her clothes, tore them as before and fell down in a swoon. Whereupon the cateress rose and brought her another dress, after she had sprinkled water on her. Then she sat up again and said to the cateress 'To it again and help me to do the rest of my duty; for there remains but one more song.' So the cateress took the lute and sang the following verses:

How long, ah me! shall this rigour last and this inhumanity?
Are not the tears that I have shed enough to soften thee?
If thou, of thy relentless will, estrangement do prolong,
Intending my despite, at last, I pray, contented be!
If treacherous fortune were but just to lovers and their woe,
They would not watch the weary night in sleepless agony.
Have ruth on me, for thy disdain is heavy on my heart;
Is it not time that thou relent at last, my king, to me?
To whom but thee that slayest me should I reveal my pain?
What grief is theirs who love and prove the loved one's perfidy!
Love and affliction hour by hour redouble in my breast:
The days of exile are prolonged; no end to them I see.
Muslims, avenge a slave of love, the host of wakefulness,
Whose patience hath been trampled out by passion's tyranny!
Can it be lawful, O my wish, that thou another bless
With thine embraces, whilst I die, in spite of Love's decree?
Yet in thy presence, by my side, what peace should I enjoy,
Since he I love doth ever strive to heap despite on me?

When the portress heard this third song, she screamed out and putting forth her hand, tore her clothes even to the skirt and fell down in a swoon for the third time, and there appeared once more on her body the marks of beat ing with rods. Then said the three Calenders, 'Would God we had never entered this house, but had slept on the rubbish-heaps! for verily our entertainment hath been troubled by things that rend the heart.' The Khalif turned to them and said, 'How so?' And they answered, 'Indeed, our minds are troubled about this matter.' Quoth he, 'Are you not then of the household?' 'No,' replied they; 'nor did we ever see the place till now.' Said the Khalif, 'There is the man by you: he will surely know the meaning of all this.' And he winked at the porter. So they questioned the latter and he replied, 'By the Almighty, we are all in one boat! I was brought up at Baghdad, but never in my life did I enter this house till to-day, and the manner of my coming in company with them was curious.' 'By Allah,' said they, 'we thought thee one of them, and now we see thou art but as one of ourselves.' Then said the Khalif, 'We are here seven men, and they are but three women: so let us question them of their case, and if they do not answer willingly, they shall do so by force.' They all agreed to this, except Jaafer, who said, 'This is not well-advised: let them be, for we are their guests, and as ye know, they imposed on us a condition, to which we all agreed. Wherefore it is better that we keep silence concerning this affair, for but a

little remains of the night, and each go about his business.' And he winked to the Khalif and whispered to him, 'There is but a little longer to wait, and to-morrow I will bring them before thee and thou canst then question them of their story.' But the Khalif lifted his head and cried out angrily, 'I have not patience to wait till then: let the Calenders ask them.' And Jaafer said, 'This is not well-advised.' Then they consulted together, and there was much talk and dispute between them, who should put the question, before they fixed upon the porter. The noise drew the notice of the lady of the house, who said to them, 'O guests, what is the matter and what are you talking about?' Then the porter came forward and said to her, 'O lady, the company desire that thou acquaint them with the history of the two bitches and why thou didst beat them and after fellest to kissing and weeping over them and also concerning thy sister and why she has been beaten with rods, like a man. This is what they charge me to ask thee, and peace be on thee.' When she heard this, she turned to the others and said to them 'Is this true that he says of you?' And they all replied 'Yes;' except Jaafer, who held his peace. Then said she, 'By Allah! O guests, ye have done us a grievous wrong, for we made it a previous condition with you that whoso spoke of what concerned him not, should hear what should not please him. Is it not enough that we have taken you into our house and fed you with our victual! But the fault is not so much yours as that of her who brought you in to us.' Then she tucked up her sleeves and smote three times on the floor, saying, 'Come quickly!' Whereupon the door of a closet opened and out came seven black slaves, with drawn swords in their hands, to whom said the lady, 'Bind these babblers' hands behind them and tie them one with another.' The slaves did as she bade, and said, 'O noble lady, is it thy will that we strike off their heads?' 'Hold your hands awhile,' answered she, 'till I question them of their condition, before ye strike off their heads.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' exclaimed the porter 'do not slay me for another's fault, for all have erred and offended save myself. And by Allah, our night would have been a pleasant one, had we not been afflicted with these Calenders, whose presence is enough to lay a flourishing city in ruins.' And he repeated the following verses:

How fair a thing is mercy to the great!
And how much more to those of low estate!
By all the love that has between us been,
Doom not the guiltless to the guilty's fate!

When the lady heard this, she laughed, in spite of her anger, and coming up to the guests, said to them, 'Tell me who you are, for ye have but a little while to live, and were you not men of rank and consideration, you had never dared to act thus.' Then the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Out on thee! Tell her who we are, or we shall be slain in a mistake, and speak her fair, ere an abomination befall us.' 'It were only a part of thy deserts,' replied Jaafer. Whereupon the Khalif cried out at him in anger and said, 'There is a time to jest and a time to be serious.' Then the lady said to the Calenders, 'Are ye brothers?' 'Not so,' answered they; 'we are only poor men and strangers.' And she said to one of them, 'Wast thou born blind of one eye?' 'No, by Allah!' replied he; 'but there hangs a rare story by the loss of my eye, a story which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, would serve as a lesson to those that can profit by example.' She questioned the two other Calenders, and they made a like reply, saying,

‘By Allah! O our mistress, each one of us comes from a different country and is the son of a king and a sovereign prince ruling over lands and subjects.’ Then she turned to the others and said to them, ‘Let each of you come forward in turn and tell us his history and the manner of his coming hither and after go about his business; but whoso refuses, I will cut off his head.’ The first to come forward was the porter, who said, ‘O my lady, I am a porter. This lady, the cateress, hired me and took me first to the vintner’s, then to the butcher’s, from the butcher’s to the fruiterer’s, from the fruiterer’s to the grocer’s, from the grocer’s to the greengrocer’s, from the greengrocer’s to the confectioner’s and the druggist’s, and thence to this place, where there happened to me with you what happened. This is my story; and peace be on thee!’ At this the lady laughed and said to him, ‘Begone about thy business.’ But he said, ‘By Allah, I will not budge ‘till I hear the others’ stories.’ Then came forward the first Calender and said, ‘Know, O lady, that

The First Calender's Story.

MY father was a king, and he had a brother, who was also a king over another city. The latter had a son and a daughter, and it chanced that I and the son of my uncle were both born on the same day. In due time we grew up to man's estate and there was a great affection between us. Now it was my wont every now and then to visit my uncle and abide with him several months at a time. One day, I went to visit him as usual and found him absent a-hunting; but my cousin received me with the utmost courtesy and slaughtered sheep and strained wine for me and we sat down to drink. When the wine had got the mastery of us, my cousin said to me, "O son of my uncle I have a great service to ask of thee, and I beg of thee not to baulk me in what I mean to do." "With all my heart," answered I; and he made me swear by the most solemn oaths to do his will. Then he went away and returning in a little, with a lady veiled and perfumed and very richly clad, said to me, "Take this lady and go before me to the burial-ground and enter such and such a sepulchre," and he described it to me and I knew it, "and wait till I come." I could not gainsay him, by reason of the oath I had sworn to him; so I took the lady and carried her to the cemetery, and entering the tomb sat down to await my cousin, who soon rejoined us, carrying a vessel of water, a bag containing plaster and an adze. He went up to the tomb in the midst of the sepulchre and loosening its stones with the adze, laid them on one side after which he fell to digging with the adze in the earth till he uncovered a trap of iron, as big as a small door, and raised it, when there appeared beneath it a winding stair. Then he turned to the lady and said to her, "Up and make thy choice." So she descended the stair and was lost to sight; and he said to me, "O my cousin, when I have descended, complete thy kindness to me by replacing the trap-door and throwing back the earth on it: then mix the plaster in the bag with the water in this vessel and build up the tomb again with the stones and plaster it over as before, lest any see it and say, 'This tomb has been newly opened, albeit it is an old one;' for I have been at work here a whole year, unknown to any save God. This then is the service I had to ask of thee, and may God never bereave thy friends of thee, O my cousin!" Then he descended the stair; and when he was out of sight, I replaced the trap-door and did as he had bidden me, till the tomb was restored to its original condition, and I the while in a state of intoxication; after which I returned to the palace, and found my uncle still absent. Next morning I called to mind what had happened and repented of having obeyed my cousin, when repentance was of no avail, but thought that it must have been a dream. So I fell to enquiring after my cousin; but none could give me any news of him; and I went out to the burial-ground and sought for the tomb where I had left him, but could not find it, and ceased not to go from sepulchre to sepulchre and from tomb to tomb, without success, till nightfall. Then I returned to the palace and could neither eat nor drink, for my heart was troubled about my cousin, seeing I knew not what was come of him; and I was extremely chagrined and slept not that night, but lay awake for anxiety till morning. As soon as it was day, I repaired again to the cemetery, pondering what my cousin had done and repenting me of having hearkened to him, and vent round among all the tombs, but could not find the one I sought. Thus I did for the space of seven days, but with no better success, and my trouble and anxiety increased till I was

well-nigh mad and could find nothing for it but to return to my father. So I set out and journeyed till I reached his capital; but as I entered the gate of the city, a number of men sprang out on me and tied my hands behind me. At this I was beyond measure amazed, seeing that I was the son of the Sultan and that they were his servants and my own; and great fear fell on me, and I said to myself, "I wonder what has befallen my father!" Then I questioned my captors; but they returned me no answer. However, after awhile, one of them, who had been my servant, said to me, "Fortune has played thy father false; and the troops deserted him. So the Vizier slew him and seized on his throne; and we laid wait for thee by his command." Then they took me and carried me before the Vizier, well-nigh distraught for this news of my father. Now between me and this Vizier was an old feud, the cause of which was as follows. I was fond of shooting with a pellet-bow, and one day, as I was standing on the terrace of my palace, a bird lighted on the terrace of the Vizier's house, where the latter chanced to be standing at the time. I let fly at the bird, but, as fate and destiny would have it, the pellet swerved and striking the Vizier on the eye, put it out. As says the poet:

Our footsteps follow on in their predestined way,
Nor from the ordered track can any mortal stray:
And he whom Fate appoints in any land to die,
No other place on earth shall see his dying day.

The Vizier dared say nothing, at the time, because I was the Sultan's son of the city, but thenceforward he nourished a deadly hatred against me. So when they brought me bound before him, he commanded my head to be smitten off; and I said, "For what crime wilt thou put me to death?" "What crime could be greater than this?" answered he, and pointed to his ruined eye. Quoth I, "That I did by misadventure." And he replied, "If thou didst it by misadventure, I will do the like with intent." Then said he, "Bring him to me." So they brought me up to him, and he put his finger into my right eye and pulled it out; and thenceforward I became one-eyed as ye see me. Then he caused me to be bound hand and foot and put in a chest and said to the headsman, "Take this fellow and carry him forth of the city and slay him and leave him for the beasts and birds to eat." So the headsman carried me without the city to the midst of the desert, where he took me out of the chest, bound hand and foot as I was, and would have bandaged my eyes, that he might slay me. But I wept sore till I made him weep, and looking at him, repeated the following verses:

I counted on you as a coat of dart-proof mail toward
The foeman's arrows from my breast. Alas! ye are his sword!
I hoped in you to succour me in every evil chance,
Although my right hand to my left no more should help afford.
Yet stand aloof nor cast your lot with those who do me hate,
And let my foemen shoot their shafts against your whilom lord!
If you refuse to succour me against my enemies,
At least be neutral, nor to me nor them your aid accord.

And these also:

How many of my friends, methought, were coats of mail!
And so they were, indeed, but on my foeman's part.

Unerring shafts and true I deemed them; and they were
Unerring shafts, indeed, alas, but in my heart!

When the headsman heard this (now he had been my father's headsman and I had done him kindness) he said, "O my lord what can I do, being but a slave commanded?" Then he said, "Fly for thy life and never return to this country, or thou art lost and I with thee." As says one of the poets:

Escape with thy life, if oppression betide thee,
And let the house tell of its builder's fate!
Country for country thou'lt find, if thou seek it;
Life for life never, early or late.
It is strange men should dwell in the house of abjection,
When the plain of God's world is so wide and so great!

I kissed his hands, hardly crediting my escape; and recked little of the loss of my eye, in consideration of my deliverance from death. Then I repaired to my uncle's capital and going in to him, told him what had befallen my father and myself; whereat he wept sore and said, "Verily, thou addest affliction to my affliction and sorrow to my sorrow; for thy cousin has been missing these many days; I know not what is become of him, and none can give me any news of him." Then he wept till he swooned away, and my heart was sore for him. When he revived, he would have medicined my eye, but found there was but the socket left and said, "O my son, it is well that it was thine eye and not thy life!" I could not keep silence about my cousin; so I told him all that had passed, and he rejoiced greatly at hearing news of his son and said, "Come, show me the tomb." "By Allah, O my uncle," answered I, "I know it not, for I went after many times to seek for it, but could not find it." However, we went out to the burial-ground and looked right and left, till at last I discovered the tomb. At this we both rejoiced greatly and entering, removed the earth, raised the trapdoor and descended fifty steps, till we came to the foot of the stair, where we were met by a great smoke that blinded our eyes: and my uncle pronounced the words, which whoso says shall never be confounded, that is to say, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" Then we went on and found ourselves in a saloon, raised upon columns, drawing air and light from openings communicating with the surface of the ground and having a cistern in its midst. The place was full of crates and sacks of flour and grain and other victual; and at the upper end stood a couch with a canopy over it. My uncle went up to the bed and drawing the curtains, found his son and the lady in each other's arms; but they were become black coal, as they had been cast into a well of fire. When he saw this, he spat in his son's face and taking off his shoe, smote him with it, exclaiming, "Swine that thou art, thou hast thy deserts! This is thy punishment in this world, but there awaits thee a far sorer and more terrible punishment in the world to come!" His behaviour amazed me, and I mourned for my cousin, for that he was become a black coal, and said to the king, "O my uncle, is not that which hath befallen him enough, but thou must beat him with thy shoe?" "O son of my brother," answered my uncle, "this my son was from his earliest youth madly enamoured of his sister, and I forbade him from her, saying in myself, 'They are but children.' But, when they grew up, sin befell between them, notwithstanding that his attendants warned him to abstain from so foul a thing, which none had done before nor would do after him, lest

the news of it should be carried abroad by the caravans and he become dishonoured and unvalued among kings to the end of time. I heard of this and believed it not, but took him and upbraided him severely, saying, 'Have a care lest this thing happen to thee; for I will surely curse thee and put thee to death.' Then I shut her up and kept them apart, but this accursed girl loved him passionately, and Satan got the upper hand of them and made their deeds to seem good in their eyes. So when my son saw that I had separated them, he made this place under ground and transported victual hither, as thou seest, and taking advantage of my absence a-hunting, came here with his sister, thinking to enjoy her a long while. But the wrath of God descended on them and consumed them; and there awaits them in the world to come a still sorer and more terrible punishment." Then he wept and I with him, and he looked at me and said, "Henceforth thou art my son in his stead." Then I bethought me awhile of the world and its chances and how the Vizier had slain my father and usurped his throne and put out my eye and of the strange events that had befallen my cousin and wept again, and my uncle wept with me. Presently we ascended, and replacing the trap-door, restored the tomb to its former condition. Then we resumed to the palace, but hardly had we sat down when we heard a noise of drums and trumpets and cymbals and galloping of cavalry and clamour of men and clash of arms and clank of bridles and neighing of horses, and the world was filled with clouds of dust raised by the horses' hoofs. At this we were amazed and knew not what could be the matter so we enquired and were told that the Vizier, who had usurped my father's throne, had levied troops and hired the wild Arabs and was come with an army like the sands of the sea, none could tell their number nor could any avail against them. They assaulted the city unawares, and the people, being unable to withstand them, surrendered the place to them. My uncle was slain and I took refuge in the suburbs, knowing that, if I fell into the Vizier's hands, he would put me to death. Wherefore trouble was sore upon me and I bethought me of all that had befallen me and my father and uncle and knew not what to do, for if I showed myself, the people of the city and my father's troops would know me and hasten to win the usurpers favour by putting me to death; and I could find no means of escape but by shaving my face. So I shaved off my beard and eyebrows and donning a Calender's habit, left the town, without being known of any, and made for this city, in the hope that perhaps some one would bring me to the presence of the Commander of the Faithful and Vicar of the Lord of the Two Worlds, that I might relate to him my story and lay my case before him. I arrived here today and was standing, perplexed where I should go, when I saw this second Calender; so I saluted him, saying "I am a stranger," and he replied, "And I also am a stranger." Presently up came our comrade, this other Calender, and saluted us, saying, "I am a stranger." "We also are strangers," answered we; and we walked on together, till darkness overtook us, and destiny led us to your house. This, then, is my history and the manner of the loss of my right eye and the shaving of my beard and eyebrows.' They all marvelled at his story, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'By Allah, I never heard or saw the like of what happened to this Calender.' Then the mistress of the house said to the Calender, 'Begone about thy business.' But he answered, 'I will not budge till I hear the others' stories.' Then came forth the second Calender and kissing the earth, said, 'O my lady, I was not born blind of one eye, and my story is a marvellous one; were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as a warning to those that can profit by example.

The Second Calender's Story.

I AM a king, son of a king. My father taught me to read and write, and I got the Koran by heart, according to the seven readings, and read all manner of books under the guidance of learned professors; I studied the science of the stars and the sayings of poets and applied myself to all branches of knowledge, till I surpassed all the folk of my time. In particular, my skill in handwriting excelled that of all the scribes, and my fame was noised abroad in all countries and at the courts of all the kings. Amongst others, the King of Ind heard of me and sent to my father to seek me, with gifts and presents such as befit kings. So my father fitted out six ships for me, and we put to sea and sailed for a whole month, till we reached the land. Then we brought out the horses that were with us in the ships, together with ten camels laden with presents for the King of Ind. and set out inland, but had not gone far, before there arose a great dust, that grew till it covered the whole country. After awhile it lifted and discovered fifty steel-clad horsemen, as they were fierce lions, whom we soon found to be Arab highwaymen. When they saw that we were but a small company and had with us ten laden camels, they drove at us with levelled spears. We signed to them with our fingers to do us no hindrance, for that we were ambassadors to the mighty King of Ind; but they replied (in the same manner) that they were not in his dominions nor under his rule. Then they set on us and slew some of my attendants and put the rest to flight; and I also fled, after I had gotten a sore wound whilst the Arabs were taken up with the baggage. I knew not whither to turn, being reduced from high to low estate; so I fled forth at a venture till I came to the top of a mountain, where I took shelter for the night in a cavern. On the morrow, I continued my journey and fared on thus for a whole month, till I reached a safe and pleasant city. The winter had passed away from it with its cold and the spring was come with its roses; its flowers were blowing and its streams welling and its birds warbling. As says the poet, describing the city in question:

A town, wherein who dwells is free from all affray;
Security and peace are masters there alway.
Like Paradise itself, it seemeth, for its folk,
With all its beauties rare decked out in bright array.

I was both glad and sorry to reach the city, glad for that I was weary with my journey and pale for weakness and anxiety, and grieved to enter it in such sorry case. However, I went in, knowing not whither to betake me, and fared on till I came to a tailor sitting in his shop. I saluted him, and he returned my salute and bade me a kindly welcome, and seeing me to be a stranger and noting marks of gentle breeding on me, enquired how I came thither. I told him all that had befallen me; and he was concerned for me and said, "O my son, do not discover thyself to any, for the King of this city is the chief of thy father's foes and hath a mortal feud against him." Then he set meat and drink before me, and I ate and he with me, and we talked together till nightfall, when he lodged me in a chamber beside his own, and brought me a bed and coverlet. I abode with him three days, at the end of which time he said to me, "Dost thou know any craft by which thou mayst earn thy living?" I replied, "I am a doctor of the law and a man of learning, a scribe, a grammarian, a poet, a mathematician and a

skilled penman." Quoth he, "Thy trade is not in demand in this country nor are there in this city any who understand science or writing or aught but money-getting." "By Allah," said I, "I know nought but what I have told thee!" And he said, "Gird thy middle and take axe and cord and go and cut firewood in the desert for thy living, till God send thee relief, and tell none who thou art, or they will kill thee." Then he bought me an axe and a cord and gave me in charge to certain woodcutters; with whom I went out into the desert and cut wood all day and carried home a load on my head. I sold it for half a dinar, with part of which I bought victual and laid up the rest. On this wise I lived a whole year, at the end of which time I went out one day into the desert, according to my wont, and straying from my companions, happened on a tract full of trees and running streams, in which there was abundance of firewood; so I entered and coming on the gnarled stump of a great tree, dug round it with my axe and cleared the earth away from it. Presently, the axe struck upon a ring of brass; so I cleared away the earth, till I uncovered a wooden trap-door, which I raised and there appeared beneath it a stair I descended the stair, till I came to a door, which I opened and found myself in a vaulted hall of goodly structure, wherein was a damsel like a pearl of great price, whose aspect banished pain and care and anxiety from the heart and whose speech healed the troubled soul and captivated the wise and the intelligent. She was slender of shape and swelling-breasted, delicate-cheeked and bright of colour and fair of form; and indeed her face shone like the sun through the night of her tresses, and her teeth glittered above the snows of her bosom. As says the poet of her:

Slender of waist, with streaming hair the hue of night, is she,
With hips like hills of sand and shape straight as the balsam-tree.

And as says another:

There are four things that ne'er unite, except it be
To shed my heart's best blood and take my soul by storm.
And these are night-black locks and brow as bright as day,
Cheeks ruddy as the rose and straight and slender form.

When I looked on her, I prostrated myself before her Maker, for the grace and beauty He had created in her and she looked at me and said, "Art thou a man or a genie?" "I am a man," answered I; and she said, "And who brought thee to this place, where I have dwelt five-and-twenty years without seeing man?" Quoth I (and indeed her speech was sweet to me), "O my lady, my good star brought me hither for the dispelling of my grief and anxiety." And I told her all that had befallen me from first to last. My case was grievous to her and she wept: then she said, "I will tell thee my story in turn. I am the daughter of a King of Farther India, by name Efitamous, Lord of the Ebony Islands, who married me to my cousin, but on my wedding-night an Afrit called Jerjis ben Rejmous, the mother's sister's son of Iblis, carried me off and flying away with me, set me down in this place whither he transported all that I needed of clothes and ornaments and furniture and meat and drink and so forth. Once in every ten days he comes to me and lies the night here, then goes his way; for he took me without the consent of his family: and he has agreed with me that, in case I should ever have occasion for him in the interval between his visits, whether by night or by day, I have only to touch these two lines engraved upon the alcove, and he will be with

me before I take away my hand. It is now four days since he was here, and there remain six before he comes again. Wilt thou therefore spend five days with me and depart the day before his coming?" "I will well," answered I. "O rare! if it be not all a dream." At this she rejoiced and taking me by the hand, led me through a vaulted doorway into a small but elegant bath-room, where we put off our clothes and she washed me. Then she clad me in a new suit and seated me by her side on a high divan and gave me to drink of sherbet of sugar flavoured with musk. Then she brought food, and we ate and conversed. After awhile, she said to me, "Lie down and rest, for thou art weary." So I lay down and slept and forgot all that had befallen me. When I awoke, I found her rubbing my feet: so I thanked her and blessed her, and we sat talking awhile. Quoth she, "By Allah, I was sad at heart, for that I have dwelt alone under ground these five-and-twenty years, without any to talk withal. So praised be God who hath sent thee to me!" Then she said, "O youth, art thou for wine?" And I answered, "As thou wilt." Whereupon she went to the cupboard and took out a sealed flask of old wine and decked the table with flowers and green herbs. Then she recited the following verses:

Had we thy coming known, we would for sacrifice
Have poured thee forth heart's blood and blackness of the eyes:
Ay, and we would have laid our cheeks within thy way,
That so thy feet might tread on eyelids, carpet-wise!

I thanked her, for indeed love of her had taken hold of me, and my grief and anxiety left me. We sat carousing till nightfall, and I passed the night with her, never knew I such a night. On the morrow, delight succeeded delight till the middle of the day, when I drank wine, till I lost my senses and rose, staggering from side to side, and said to her, "Come, O fair one! I will carry thee up from under the earth and rid thee of this genie." She laughed and replied, "Be content and hold thy peace. One day in every ten is the genie's, and the other nine shall be thine." Quoth I (and indeed drunkenness had got the better of me), "This very moment will I break the alcove, on which is graven the talisman, and summon the Afrit hither, that I may kill him, for I am used to kill Afrits ten at a time." When she heard this, she conjured me by Allah to refrain and repeated the following verses:

This is a thing wherein thine own destruction lies: I rede thee keep thyself therefrom, if thou be wise.

And also these:

O thou that seek'st to hasten on the feet
Of parting's steeds, the matchless swift of flight,
Forbear, for fortune's nature is deceit,
And parting is the end of love delight.

I paid no heed to her words, but kicked the alcove with all my might, and immediately the place grew dark, it thundered and lightened, the earth trembled and the world was wrapped in gloom. When I saw this, the fumes of the wine left my head and I said to the lady, "What is the matter?" "The Afrit is upon us," answered she "Did I not warn thee of this! By Allah, thou hast ruined me! But fly for thy life and return whence thou camest." So I ascended the stair, but, in the excess of my fear I forgot my

sandals and hatchet. When I had mounted two steps, I turned to look, and behold, the ground clove in sunder and out came an Afrit of hideous aspect, who said to the lady, "What is this commotion with which thou disturbest me? What misfortune has befallen thee?" "Nothing has befallen me," answered she, "except that I was heavy at heart and drank a little wine to hearten myself. Then I rose to do an occasion, but my head became heavy and I fell against the alcove." "Thou liest, O harlot!" said he, and looked right and left, till he caught sight of the axe and the sandals and said, "These are some man's gear. Who has been with thee?" Quoth she, "I never set eyes on them till this moment; they must have clung to thee as thou camest hither." But he said, "This talk is absurd and will not impose on me, O strumpet!" Then he stripped her naked and stretching her on the ground, tied her hands and feet to four stakes and proceeded to torture her to make her confess. I could not bear to hear her weeping; so I ascended the stair, quaking for fear. When I reached the top, I replaced the trap-door and covered it over with earth; and I thought of the lady and her beauty and what had befallen her through my folly and repented me sore of what I had done. Then I bethought me of my father and his kingdom and how I had become a woodcutter, and how, after my life had been awhile serene, it had again become troubled, and I wept and repeated the following verse:

What time the cruelties of Fate o'erwhelm thee with distress, Think that one day must bring thee ease, another day duresse.

Then I went on till I reached the house of my friend, whom I found awaiting me, as he were on coals of fire on my account. When he saw me, he rejoiced and said, "O my brother, where didst thou pass the night? My heart has been full of anxiety on thine account, fearing for thee from the wild beasts or other peril: but praised be God for thy safety!" I thanked him for his solicitude, and retiring to my chamber, fell a-musing on what had passed and reproached myself grievously for my meddlesomeness in kicking the alcove. Presently the tailor came in to me and said, "O my son, there is without an old man, a foreigner, who seeks thee. He has thine axe and sandals and came to the woodcutters and said to them, 'I went out at the hour of the call to morning prayer and happened on these and know not whose they are: direct me to their owner.' They knew thine axe and sent him to thee; and he is now sitting in my shop. So do thou go out to him and thank him and take thy gear." When I heard this, my colour changed and I was sick for terror but before I could think, the floor clove asunder and up came the stranger, and lo, it was the Afrit! Now he had tortured the lady in the most barbarous manner, without being able to make her confess: so he took the axe and sandals, saying, "As sure as I am Jerjis of the lineage of Iblis, I will bring back the owner of this axe and these sandals!" So he went to the woodcutters with the tale aforesaid, and they directed him to me. He snatched me up without parley and flew high into the air, but presently descended and plunged into the ground with me, and I the while unconscious. Then he came up with me in the underground palace, where I saw the lady stretched out naked, with the blood running from her sides. At this sight, my eyes ran over with tears; but the Afrit unbound her and veiling her, said to her, "O wanton, is not this thy lover?" She looked at me and said, "I know not this man, nor have I ever seen him till now." Quoth he, "Wilt thou not confess after all this torture?" And she answered, "I never saw him in my life, and God forbid that I should

lie against him and thou kill him." "Then," said he, "if thou know him not, take this sword and cut off his head." She took the sword and came and stood at my head; and I made signs to her with my eyebrows whilst the tears ran down my cheeks. She understood me and signed to me with her eyes as who should say, "Thou hast brought all this upon us." And I answered her, in the same fashion, that it was a time for forgiveness; and the tongue of the case spoke the words of the poet:

My looks interpret for my tongue and tell of what I feel:
And all the love appears that I within my heart conceal.
When as we meet and down our cheeks our tears are running fast,
I'm dumb, and yet my speaking eyes my thought of thee reveal.
She signs to me; and I, I know the things her glances say:
I with my fingers sign, and she conceives the mute appeal.
Our eyebrows of themselves suffice unto our intercourse:
We're mute; but passion none the less speaks in the looks we steal.

Then she threw down the sword and said, "How shall I strike off the head of one whom I know not and who has done me no hurt? My religion will not allow of this." Quoth the Afrit, "It is grievous to thee to kill thy lover. Because he hath lain a night with thee, thou endurest this torture and wilt not confess upon him. It is only like that pities like." Then he turned to me and said, "O mortal, dost thou not know this woman?" "Who is she?" answered I. "I never saw her till now." "Then," said he "take this sword and strike off her head and I will believe that thou knowest her not and will let thee go and do thee no hurt." Quoth I, "It is well;" and taking the sword, went up to her briskly and raised my hand. But she signed to me with her eyebrows, as who should say, "What hurt have I done thee? Is it thus thou requitest me?" I understood what she would say and replied in the same manner, "I will ransom thee with my life." And the tongue of the case repeated the following verses:

How many a lover with his eyelids speaks And doth his thought unto his mistress tell
He flashes signals to her with his eyes,
And she at once is ware of what befell.
How swift the looks that pass betwixt the twain!
How fair, indeed, and how delectable!
One with his eyelids writes what he would say:
The other with her eyes the writ doth spell.

Then my eyes ran over with tears and I said, "O mighty Afrit and doughty hero! if a woman, lacking sense and religion, deem it unlawful to strike off my head, how can I, who am a man, bring myself to slay her whom I never saw in my life? Never will I do it, though I drink the cup of death and ruin!" And I threw the sword from my hand. Quoth the Afrit, "Ye show the good understanding between you, but I will let you see the issue of your doings." Then he took the sword and cut off the lady's hands and feet at four strokes; whilst I looked on and made sure of death; and she signed me a farewell with her eyes. Quoth he, "Thou cuckoldest me with thine eyes!" And struck off her head with a blow of his sword. Then he turned to me and said, "O mortal, by our law; when our wives commit adultery, it is lawful to us to put them to death. As for this woman, I stole her away on her wedding-night, when she was a girl of twelve, and she

has known no one but myself. I used to come to her once in every ten days in the habit of a man, a foreigner, and pass one night with her; and when I was assured that she had played me false, I slew her. But as for thee, I am not sure that thou west her accomplice: nevertheless, I must not let thee go unharmed; but I will grant thee a favour." At this I rejoiced greatly and said, "What favour wilt thou grant me?" "I will give thee thy choice," replied he, "whether I shall change thee into a dog, an ass or an ape." Quoth I (and indeed I had hoped that he would pardon me), "By Allah, spare me, and God will reward thee for sparing a true believer, who hath done thee no harm." And I humbled myself before him to the utmost and wept, saying, "Indeed, thou dost me injustice." "Do not multiply words on me," answered he; "it is in my power to kill thee: but I give thee thy choice." "O Afrit," rejoined I, "it would best become thee to pardon me, even as the envied pardoned the envier." Quoth he, "And how was that?" "They say, O Afrit," answered I, "that

Story of the Envier and the Envied.

THERE dwelt once in a certain city two men, who occupied adjoining houses, having a common party-wall; and one of them envied the other and looked on him with an evil eye and did his utmost endeavour to work him ill; and his envy grew on him till he could hardly eat or enjoy the delight of sleep for it. But the envied man did nought but prosper, and the more the other strove to do him hurt, the more he increased and throve and flourished. At last the hatred his neighbour bore him and his constant endeavour to do him hurt came to his knowledge and he said, 'By Allah, I will renounce the world on his account!' So he left his native place and settled in a distant city, where he bought a piece of land, in which was a dried-up well, that had once been used for watering the fields. Here he built him an oratory, which he fitted up with all that he required, and took up his abode therein, devoting himself with a sincere heart to the service of God the Most High. Fakirs and poor folk soon flocked to him from all sides, and his fame spread abroad in the city, so that the notables resorted to him. After awhile, the news reached the envious man of the good fortune that had befallen his old neighbour and the high consideration in which he was held: so he set out for the town in which the latter dwelt and repaired to the hermitage, where the envied man welcomed him and received him with the utmost honour. Quoth the envier, 'I have journeyed hither on purpose to tell thee a piece of good news. So order thy fakirs to retire to their cells and go with me apart, for I will not say what I have to tell thee, except privately where none may overhear us.' Accordingly the envied man ordered the fakirs to retire to their cells; and they did so. Then he took the other by the hand and walked on with him a little way, till they came to the deserted well, when the envious man gave the other a push and cast him into the well, unseen of any; after which, he went out and went his way thinking that he had killed him. Now this well was haunted by Jinn, who bore up the envied man and let him down little by little, so that he reached the bottom unhurt, and they seated him on a stone. Then said one of the Jinn to the others, 'Know ye who this is?' And they answered, 'No.' Quoth he, 'This is the envied man who fled from him who envied him and settled in our city, where he built him this oratory and entertains us with his litanies and recitations of the Koran. But the envious man set out and journeyed till he rejoined him and contrived to throw him into this well. Now the news of him hath this very night come to the Sultan of the city and he purposes to visit him to-morrow, on account of his daughter. 'And what ails his daughter?' asked another. 'She is possessed of an evil spirit,' replied the first, 'for the genie Meimoun ben Demdem has fallen in love with her; but if the pious man knew the remedy, he could cure her; and it is the easiest of things.' 'And what is the remedy?' asked the other. Quoth the first speaker 'The black cat that is with him in the oratory has a white spot, the size of a dirhem, at the end of her tail: he should take seven white hairs from this spot and fumigate the princess therewith; whereupon the Marid will leave her and never return, and she will be cured immediately.' And the envied man heard all this. When the day broke and the morning appeared and shone, the fakirs came to seek their chief and found him rising from the well, wherefore he was magnified in their eyes; and he took the black cat and plucking seven white hairs from the spot at the end of her tail, laid

them aside. The sun had hardly risen when the King arrived and entered the hermitage, attended by his chief officers, leaving the rest of his suite without. The envied man bade him welcome and drawing near to him, said, 'Shall I tell thee the object of thy visit?' 'Yes,' answered the King. And he said, 'Thou comest to consult me concerning thy daughter.' Quoth the King, 'Thou sayst truly, O virtuous elder!' Then said the envied man, 'Send and fetch her, and (God willing) I trust to cure her at once.' The King rejoiced and sent for his daughter; and they brought her bound hand and foot. The envied man made her sit down behind a curtain and taking out the hairs, fumigated her with them; whereupon the Afrit that was in her roared out and departed from her. And she was restored to her right mind and veiled her face, saying, 'What has happened and who brought me hither?' At this, the Sultan rejoiced beyond measure and kissed her on the eyes and kissed the envied man's hand. Then he turned to his officers and said, 'How say you? What reward doth he deserve who cured my daughter?' They answered, 'He deserves to have her to wife;' and the King, 'Ye say well.' So he married him to her, and the envied man became the King's son-in-law. After awhile, the Vizier died, and the King said, 'Whom shall we make Vizier in his stead?' 'Thy son-in-law,' answered the courtiers. So the envied man was made Vizier. Presently the Sultan also died, and the grandees determined to appoint the Vizier King in his place. So they made him Sultan, and he became King regnant. One day, as he was riding forth in his royal state, surrounded by his Viziers and Amirs and grandees, his eyes fell on his old neighbour, the envious man; so he turned to one of his viziers and said to him, 'Bring me yonder man and frighten him not.' So the Vizier went and returned with the envious man: and the King said, 'Give him a thousand dinars from my treasury and twenty loads of merchandise and send him under an escort to his own city.' Then he bade him farewell and sent him away and forbore to punish him for what he had done with him See, O Afrit, how the envied man forgave his envier, who had always hated him and borne him malice and had journeyed to him and made shift to throw him into the well: yet did he not requite him his ill-doing, but on the contrary was bountiful to him and forgave him." Then I wept before him exceeding sore, and repeated the following verses:

I prithee, pardon mine offence: for men of prudent mind
To pardon unto those that sin their sins are still inclined.
If I, alas! contain in me all fashions of offence,
Let there in thee forgiveness fair be found in every kind.
For men are bound to pardon those that are beneath their hand,
If they themselves with those that be above them grace would find.

Quoth the Afrit, "I will neither kill thee nor let thee go free, but I will assuredly enchant thee." Then he tore me from the ground and flew up with me into the air, till I saw the earth as it were a platter midmost the water. Presently he set me down on a mountain and took a little earth, over which he muttered some magical words, then sprinkled me with it, saying, "Quit this shape for that of an ape." And immediately I became an ape, a hundred years old. Then he went away and left me; and when I saw myself in this ugly shape, I wept, but resigned myself to the tyranny of fate, knowing that fortune is constant to no one, and descended to the foot of the mountain, where found a wide plain. I fared on for the space of a month till my course brought me to

the shore of the salt sea: where I stood awhile and presently caught sight of a ship in the midst of the sea, making for the land with a fair wind. I hid myself behind a rock on the beach and waited till the ship drew near, when I sprang on board. Quoth one of the passengers, "Turn this unlucky brute out from amongst us!" And the captain said, "Let us kill him." And a third, "I will kill him with this sword." But I laid hold of the captain's skirts and wept, and the tears ran down my face. The captain took pity on me and said, "O merchants, this ape appeals to me for protection, and I will protect him: henceforth he is under my safeguard, and none shall molest or annoy him." Then he entreated me kindly and whatever he said I understood and ministered to all his wants and waited on him, so that he loved me. The ship sailed on with a fair wind for the space of fifty days, at the end of which time we cast anchor over against a great city, wherein were much people, none could tell their number save God. No sooner had we come to an anchor, than we were boarded by officers from the King of the city; who said to the merchants, "Our King gives you joy of your safety and sends you this scroll of paper, on which each one of you is to write a line. For know that the King's Vizier, who was an excellent penman, is dead and the King has sworn a solemn oath that he will make none Vizier in his stead who cannot write like him." Then they gave them a scroll, ten cubits long by one wide, and each of the merchants, who could write, wrote a line therein: after which I rose and snatched the scroll from their hands, and they cried out at me and rated me, fearing that I would tear it or throw it into the sea. But I made signs that I would write; whereat they marvelled, saying, "We never saw an ape write!" And the captain said to them, "Let him alone; if he scrabble, we will drive him away and kill him; but if he write well, I will adopt him as my son, for I never saw so intelligent and well-mannered an ape; and would God my son had his sense and good breeding!" So I took the pen and dipping it in the inkhorn, wrote in an epistolary hand the following verses:

Time hath recorded the virtues of the great:
But thine have remained unchronicled till now.
May God not orphan the human race of thee,
For sire and mother of all good deeds art thou.

Then I wrote the following in a running hand:

Thou hast a pen whose use confers good gifts on every clime;
Upon all creatures of the world its happy favours fall.
What are the bounties of the Nile to thy munificence,
Whose fingers five extend to shower thy benefits on all?

And in an engrossing hand the following:

There is no writer but he shall pass away:
Yet what he writes shall last for ever and aye.
Write, therefore, nought but that which shall gladden thee,
When as it meets thine eye on the Judgment Day.

And in a transcribing hand the following:

When separation is to us by destiny decreed
And 'gainst the cruel chance of Fate our efforts are in vain,

Unto the inkhorn's mouth we fly that, by the tongues of pens,
Of parting and its bitterness it may for us complain.

And in a large formal hand the following:

The regal state endureth not to any mortal man.
If thou deny this, where is he who first on earth held sway?
Plant therefore saplings of good deeds, whilst that thou yet art great
Though thou be ousted from thy stead, they shall not pass away.

And in a court hand the following:

When thou the inkhorn op'st of power and lordship over men,
Make thou thine ink of noble thoughts and generous purpose; then
Write gracious deeds and good therewith, whilst that thy power endures.
So shall thy virtues blazoned be at point of sword and pen.

Then I gave the scroll to the officers, who took it and returned with it to the King. When he saw it, no writing pleased him but mine; so he said to his officers, "Go to the writer of these lines and dress him in a splendid robe; then mount him on a mule and bring him to me with a band of music before him." At this they smiled, and the King was wroth with them and said, "O accursed ones, I give you an order, and ye laugh at me!" "O King," answered they, "we have good cause to laugh." Quoth he, "What is it?" And they replied, "O King, thou orderest us to bring thee the man who wrote these lines: now he who wrote them is no man, but an ape belonging to the captain of the ship." "Can this be true?" asked he; and they said, "Yea, by thy munificence!" The King was astonished at their report and shook with mirth and said, "I have a mind to buy this ape of the captain." Then he sent messengers to the ship and said to them, "Dress him none the less in the robe and mount him on the mule and bring him hither in state, with the band of music before him." So they came to the ship and took me and clad me in the robe and mounted me on the mule and carried me in procession through the city; whilst the people were astounded and crowded to gaze upon me, and the place was all astir on my account. When I reached the King's presence, I kissed the earth before him three times, and he bade me be seated; so I sat down on my heels; and all the bystanders marvelled at my good manners, and the King most of all. After awhile the King dismissed his courtiers, and there remained but myself, his highness the King, an eunuch and a little white slave. Then the King gave orders and they brought the table of food, containing all kinds of birds that hop and fly and couple in the nests, such as grouse and quails and so forth. He signed to me to eat with him; so I rose and kissed the earth before him then sat down and ate with him. When we had done eating, the table was removed, and I washed my hands seven times. Then I took pen and ink and wrote the following verses:

Weep for the cranes that erst within the porringers did lie,
And for the stews and partridges evanished heave a sigh!
Mourn for the younglings of the grouse; lament unceasingly,
As,for the omelettes and the fowls browned in the pan, do I.
How my heart yearneth for the fish, that in its different kinds,
Upon a paste of wheaten flour lay hidden in the pie!

Praised be God for the roast meat! As in the dish it lay,
With pot-herbs, soaked in vinegar, in porringers hard by!
My hunger was appeased: I lay, intent upon the gleam
Of arms that in the frumenty were buried bracelet high.
I woke my sleeping appetite to eat, as 'twere in jest,
Of all the tarts that, piled on trays, shone fair unto the eye.
O soul, have patience! For indeed, Fate full of marvel is:
If fortune straiten thee one day, the next relief is nigh.

Then I rose and seated myself at a distance, whilst the King read what I had written and marvelled and said "Strange that an ape should be gifted with such fluency and skill in penmanship! By Allah, this is a wonder of wonders!" Then they set choice wine before the King in flagons of glass; and he drank, then passed the cup to me; and I kissed the earth and drank and wrote the following verses:

They burnt me with fire, to make me speak,
And found me patient and debonair.
For this I am borne on men's hands on high
And kiss the rosy lips of the fair!

And these also:

Morn struggles through the dusk; so pour me out,
I pray, Of wine, such wine as makes the saddest-hearted gay!
So pure and bright it is, that whether wine in glass
Or glass in wine be held, i' faith, 'tis hard to say.

The King read them and said, with a sigh, "If a man had this quickness of wit, he would excel all the folk of his age and time." Then he called for a chess-board and said to me, "Wilt thou play with me?" I signed with my head as who should say, "Yes," and came forward and placed the men and played two games with him, each of which I won, much to his amazement. Then I took the pen and wrote the following verses:

Two hosts throughout the live-long day contend in deadly fight,
That waxes ever till the shades of night upon them creep;
Then, when the darkness puts an end at last unto their strife,
Upon one couch and side by side, they lay them down to sleep.

These verses filled the King with wonder and delight, and he said to the eunuch, "Go to thy mistress, the Lady of Beauty, and bid her come and amuse herself with the sight of this wonderful ape." So the eunuch went out and presently returned with the lady, who, when she saw me, veiled her face, and said, "O my father, how comes it that thou art pleased to send for me and show me to strange men?" "O my daughter," said he, "there is none here save the little slave and the eunuch who reared thee and myself, thy father. From whom then dost thou veil thy face?" Quoth she, "This that thou deemest an ape is a wise and learned man, the son of a king; the Afrit Jerjis of the lineage of Iblis enchanted him thus, after putting to death his own wife, the daughter of King Efitamous, Lord of the Ebony Islands." At this the King wondered and turning to me, said, "Is this true that she says of thee?" And I signed with my head, as

who should say, "Yes;" and wept. Then said he to his daughter, "Whence knewest thou that he was enchanted?" "O my father," answered she, "there was with me, in my childhood, an old woman who was skilled in magic and taught me its rules and practice; and I became skilled therein and committed to memory a hundred and seventy magical formulas, by the least of which I could transport the stones of thy?? behind the mountain Caf and make its site an abyss of the sea and its people fishes swimming in its midst." "O my daughter," said her father, "I conjure thee, by my life, to disenchant this young man, that I may make him my Vizier, for he is a right pleasant and ingenious youth." "With all my heart," replied she, and taking a knife, on which were engraved Hebrew characters, drew therewith a circle in the midst of the hall and wrote there in names and talismans and muttered words and charms, some of which we understood and others not. Presently the world darkened upon us, and the Afrit presented himself before us in his own shape and aspect, with hands like pitchforks legs like masts and eyes like flames of fire. We were affrighted at him, but the princess said to him, "An ill welcome to thee, O dog!" Whereupon he took the form of a lion and said to her, "O traitress, thou hast broken thy compact with me! Did we not swear that neither of us should molest the other?" "O accursed one," answered she, "how could there be a compact between me and the like of thee?" "Then," said he, "take what thou hast brought on thyself." And opening his mouth, rushed upon her: but she made haste and plucked a hair from her head and waved it in the air, muttering the while; and it at once became a sharp sword, with which she smote the lion and cut him in two. His head became a scorpion, whereupon the princess transformed herself into a great serpent and fell upon the scorpion and there befell a sore battle between them. Presently the scorpion changed to an eagle, and the serpent at once became a griffin, which pursued the eagle a long while, till the latter became a black cat. Thereupon the griffin became a piebald wolf and they fought long and sore, till the cat finding itself beaten, changed into a worm and crept into a pomegranate which lay beside the fountain in the midst of the hall whereupon the pomegranate swelled till it was as big as a watermelon. The wolf ran to seize it, but it rose into the air and falling on the pavement, broke in pieces, and all the seeds fell out and rolled hither and thither, till the floor was covered with them. Then the wolf shook itself and became a cock, which fell to picking up the seeds, till they were all gone, except one that, by the decree of Fate, had rolled to the side of the basin and lay hidden there. The cock began to crow and clap its wings and signed to us with his beak, as who should say, "Are there any grains left?" But we understood him not; and he gave such a cry that we thought the palace would fall on us. Then he ran about all over the hall, till he saw the remaining pomegranate-seed, and rushed to pick it up, but it sprang into the midst of the water and became a fish, which sank to the bottom of the basin. Thereupon the cock became big fish and plunged in after the other; and we saw nothing of them for a time, but heard a loud crying and screaming and trembled. Presently the Afrit rose out of the water, as he were one great flame, with fire and smoke issuing from his mouth and eyes and nostrils. Immediately after, the princess rose also, like a great coal of fire, and they fought till they were wrapped in flames and the hall was filled with smoke. As for us, we were well-nigh suffocated and hid ourselves and would have plunged into the water, fearing lest we be burnt up and destroyed: and the King said, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the

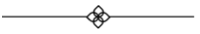
Supreme! We are God's and to Him we return! Would God I had not urged my daughter to attempt the delivery of this ape, whereby I have imposed on her this fearful labour with yonder accursed Afrit, against whom all the other Afrits in the world could not prevail! And would we had never seen this ape, may God's blessing not be on him nor on the hour of his coming! We thought to do him a kindness for the love of God, by freeing him from this enchantment, and lo, we have brought this terrible travail upon ourselves!" But my tongue was tied and I could not say a word to him. Suddenly, the Afrit roared out from under the flames and coming up to us, as we stood on the dais, blew fire in our faces. The princess pursued him and blew flames at him, and the sparks from them both fell upon us; her sparks did us no hurt, but of his one lighted on my right eye and destroyed it; another fell on the King's face and scorched the lower part, burning away half his beard and making his under teeth drop out, and a third lighted on the eunuch's breast and set him on fire, so that he was consumed and died forthright. So we despaired of life and looked for nothing but death; but presently we heard a voice exclaiming, "God is most great! He giveth aid and victory to the true believer and abandoneth him who denieth the religion of Mohammed, the Moon of the Faith!" And lo, the King's daughter had burnt up the Afrit and he was become a heap of ashes! Then she came up to us and said, "Bring me a cup of water." They did so: and she spoke over the water words we understood not and sprinkled me with it, saying, "By the virtue of the Truth and of the Most Great Name of God, return to thine original shape!" And immediately I shook and became a man as before, save that I had lost my right eye. Then she cried out, "The fire! The fire! O my father, I have but an instant to live, for I am not used to fight with Jinn: had he been a man, I had slain him long ago. I had no travail till the time when the pomegranate burst asunder and I overlooked the seed in which was the genie's life. Had I picked it up, he would have died at once; but as fate and destiny would have it, I knew not of this, so that he came upon me unawares and there befell between us a sore strife under the earth and in the air and in the water: and as often as I opened on him a gate (of magic), he opened on me another, till at last he opened on me the gate of fire, and seldom does he on whom the gate of fire is opened escape alive. But Providence aided me against him, so that I consumed him first, after I had summoned him to embrace the faith of Islam. As for me, I am a dead woman and may God supply my place to you!" Then she called upon God for help and ceased not to implore relief from the fire, till presently a tongue of fierce flame broke out from her clothes and shot up to her breast and thence to her face. When it reached her face, she wept and said, "I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the apostle of God!" And we looked at her and behold, she was a heap of ashes beside those of the genie. We mourned for her and I wished I had been in her place, so had I not seen the fair-faced one who had done me this good office reduced to ashes; but there is no averting the decree of God. When the King saw what had befallen his daughter, he plucked out the rest of his beard and buffeted his face and rent his clothes; and I did the like, and we both wept for her. Then came in the chamberlains and grandees and were amazed to find two heaps of ashes and the Sultan in a swoon. So they stood round him till he revived and told them what had happened, whereat they were sore afflicted and the women and slave-girls shrieked aloud and kept up their lamentation for the space of seven days. Moreover, the King bade build a great dome over his daughter's ashes and burn therein

candles and lamps: but the Afrit's ashes they scattered to the winds, committing them to the malediction of God. The King was sick, well-nigh unto death, for a month's space, after which health returned to him and His beard grew again. Then he sent for me and said to me, "O youth, verily we led the happiest of lives, safe from the vicissitudes of fortune, till thou camest to us, when troubles flocked upon us. O that we had never seen thee nor the ugly face of thee! For through our taking pity on thee, we are come to this state of bereavement. I have lost, on thine account, first, my daughter, who was worth a hundred men; secondly, I have suffered what befell me by the fire and the loss of my teeth, and my eunuch also is dead. I do not indeed blame thee for aught of this; for all was decreed of God to us and to thee; and praised be He that my daughter delivered thee, though at the cost of her own life! But now, O my son, depart from my city and let what has befallen us on thine account suffice. Depart in peace, and if I see thee again I will kill thee." And he cried out at me. So I went forth from his presence, knowing not whither I should go, and hardly believing in my escape. And I recalled all that had befallen me from first to last and thanked God that it was my eye that I had lost and not my life. Before I left the town, I entered the bath and shaved my head and put on a hair-cloth garment. Then I fared forth at a venture, and every day I recalled all the misfortunes that had befallen me and wept and repeated the following verses:

By the Compassionate, I'm dazed and know not where I go.
Griefs flock on me from every side, I know not whence they grow.
I will endure till patience' self less patient is than I:
I will have patience till it please the Lord to end my woe.
A vanquished man, without complaint, my doom I will endure,
As the parched traveller in the waste endures the torrid glow.
I will endure till aloes' self confess that I, indeed,
Can 'gainst a bitt'rer thing abide than even it can show.
There is no bitt'rer thing; and yet if patience play me false,
It were to me a bitt'rer thing than all the rest, I trow.
The wrinkles graven on my heart would speak my hidden pain
If through my breast the thought could pierce and read what lies below.
Were but my load on mountains laid, they'd crumble into dust;
On fire it would be quenched outright; on wind, 'twould cease to blow.
Let who will say that life is sweet; to all there comes a day
When they must needs a bitt'rer thing than aloes undergo.

Then I journeyed through many lands and cities, intending for the Abode of Peace, Baghdad, in the hope that I might get speech of the Commander of the Faithful and tell him all that had befallen me. I arrived here this night and found my brother, this first Calender, standing perplexed; so I saluted him and entered into converse with him. Presently up came our brother, this third Calender, and said to us, "Peace be on you! I am a stranger." "We also are strangers," answered we, "and have come hither this blessed night." So we all three walked on together, none of us knowing the others' story, till chance brought us to this door and we came in to you. This, then, is my story and the manner of the shaving of my face and the loss of my eye.' Quoth the mistress of the house, 'Thy story is indeed a rare one: and now begone about thy business.' But

he replied, 'I will not stir till I hear the others' stories.' Then came forward the third Calender and said, 'O illustrious lady, my history is not like that of these my comrades, but still stranger and more marvellous, in that, whilst destiny and fore-ordained fate overcame them unawares, I with mine own hand drew fate and affliction upon myself, as thou shalt presently hear. Know that



Story of the Third Calender.

I ALSO am a king, the son of a king, and my name is Agib, son of Khesib. My father died, and I took the kingdom after him and ruled my subjects with justice and beneficence. My capital city stood on the shore of a wide spreading sea, on which I had fifty merchant ships and fifty smaller vessels for pleasure and a hundred and fifty cruisers equipped for war; and near at hand were many great islands in the midst of the ocean. Now I loved to sail the sea and had a mind to visit the islands aforesaid so I took ship with a month's victual and set out and took my pleasure in the islands and returned to my capital Then, being minded to make a longer voyage upon the ocean, I fitted out half a score ships with provision for two months and sailed twenty days, till one night the wind blew contrary and the sea rose against us with great billows; the waves clashed together and there fell on us a great darkness. So we gave ourselves up for lost and I said, "He who perils himself is not to be commended, though he come off safe." Then we prayed to God and besought Him, but the wind ceased not to rage and the waves to clash together, till daybreak, when the wind fell, the sea became calm and the sun shone out. Presently we sighted an island, where we landed and cooked food and ate and rested two days. Then we set out again and sailed other twenty days, without seeing land; but the currents carried us out of our true course, so that the captain lost his reckoning and finding himself in strange waters, bade the watch go up to the mast-head and look out. So he climbed the mast and looked out and said "O captain, I see nothing to right and left save sky and water, but ahead I see something looming afar off in the midst of the sea, now black and now white." When the captain heard the look-out's words, he cast his turban on the deck and plucked out his beard and buffeted his face and said, "O King, we are all dead men, not one of us can be saved." We all wept for his weeping and I said to him, "O captain, tell us what it is the look-out saw." "O my lord," answered he, "know that we lost our way on the night of the storm and since then we have gone astray one-and-twenty days and there is no wind to bring us back to our true course. To-morrow, by the end of the day, we shall come to a mountain of black stone, called loadstone, for thither the currents bear us perforce. As soon as we come within a certain distance, all the nails in the ships will fly out and fasten to the mountain, and the ships will open and fall to pieces, for that God the Most High has gifted the loadstone with a secret virtue, by reason whereof all iron is attracted to it; and on this mountain is much iron, how much God only knows, from the many ships that have been wrecked there from old time. On its summit there stands a dome of brass, raised on ten columns and on the top of the dome are a horse and horseman of the same metal. The latter holds in his hand a brazen lance and on his breast is a tablet of lead, graven with names and talismans: and, O King, it is nought but this horseman that causeth the folk to perish, nor will the charm be broken till he fall from his horse." Then he wept sore and we all made sure of death and each took leave of his comrade and charged him with his last wishes, in case he should be saved. That night we slept not, and in the morning, we sighted the loadstone mountain, towards which the currents carried us with irresistible force. When the ships came within a certain distance, they opened and the nails started out and all the iron in them sought the loadstone and clove to it; so that by the end of

the day, we were all struggling in the sea round the mountain. Some of us were saved, but the most part drowned, and even those who escaped knew not one of the other, being stupefied by the raging wind and the buffeting of the waves. As for me, God preserved me that I might suffer that which He willed to me of trouble and torment and affliction, for I got on a plank from one of the ships and, the wind driving it ashore, I happened on a pathway leading to the top, as it were a stair hewn out of the rock. So I called upon the name of God the Most High and besought His succour and clinging to the steps, addressed myself to climb up little by little. And God stilled the wind and aided me in my ascent, so that I reached the summit in safety. There I found nothing but the dome; so I entered, mightily rejoiced at my escape, and made my ablutions and prayed a two-bow prayer in gratitude to God for my preservation. Then I fell asleep under the dome and saw in a dream one who said to me, "O son of Khesib, when thou awakest, dig under thy feet and thou wilt find a bow of brass and three leaden arrows, inscribed with talismanic characters. Take the bow and shoot the arrows at the horseman on the top of the dome and rid mankind of this great calamity. When thou shootest at him, he will fall into the sea and the horse will drop at thy feet: take it and bury it in the place of the bow. This done, the sea will swell and rise till it is level with the top of the mountain, and there will appear on it a boat containing a man of brass (other than he whom thou shalt have thrown down), with an oar in his hands. He will come to thee, and do thou embark with him, but beware of naming God. He will row with thee for the space of ten days, till he brings thee to a port of safety, where thou shalt find those who will carry thee to thine own country: and all this shall be fulfilled to thee, so thou pronounce not the name of God." I started up from my sleep and hastening to do the bidding of the mysterious voice, found the bow and arrows and shot at the horseman and overthrew him; whereupon he fell into the sea, whilst the horse dropped at my feet and I took it and buried it. Then the sea grew troubled and rose till it reached the top of the mountain; nor had I long to wait before I saw a boat in the midst of the sea coming towards me. So I gave thanks to God: and when the boat came up to me, I saw in it a man of brass, with a tablet of lead on his breast, inscribed with names and talismans; and I embarked without saying a word. The boatman rowed on with me for ten whole days, till I caught sight of islands and mountains and signs of safety; whereat I was beyond measure rejoiced and in the excess of my gladness, I called upon the name of the Almighty and exclaimed, "There is no god but God! God is most great!" When behold, the boat turned over and cast me out into the sea, then righted and sank beneath the water. Now, I knew how to swim, so I swam the whole day till nightfall, when my arms and shoulders failed me for fatigue, and I abode in mortal peril and made the profession of the Faith, looking for nothing but death. Presently, the sea rose, for the greatness of the wind, and a wave like a great rampart took me and bearing me forward, cast me up on the land, that the will of God might be done. I clambered up the beach and, putting off my clothes, wrung them and spread them out to dry, then lay down and slept all night. As soon as it was day, I put on my clothes and rose to look about me. Presently I came to a grove of trees and making a circuit round it, found that I was on a little island, surrounded on all sides by the sea; whereupon I said to myself, "No sooner do I escape from one peril than I fall into a worse." But as I was pondering my case and wishing for death, I spied a ship afar off making towards me; so I climbed up into a tree and hid myself among the

branches. Presently the ship came to an anchor, and ten slaves landed, bearing spades, and made for the middle of the island, where they dug till they uncovered a trapdoor and raised it. Then they returned to the ship and brought thence bread and flour and oil and honey and meat and carpets and all else that was needed to furnish one dwelling there; nor did they leave going back and forth till they had transferred to the underground dwelling all that was in the ship: after which they again repaired to the vessel and returned, laden with wearing apparel of the finest kind and in their midst a very old man, whom time had mauled till he was wasted and worn, as he were a bone wrapped in a rag of blue cloth, through which the winds blew East and West. As says the poet of him:

Time makes us tremble ah, how piteously!
For full of violence and might is he.
Once on a time I walked and was not tired:
Now am I tired, yet have not walked, ah me!

He held by the hand a youth cast in the mould of symmetry and perfection, so fair that his beauty might well be the subject of proverbs; for he was like a tender sapling, ravishing every heart with his beauty and seducing every wit with his amorous grace. It was of him the poet spoke, when he said:

Beauty they brought to liken it with him:
But Beauty hung its head for shame and fear.
"O Beauty," said they, "dost thou know his like?"
It answered, "Never have I seen his peer."

They proceeded to the underground, where they descended all and did not reappear for an hour or more, at the end of which time the old man and the slaves came up, without the youth, and replacing the trap-door, covered it again with earth; then returned to the ship and set sail. As soon as they were out of sight, I came down from the tree and going to the place I had seen them fill up, made shift to clear away the earth, till I came to the trap-door, which was of wood, the shape and bigness of a mill-stone, and raised it, when there appeared underneath a winding stair of stone. At this I wondered and descending, came to a fair chamber, spread with various kinds of carpets and hung with silken stuffs, where I saw the youth sitting alone upon a raised couch and leant upon a cushion, with a fan in his hand and sweet-scented flowers and herbs and fruits before him. When he saw me, he turned pale; but I saluted him, saying, "Calm thyself and put away fear; no harm shall come to thee: I am a man like unto thee and a king's son, whom Providence hath sent to bear thee company in thy solitude. But now tell me thy history and why thou dwellest underground by thyself." When he was assured that I was of his kind, he was glad and his colour returned; then he made me draw near to him and said, "O my brother, my story is a strange one, and it is as follows. My father is a merchant jeweller, possessed of great wealth and having black and white slaves, who make trading voyages, on his account, in ships and on camels, to the most distant countries; and he has dealings with kings. Until my birth, he had never been blessed with a child, but one night he dreamt that a son had been born to him, who lived but a short time, and awoke weeping and crying out. The following night my mother conceived and he took note of the date of her conception.

The days of her pregnancy were accomplished and she gave birth to myself, whereupon my father rejoiced and made banquets and fed the poor and the needy for that I had been vouchsafed to him in his old age. Then he assembled the astrologers and mathematicians of the day and those learned in nativities and horoscopes; and they drew my horoscope and said to my father, 'Thy son will live till the age of fifteen, at which date there is a break in his line of life, which if he tide over in safety, he shall live long. The danger with which he is threatened is as follows. In the Sea of Peril stands a mountain called the Loadstone Mountain, on whose summit is a horseman of brass, seated on a horse of the same metal, with a tablet of lead on his breast. Fifty days after this horseman falls from his horse, thy son will die, and his slayer will be he who overthrows the statue, a king called Agib, son of Khesib.' My father was sore concerned at this prediction; but he brought me up and gave me a good education, till I attained my fifteenth year. Ten days ago, news came to him that the horseman had fallen into the sea and that he who overthrew him was Agib, son of King Khesib; whereat he was as one distraught and feared for my life. So he built me this place under the earth and stocking it with all that I need during the forty days that yet remain of the period of danger, transported me hither, that I might be safe from King Agib's hands. When the forty days are past, he will come back and fetch me; and this is my story and why thou findest me here alone." When I heard his story, I marvelled and said to myself, "I am that King Agib of whom he speaks; but, by Allah, I will assuredly not kill him!" And I said to him, "O my lord, God willing, thou shalt be spared suffering and death, nor shalt thou see trouble or sorrow or disquiet, for I will abide with thee and serve thee; and when I have borne thee company during the appointed days, I will go with thee to thy dwelling-place and thou shalt bring me to some of thy father's servants, with whom I may journey to my own country; and God shall requite thee for me." He rejoiced in my words and we sat conversing till nightfall when I rose and lighted a great wax candle and fed the lamps and set on meat and drink and sweetmeats. We ate and drank and sat talking till late into the night, when he lay down to sleep and I covered him up and went to sleep myself. Next morning, I rose and heated a little water, then woke him gently and brought him the warm water, with which he washed his face and thanked me, saying, "God requite thee with good, O youth! By Allah, if I escape from this my danger and from him they call Agib ben Khesib, I will make my father reward thee!" "May the day never come on which evil shall befall thee," answered I, "and may God appoint my last day before thine!" Then I set on food and we ate, and I made ready perfumes with which he scented himself. Moreover, I made him a backgammon board, and we played and ate sweetmeats and played again till nightfall when I rose and lighting the lamps, set on food; and we ate and sat talking till the night was far spent. Then he lay down to sleep and I covered him up and went to sleep myself. Thus I did with him, day and night, and the love of him got hold upon my heart and I forgot my troubles and said to myself, "The astrologers lied; by Allah, I will not kill him!" I ceased not to serve him and bear him company and entertain him thus, till nine-and-thirty days were passed and we came to the morning of the fortieth day, when he rejoiced and said to me, "O my brother, the forty days are up to-day, praised be God who hath preserved me from death, and this by thy blessing and the blessing of thy coming to me, and I pray Him to restore thee to thy country! But now, O my brother, I prithee heat me some water, that I may wash my body and change my clothes." "With

all my heart," answered I; and heated water in plenty and carrying it in to him, washed his body well with lupin-meal and rubbed him down and changed his clothes and spread him a high bed, on which he lay down to rest after the bath. Then said he, "O my brother, cut me a melon and sweeten it with sugar-candy." So I went to the closet and bringing a fine melon I found there on a platter, said to him, "O my lord, hast thou no knife?" "Here it is," answered he, "on the high shelf at my head." So I got up hurriedly and taking the knife, drew it from its sheath; but in stepping down backward, my foot slipped and I fell heavily on the youth, holding in my hand the knife, which hastened to fulfil that which was ordained and entered his heart, and he died forthright. When I saw that he was no more and that I had indeed killed him, I cried out grievously and buffeted my face and tore my clothes, saying, "We are God's and to Him we return! There remained for this youth but one day of the period of danger that the astrologers had foretold for him, and the death of this fair one was to be at my hand! Verily, my life is nought but disasters and afflictions! Would he had not asked me to cut the melon or would I had died before him! But what God decrees cometh to pass." When I was certain that there was no life left in him, I rose and ascending the stair, replaced the trap-door and covered it with earth. Then I looked out to sea and saw the ship cleaving the waters in the direction of the island. Whereat I was afeared and said, "They will be here anon and will find their son dead and know 'twas I killed him and will slay me without fail." So I climbed up into a high tree and hid myself among the leaves. Hardly had I done so, when the vessel came to an anchor and the slaves landed with the old man and made direct for the place, where they cleared away the earth and were surprised to find it soft. Then they raised the trap-door and going down, found the boy lying dead, clad in clean clothes, with his face shining from the bath and the knife sticking in his breast. At this sight, they shrieked aloud and wept and buffeted their faces and cried out, "Alas! woe worth the day!" whilst the old man swooned away and remained so long insensible, that the slaves thought he would not survive his son. So they wrapped the dead youth in his clothes and carried him up and laid him on the ground, covering him with a shroud of silk. Then they addressed themselves to transport all that was in the place to the ship, and presently the old man revived and coming up after them, saw his son laid out, whereupon he fell on the ground and strewed dust on his head and buffeted his face and tore his beard; and his weeping redoubled, as he hung over his dead son, till he swooned away again. After awhile the slaves came back, with a silken carpet, and laying the old man thereon, sat down at his head. All this time I was in the tree above them, watching them; and indeed my heart became hoary before my head, for all the grief and affliction I had undergone. The old man ceased not from his swoon till nigh upon sundown, when he came to himself and looking upon his dead son, recalled what had happened and how what he had feared had come to pass: and he buffeted his face and head and recited the following verses:

My heart is cleft in twain for severance of loves;
The burning tears pour down in torrents from my eye.
My every wish with him I loved is fled away:
What can I do or say? what help, what hope have I?
Would I had never looked upon his lovely face!
Alas, the ways on me are straitened far and nigh!

What charm can bring me peace, what drink forgetfulness,
Whilst in my heart the fire of love burns fierce and high?
Would that my feet had trod with him the road of death!
Then should I not, as now, in lonely sorrow sigh.
O God, that art my hope, have pity upon me!
Unite us twain, I crave, in Paradise for aye!
How blessed were we once, whilst one house held us both
And twinned in pure content our happy lives passed by!
Till fortune aimed at us the shafts of severance
And parted us; for who her arrows can defy?
For lo! the age's pearl, the darling of his folk,
The mould of every grace, was singled out to die!
I call him back: "Would God thine hour had never come!"
What while the case takes speech and doth forestall my cry.
Which is the speediest way to win to thee, my son!
My soul had paid the price, if that thy life might buy.
The sun could not compare with him, for lo! it sets.
Nor yet the moon that wanes and wasteth from the sky.
Alas, my grief for thee and my complaint of fate!
None can console for thee nor aught thy place supply.
Thy sire is all distraught with languishment for thee;
Since death upon thee came, his hopes are gone awry.
Surely, some foe hath cast an envious eye on us:
May he who wrought this thing his just deserts aby!

Then he sobbed once and gave up the ghost; whereupon the slaves cried out, "Alas, our master!" and strewed dust on their heads and wept sore. Then they carried the two bodies to the ship and set sail. As soon as they were out of sight, I came down from the tree and raising the trap-door, went down into the underground dwelling, where the sight of some of the youth's gear recalled him to my mind, and I repeated the following verses:

I see their traces and pine for longing pain;
My tears rain down on the empty dwelling-place!
And I pray to God, who willed that we should part,
One day togrant us reunion, of His grace!

Then I went up again and spent the day in walking about the island, returning to the underground dwelling for the night. Thus I lived for a month, during which time I became aware that the sea was gradually receding day by day from the western side of the island, till by the end of the month, I found that the water was become low enough to afford a passage to the mainland. At this I rejoiced, making sure of delivery, and fording the little water that remained, made shift to reach the mainland, where I found great heaps of sand, in which even a camel would sink up to the knees. However, I took heart and making my way through the sand, espied something shining afar off, as it were a bright-blazing fire. So I made towards it, thinking to find succour and repeating the following verses:

It may be Fate at last shall draw its bridle-rein
And bring me happy chance; for Fortune changes still;
And things shall happen yet, despite the things fordone,
To further forth my hopes and bring me to my will.

When I drew near the supposed fire, behold, it was a palace, with a gate of brass, whereon, when the sun shone, it gleamed and glistened and showed from afar, as it were a fire. I rejoiced at the sight and sat down before the palace gate; but hardly had I done so, when there came up ten young men, sumptuously clad and all blind of the right eye. They were accompanied by an old man; and I marvelled at their appearance and at their being all blind of the same eye. They saluted me and questioned me of my condition, whereupon I told them all that had befallen me. They wondered at my story and carried me into the palace, where I saw ten couches, with beds and coverlets of blue stuff, ranged in a circle, with a like couch of smaller size in the midst. As we entered, each of the young men went up to his own couch, and the old man seated himself on the smaller one in the middle. Then said they unto me, "O youth, sit down on the ground and enquire not of our doings nor of the loss of our right eyes." Presently the old man rose and brought each one of the young men and myself his portion of meat and drink in separate vessels; and we sat talking, they questioning me of my adventures and I replying, till the night was far spent. Then said they to the old man, "O elder, wilt thou not bring us our ordinary? The time is come." "Willingly," answered he, and rose and entering a closet, disappeared and presently returned, bearing on his head ten dishes, each covered with a piece of blue stuff. He set a dish before each youth and lighting ten wax-candles, set one upon each dish; after which he uncovered the dishes, and lo, they were full of ashes and powdered charcoal and soot. Then all the young men tucked up their sleeves and fell to weeping and lamenting; and they blackened their faces and rent their clothes and buffeted their cheeks and beat their breasts, exclaiming "We were seated at our ease, but our impertinent curiosity would not let us be!" They ceased not to do thus till near daybreak, when the old man rose and heated water for them, and they washed their faces and put on fresh clothes. When I saw this, my senses left me for wonderment and my heart was troubled and my mind perplexed, for their strange behaviour, till I forgot what had befallen me and could not refrain from questioning them; so I said to them, "What makes you do thus, after our sport and merry-making together? Praised be God, ye are whole of wit, yet these are the doings of madmen! I conjure you, by all that is most precious to you, tell me why you behave thus and how ye came to lose each an eye!" At this, they turned to me and said, "O young man, let not thy youth beguile thee, but leave thy questioning." Then they slept and I with them, and when we awoke, the old man served up food; and after we had eaten and the vessels had been removed, we sat conversing till nightfall, when the old man rose and lit the candles and lamps and set meat and drink before us. We ate and sat talking and carousing till midnight, when they said to the old man, "Bring us our ordinary, for the hour of sleep is at hand." So he rose and brought them the dishes of soot and ashes, and they did as they had done on the preceding night. I abode with them on this wise for a month, during which time they blackened their faces every night, then washed them and changed their clothes and my trouble and amazement increased upon me till I could neither eat nor drink. At last, I lost patience and said to them, "O young men, if ye will not relieve my concern and acquaint me with the

reason of your blackening your faces and the meaning of your words, 'We were seated at our ease, but our impertinent curiosity would not let us be,' let me leave you and return to my own people and be at rest from seeing these things, for as says the proverb,

'Twere wiser and better your presence to leave, For when the eye sees not, the heart does not grieve."

"O youth," answered they, "we have not concealed this thing from thee but in our concern for thee, lest what befell us before thee and thou become like unto us." "It avails not," said I; "you must tell me." "We give thee good advice," rejoined they; "do thou take it and leave questioning us of our case, or thou wilt become one-eyed like unto us." But I still persisted in my demand and they said, "O youth, if this thing befall thee, we warn thee that we will never again receive thee into our company nor let thee abide with us." Then they took a ram and slaughtering it, skinned it and gave me a knife, saying, "Lie down on the skin and we will sew thee up in it and leave thee and go away. Presently there will come to thee a bird called the roc, that will catch thee up in its claws and fly away with thee and set thee down on a mountain. As soon as thou feelest it alight with thee, slit the skin with the knife and come forth; whereupon the bird will take fright at thee and fly away and leave thee. Then rise and fare on half a day's journey, till thou comest to a palace rising high into the air, builded of khelenj and aloes and sandal-wood and plated with red gold, inlaid with all manner emeralds and other jewels. There enter and thou wilt attain thy desire. We all have been in that place, and this is the cause of the loss of our right eyes and the reason why we blacken our faces. Were we to tell thee our stories, it would take too much time, for each lost his eye by a separate adventure." They then sewed me up in the skin and left me on the ground outside the palace; and the roc carried me off and set me down on the mountain. I cut open the skin and came out, whereupon the bird flew away and I walked on till I reached the palace. The door stood open; so I entered and found myself in a very wide and goodly hall, as big as a tilting-ground, round which were a hundred doors of sandal and aloes-wood, plated with red gold and furnished with rings of silver. At the upper end of the hall, I saw forty young ladies, sumptuously clad and adorned, as they were moons, one could never tire of gazing on them: and they all came up to me, saying, "Welcome and fair welcome, O my lord! This month past have we been expecting the like of thee; and praised be God who hath sent us one who is worthy of us and we of him!" Then they made me sit down on a high divan and said to me, "From to-day thou art our lord and master, and we are thy handmaids; so order us as thou wilt." And I marvelled at their case. Presently one of them arose and set food before me, and I ate, whilst others heated water and washed my hands and feet and changed my clothes, and yet others made ready sherbets and gave me to drink; and they were all full of joy and delight at my coming. Then they sat down and conversed with me till nightfall, when five of them arose and spreading a mat, covered it with flowers and fruits and confections in profusion and set on wine; and we sat down to drink, while some of them sang and others played the lute and psaltery and recorders and other instruments. So the cup went round amongst us and such gladness possessed me that I forgot all the cares of the world and said, "This is indeed life, but that it is fleeting." We ceased not to drink and make merry till the night was far spent and we

were warm with wine, when they said to me, "O our lord, choose from amongst us one who shall be thy bedfellow this night and not lie with thee again till forty days be past." So I chose a girl fair of face, with liquid black eyes and jetty hair, slightly parted teeth and joining eyebrows, perfect in shape and form, as she were a palm-sapling or a stalk of sweet basil; such an one as troubles the heart and bewilders the wit, even as saith of her the poet:

'Twere vain to liken her unto the tender branch,
And out on who compares her form to the gazelle!
Whence should gazelles indeed her shape's perfection get
Or yet her honeyed lips so sweet to taste and smell,
Or those great eyes of hers, so dire to those who love,
That bind their victims fast in passion's fatal spell?
I dote on her with all the folly of a child.
What wonder if he turn a child who loves too well!

And I repeated to her the following verses:

My eyes to gaze on aught but thy grace disdain
And none but thou in my thought shall ever reign.
The love of thee is my sole concern, my fair;
In love of thee, I will die and rise again.

So I lay with her that night, never knew I a fairer, and when it was morning, the ladies carried me to the bath and washed me and clad me in rich clothes. Then they served up food and we ate and drank, and the cup went round amongst us till the night, when I chose from among them one who was fair to look upon and soft of sides, such an one as the poet describes, when he says:

I saw upon her breast two caskets snowy-white,
Musk-sealed; she doth forbid to lovers their delight.
She guards them with the darts that glitter from her eyes;
And those who would them press, her arrowy glances smite.

I passed a most delightful night with her; and to make a long story short, I led the goodliest life with them, eating and drinking and carousing and every night taking one or other of them to my bed, for a whole year, at the end of which time they came in to me in tears and fell to bidding me farewell and clinging to me, weeping and crying out; whereat I marvelled and said to them, "What ails you? Indeed you break my heart." "Would we had never known thee!" answered they. "We have companied with many men, but never saw we a pleasanter or more courteous than thou: and now we must part from thee. Yet it rests with thee to see us again, and if thou hearken to us, we need never be parted: but our hearts forebode us that thou will not hearken to us; and this is the cause of our weeping" "Tell me how the case stands," said I; and they answered, "Know that we are the daughters of kings, who have lived here together for years past, and once in every year we are absent for forty days; then we return and abide here for the rest of the year, eating and drinking and making merry. We are now about to depart according to our custom, and we fear lest thou disobey our injunctions in our absence, in which case we shall never see thee again; but if thou do as we bid thee, all

will yet be well. Take these keys: they are those of the hundred apartments of the palace, each of which contains what will suffice thee for a day's entertainment. Ninety-and-nine of these thou mayst open and take thy pleasure therein, but beware lest thou open the hundredth, that which has a door of red gold; for therein is that which will bring about a separation between us and thee." Quoth I, "I will assuredly not open the hundredth door, if therein be separation from you." Then one of them came up to me and embraced me and repeated the following verses:

If but the days once more our severed loves unite,
If but my eyes once more be gladdened by thy sight,
Then shall the face of Time smile after many a frown,
And I will pardon Fate for all its past despite.

And I repeated the following:

When she drew near to bid farewell, upon our parting day,
Whilst on her heart the double stroke of love and longing smote,
She wept pure pearls, and eke mine eyes did rain cornelians forth;
And lo, they all combined and made a necklace for her throat!

When I saw her weeping, I said, "By Allah, I will never open the hundredth door!" Then they bade me farewell and departed, leaving me alone in the palace. When the evening drew near, I opened the first door and found myself in an orchard, full of blooming trees, laden with ripe fruit, and the air resounded with the loud singing of birds and the ripple of running waters. The sight brought solace to my soul, and I entered and walked among the trees, inhaling the odours of the flowers and listening to the warble of the birds, that sang the praises of God the One, the Almighty. I looked upon the apple, whose colour is parcel red and parcel yellow, as says the poet:

The apple in itself two colours doth unite,
The loved one's cheek of red, and yellow of despite.

Then I looked upon the quince and inhaled its fragrance that puts musk and ambergris to shame, even as says the poet:

The quince contains all pleasant things that can delight mankind,
Wherefore above all fruits that be its virtues are renowned.
Its taste is as the taste of wine, its breath the scent of musk;
Its hue is that of virgin gold, its shape the full moon's round.

Thence I passed to the pear, whose taste surpasses rose-water and sugar, and the plum, whose beauty delights the eye, as it were a polished ruby. When I had taken my fill of looking on the place, I went and locked the door again. Next day, I opened the second door and found myself in a great pleasaunce, set with many palm-trees and watered by a running stream, whose borders were decked with bushes of rose and jessamine and henna and camomile and marjoram and sweetbriar and carpeted with narcissus and ox-eye and violets and lilies and gillyflowers. The breeze fluttered over all these sweet-smelling plants and scattered their scents right and left, possessing me with complete delight. I took my pleasure in the place awhile, and my chagrin was somewhat lightened. Then I went out and locked the door and opening the third door, found

therein a great hall paved with vari-coloured marbles and other precious stones and hung with cages of sandal and aloes wood, full of singing-birds, such as the thousand-voiced nightingale and the cushat and the blackbird and the turtle-dove and the Nubian warbler. My heart was ravished by the song of the birds and I forgot my cares and slept in the aviary till the morning. Then I opened the fourth door and saw a great hall, with forty cabinets ranged on either side. The doors of the latter stood open; so I entered and found them full of pearls and rubies and chrysolites and beryls and emeralds and corals and carbuncles and all manner of precious stones and jewels of gold and silver, such as the tongue fails to describe. I was amazed at what I saw and said in myself "Methinks, if all the kings of the earth joined together they could not produce the like of these treasures!" And my heart dilated and I exclaimed, "Now am I king of my time, for all these riches are mine by the favour of God, and I have forty young ladies under my hand, nor is there any with them but myself!" In short, I passed nine-and-thirty days after this fashion, exploring the riches of the place, till I had opened all the doors, except that which the princesses had charged me not to open, but my thoughts ran ever on this latter and Satan urged me, for my ruin, to open it, nor had I patience to forbear; though there remained but one day of the appointed time. So I opened the hundredth door, that which was plated with red gold, and was met by a perfume, whose like I had never before smelt and which was of so subtle and penetrating a quality, that it invaded my head and I fell down, as if intoxicated, and lay awhile unconscious. Then I revived and took heart and entering, found myself in a place strewn with saffron and blazing with light shed by lamps of gold and candles, that diffused a scent of musk and aloes. In the midst stood two great censers, full of burning aloes wood and ambergris and other perfumes, and the place was full of their fragrance. Presently I espied a horse, black as night at its darkest, girt and bridled and saddled with red gold, standing before two mangers of white crystal, one full of winnowed sesame and the other of rose-water flavoured with musk. When I saw this, I was amazed and said to myself, "Surely this horse must be of extraordinary value!" and the devil tempted me, so that I took him out and mounted him, but he would not stir. So I spurred him with my heel, but he did not move; and I took a. switch and struck him with it. When he felt the blow, he gave a neigh like the roaring thunder, and spreading a pair of wings flew up with me high into the air. After awhile, he descended and set me down on the terrace of a palace; then, shaking me off his back, he smote me on the face with his tail and struck out my right eye and flew away, leaving me there. I went down into the palace and found myself again among the ten one-eyed youths, who exclaimed, when they saw me, "An ill welcome to thee!" Quoth I, "Behold, I am become like unto you, and now I would have you give me a dish of soot, that I may blacken my face and admit me to your company." "By Allah," answered they, "thou shalt not abide with us! Depart hence!" And they drove me away. I was grieved at their rejection of me and went out from them, mourning-hearted and tearful-eyed, saying to myself, "Of a truth, I was sitting at my ease, but my impertinent curiosity would not let me be." Then I shaved my beard and eyebrows and renouncing the world, became a Calender and wandered about God's earth, till by His blessing, I arrived at Baghdad in safety this evening and met with these two other Calenders standing bewildered. So I saluted them, saying, "I am a stranger;" to which they replied, "We also are strangers." And, as it chanced, we were all Calenders and each blind of the right eye. This, then, O

my lady, is my story and the manner of the shaving of my face and the loss of my eye.' Quoth the mistress of the house, 'Begone about thy business.' But he said, 'By Allah, I will not go, till I hear the others' stories!' Then she turned to the Khalif and his companions and said, 'Give me an account of yourselves.' So Jaafer came forward and repeated the story he had told the portress; whereupon the lady said, 'I pardon you all: go your ways.' So they all went out; and when they reached the street the Khalif said to the Calenders, 'O folk, whither are you bound now, seeing that it is not yet day?' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered they, 'we know not where to go!' 'Then come and pass the rest of the night with us,' said the Khalif, and turning to Jaafer, said to him, 'Take them home with thee and to-morrow bring them before me, that we may cause their adventures to be recorded.' Jaafer did as the Khalif bade him, and the latter returned to his palace. Sleep did not visit him that night, but he lay awake, pondering the adventures of the three Calenders and full of impatience to know the history of the two ladies and the black bitches; and no sooner had the day dawned than he went out and sat down on his chair of estate. Then his courtiers presented themselves and withdrew, whereupon he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Bring me the three ladies and the bitches and the Calenders, and make haste.' So Jaafer went out and brought them all before him and seated the ladies behind a curtain; then turned to them and said, speaking for the Khalif, 'O women, we pardon you your rough usage of us, in consideration of your previous kindness and for that ye knew us not: and now I would have you to know that you are in the presence of the fifth of the sons of Abbas, the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid, son of El Mehdi Mohammed, son of Abou Jaafer el Mensour. So do ye acquaint him with your stories and tell him nothing but the truth.' When the ladies heard Jaafer's speech, the eldest came forward and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, my story is one which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, would serve for an example to those who can profit by example and a warning to those who can take warning. And it is that

The Eldest Lady's Story.

THESE two bitches are my elder sisters by the same mother and father, and these two others, she on whom are the marks of blows and the cateress, are my sisters by another mother. When my father died, each took her portion of the heritage, and after awhile my mother died also and left me and my sisters-german a thousand dinars each. After awhile my two sisters married and lived with their husbands for a time; then the latter bought merchandise with their wives' money and set out on their travels, and I heard no more of them for five years: for their husbands spent their wives' fortunes and became bankrupt and deserted them in a foreign land. Presently, my eldest sister came back to me in the guise of a beggar, with tattered clothes and a dirty old veil, and altogether in so sorry a plight, that at first I knew her not; but when I recognised her, I asked her how she came in such a state. "O my sister," answered she, "talking profits not now: the pen hath written what was decreed." Then I sent her to the bath and clothed her in a suit of my own and entreated her kindly and said to her, "O my sister, thou standest to me in the stead of my father and mother; and God has blessed me in the share of the inheritance that fell to me and prospered it to me, so that I am now in flourishing case; and thou shalt share with me in my increase." So she abode with me a whole year, during which time we were much concerned to know what was become of our other sister. At last, she too came back to me, in a worse plight than the other, and I dealt still more kindly by her than by the first, and each of them had a share of my substance. After awhile, they said to me, "O sister, we desire to marry again, for we can no longer endure to live without husbands." "O my dear ones," answered I, "there is no good in marriage, for now-a-days good men are rare to find; nor do I see the advantage of marrying again, since ye have already made trial of matrimony and it has profited you nothing." They would not listen to me, but married without my consent; nevertheless I equipped them and portioned them with my own money and they went away with their husbands. After a little, the latter cheated them of all they had and went away and left them. Then they came to me, in abject case, and made their excuses to me, saying, "Do not reproach us; thou art younger than we, but riper of wit, so take us as thy handmaids, that we may eat our mouthful; and we will never again speak of marriage." Quoth I, "Ye are welcome, O my sisters: there is nothing dearer to me than you." And I took them in and redoubled in kindness to them. We lived thus for a whole year, at the end of which time I was minded to travel. So I fitted out a great ship at Bassora and loaded her with merchandise and victual and other necessaries for a voyage, and said to my sisters, "Will you come with me or abide at home till I return?" "We will go with thee," answered they, "for we cannot endure to be parted from thee." So I took them and set sail, after dividing my money into two parts, one of which I deposited with a trusty person, saying, "Maybe ill-hap shall betide the ship and yet we remain alive; but now, if we return, we shall find what will be of service to us." We sailed days and nights, till the captain missed the true course and the ship went astray with us and entered a sea other than that we aimed at. We knew not of this awhile and the wind blew fair for us ten days, at the end of which time, the watch went up to the mast-head, to look out, and cried, "Good news!" Then he came down, rejoicing, and said to us, "I see a city in

the distance as it were a dove." At this we rejoiced and before an hour of the day was past, the city appeared to us afar off: and we said to the captain, "What is the name of yonder city?" "By Allah!" replied he, "I know not, for I never saw it before nor have I ever sailed this sea in my life; but since the affair has issued in safety, ye have nought to do but to land your goods, and if ye find a market, sell and buy and barter, as the occasion serves; if not, we will rest here two days, re-victual and depart." So we entered the harbour and the captain landed and was absent awhile, after which he returned and said to us, "Arise, go up into the city and marvel at God's dealings with His creatures and seek to be preserved from His wrath." So we landed and going up to the city, saw at the gate men with staves in their hands; but when we drew near them, behold, they had been stricken by the wrath of God and were become stones. Then we entered the city and found all its in habitants changed into black stones: there was not a living soul therein, no, not a blower of the fire. At this we were amazed and passed on through the bazaars, where we found all the goods and gold and silver left lying in their places, and rejoiced and said, "Doubtless, there is some mystery in all this." Then we dispersed about the streets of the city and each busied himself with making prize of the wealth and stuffs lying about and took no heed of his comrades, whilst I went up to the citadel and found it goodly of fashion. I entered the king's palace and saw all the vessels of gold and silver and the king himself seated in the midst of his officers and grandees, clad in raiment such as confounded the wit. The throne on which he sat was encrusted with pearls and jewels and his robes were of cloth of gold, adorned with all manner jewels, that shone like stars. Around him stood fifty white slaves, with drawn swords in their hands and clad in divers sorts of silken stuffs; but when I drew near to them, behold, they were all black stones. My understanding was confounded at the sight, but I went on and came to the saloon of the harem, which I found hung with tapestries of gold-striped silk and spread with carpets of the same, embroidered with flowers of gold. Here I saw the queen lying, arrayed in a robe covered with fresh pearls as big as hazel-nuts and crowned with a diadem set with all manner jewels. Her neck was covered with collars and necklaces and all her clothes and ornaments were unchanged, but she herself had been smitten of God and was become black stone. Presently I spied an open door, with seven steps leading to it, and going up, found myself in a place paved with marble and hung and carpeted with gold-embroidered stuffs. At the upper end stood an alcove with drawn curtains and I saw a light issuing thence. So I went up to the alcove and found therein a couch of juniper wood, inlaid with pearls and diamonds and set with bosses of emeralds, with silken coverings of bewildering richness and curtains of the same, looped up with pearls. At the head of the bed stood two lighted candles and in the midst of the alcove was a little stool, on which lay a jewel, the size of a goose's egg, that shone like a lamp and lighted the whole place; but there was no one to be seen. When I saw these things, I wondered and said, "Some one must have lighted these candles." Then I went out and came to the kitchen and thence to the buttery and the king's treasuries and continued to explore the palace and to go from place to place; and for wonderment at what I saw, I forgot myself and wandered on, lost in thought, till the night overtook me. Then I would have gone out, but lost my way and could not find the gate; so I returned to the alcove, where I lay down on the bed and covering myself with a quilt, repeated somewhat of the Koran and would have slept, but could not, for restlessness possessed me. In the middle of the

night, I heard a low sweet voice reciting the Koran, whereat I rejoiced and rising, followed the sound, till it led me to a chamber with the door ajar. I looked through the chink of the door and saw an oratory, wherein was a prayer-niche, with candles burning and lamps hanging from the ceiling. In the midst was spread a prayer-carpet, on which sat a handsome youth, with a copy of the Koran open before him, from which he was reading. I wondered to see him alone alive of all the people of the city and entered and saluted him; whereupon he raised his eyes and returned my salutation. Then said I, "I implore thee, by the truth of that thou readest from the book of God, to answer me my questions." He looked at me with a smile and said, "O handmaid of God, tell me first how thou camest hither, and I will tell thee what has befallen me and the people of this city and the manner of my preservation." So I told him my story, at which he marvelled, and questioned him of the people of the city. Quoth he, "Have patience with me a little, O my sister!" and shutting the Koran, laid it in a bag of satin. Then he made me sit down by his side, and I looked at him and behold, he was like the moon at its full, bright-faced, soft-sided, well-shaped and fair to look upon, as he were a figure of sugar, even as says the poet of the like of him:

A seer of the stars one night was reading the book of the skies,
When lo, in his scroll he saw a lovely youth arise.
Saturn had dyed his hair the hue of the raven's wing
And sprinkled upon his face the musk of Paradise:
The rose of his cheeks from Mars its ruddy colour drew,
And the Archer winged the shafts that darted from his eyes.
Hermes dowered the youth with his own mercurial wit,
And the Great Bear warded off the baleful glance of spies.
Wonder seized on the sage at the sight of the lovely boy,
For the full moon kissed the earth before him, servant-wise.

And indeed God the Most High had clad him in the garment of perfection and broidered it with the shining fringes of his cheeks, even as says the poet of him:

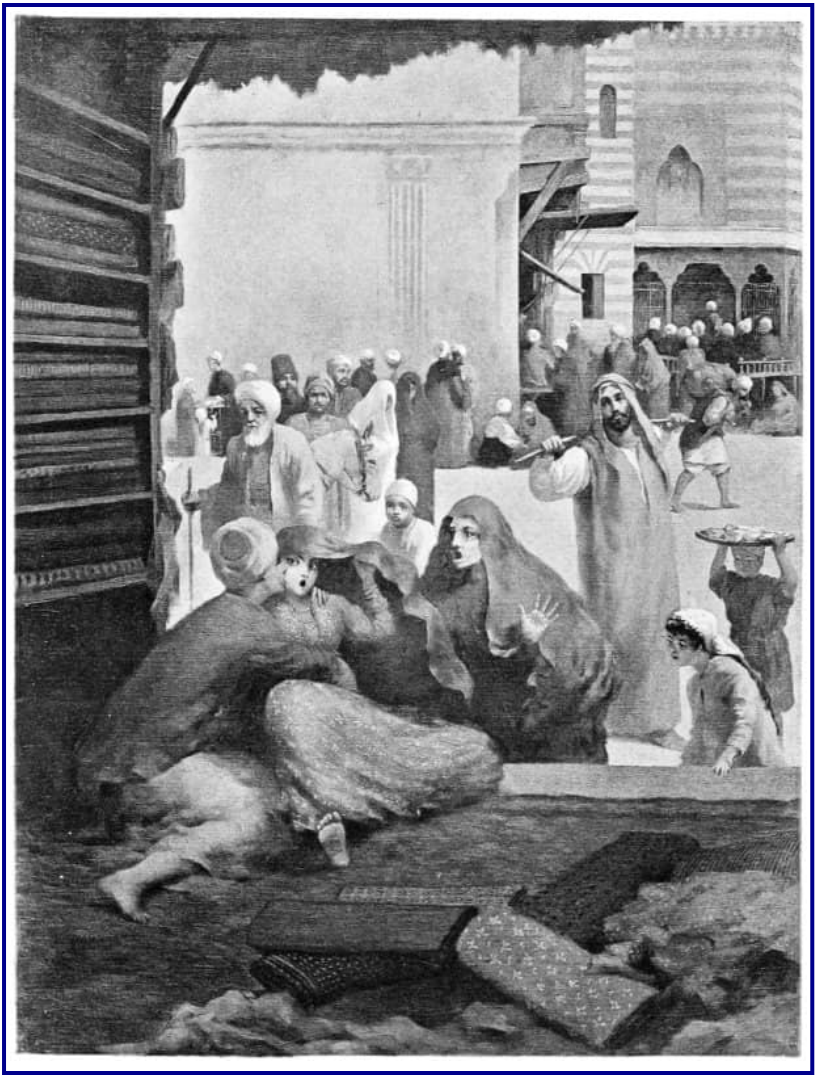
By the perfume of his eyelids and his slender waist I swear,
By the arrows that he feathers with the witchery of his air,
By his sides so soft and tender and his glances bright and keen,
By the whiteness of his forehead and the blackness of his hair,
By his arched imperious eyebrows, chasing slumber from my eyes,
With their yeas and noes that hold me 'twixt rejoicing and despair,
By the myrtle of his whiskers and the roses of his cheeks,
By his lips' incarnate rubies and his teeth's fine pearls and rare,
By his neck and by its beauty, by the softness of his breast
And the pair of twin pomegranates that my eyes discover there,
By his heavy hips that tremble, both in motion and repose,
And the slender waist above them, all too slim their weight to bear,
By his skin's unsullied satin and the quickness of his spright,
By the matchless combination in his form of all things fair,
By his hand's perennial bounty and his true and trusty speech,
By the stars that smile upon him, favouring and debonair,

Lo, the smell of musk none other than his very fragrance is,
And the ambergris's perfume breathes around him everywhere.
Yea, the sun in all its splendour cannot with his grace compare,
Seeming but a shining fragment that he from his nail doth pare.

I stole a look at him, which cost me a thousand sighs, for my heart was taken with his love, and I said to him, "O my lord, tell me what I asked thee." "I hear and obey," answered he. "Know, O handmaid of God, that this city was the capital of my father, who is the king thou sawest on the throne, changed to a black stone, and as for the queen on the bed, she was my mother; and they and all the people of the city were Magians, worshipping the fire, instead of the All-powerful King, and swearing by the fire and the light and the shade and the heat and the revolving sphere. My father had no child, till I was vouchsafed to him in his old age, and he reared me and I grew up and flourished. Now, as my good star would have it, there was with us an old woman stricken in years, who was at heart a Muslim, believing in God and His prophet, but conforming outwardly to the religion of my people. My father had confidence in her, supposing her to be of his own belief, and showed her exceeding favour, for that he knew her to be trusty and virtuous; so when I grew to a fitting age, he committed me to her charge, saying, 'Take him and do thy best to give him a good education and teach him the things of our faith.' So she took me and taught me the tenets of Islam and the ordinances of ablution and prayer and made me learn the Koran by heart, bidding me worship none but God the Most High and charging me to keep my faith secret from my father, lest he should kill me. So I hid it from him, and I abode thus till, in a little while, the old woman died and the people of the city redoubled in their impiety and frowardness and in the error of their ways. One day, they heard a voice from on high, proclaiming aloud, with a noise like the resounding thunder, so that all heard it far and near, and saying, 'O people of the city, turn from your worship of the fire and serve God the Compassionate King!' At this, fear fell on the people of the city and they crowded to my father and said to him; 'What is this awful voice that we have heard and that has confounded us with the excess of its terror?' But he said, 'Let not a voice fright you nor turn you from your faith.' Their hearts inclined to his word and they ceased not to worship the fire, but redoubled in their frowardness, till the anniversary of the day on which they had heard the supernatural voice. When they heard it anew, and so again a third time at the end of the second year. Still they persisted in their evil ways, till one day, at break of dawn, judgment descended on them and wrath from heaven, and they were all turned into black stones, they and their beasts and cattle; and none was spared, save myself. From that day to this, I have remained as thou seest me, occupying myself with prayer and fasting and reading the Koran aloud; and indeed I am grown weary of solitude, having none to bear me company." Then said I to him (and indeed he had won my heart), "O youth, wilt thou go with me to the city of Baghdad and foregather with men of learning and theologians and grow in wisdom and understanding and knowledge of the Law? If so, I will be thy handmaid, albeit I am head of my family and mistress over men and slaves and servants. I have here a ship laden with merchandise; and indeed it was providence drove us to this city, that I might come to the knowledge of these things, for it was fated that we should meet." And I ceased not to speak him fair and persuade him, till he consented to go with me, and I passed the night at his feet, beside myself for joy.

When it was day, we repaired to the treasuries and took thence what was little of weight and great of value; then went down into the town, where we met the slaves and the captain seeking for me. When they saw me, they rejoiced and I told them all I had seen and related to them the story of the young man and of the curse that had fallen on the people of the city. At this they wondered: but when my sisters saw me with the prince, they envied me on his account and were enraged and plotted mischief against me in their hearts. Then we took ship again, beside ourselves for joy in the booty we had gotten, though the most of my joy was in the prince, and waited till the wind blew fair for us, when we set sail and departed. As we sat talking, my sisters said to me, "O sister, what wilt thou do with this handsome young man?" "I purpose to make him my husband," answered I; and I turned to the prince and said, "O my lord, I have that to propose to thee, in which I will not have thee cross me: and it is that, when we reach Baghdad, I will give myself to thee as a handmaid in the way of marriage, and thou shalt be my husband and I thy wife." Quoth he, "I hear and obey; thou art my lady and my mistress, and whatever thou dost, I will not cross thee." Then I turned to my sisters and said to them, "This young man suffices me; and those who have gotten aught, it is theirs." "Thou sayest well," replied they; but in their hearts they purposed me evil. We sailed on with a fair wind, till we left the sea of peril and came into safe waters, and in a few days, we came in sight of the walls of Bassora, even as night overtook us. My sisters waited till the prince and I were asleep, when they took us up, bed and all, and threw us into the sea. The prince, who could not swim, was drowned and God wrote him of the company of the martyrs. As for me, would I had been drowned with him! But God decreed that I should be of the saved; so He threw in my way a piece of wood and I got astride of it, and the waters tossed me about till they cast me up on an island. I landed and walked about the island the rest of the night, and when the day broke, I saw a footway, leading to the mainland. By this time, the sun had risen; so I dried my clothes in its rays and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters. Then I set out and fared on till I reached the mainland and found myself but two hours' distant from the city. So I sat down to rest and presently I saw a great serpent, the bigness of a palm-tree, come fleeing towards me, with all her might, whilst her tongue for weariness hung from her mouth a span's length and swept the dust as she went. She was pursued by a dragon, as long and thin as a spear, which presently overtook her and seized her by the tail whereat the tears streamed from her eyes and she wriggled from side to side. I took pity on her and catching up a stone, threw it at the dragon's head and killed him on the spot. Then the serpent spread a pair of wings and flew away out of sight, leaving me wondering. Now I was tired and drowsiness overcoming me, I slept where I was for awhile. When I awoke, I found a damsel sitting at my feet, rubbing them, and with her, two black bitches, and I was ashamed before her; so I sat up and said to her, "O my sister, who art thou?" "How quickly thou hast forgotten me!" answered she. "I am the serpent, whom thou didst deliver from my enemy by killing him, for I am a Jinniyeh and the dragon was a genie; and I was only saved from him by thy kindness. As soon as thou hadst done me this service, I flew on the wind to your ship and transported all that was therein to thy house. Then I sank the vessel and changed thy sisters into two black bitches, for I know all that has passed between thee and them: but as for the young man, he is drowned." So saying, she flew up with me and the two bitches and presently set us down on the roof of my house,

where I found all the goods that were in my ship, nor was aught missing. Then she said to me, "By that which is written on the seal of our lord Solomon (on whom be peace!) except thou give each of these bitches three hundred lashes every day, I will come and make thee like unto them." "I hear and obey," answered I; and since then I have never failed to beat them thus, O Commander of the Faithful, pitying them the while; and they know it is no fault of mine that they are beaten and accept my excuse. And this is my story.' The Khalif marvelled at her story and said to the portress, 'And thou, how camest thou by the weals on thy body?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she:



Story of the Portress.

"MY father died and left me great wealth, and soon after his death I married one of the richest men of Baghdad. At the end of a year he too died and I inherited from him fourscore thousand dinars, being my lawful share of his property; so that I became passing rich and the report of my wealth spread abroad, for I got me half a score suits of clothes, each worth a thousand dinars. One day, as I was sitting alone, there came in to me an old woman with sunken cheeks and worn eyebrows, bleared eyes and broken teeth, blotched face and bald head, grizzled hair and bent and mangy body, running nose and sallow complexion, even as says the poet of the like of her:

A right pernicious hag! Unshriven be her sins,
Nor let her mercy find what time she comes to die!
So full of wile she is, that with a single thread
Of spider's silk she'd curb a thousand mules that shy.

She saluted me and kissing the ground before me, said, "I have an orphan daughter whose wedding and unveiling I celebrate to-night. We are strangers in the city and know none of its inhabitants, and verily our hearts are broken so do thou earn through us a recompense and reward in the world to come by being present at her unveiling. When the ladies of the city hear that thou art to be present, they also will attend, and so wilt thou bring healing to her spirit, for now she is broken-hearted and has none to look to but God the Most High." Then she wept and kissed my feet, repeating the following verses:

Thy presence honoureth us, and we Confess thy magnanimity: If thou forsake us, there is none Can stand to us in stead of thee.

I was moved to pity for her and said, "I hear and obey; and God willing, I will do more than this for her, for she shall not be unveiled but in my clothes and ornaments and jewellery." At this the old woman rejoiced and fell at my feet and kissed them, saying, "God requite thee with good and gladden thy heart as thou hast gladdened mine! But, O my lady, do not trouble thyself now, but be ready against the evening, when I will come and fetch thee." So saying, she kissed my hand and went away, whilst I attired myself and made my preparations. At the appointed time, the old woman returned, smiling, and kissed my hand, saying, "O my mistress, the most part of the ladies of the city are assembled; and I told them that thou hadst promised to be present, whereat they rejoiced and they are now awaiting thee and are looking eagerly for thy coming." So I veiled myself and taking my serving-maids with me, followed the old woman, till we came to a street swept and watered, through which blew a pleasant breeze. Here she stopped at a handsome portico vaulted with marble and leading to a palace that rose from the ground and took hold upon the clouds. The gateway was hung with a black curtain and lighted by a lamp of gold curiously wrought; and on the door were written the following verses:

I am a dwelling, builded for delight;
My time is still for joyance day and night.
Right in my midst a springing fountain wells,
Whose waters banish anguish and despite,
Whose marge with rose, narcissus, camomile,
Anemone and myrtle, is bedight.

The old woman knocked at the gate, which opened; and we entered a carpeted vestibule hung with lighted lamps and candles and adorned with pendants of precious stones and minerals. Through this we passed into a saloon, whose like is not to be found in the world, hung and carpeted with silken stuffs and lighted by hanging lamps and wax candles in rows. At the upper end stood a couch of juniper-wood, set with pearls and jewels and canopied with curtains of satin, looped up with pearls. Hardly had I taken note of all this, when there came out from the alcove a young lady more perfect than the moon at its full, with a forehead brilliant as the morning, when it shines forth, even as says the poet:

Upon the imperial necks she walks, a loveling bright,
For bride-chambers of kings and emperors bedight.
The blossom of her cheek is red as dragon's blood,
And all her face is flowered with roses red and white.
Slender and sleepy-eyed and languorous of gait,
All manner loveliness is in her sweetest sight.
The locks upon her brow are like a troubled night,
From out of which there shines a morning of delight.

She came down from the dais and said to me, "Welcome, a thousand times welcome to the dear and illustrious sister!" and she recited the following verses:

If the house knew who visits it, it would indeed rejoice
And stoop to kiss the happy place whereon her feet have stood;
And in the voice with which the case, though mute, yet speaks, exclaim,
"Welcome and many a welcome to the generous and good!"

Then she sat down and said to me, "O my sister, I have a brother, who is handsomer than I; and he saw thee at certain festivals and assemblies and fell passionately in love with thee, for that thou art possessed of beauty and grace beyond thy share. He heard that thou wast thine own mistress, even as he also is the head of his family, and wished to make thine acquaintance; wherefore he used this device to bring thee in company with me; for he desires to marry thee according to the law of God and His prophet, and there is no shame in what is lawful." When I heard what she said, I bethought me that I was fairly entrapped and answered, "I hear and obey." At this she was glad and clapped her hands, whereupon a door opened and out came the handsomest of young men, elegantly dressed and perfect in beauty and symmetry and winning grace, with eyebrows like a bended bow and eyes that ravished hearts with lawful enchantments, even as says a poet, describing the like of him:

His face is like unto the new moon's face With signs, like pearls, of fortune and of grace.

And God bless him who said:

He hath indeed been blest with beauty and with grace,
And blest be He who shaped and fashioned forth his face!
All rarest charms that be unite to make him fair,
His witching loveliness distracts the human race.
Beauty itself hath set these words upon his brow,
"Except this youth there's none that's fair in any place."

When I looked at him, my heart inclined to him and I loved him; and he sat down by me and talked with me awhile. Presently the young lady clapped her hands a second time, and behold, a side door opened and there came out a Cadi and four witnesses, who saluted and sitting down, drew up the contract of marriage between me and the young man and retired. Then he turned to me and said, "May our night be blessed! O my mistress, I have a condition to lay on thee." Quoth I, "O my lord, what is it?" Whereupon he rose and fetching a copy of the Koran, said to me, "Swear to me that thou wilt never look upon another man than myself, nor incline to him." I did as he wished and he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and embraced me and my whole heart was taken with love of him. Presently they set food before us and we ate and drank, till we were satisfied and night closed in upon us. Then he took me and went to bed with me and ceased not to kiss and embrace me till the morning. I lived with him in all delight and happiness for a month, at the end of which time I asked his leave to go to the bazaar to buy certain stuffs that I wanted, and he gave me leave. So I veiled myself and taking with me the old woman and a serving-maid, went to the bazaar, where I sat down in the shop of a young merchant, whom the old woman knew and had recommended to me, saying, "The father of this young man died, when he was a boy, and left him great wealth: he has great store of goods, and thou wilt find what thou seekest with him, for none in the bazaar has finer stuffs than he." So she said to him, "Show this lady thy finest stuffs." And he answered, "I hear and obey." Then she began to sound his praises; but I said, "I have no concern with thy praises of him; all I want is to buy what I need of him and return home." So he brought me what I sought, and I offered him the price, but he refused to take it, saying, "It is a guest-gift to thee on the occasion of thy visit to me this day." Then I said to the old woman, "If he will not take the money, give him back the stuff." "By Allah!" said he, "I will take nothing from thee! I make thee a present of it all, in return for one kiss; for that is more precious to me than all that is in my shop." Quoth the old woman, "What will a kiss profit thee?" Then she said to me, "O my daughter, thou hearest what this young man says. What harm will it do thee, if he take from thee a kiss and thou get the stuffs for nothing?" "Dost thou not know," answered I, "that I am bound by an oath?" But she said, "Hold thy tongue and let him kiss thee, and thou shalt keep thy money and no harm shall betide thee." And she ceased not to persuade me till I put my head into the noose and consented. So I veiled my eyes and held up the edge of my veil between me and the street, that the passers-by might not see me; and he put his mouth to my cheek under the veil. But, instead of kissing me, he bit me so hard that he tore the flesh of my cheek, and I swooned away. The old woman took me in her arms and when I came to myself, I found the shop shut up and her lamenting over me and saying, "Thank God it was no worse!" Then she said to me, "Come, take courage and let us go home, lest

the thing get wind and thou be disgraced. When thou returnest, do thou feign sickness and lie down and cover thyself up, and I will bring thee a remedy that will soon heal the wound." So, after awhile, I arose, full of fear and anxiety, and went little by little, till I came to the house, where I lay down and gave out that I was ill. When it was night, my husband came in to me and said, "O my lady, what has befallen thee in this excursion?" Quoth I, "I am not well: I have a pain in my head." Then he lighted a candle and drew near and looked at me and said, "What is that wound on thy cheek, in the soft part?" Said I, "When I went out to-day to buy stuffs, with thy leave, a camel laden with firewood jostled me and the end of one of the pieces of wood tore my veil and wounded my cheek, as thou seest; for indeed the ways are strait in this city." "To-morrow," rejoined he, "I will go to the governor and speak to him, that he may hang every firewood-seller in the city." "God on thee," cried I, "do not burden thy conscience with such a sin against any one! The truth is that I was riding on an ass, and it stumbled and threw me down, and my cheek fell on a piece of glass, which wounded it." "Then," said he, "to morrow I will go to Jaafer the Barmecide and tell him the case, and he will kill every ass in the city." "Wilt thou ruin all the folk on my account," said I, "when this that befell me was decreed of God?" "There is no help for it," answered he, and springing to his feet, plied me with questions and pressed me, till I was frightened and stammered in my speech, so that he guessed how the case stood and exclaimed, "Thou hast been false to thine oath!" Then he gave a great cry, whereupon a door opened and in came seven black slaves, whom he commanded to drag me from my bed and throw me down in the middle of the room. Moreover, he made one take me by the shoulders and sit upon my head and another sit on my knees and hold my feet and giving a third a naked sword, said to him, "Strike her, O Saad, and cut her in twain and let each take half and throw it into the Tigris that the fish may eat her, for this is the reward of her who breaks her oath and is unfaithful to her love." And he redoubled in wrath and repeated the following verses:

If any other share with me in her whom I adore,
I'll root out passion from my heart, though longing me destroy;
And I will say unto my soul, "Death is the better part;"
For love is naught that men with me in common do enjoy.

Then he said to the slave, "Smite her, O Saad!" Whereupon the latter bent down to me and said, "O my lady, repeat the profession of the faith and tell us if there be aught thou wouldst have done, for thy last hour is come." "O good slave," said I, "grant me a little respite, that I may give thee my last injunctions." Then I raised my head and considered my case and how I had fallen from high estate into abjection; wherefore the tears streamed from my eyes and I wept passing sore. He looked at me with angry eyes and repeated the following

Say unto her who wronged us, on whom our kisses tire,
Her that hath chosen another for darling of desire,
Lo, we will spurn thee from us, before thou cast us off!
That which is past between us suffices to our ire.

When I heard this, I wept and looked at him and repeated the following verses:

You doom my banishment from love and all unmoved remain;
You rob my wounded lids of rest and sleep whilst I complain.
You make mine eyes familiar with watching and unrest;
Yet can my heart forget you not, nor eyes from tears refrain.
You swore to me that you would keep, for aye, your plighted faith;
But when my heart was yours, you broke the oath that you had ta'en.
Are you secure against the shifts of time and evil chance,
That you've no mercy on my love nor aught of pity deign?
If I must die, I prithee, write, 'fore God, upon my tomb,
"A slave of passion lieth here, who died of love in vain."
It may be one shall pass that way, who knows the pangs of love,
And looking on a lover's grave, take pity on her pain.

Then I wept; and when he heard what I said and saw my tears, his anger redoubled, and he repeated the following verses:

I left the darling of my heart, not from satiety;
But she had sinned a sin that called aloud for punishment.
She would have ta'en another in to share with me her love,
But the religion of my heart to share will not consent.

Then I wept again and implored him, saying to myself, "I will work on him with words; so haply he may spare my life, though he take all I have." So I complained to him of my sufferings and repeated the following verses:

If thou indeed wert just to me, thou wouldst not take my life.
Alas! against the law of Death no arbiter is there!
Thou layst upon my back the load of passion and desire,
When I for weakness scarce can lift the very gown I wear!
That so my soul should waste away, small wonder is to me;
But oh! I wonder how my flesh can thine estrangement bear.

Then I wept again, and he looked at me and reviled and reproached me, repeating the following verses:

Thou hast forgotten my love in the arms of another than me;
Thou shew'st me estrangement, though I was never unfaithful to thee.
So I will cast thee away, since thou wast the first to forsake,
And by thy pattern content to live without thee will I be.
And (like thyself) in the arms of another thy charms I'll forget;
'Tis thou that hast sundered our loves: thou canst not reproach it to me.

Then he called to the slave with the sword, saying "Cut her in half and rid us of her, for we have no profit of her." So the slave drew near to me and I gave myself up for lost and committed my affair to God the Most High; but, at this moment, in came the old woman and threw herself at my husband's feet and kissed them, saying, "O my son, for the sake of my fosterage of thee and my service to thee, spare this young lady, for indeed she has done nothing deserving of death. Thou art a very young man, and I fear lest her death be laid to thy count, for it is said, 'He who kills shall be killed.' As for

this wretched woman, put her away from thee and from thy thought and heart." And she ceased not to weep and implore him, till he relented and said, "I pardon her, but I will set a mark on her that shall stay with her all her life." Then he made the slaves strip off my clothes and hold me down, and taking a rod of quince-wood beat me with it on the back and sides till I lost my senses for excess of pain and despaired of life. Then he commanded slaves, as soon as it was dark, to carry me back to the house in which I had lived before my marriage with him, taking the old woman with them to guide them. They did as he bade them and cast me down in my house and went away. I did not recover from my swoon till the morning, when I applied myself to the dressing of my wounds, and medicined myself and kept my bed for four months, at the end of which time my body healed and I was restored to health; but my sides still bore the marks of the blows, as thou hast seen. As soon as I could walk, I went to the house where all this had happened, but found the whole street pulled down and nothing but heaps of rubbish where the house had stood, nor could I learn how this had come about. Then I betook myself to this my half-sister and found with her these two black bitches. I saluted her and told her what had befallen me; and she said, "O my sister, who is safe from the vicissitudes of fortune? Praised be God, who hath brought thee off with thy life!" And she repeated the following verse:

Fortune indeed was ever thus: endure it patiently, Whether thou suffer loss of wealth or friends depart from thee.

Then she told me her own story, and we abode together, she and I, never mentioning the name of marriage. After awhile there came to live with us this our other sister the cateress, who goes out every day and buys what we require for the day and night. We led this life till yesterday, when our sister went out as usual and fell in with the porter. Presently we were joined by these three Calenders and later on by three respectable merchants from Tiberias, all of whom we admitted to our company on certain conditions, which they infringed. But we forgave them their breach of faith, on condition that they should give us an account of themselves; so they told us their stories and went away; and we heard nothing more till this morning, when we were summoned to appear before thee; and this is our story.' The Khalif wondered at her story, and ordered it and those of her sister and the Calenders to be recorded in the archives of his reign and laid up in the royal treasury. Then he said to the eldest lady, 'Knowst thou where to find the Afriteh who enchanted thy sisters?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'she gave me some of her hair, saying, "When thou wouldst see me, burn one or two of these hairs, and I will be with thee presently, though I be behind the mountain Caf."' Quoth the Khalif, 'Bring me the hair.' So she fetched it and he threw the whole lock into the fire, whereupon the palace shook and they heard a rumbling sound of thunder, and presently the Jinniyeh appeared and saluted the Khalif, saying, 'Peace be upon thee, O vicar of God!' 'And on thee be peace,' answered he, 'and the mercy of God and His blessing!' Quoth she, 'Know that this lady did me a service for which I cannot enough requite her, in that she saved me from death and slew my enemy. Now I had seen how her sisters dealt with her and felt bound to avenge her on them. At first, I was minded to kill them, but I feared it would be grievous to her, so I turned them into bitches; and now, O Commander of the Faithful, if thou wouldst have me release them, I will do so, out of respect to thee and to her, for I am of

the true believers.' 'Release them,' said the Khalif; 'and after we will proceed to look into the affair of the beaten lady, and if her account prove true, we will avenge her on him who wronged her.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'I will release them forthwith and bring thee to the knowledge of him who maltreated this lady and took her property; and he is the nearest of all men to thee.' So saying, she took a cup of water and muttered over it and spoke words that might not be understood. Then she threw some of the water in the faces of the bitches, saying, 'Return to your former human shape;' whereupon they were restored to their original form, and the Afriteh said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he who beat this lady is thy son El Amin, brother of El Mamoun, who heard of her beauty and grace and laid a trap for her and married her; and indeed he is not to blame for beating her, for he laid a condition on her and took of her a solemn oath that she would not do a certain thing; but she was false to her vow; and he was minded to kill her, but was restrained by the fear of God the Most High and contented himself with beating her, as thou hast seen, and sending her back to her own place.' When the Khalif heard this, he wondered greatly and said, 'Glory be to God the Most High, the Supreme, who hath vouchsafed me the delivery of these two damsels from enchantment and torment and hath granted me to know the secret of this lady's history! By Allah, I will do a thing that shall be chronicled after me!' Then he summoned his son El Amin and questioned him of the story of the portress, and he told him the truth; whereupon the Khalif sent for Cadis and witnesses and married the eldest lady and her two sisters-german to the three Calenders, whom he made his chamberlains, appointing them stipends and all that they needed and lodging them in his palace at Baghdad. Moreover, he returned the beaten girl to her husband, his son El Amin, renewing the marriage contract between them, and gave her great wealth and bade rebuild the house more handsomely than before. As for himself, he took to wife the cateress and lay with her that night; and on the morrow he assigned her a separate lodging in his seraglio, with a fixed allowance and serving-maids to wait on her; and the people marvelled at his equity and magnificence and generosity.

When Shehrzad had made an end of her story, Dunyazad said to her, "By Allah, this is indeed a pleasant and delightful story, never was heard its like! But now, O my sister, tell us another story, to beguile the rest of the waking hours of our night." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad, "if the King give me leave." And he said, "Tell thy story, and that quickly." Then said she, "They say, O King of the age and lord of the time and the day, that

The Three Apples.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid summoned his Vizier Jaafer one night and said to him, 'I have a mind to go down into the city and question the common people of the conduct of the officers charged with its government; and those of whom they complain, we will depose, and those whom they commend, we will advance.' Quoth Jaafer, 'I hear and obey.' So the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour went down into the town and walked about the streets and markets till, as they were passing through a certain alley, they came upon an old man walking along at a leisurely pace, with a fishing-net and a basket on his head and a staff in his hand, and heard him repeat the following verses:

They tell me I shine, by my wisdom and wit,
Midst the rest of my kind, as the moon in the night.
"A truce to your idle discourses!" I cry,
"What's knowledge, indeed, unattended by might?"
If you offered me, knowledge and wisdom and all,
With my inkhorn and papers, in pawn for a mite,
To buy one day's victual, the pledge they'd reject
And cast, like an unread petition, from sight.
Sorry, indeed, is the case of the poor,
And his life, what a load of chagrin and despite!
In summer, he's pinched for a living and cowers
O'er the fire-pot in winter, for warmth and for light.
The curs of the street dog his heels, as he goes,
And the scurviest rascal may rail at the wight.
If he lift up his voice to complain of his case,
He finds not a soul who will pity his plight.
Since such is the life and the lot of the poor,
It were better he lay in the graveyard forthright!

When the Khalif heard this, he said to Jaafer, 'See yonder poor man and note his verses, for they show his necessity.' Then he went up to him and said, 'O old man, what is thy trade?' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'I am a fisherman, with a family to maintain; and I have been out since mid-day, but God has not vouchsafed me aught wherewith to feed them, and indeed I abhor myself and wish for death.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Wilt thou go back with me to the Tigris and cast thy net yet once more on my account, and I will buy of thee whatever comes up for a hundred dinars?' 'On my head be it!' answered the fisherman joyfully. 'I will go back with you.' So he returned with them to the river-bank and cast his net and waited awhile, then drew it up and found in it a chest, locked and heavy. The Khalif lifted it and found it weighty; so he gave the fisherman a hundred dinars, and he went his way; whilst Mesrour carried the chest to the palace, where he set it down before the Khalif and lighted the candles. Then Jaafer and Mesrour broke open the chest and found in it a basket of palm-leaves, sewn together with red worsted. This they cut open and found within a bundle wrapped in a piece of

carpet. Under the carpet was a woman's veil and in this a young lady, as she were an ingot of silver, slain and cut in pieces. When the Khalif saw this, he was sore enraged and afflicted; the tears ran down his cheeks and he turned to Jaafer and said, "O dog of a Vizier, shall folk be murdered in my capital city and thrown into the river and their death laid to my account on the Day of Judgment? I must avenge this woman on her murderer and put him to death without mercy! And as surely as I am descended from the sons of Abbas, an thou bring me not him who slew her, that I may do her justice on him, I will hang thee and forty of thy kinsmen at the gate of my palace!' Quoth Jaafer, 'Grant me three days' respite.' And the Khalif said, 'I grant thee this.' So Jaafer went out from before him and returned to his house, full of sorrow and saying to himself, 'How shall I find him who killed the damsel, that I may bring him before the Khalif? If I bring other than the right man, it will be laid to my charge by God. Indeed, I know not what to do.' Then he kept his house three days, and on the fourth day, the Khalif sent one of his chamberlains for him and said to him, 'Where is the murderer of the damsel?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Vizier, 'am I inspector of murdered folk, that I should know who killed her?' The Khalif was enraged at his answer and commanded to hang him before his palace-gate and that proclamation should be made in the streets of Baghdad, 'Whoso hath a mind to witness the hanging of Jaafer the Barmecide, Vizier of the Khalif, and of forty of his kin, before the gate of the Khalif's palace, let him come out to see!' So the people came out from all quarters to witness the execution of Jaafer and his kinsmen, not knowing the reason. Then they set up the gallows and made Jaafer and the others stand underneath in readiness; but whilst they awaited the Khalif's signal for the execution and the people wept for Jaafer and his kinsmen, behold, a handsome and well-dressed young man, with shining face and bright black eyes, flower-white forehead, downy whiskers and rosy cheeks and a mole like a grain of ambergris, pressed through the crowd, till he stood before Jaafer and said to him, 'I come to deliver thee from this strait, O chief of the Amirs and refuge of the poor! I am he who killed the woman ye found in the chest; so hang me for her and do her justice on me!' When Jaafer heard this, he rejoiced at his own deliverance, but grieved for the young man; and whilst they were yet talking, behold, a man far advanced in years made his way when he saluted them and said, 'O Vizier and noble lord, credit not what this young man says. None killed the damsel but I; so do thou avenge her on me, or I do accuse thee before God the Most High.' Then said the youth, 'O Vizier, this is a doting old man, who knows not what he says: it was I killed her, so do thou avenge her on me.' 'O my son,' said the old man, 'thou art young and desirest the things of the world, and I am old and weary of the world. I will ransom thee and the Vizier and his kinsmen with my life. None killed the damsel but I; so God on thee, make haste to hang me, or there is no living for me after her!' The Vizier marvelled at all this and taking the youth and the old man, carried them before the Khalif and said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I bring thee the murderer of the damsel.' 'Where is he?' asked the Khalif, and Jaafer answered, 'This youth says he killed her, but this old man gives him the lie and affirms that he himself killed her: and behold, they are both in thy hands.' The Khalif looked at them and said, 'Which of you killed the damsel?' The youth replied, 'It was I.' And the old man, 'Indeed, none killed her but myself.' Then the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Take them and hang them both.' But the Vizier replied, 'If one of them be the murderer, to

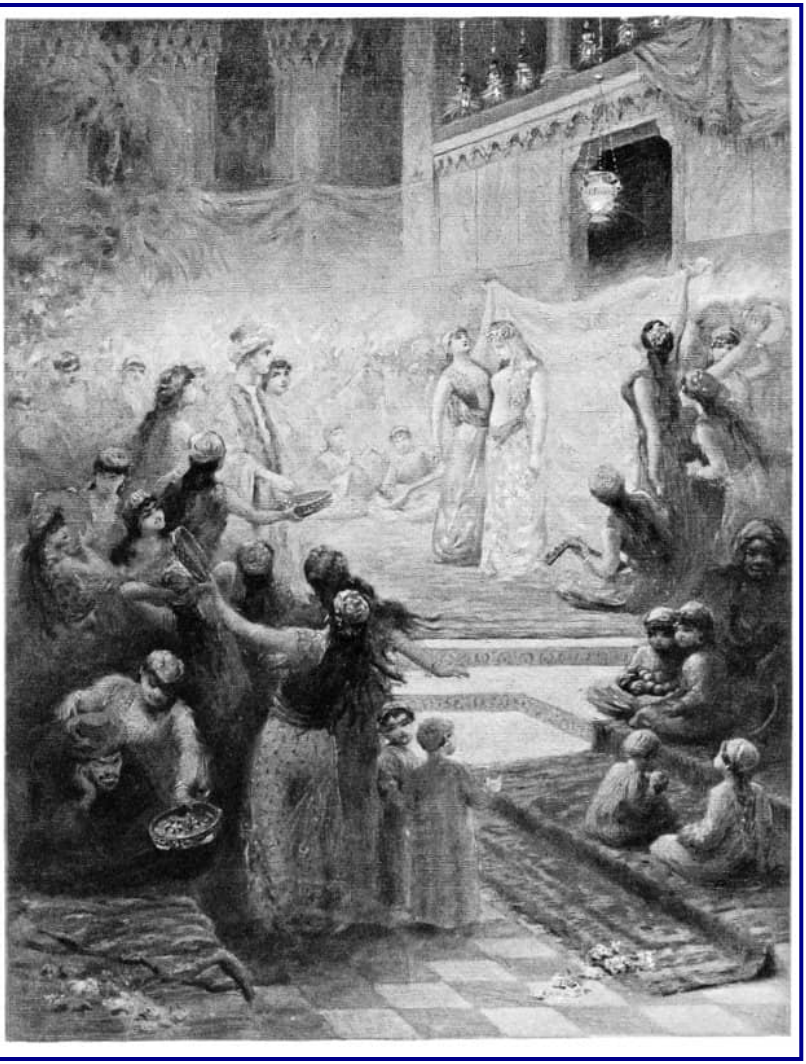
hang the other were unjust.' 'By Him who vaulted the heavens and spread out the earth like a carpet,' cried the youth, 'it was I killed her!' And he set forth the circumstance of her death and how they had found her body, so that the Khalif was certified that he was the murderer, whereat he wondered and said to him, 'Why didst thou slay the damsel wrongfully and what made thee come and accuse thyself thus and confess thy crime without being beaten?' 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the young man, 'that this damsel was my wife and the daughter of this old man, who is my father's brother, and she was a virgin when I married her. God blessed me with three male children by her, and she loved me and served me, and I also loved her with an exceeding love and saw no evil in her. We lived happily together till the beginning of this month, when she fell grievously ill. I fetched the doctors to her and she recovered slowly; and I would have had her take a bath; but she said, "There is something I long for, before I go to the bath." "What is it?" asked I, and she replied, "I have a longing for an apple, that I may smell it and bite a piece of it." So I went out into the city at once and sought for apples, but could find none, though, had they been a dinar apiece, I would have bought them. I was vexed at this and went home and said to my wife, "By Allah, my cousin, I can find none." She was distressed, being yet weak, and her weakness increased greatly on her that night, and I passed the night full of anxiety. As soon as it was day, I went out again and made the round of the gardens, but could find no apples anywhere. At last I met an old gardener, of whom I enquired for them, and he said to me, "O my son, this fruit is rare with us and is not now to be found but in the garden of the Commander of the Faithful at Bassora, where the gardener keeps them for the Khalif's table.' I returned home, troubled at my ill-success, and my love and concern for her moved me to undertake the journey to Bassora. So I set out and travelled thither and bought three apples of the gardener there for three dinars, with which I returned to Baghdad, after having been absent fifteen days and nights, going and coming. I went in to my wife and gave her the apples; but she took no pleasure in them and let them lie by her side; for weakness and fever had increased on her and did not leave her for ten days, at the end of which time she began to mend. So I left the house and went to my shop, where I sat buying and selling. About mid-day a great ugly black slave came into the bazaar, having in his hand one of the three apples, with which he was playing; so I called to him and said, "Prithee, good slave, tell me whence thou hadst that apple, that I may get the fellow to it." He laughed and answered, "I had it of my mistress; for I had been absent and on my return I found her lying ill, with three apples by her side: and she told me that the cuckold her husband had made a journey for them to Bassora, where he had bought them for three dinars. So I ate and drank with her and took this one from her." When I heard this, the world grew black in my eyes, and I rose and shut my shop and went home, beside myself for excess of rage. I looked for the apples and finding but two of them, said to my wife, "Where is the third apple?" Quoth she, "I know not what is come of it." This convinced me of the truth of the slave's story, so I took a knife and coming behind her, without word said, got up on her breast and cut her throat; after which I hewed her in pieces and wrapping her in her veil and a piece of carpet, sewed the whole up hurriedly in the basket. Then I put the basket in the chest and locking it up, set it on my mule and threw it into the Tigris with my own hands. So, God on thee, O Commander of the Faithful, make haste to hang me, for I fear lest she sue for vengeance on me at the Day

of Resurrection! For when I had thrown her into the river, unknown of any, I returned home and found my eldest boy weeping, though he knew not what I had done with his mother; and I said to him "Why dost thou weep, my son?" He replied, "I took one of my mother's apples and went down with it into the street to play with my brothers, when lo, a tall black slave snatched it from my hand, saying, 'Whence hadst thou this?' Quoth I, 'My father journeyed to Bassora for it and brought it to my mother, who is ill, with two other apples for which he paid three dinars. Give it back to me and do not get me into trouble for it.' He paid no heed to my words and I demanded the apple a second and a third time; but he beat me and went away with it. I was afraid that my mother would beat me on account of the apple; so for fear of her, I went without the city with my brothers and abode there until night closed in upon us, and indeed I am in fear of her: so by Allah, O my father, say nothing to her of this, or it will add to her illness." When I heard what the child said, I knew that the slave was he who had forged a lie against my wife and was certified that I had killed her wrongfully. So I wept sore, and presently, this old man, her father, came in and I told him what had passed; and he sat down by my side and wept and we ceased not weeping half the night. This was five days ago and from that time to this, we have never ceased to bewail her and mourn for her, sorrowing sore for that she was unjustly put to death. All this came of the lying story of the slave, and this was the manner of my killing her; so I conjure thee, by the honour of thy forefathers, make haste to kill me and do her justice on me, for there is no living for me after her.' The Khalif wondered at his story and said, 'By Allah, the young man is excusable, and I will hang none but the accursed slave!' Then he fumed to Jaafer and said to him, 'Bring me the accursed slave, who was the cause of this calamity, and if thou bring him not in three days, thou shalt suffer in his stead.' And Jaafer went out, weeping and saying, 'Verily, I am beset by deaths; the pitcher does not come off for aye unbroken. I can do nothing in this matter; but He who saved me the first time may save me again. By Allah, I will not leave my house during the three days that remain to me, and God who is the Truth shall do what He will.' So he kept his house three days, and on the fourth day, he summoned Cadis and witnesses and made his last dispositions and bade farewell to his children, weeping. Presently in came a messenger from the Khalif and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful is beyond measure wroth and sends to seek thee and swears that the day shall not pass without thy being hanged.' When Jaafer heard this, he wept and his children and slaves and all that were in the house wept with him. Then they brought him his little daughter, that he might bid her farewell. Now he loved her more than all his other children; so he pressed her to his breast and kissed her and wept over his separation from her; when lo, he felt something round in her bosom and said to her, 'What's this in thy bosom?' 'O my father,' answered she, 'it is an apple with the name of our lord the Khalif written on it. Our slave Rihan brought it to me four days ago and would not let me have it, till I gave him two dinars for it.' When Jaafer heard this, he put his hand into her bosom and took out the apple and knew it and rejoiced, saying, 'O swift Dispeller of trouble!' Then he sent for the slave and said to him, 'Harkye Rihan, whence hadst thou this apple?' 'By Allah, O my lord,' replied he, 'though lying might get me off, yet is it safer to tell the truth! I did not steal it from thy palace nor from the palace of His Highness nor the garden of the Commander of the Faithful. The fact is that some days ago, I was passing along a certain alley of this city, when I saw some

children playing and this apple in the hand of one of them. So I snatched it from him, and he wept and said, "O youth, this apple is my mother's and she is ill. She longed for apples, and my father journeyed to Bassora and bought her three for three dinars, and I took one of them to play with." But I paid no heed to what he said and beat him and went off with the apple and sold it to my little mistress for two dinars.' When Jaafer heard this, he wondered that the death of the damsel and all this misery should have been caused by his slave and grieved for the relation of the slave to himself, whilst rejoicing over his own delivery: and he repeated the following verses:

If through a servant misfortune befall thee, Spare not to save thine own life at his cost. Servants in plenty thou'lt find to replace him, Life for life never, once it is lost.

Then he carried the slave to the Khalif, to whom he related the whole story; and the Khalif wondered greatly and laughed till he fell backward and ordered the story to be recorded and published among the folk. Then said Jaafer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wonder not at this story, for it is not more marvellous than that of Noureddin Ali of Cairo and his son Bedreddin Hassan.' 'What is that?' asked the Khalif; 'and how can it be more marvellous than this story?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'I will not tell it thee except thou pardon my slave.' Quoth the Khalif, 'If it be indeed more marvellous than that of the three apples, I grant thee thy slave's life; but if not, I will kill him.' 'Know, then, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Jaafer, 'that



Noureddin Ali of Cairo and His Son Bedreddin Hassan.

THERE was once in the land of Egypt a just and pious King who loved the poor and companied with the learned, and he had a Vizier, a wise and experienced man, well versed in affairs and in the art of government. This Vizier, who was a very old man, had two sons, as they were two moons, never was seen their like for beauty and grace, the elder called Shemseddin Mohammed and the younger Noureddin Ali; but the younger excelled his brother in comeliness and fair favour, so that folk heard of him in distant lands and journeyed to Egypt to get sight of him. After awhile the Vizier died, to the great grief of the Sultan, who sent for his two sons and invested them with robes of honour, saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled, for you shall stand in your father's stead and be joint Viziers of Egypt." At this they were glad and kissed the earth before him and mourned for their father a whole month, at the end of which time they entered upon the Vizierate, and the government passed into their hands, as it had been in those of their father, each ruling for a week at a time. Whenever the Sultan went on a journey, they took it in turns to accompany him; and the two brothers lived in one house, and there was perfect accord between them. It chanced, one night, that the Sultan purposed setting out on a journey on the morrow and the elder, whose turn it was to attend him, was sitting talking with his brother and said to him, "O my brother, it is my wish that we both marry and go in to our wives on the same night." "O my brother," replied Noureddin, "do as thou wilt; I will conform to thee." So they agreed upon this and Shemseddin said, "If it be the will of God that we both marry on the same night, and our wives be brought to bed on the same day, and thy wife bear a boy and mine a girl, we will marry the children to one another, for they will be cousins." "O my brother," asked Noureddin, "what dowry wilt thou require of my son for thy daughter!" Quoth the other, "I will have of him three thousand dinars and three gardens and three farms, for it would not be fitting that he bring her a smaller dowry than this." When Noureddin heard this, he said, "What dowry is this thou wouldst impose on my son? Knowest thou not that we are brothers and both by God's grace Viziers and equal in rank? It behoves thee to offer thy daughter to my son, without dowry: or if thou must have a dower, it should be something of nominal value, for mere show; for thou knowest the male to be more worthy than the female, and my son is a male, and our memory will be preserved by him, not by thy daughter; but I see thou wouldst do with me according to the saying, 'If thou wouldst drive away a purchaser, ask him a high price,' or as did one, who, being asked by a friend to do him a favour, replied, 'In the name of God; I will comply with thy request, but not till tomorrow.' Whereupon the other answered him with this verse:

'When one, of whom a favour's asked, postpones it till next day,
'Tis, to a man who knows the world, as if he said him nay.'"

Quoth Shemseddin, "Verily, thou errest in that thou wouldst make thy son more worthy than my daughter, and it is plain that thou lackest both judgment and manners. Thou talkest of thy share in the Vizierate, when I only admitted thee to share with me, in pity for thee, not wishing to mortify thee, and that thou mightest help me.

But since thou talkest thus, by Allah, I will not marry my daughter to thy son, though thou pay down her weight in gold!" When Noureddin heard this, he was angry and said, "And I, I will never marry my son to thy daughter." "I would not accept him as a husband for her," answered the other, "and were I not bound to attend the Sultan on his journey, I would make an example of thee; but when I return, I will let thee see what my dignity demands." When Noureddin heard this speech from his brother, he was beside himself for rage, but held his peace and stifled his vexation; and each passed the night in his own place, full of wrath against the other. As soon as it was day, the Sultan went out to Ghizeh and made for the Pyramids, accompanied by the Vizier Shemseddin, whilst Noureddin arose, sore enraged, and prayed the morning-prayer. Then he went to his treasury, and taking a small pair of saddle-bags, filled them with gold. And he called to mind his brother's words and the contempt with which he had treated him and repeated the following verses:

Travel, for yon shall find new friends in place of those you leave,
And labour, for in toil indeed the sweets of life reside.
Nor gain nor honour comes to him who idly stays at home;
So leave thy native land behind and journey far and wide.
Oft have I seen a stagnant pool corrupt with standing still;
If water run, 'tis sweet, but else grows quickly putrefied.
If the full moon were always high and never waned nor set,
Men would not strain their watchful eyes for it at every tide.
Except the arrow leave the bow, 'twill never hit the mark,
Nor will the lion chance on prey, if in the copse he bide.
The aloes in its native land a kind of firewood is,
And precious metals are but dust whilst in the mine they hide.
The one is sent abroad and grows more precious straight than gold;
The other's brought to light and finds its value magnified.

Then he bade one of his people saddle him his mule with a padded saddle. Now she was a dapple mule, high-backed, like a dome builded upon columns; her saddle was of cloth of gold and her stirrups of Indian steel, her housings of Ispahan velvet, and she was like a bride on her wedding night. Moreover, he bade lay on her back a carpet of silk and strap the saddle-bags on that and spread a prayer-rug over the whole. The man did as he bade him and Noureddin said to his servants, "I have a mind to ride out a-pleasuring towards Kelyoubiyeh, and I shall lie three nights abroad; but let none of you follow me, for my heart is heavy." Then he mounted the mule in haste and set out from Cairo, taking with him a little victual, and made for the open country. About mid-day, he reached the town of Belbeys, where he alighted and rested himself and the mule. Then he took out food and ate and fared on again in the direction of the desert, after having bought victual and fodder for the mule in the town. Towards nightfall, he came to a town called Saadiyeh, where he alighted and took out food and ate, then spread the carpet on the ground and laying the saddle bags under his head, slept in the open air, for he was still overcome with anger. As soon as it was day, he mounted and rode onward, till he reached the city of Jerusalem and thence to Aleppo, where he alighted at one of the khans and abode three days, to rest himself and the mule. Then, being still intent upon travel, he mounted and setting out again, he knew not whither,

journeyed on without ceasing, till he reached the city of Bassora, where he alighted at a certain khan and spread out his prayer-carpet, after having taken the saddle-bags off the mule's back and given her to the porter that he might walk her about. As chance would have it, the Vizier of Bassora, who was a very old man, was sitting at a window of his palace opposite the khan and saw the porter walking the mule up and down. He remarked her costly trappings and took her to be a mule of parade, of such as are ridden by kings and viziers. This set him thinking and he became perplexed and said to one of his servants, "Bring me yonder porter." So the servant went and returned with the porter, who kissed the ground before the Vizier; and the latter said to him, "Who is the owner of that mule, and what manner of man is he?" "O my lord," replied the porter, "he is a comely young man of the sons of the merchants, grave and dignified of aspect." When the Vizier heard this, he rose at once and mounting his horse, rode to the khan and went in to Noureddin, who, seeing him making towards himself, rose and went to meet him and saluted him. The Vizier bade him welcome to Bassora and dismounting, embraced him and made him sit down by his side and said to him, "O my son, whence comest thou and what dost thou seek?" "O my lord." answered Noureddin, "I come from the city of Cairo;" and told him his story from beginning to end, saying, "I am resolved not to return home, till I have seen all the towns and countries of the world." When the Vizier heard this, he said to him, "O my son, follow not the promptings of thy soul, lest they bring thee into peril; for indeed the lands are waste and I fear the issues of Fortune for thee." Then he let load the saddle-bags and the carpets on the mule and carried Noureddin to his own house, where he lodged him in a pleasant place and made much of him, for he had conceived a great affection for him. After awhile, he said to him, "O my son, I am an old man and have no male child, but God has given me a daughter who is thy match for beauty, and I have refused many suitors for her hand. But love of thee has got hold upon my heart; so wilt thou accept of my daughter to thine handmaid and be her husband? If thou consent to this, I will carry thee to the Sultan of Bassora and tell him that thou art my brother's son and bring thee to be appointed Vizier in my stead, that I may keep the house, for, by Allah, O my son, I am a very old man and I am weary." When Noureddin heard the Vizier's proposal, he bowed his head awhile, then raised it and answered, "I hear and obey." At this the Vizier rejoiced and bade his servants decorate the great hall, in which they were wont to celebrate the marriages of nobles. Then he assembled his friends and the notables of the kingdom and the merchants of Bassora and said to them, "I had a brother who was Vizier in Cairo, and God vouchsafed him two sons, whilst to me, as you know, He has given a daughter. My brother proposed to me to marry my daughter to one of his sons, to which I consented; and when my daughter came at a marriageable age, he sent me one of his sons, this young man now present, to whom I purpose now to marry her, for he is better than a stranger, and that he shall go in to her in my house this night. After, if he please, he shall abide with me, or if he please, he shall return with his wife to his father." The guests replied, "It is well seen of thee." And they looked at Noureddin and were pleased with him. So the Vizier sent for Cadis and witnesses, and they drew up the marriage contract, after which the servants perfumed the guests with incense and sprinkled rose-water on them, and they drank sherbet of sugar and went away. Then the Vizier bade his servants take Noureddin to the bath and sent him a suit of the best of his own clothes, besides cups

and napkins and perfume-burners and all else that he required. So he went to the bath, and when he came out and put on the suit, he was like the moon on the night of her full. Then he mounted his mule and returning to the Vizier's palace, went in to the latter and kissed his hands. The Vizier welcomed him and said to him, "Arise, go in to thy wife this night, and tomorrow I will carry thee to the Sultan; and I pray God to bless thee with all manner of good!" So Noureddin left him and went in to his wife, the Vizier's daughter. To return to his brother Shemseddin. When he came back to Cairo, after having been absent awhile with the Sultan, he missed his brother and enquired of his servants, who said, "On the day of thy departure with the Sultan, thy brother mounted his mule, caparisoned as for state, saying, 'I am going towards El Kelyoubiyeh and shall be absent a day or two, for I am heavy of heart; and let none follow me.' Then he rode away, and from that time to this we have heard nothing of him." Shemseddin was concerned at his brother's absence and became exceedingly uneasy, when he found that he did not return, and said to himself, "This is because I spoke harshly to him that night, and he has taken it to heart and gone away; but I must send after him." Then he went in to the King and acquainted him with what had happened, and he wrote letters and despatched couriers to his deputies in every province; but after awhile they returned without having been able to come at any news of Noureddin, who had by this time reached Bassora. So Shemseddin despaired of finding his brother and said, "Indeed, I went beyond all bounds in what I said to him, with reference to the marriage of our children. Would it had not been so! This all comes of my lack of sense and judgment." Soon after this he sought in marriage the daughter of a merchant of Cairo and took her to wife and went in to her (as it happened by the will of God the Most High, that so He might carry out what He had decreed to His creatures) on the very night on which Noureddin went in to the Vizier's daughter of Bassora. Moreover, it was as the two brothers had said; for their wives conceived by them and were brought to bed on the same day, the wife of Shemseddin of a daughter, never was seen in Cairo a fairer than she, and the wife of Noureddin of a son, than whom a handsomer was never seen in his time. They named the boy Bedreddin Hassan, and his grandfather, the Vizier of Bassora rejoiced in him and gave feasts and public entertainments, as for the birth of a king's son. Then he took Noureddin and went up with him to the Sultan. When Noureddin came in presence of the King, he kissed the ground before him and repeated the following verses, for he was facile of speech, firm of soul and abounding in good parts and natural gifts:

May all delights of life attend thee, O my lord,
And mayst thou live as long as night and morning be!
Lo! when meets tongues recall thy magnanimity,
The age doth leap for Joy and Time claps hands for glee.

The Sultan rose to receive them and after thanking Noureddin for his compliment, asked the Vizier who he was. The Vizier replied, "This is my brother's son." And the Sultan said, "How comes it that we have never heard of him?" "O my lord the Sultan," answered the Vizier, know that my brother was Vizier in Egypt and died, leaving two sons, whereof the elder became Vizier in his father's stead and the younger, whom thou seest, came to me. I had sworn that I would give my daughter in marriage to none but him; so when he came, I married him to her. Now he is young

and I am old; my hearing grows dull and my judgment fails; wherefore I pray our lord the Sultan to make him Vizier in my room, for he is my brother's son and the husband of my daughter, and he is apt for the Vizierate, being a man of sense and judgment." The Sultan looked at Noureddin and was pleased with him, so granted the Vizier's request and appointed him to the Vizierate, presenting him with a splendid dress of honour and one of his choicest mules and allotting him stipends and allowances. Noureddin kissed the Sultan's hands and went home, he and his father-in-law, rejoicing greatly and saying, "This is of the good fortune of the new-born Hassan." Next day he presented himself before the King and repeated the following verses:

New favours attend thee each day of thy life,
And fortune to counter the craft of thy foes!
May thy days with God's favour be white to the end,
And black be their days with misfortune and woes!

The Sultan commanded him to sit in the Vizier's place; so he sat down and applied himself to the business of his office, examining into the folks' affairs and giving judgment on their suits, after the usage of Viziers, whilst the Sultan watched him and wondered at his wit and good sense and judgment, wherefore he loved him and took him into favour. When the Divan broke up, Noureddin returned to his house and related what had passed to his father-in-law, who rejoiced. Thence-forward Noureddin ceased not so to apply himself to the duties of the Vizierate, that he left not the Sultan day or night and the latter increased his stipends and allowances till he amassed great wealth and became the owner of ships, that made trading voyages for his hand, as well as of slaves and servants, black and white, and laid out many estates and made irrigation-works and planted gardens. When his son Hassan was four years old, his father-in-law, the old Vizier, died, and he buried him with great pomp. Then he occupied himself with the education of his son and when he came to the age of seven, he brought him a doctor of the law, to teach him in his own house, and charged him to give him a good education and teach him good manners. So the tutor taught the boy to read and all manner of useful knowledge, after he had spent some years in committing the Koran to memory; and he grew in stature and beauty and symmetry, even as says the poet:

The moon in the heaven of his grace shines full and fair to see,
And the sun of the morning glows in his cheeks' anemones.
He's such a compend of beauties, meseems, indeed, from him
The world all beauty borrows that lives in lands and seas.

The professor brought him up in his father's palace, and all his years of youth he never left the house, till one day his father clad him in his richest clothes, and mounting him on one of the best of his mules, carried him to the Sultan, who was struck with his beauty and loved him. As for the people of the city, when he passed through the streets on his way to the palace, they were dazzled with his loveliness and sat down in the road, awaiting his return, that they might gaze their fill on his beauty and grace and symmetry. The Sultan made much of the boy and bade his father bring him with him, whenever his affairs called him to the palace. Noureddin replied, "I hear and obey," and ceased not to carry him to the Sultan's court, till he reached the

age of fifteen, when his father sickened and calling his son, said to him, "Know, O my son, that this world is but a temporary abode, whilst the next is an eternal one. Before I die, I wish to give thee certain last injunctions, so pay heed to my words and set thy mind to understand them." Then he gave him certain advice as to the proper way of dealing with folk and the conduct of his affairs; after which he called to mind his brother and his native land and wept for his separation from those he loved. Then he wiped away his tears and turning to his son, said to him, "Before I proceed to my parting exhortations, thou must know that thou hast an uncle who is Vizier in Cairo, and I left him and went away without his consent." Then he took a sheet of paper and wrote therein all that had happened to him from the day of the dispute, together with the dates of his marriage and going in to the Vizier's daughter and the birth of his son; after which he folded and sealed the paper and gave it to his son, saying, "keep this paper carefully, for in it is written thy rank and lineage and origin, and if any mishap befall thee, go to Cairo and ask for thine uncle and give him this and tell him that I died in a foreign land, full of longing for him." So Bedreddin took the paper and wrapping it in a piece of waxed cloth, sewed it into the lining of his skull-cap and wound the muslin of his turban over it, weeping the while at the thought of losing his father, whilst himself but a boy. Then said Noureddin, "I have five behests to lay on thee: and the first is that thou be not too familiar with any one, neither frequent him nor foregather with him over-much; so shalt thou be safe from his mischief, for in retirement is safety, and I have heard it said by a poet:

There is no man in all the world, whose love is worth thy trust,
No friend who, if fate play thee false, will true and constant be.
Wherefore I'd have thee live apart and lean for help on none.
In this I give thee good advice; so let it profit thee.

Secondly, O my son, oppress no one, lest Fortune oppress thee; for the fortune of this world is one day for thee and another against thee, and its goods are but a loan to be repaid. As I have heard a poet say:

Be slow to move and hasten not to snatch thy heart's desire;
Be merciful to all, as thou on mercy reckonest;
For no hand is there but the hand of God is over it,
And no oppressor but shall be with worse than he oppress.

Thirdly, preserve silence and let thy faults distract thee from those of other men; for it is said that in silence is safety; and thereon I have heard the following verses:

Silence is fair and safety lies in taciturnity.
So, when thou speak'st, I counsel thee, give not thy tongue the rein.
Since, for one time that thou repent the having held thy tongue,
Thou shalt of having spoke repent again and yet again.

Fourthly, O my son, beware of drinking wine, for wine is the root of all evils and the thief of wit. Guard thyself from it, for the poet says:

Wine and the drinkers of wine I have put away,
And am become of those that of it mis-say.

For wine indeed diverts from the road of right,
And to all kinds of evil opens the way.

Lastly, O my son, keep thy wealth, that it may keep thee, and watch over it, that it may watch over thee. Squander not thy substance, or thou wilt come to need the meanest of folk. Guard well thy money, for it is a sovereign salve for the wounds of life, even as says the poet:

If wealth should fail, there is no friend will bear thee company,
But whilst thy substance still abounds, all men are friends to thee.
How many a foe for money's sake hath companied with me!
But when wealth failed beneath my hand, my dearest friend did flee."

And Noureddin ceased not to exhort his son till his spirit departed and his house became the abode of mourning. The King and all the Amirs grieved for him and buried him; but Bedreddin ceased not to bewail his father for two whole months, during which time he never left the house, nor did he attend the Divan or present himself before the Sultan. At last the latter became wroth with him and made one of his chamberlains Vizier in his stead and bade him seize on all Noureddin's houses and goods and possessions and seal them up. So the new Vizier went forth to do this and take Bedreddin Hassan and bring him before the Sultan, that he might deal with him as he thought fit. Now there was among the troops one who had been a servant of the deceased Vizier, and when he heard this order he spurred his steed and rode at full speed to Bedreddin's house, where he found him sitting at the gate, with downcast head, broken-hearted. So he dismounted and kissing his hand, said to him, "O my lord and son of my lord, hasten, ere destruction light on thee!" When Bedreddin heard this, he trembled and said, "What is the matter?" "The Sultan is wroth with thee," answered the other, "and has given orders for thine arrest, and calamity follows hard upon me, so flee for thy life." Quoth Bedreddin, "Is there time for me to go in and take somewhat to stand me in stead in my strangerhood?" But the other answered, "O my lord, rise at once and save thyself whilst it is yet time, and leave thy house." So Bedreddin covered his face with his skirt and went out and walked on till he came without the city. On his way, he heard the people saying that the Sultan had sent the new Vizier to the late Vizier's house, to seize on his possessions and take his son Bedreddin Hassan and bring him before him, that he might put him to death, and they grieved for him by reason of his beauty and grace. When he heard this, he fled forth at hazard, not knowing whither, and chance led him to the cemetery where his father was buried. So he passed among the tombs, till he came to his father's sepulchre and entering, sat down and let fall from over his head the skirt of his cassock, which was made of brocade, with the following lines embroidered in gold on the hem:

Thou whose face with the rainbow might vie,
That art bright as the stars of the sky,
May thy fortune ne'er fail to be fair
And thy glory for ever be high!

As he sat by his father's tomb, there came up a Jew, as he were a money-changer, with a pair of saddle-bags full of gold, and accosted him, saying, "Whither away, O my lord? It is near the end of the day and thou art lightly clad and bearest the marks of

chagrin on thy countenance." "I was asleep but now," answered Bedreddin, "when my father appeared to me and reproached me for not having visited his tomb, and I awoke, trembling, and came hither at once, fearing lest the day should pass, without my paying him a visit, which would have been grievous to me." "O my lord," said the Jew, "thy father had many ships at sea, whereof some are now due; and it is my wish to buy of thee the cargo of the first that comes into port for a thousand dinars." "I will well," answered Bedreddin; whereupon the Jew took out a purse of gold and counted out a thousand dinars, which he gave to Bedreddin, saying, "Write me an acknowledgment and seal it." So Bedreddin took pen and paper and wrote the following in double: "The writer, Bedreddin Hassan, son of the Vizier Noureddin of Bassora, has sold to Isaac the Jew all the cargo of the first of his father's ships that comes into port, at the price of a thousand dinars, which he has received in advance." Then he gave one copy to the Jew, who took it and went away, and put the other in the purse, which he thrust into his waistcloth. And he bethought him of his former estate of honour and consideration and wept and repeated the following verses:

Home is no longer home to me, now ye are gone away,
Nor are the neighbours neighbours now, after our parting-day,
The comrade, whom I loved whilere, no more a comrade is,
And even the very sun and moon' no longer bright are they.
Ye went away and all the world was saddened for your loss,
And all the hills and plains grew dark with sorrow and dismay.
O that the raven of ill-luck, that croaked our parting hour,
May lose his plumes nor find a nest in which his head to lay!
My patience fails me for desire, my body wasteth sore;
How many a veil the hands of death and parting rend in tway!
I wonder, will our happy nights come ever back again,
Or one house hold us two once more, after the olden way!

Then he wept sore and laying his head on his father's tomb, remained plunged in melancholy thought till drowsiness overcame him and he fell asleep. He slept on till the moon rose, when his head rolled off the tomb and he lay on his back, with his face gleaming in the moon. Now the cemetery was haunted by true-believing Jinn, and presently a Jinniyeh came out and seeing Bedreddin lying asleep, marvelled at his beauty and grace and said, "Glory be to God! This can be no other than one of the children of Paradise." Then she rose into the air to fly about, as was her wont, and met an Afrit flying, who saluted her, and she said to him, "Whence comest thou?" "From Cairo," replied he. Quoth she, "Wilt thou come with me and look on the beauty of a youth who sleeps in the burial-ground yonder?" And he said, "I will well." So they both flew down to the tomb and she showed him Bedreddin, saying, "Sawest thou ever the like of this young man?" The Afrit looked at him and exclaimed, "Blessed be God to whom there is none like! But, O my sister, shall I tell thee what I have seen this day?" "What is that?" asked she; and he answered, "I have seen a young lady in the land of Egypt, who is the counterpart of this youth. She is the daughter of the Vizier Shemseddin of Cairo and is possessed of beauty and grace and symmetry and perfection. When she reached the age of fifteen, the Sultan of Egypt heard of her and sending for the Vizier her father, said to him, 'O Vizier, it has come to my knowledge

that thou hast a daughter and I wish to demand her of thee in marriage.' 'O my lord the Sultan,' replied the Vizier, 'I prithee accept my excuse and take compassion on my grief, for thou knowest that my brother Noureddin, who was my partner in the Vizierate, left us many years ago and went I know not whither. Now the reason of his departure was that one night we were sitting talking of marriage and children, when we came to words on the subject and he was angry with me and went away in his anger. But on the day her mother bore her, fifteen years ago, I swore that I would marry my daughter to none but my brother's son. Now, awhile ago, I heard that he is lately dead at Bassora, where he was Vizier, after having married the former Vizier's daughter and had by her a son; and I will not marry my daughter but to him, in honour of my brother's memory. Moreover, I recorded the date of my marriage and of the conception and birth of my daughter and drew her horoscope, and she is destined for her cousin and there are girls in plenty for our lord the Sultan.' When the Sultan heard the Vizier's answer, he was exceeding wroth and said, 'When the like of me demands in marriage the daughter of the like of thee, he confers a favour on her, and thou puttest me off with idle excuses! As my head liveth, I will marry her to the meanest of my serving men, to spite thee!' Now the Sultan had a hunchbacked groom, with a hump behind and before, and he sent for him and married him to the Vizier's daughter, whether she would or no, and bade carry him in procession and bring him in to his bride this very night. Now I have just come from Cairo, where I left the hunchback at the door of the bath, surrounded by the King's servants holding lighted flambeaux and making mock of him. As for the Vizier's daughter, she sits among her nurses and tire-women, weeping, for they have forbidden her father access to her. Never, O my sister, saw I one more hideous than the hunchback, whilst the young lady is the likest of all folk to this youth, though she is even handsomer than he." "Thou liest," replied the Jinniyeh; "this youth is handsomer than any one of his day." "By Allah, O my sister," replied the Afrit, "the girl I speak of is handsomer than he, but none but he is worthy of her, for they resemble each other as they were brother and sister or brothers' children. Alas, the pity of her with that hunchback!" Then said she, "O my brother, let us take him up and carry him to Cairo, that we may compare him with the damsel and see whether of them is the handsomer." "I hear and obey," answered the Afrit; "this is right well advised, and I will carry him." So he took Bedreddin up and flew with him through the air, accompanied by the Afriteh, till he alighted in the city of Cairo and set him down on a stone bench. Then he aroused him, and when he found himself no longer on his father's tomb in Bassora, but in a strange city, he would have cried out, but the Afrit gave him a cuff and imposed silence on him. Then he brought him a splendid dress and made him put it on, and giving him a lighted flambeau, said to him, "Know that I have brought thee hither, meaning to do thee a good turn for the love of God; so take this torch and mingle with the people at the door of the bath and accompany them to the house of the wedding festival. Then advance and enter the hall and fear none, but sit down on the right hand of the humpbacked bridegroom; and as often as the tire-women and singers stop before thee, put thy hand into thy pocket and thou wilt find it full of gold. Take it out by handsful and give to all who come to thee and spare not, for as often as thou puttest thy hand into thy pocket, thou wilt find it without fail full of gold. So fear nothing, but put thy trust in Him who created thee, for all this is not by shine own strength but by that of God, that His decrees may take

effect upon His creatures." Quoth Bedreddin to himself, "I wonder what is the meaning of all this!" And taking the torch, went to the bath, where he found the hunchback already on horseback. So he mixed with the people and moved on with the bridal-procession; and as often as the singing-women stopped to collect largesse from the people, he put his hand into his pocket and finding it full of gold, took out a handful and threw it into the singers' tambourine, till it was full of dinars. The singing women were amazed at his munificence and they and the people wondered at his beauty and grace and the richness of his dress. He ceased not to do thus, till he reached the Vizier's palace, where the chamberlains drove back the people and forbade them to enter; but the singing women said, "By Allah, we will not enter, unless this young man enter with us, for he has overwhelmed us with his bounties; nor shall the bride be displayed, except he be present." So the chamberlains let him pass, and he entered the bridal saloon with the singers, who made him sit down, in defiance of the humpbacked bridegroom. The wives of the Viziers and Amirs and chamberlains were ranged, each veiled to the eyes and holding a great lighted flambeau, in two ranks, extending right and left from the bride's throne to the upper end of the dais, in front of the door from which she was to issue. When the ladies saw Bedreddin and noted his beauty and grace and his face that shone like the new moon, they all inclined to him, and the singers said to all the women present, "You must know that this handsome youth has handselled us with nought but red gold, so fail ye not to wait on him and comply with all that he says." So all the women crowded round Bedreddin, with their torches, and gazed on his beauty arid envied him his grace; and each would gladly have lain in his bosom an hour or a year. In their intoxication, they let fall their veils from their faces and said, "Happy she who belongs to him or to whom he belongs!" And they cursed the humpbacked groom and him who was the cause of his marriage to that lovely lady; and as often as they invoked blessings on Bedreddin, they followed them up with imprecations on the hunchback, saying, "Indeed, this youth and he alone deserves our bride. Alas, the pity of her with this wretched hunchback, God's curse be on him and on the Sultan who will have her marry him!" Then the singers beat their tambourines and raised cries of joy, announcing the coming of the bride; and the Vizier's daughter entered, surrounded by her tire-women, who had perfumed her with essences and incensed her and decked her hair and dressed her in costly robes and ornaments such as were worn by the ancient kings of Persia. Over all she wore a robe embroidered in red gold with figures of birds and beasts with eyes and beaks of precious stones and feet and claws of red rubies and green beryl, and about her neck was clasped a necklace of Yemen work, worth many thousands of dinars, whose beazels were all manner jewels, never had Caesar or King of Yemen its like. She seemed as it were the full moon, when it shines out on the fourteenth night, or one of the houris of Paradise, glory be to Him who made her so splendidly fair! The women encompassed her as they were stars, and she in their midst as the moon breaking through the clouds. As she came forward, swaying gracefully to and fro, the hunchback rose to kiss her, but she turned from him and seeing Bedreddin Hassan seated, with all the company gazing on him, went and stood before him. When the folk saw her thus attracted towards Bedreddin, they laughed and shouted and the singers raised their voices, whereupon he put his hand to his pocket and cast gold by handsful into the tambourines of the singing-women, who rejoiced and said, "Would this bride were thine!" At this he smiled, and the people

came round him, with the flambeaux in their hands, whilst the hunchback was left sitting alone, looking like an ape; for as often as they lighted a candle for him, it went out and he abode in darkness, speechless and confounded and grumbling to himself. When Bedreddin saw the bridegroom sitting moping alone and all the lights and people collected round himself, he was confounded and marvelled; but when he looked at his cousin, the Vizier's daughter, he rejoiced and was glad, for indeed her face was radiant with light and brilliancy. Then the tire-women took off the veil and displayed the bride in her first dress of red satin, and she moved to and fro with a languorous grace, till the heads of all the men and women were turned by her loveliness, for she was even as says the excellent poet:

Like a sun at the end of a cane in a hill of sand,
She shines in a dress of the hue of pomegranate-flower.
She gives me to drink of her cheeks and her honeyed lips,
And quenches the flaming fires that my heart devour.

Then they changed her dress and displayed her in a robe of blue; and she reappeared like the moon when it bursts through the clouds, with her coal-black hair and her smiling teeth, her delicate cheeks and her swelling bosom, even as says the sublime poet:

She comes in a robe the colour of ultramarine,
Blue as the stainless sky unflecked with white.
I view her with yearning eyes, and she seems to me
A moon of the summer set in a winter's night.

Then they clad her in a third dress and letting down her long black ringlets, veiled her face to her eyes with the super-abundance of her hair, which vied with the murkiest night in length and blackness; and she smote all hearts with the enchanted arrows of her glances. As says the poet:

With hair that hides her rosy cheeks ev'n to her speaking eyes,
She comes; and I her locks compare unto a sable cloud
And say to her, "Thou curtainest the morning with the night."
But she, "Not so; it is the moon that with the dark I shroud."

Then they displayed her in the fourth dress, and she shone forth like the rising sun, swaying to and fro with amorous languor and turning from side to side with gazelle-like grace. And she pierced hearts with the arrows of her eyelashes; even as says the poet:

A sun of beauty she appears to all that look on her,
Glorious in arch and amorous grace, with coyness beautified;
And when the sun of morning sees her visage and her smile,
Conquered, he hasteneth his face behind the clouds to hide.

Then they displayed her in the fifth dress, with her ringlets let down. The downy hair crept along her cheeks, and she swayed to and fro, like a willow-wand or a gazelle bending down to drink, with graceful motions of the neck and hips. As says the poet, describing her:

Like the full moon she doth appear, on a calm night and fair;
Slender of shape and charming all with her seductive air.
She hath an eye, whose glances pierce the hearts of all mankind,
Nor can cornelian with her cheeks for ruddiness compare.
The sable torrent of her locks falls down unto her hips;
Beware the serpents of her curls, I counsel thee, beware!
Indeed, her glance, her sides are soft, but none the less, alas!
Her heart is harder than the rock; there is no mercy there.
The starry arrows of her looks she darts above her veil;
They hit and never miss the mark, though from afar they fare.
When I clasp hands about her waist, to press her to my heart,
The swelling apples of her breast compel me to forbear.
Alas, her beauty! it outdoes all other loveliness;
Her shape transcends the willow-wand and makes the branch despair.

Then they unveiled her in the sixth dress, which was green. In this she reached the utmost bounds of loveliness, outvying in slender straightness the tawny spear-shaft, and in suppleness and flexile grace the bending branch, whilst the splendours of her face outshone the radiance of the full moon. Indeed, she transcended the fair of all quarters of the world and all hearts were broken by her loveliness; for she was even as says the poet:

A damsel made for love and decked with subtle grace;
You'd say the very sun had borrowed from her face.
She came in robes of green, the likeness of the leaf
That the pomegranate flower cloth in the bud encase.
"How call'st thou this thy dress?" we said to her, and she
Made answer with a word full of malicious grace.
"Breaker of Hearts," quoth she, "I call it, for therewith
I've broken many a heart among the human race."

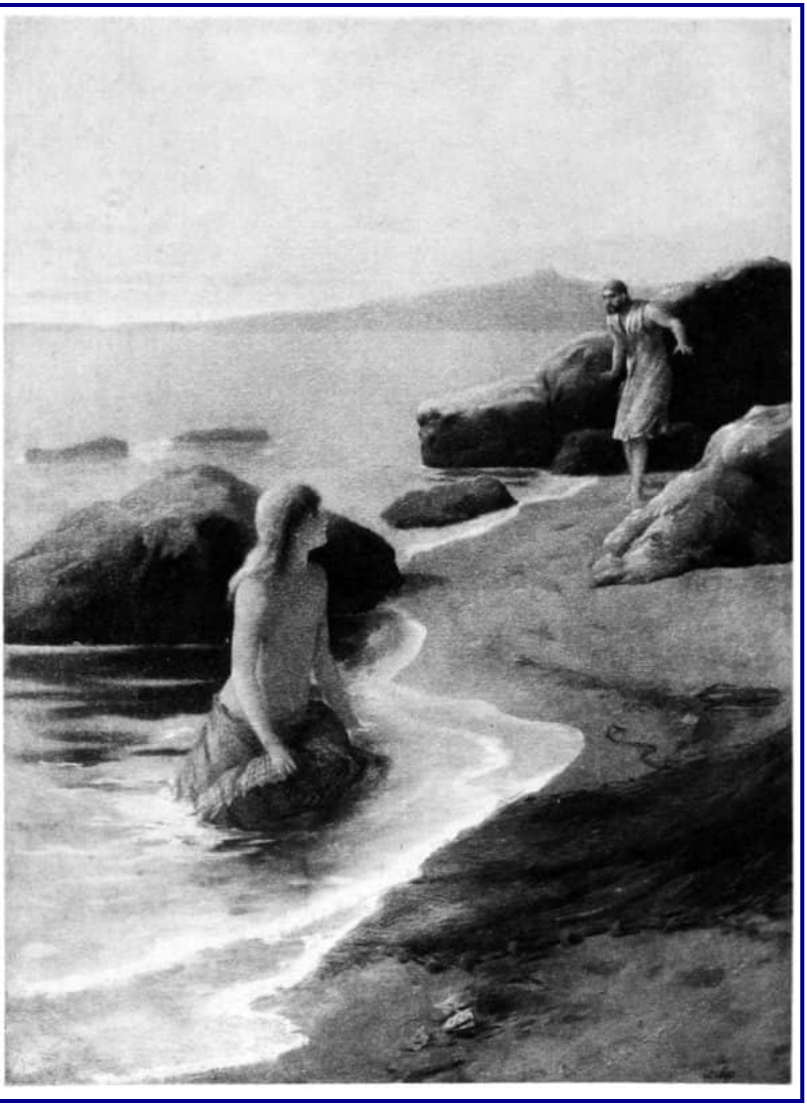
Then they dressed her in the seventh dress, which was of a colour between saffron and orange, even as says the poet:

Scented with sandal and musk and ambergris, lo! she comes.
The blended hues of her dress 'twixt orange and saffron show.
Slender and shapely she is; vivacity bids her arise,
But the weight of her hips says, "Sit, or softly and slowly go."
When I solicit her kiss and sue for my heart's desire,
"Be gracious," her beauty says, but her coquetry answers, "No."

They unveiled the bride, in all her seven dresses, before Bedreddin Hassan, leaving the hunchback sitting by himself; and when she opened her eyes, she said, "O my God, grant that this youth may be my husband and deliver me from this humpbacked groom." Then they dismissed the company and all who were present retired, except Bedreddin Hassan and the hunchback, whilst the tire-women carried off the bride to undress her and prepare her for the bridegroom. Thereupon the hunchback came up to Bedreddin Hassan and said to him, "O my lord, thou hast cheered us with thy

company tonight and overwhelmed us with thy favours. Wilt thou not now rise and depart?" "In the name of God," replied Bedreddin, and rising, went out of the door, where the Afrit met him and said to him, "Stay where thou art, and when the hunchback goes out to the draught-house, enter thou the bride chamber and do not hesitate, but sit down in the alcove, and when the bride comes, say to her, 'Tis I who am thy husband, for the King only played this trick on thee, to conjure the evil eye from us; and he whom thou sawest is one of our grooms.' Then go up to her and uncover her face and fear nothing, for jealousy hath taken us of this affair and none is worthy to enjoy her youth but thyself.' As he was yet speaking, the groom came out and entering the closet, sat down on the stool. Hardly had he done so, when the Afrit appeared to him in the shape of a mouse, issuing from the water-trough, and cried "Queek!" Quoth the hunchback, "What ails thee?" And the mouse increased till it became a cat and said, "Miaou! Miaou!" Then it grew still more and became a dog and cried, "Bow! Wow!" When the hunchback saw this, he was terrified and exclaimed, "Begone, O unlucky one!" The dog increased and became an ass-colt, that brayed and cried out in his face, "Heehaw! Heehaw!" Whereupon the hunchback quaked and cried out, "Come to my aid, O people of the house!" But the ass increased and swelled, till it became a buffalo and barred the way against him and said with a human voice, "Out on thee, hunchback, thou stinkard!" The groom was seized with a colic and sat down on the jakes with his clothes on and his teeth chattering. Quoth the Afrit, "Is the world so small that thou canst find none to marry but my mistress?" But he was silent, and the Afrit said, "Answer me, or I will make thee a dweller in the dust." "By Allah," replied the hunchback, "I am not to blame, for they forced me to marry her, and I knew not that she had a buffalo for a gallant; but I repent to God and to thee. What wilt thou have me do?" Quoth the Afrit, "I swear to thee that, if thou leave this place or speak before sunrise, I will wring thy neck! When the sun rises, go thy way and never return to this house." So saying, he seized the hunchback and set him upside down against the wall, with his head in the slit and his feet in the air, and said to him, "I will leave thee here and watch thee till sunrise; and if thou stir before then, I will seize thee by the feet and dash out thy brains against the wall." Meanwhile Bedreddin Hassan entered the bride chamber and sat down in the alcove. Presently, in came the bride, attended by an old woman, who stopped at the door of the chamber and said, "O father of symmetry, arise and take what God sends thee." Then the old woman went away, and the bride, whose name was the Lady of Beauty, entered, heart-broken and saying to herself, "By Allah, I will never yield myself to him, though he kill me!" When she came to the alcove, she saw Bedreddin sitting there and said, "O my friend, thou here at this hour! By Allah, I was wishing that thou wast my husband or that thou and the groom were partners in me!" "How should the groom have access to thee," asked Bedreddin, "and how should he share with me in thee?" Quoth she "Who is my husband, thou or he?" "O Lady of Beauty," replied Bedreddin, "all this was only a device to conjure the evil eye from us. Thy father hired the hunchback for ten diners to that end, and now he has taken his wage and gone away. Didst thou not see the singers and tire-women laughing at him and how thy people displayed thee before me?" When the Lady of Beauty heard this, she smiled and rejoiced and laughed softly. Then she said to him, "Thou hast quenched the fire of my heart, so, by Allah, take me and press me to thy bosom." Now she was without clothes; so she threw open the veil in which

she was wrapped and showed her hidden charms. At this sight, desire stirred in Bedreddin, and he rose and put off his clothes. The purse of a thousand dinars he had received of the Jew he wrapped in his trousers and laid them under the mattress; then took off his turban and hung it on the settle, remaining in a skull-cap and shirt of fine silk, laced with gold. With this arose the Lady of Beauty and drew him to her, and he did the like with her. Then he took her to his embrace and pointing the engine that batters down the fortalice of virginity, stormed the citadel and found her an unpierced pearl and a filly that none but he had ridden. So he took her maidenhead and enjoyed her dower of youth; nor did he stint to return to the assault till he had furnished fifteen courses, and she conceived by him. Then he laid his hand under her head and she did the like, and they embraced and fell asleep in each other's arms, whilst the tongue of the case spoke the words of the poet:



Cleave fast to her thou lov'st and let the envious rail amain,
For calumny and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.
Lo! the Compassionate hath made no fairer thing to see
Than when one couch in its embrace enfoldeth lovers twain,
Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their own delight,
Whilst hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain.
Lo! when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire,
But on cold iron smite the folk that chide at them in vain.
If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true,
I rede thee cast the world away and with that one remain.

As soon as Bedreddin was asleep, the Afrit said to the Afriteh, "Come, let us take up the young man and carry him back to his place, ere the dawn overtake us, for the day is near." So she took up Bedreddin, as he lay asleep, clad only in his shirt and skull-cap, and flew away with him, accompanied by the Afrit. But the dawn overtook them midway and the muezzins began to chant the call to morning-prayer. Then God let His angels cast at the Afrit with shooting-stars, and he was consumed; but the Afriteh escaped and lighted down with Bedreddin, fearing to carry him further, lest he should come to harm. Now as fate would have it, she had reached the city of Damascus, so she laid Bedreddin down before one of its gates and flew away. As soon as it was day, the gate was thrown open and the folk came out, and seeing a handsome young man, clad in nothing but a shirt and skull-cap, lying on the ground, drowned in sleep by reason of his much swink of the night before, said, "Happy she with whom this youth lay the night! Would he had waited to put on his clothes!" Quoth another, "A sorry race are young men of family! Belike, this fellow but now came forth of the tavern on some occasion or other, but being overcome with drunkenness, missed the place he was making for and strayed till he came to the city gate, and finding it shut, lay down and fell asleep." As they were bandying words about him, the breeze blew on him and raising his shirt, showed a stomach and navel and legs and thighs, firm and clear as crystal and softer than cream; whereupon the bystanders exclaimed, "By Allah, it is good!" And made such a noise, that Bedreddin awoke and finding himself lying at the gate of a city, in the midst of a crowd of people, was astonished and said to them, "O good people, where am I, and why do you crowd round me thus?" "We found thee lying here asleep, at the time of the call to morning-prayer," replied they, "and this is all we know of the matter. Where didst thou lie last night?" "By Allah, good people," answered he, "I lay last night in Cairo!" Quoth one, "Thou hast eaten hashish." And another, "Thou art mad; how couldst thou lie yesternight in Cairo and awake this morning in Damascus?" "By Allah, good people," rejoined he, "I do not lie to you; indeed I lay last night in the city of Cairo and yesterday I was in Bassora." "Good," said one; and another, "This youth is mad." And they clapped their hands at him and said to each other, "Alack, the pity of his youth! By Allah, there is no doubt of his madness." Then said they to him, "Collect thyself and return to thy senses. How couldst thou be in Bassora yesterday and in Cairo last night and yet awake in Damascus this morning?" But he said, "Indeed, I was a bridegroom in Cairo last night." "Doubtless thou hast been dreaming," rejoined they, "and hast seen all this in sleep." So he bethought himself awhile, then said to them, "By Allah, it was no dream!

I certainly went to Cairo and they displayed the bride before me, in the presence of the hunchback. By Allah, O my brethren, this was no dream; or if it was a dream, where is the purse of gold I had with me and my turban and trousers and the rest of my clothes?" Then he rose and entered the town and passed through its streets and markets; but the people followed him and pressed on him, crying out, "Madman! Madman!" till he took refuge in a cook's shop. Now this cook had been a robber and a sharper, but God had made him repent and turn from his evil ways and open a cookshop; and all the people of Damascus stood in awe of him and feared his mischief. So when they saw Bedreddin enter his shop, they dispersed for fear of him and went their ways. The cook looked at Bedreddin and noting his beauty and grace, fell in love with him and said to him, "Whence comest thou, O youth? Tell me thy case, for thou art become to me dearer than my soul." So Bedreddin told him all that had befallen him from first to last; and the cook said, "O my lord Bedreddin, this is indeed a strange thing and a rare story; but, O my son, keep thy case secret, till God grant thee relief, and abide here with me meanwhile, for I am childless and will adopt thee as my son." And Bedreddin answered, "I will well, O uncle." With this the cook went to the bazaar, where he bought him a handsome suit of clothes and made him put it on, then carried him to the Cadi and formally acknowledged him as his son. So Bedreddin passed in Damascus for the cook's son and abode with him, sitting in the shop to take the money.

To return to the Lady of Beauty. When the day broke and she awoke from sleep, she missed Bedreddin from her side and thought he had gone to the lavatory, so lay expecting him awhile, when behold, her father entered. Now he was sore at heart by reason of what had passed between him and the Sultan and for that he had married his daughter by force to one of his servants, and he a lump of a hunchbacked groom; and he said to himself, "If she have suffered this damnable fellow to possess her, I will kill her." So he came to the door of the alcove and cried out, "Ho, Lady of Beauty!" She replied, "Here am I, O my lord"; and came out tottering for joy, with a face whose brightness and beauty had redoubled for that she had lain in the arms of that gazelle, and kissed the ground before her father. When the Vizier saw her thus, he said to her, "O accursed woman, dost thou rejoice in this groom?" At these words, the Lady of Beauty smiled and said, "O my lord, let what happened yesterday suffice, when all the folk were laughing at me and flouting me with that groom, who is not worth the paring of one of my husband's nails. By Allah, I never in all my life passed a pleasanter night! So do not mock me by reminding me of that hunchback." When her father heard this, he was filled with rage and glared at her, saving, "Out on thee! what words are these? It was the hunchbacked groom that lay with thee." "For God's sake," replied the Lady of Beauty, "do not mention him to me, may God curse his father! And mock me not, for the groom was only hired for ten dinars to conjure the evil eye from us, and he took his hire and departed. As for me, I entered the bridal chamber, where I found my true husband sitting in the alcove, him before whom the singers had unveiled me and who flung them the red gold by handsful, till he made all the poor there rich; and I passed the night in the arms of my sprightly husband, with the black eyes and joined eyebrows." When her father heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness, and he cried out at her, saying, "O wanton, what is this thou sayest? Where are thy senses?" "O my father," rejoined she, "thou breakest my heart with thy

persistence in making mock of me! Indeed, my husband, who took my maidenhead, is in the wardrobe and I am with child by him." The Vizier rose, wondering, and entered the draught-house, where he found the hunchbacked groom with his head in the slit and his heels in the air. At this sight he was confounded and said, "This is none other than the hunchback." So he called to him, "Hallo, hunchback!" The groom made no answer but a grunt, thinking it was the Afrit who spoke to him. But the Vizier cried out at him, saying, "Speak, or I will cut off thy head with this sword." Then said the hunchback, "By Allah, O Chief of the Afrits, I have not lifted my head since thou didst set me here; so, God on thee, have mercy on me!" "What is this thou sayest?" quoth the Vizier. "I am no Afrit; I am the father of the bride." "It is enough that though hast already gone nigh to make me lose my life," replied the hunchback, "go thy ways ere he come upon thee who served me thus. Could ye find none to whom to marry me but the mistress of an Afrit and the beloved of a buffalo? May God curse him who married me to her and him who was the cause of it?" Then said the Vizier to him, "Come, get up out of this place." "Am I mad," answered the groom, "that I should go with thee without the Afrit's leave? He said to me, 'When the sun rises, get up and go thy way.' So has the sun risen or no? for I dare not budge till then." "Who brought thee hither?" asked the Vizier; and the hunchback replied, "I came here last night to do an occasion, when behold, a mouse came out of the water and squeaked and grew to a buffalo and spoke to me words that entered my ears. Then he left me here and went away, accursed be the bride and he who married me to her!" The Vizier went up to him and set him on his feet; and he went out, running, not crediting that the sun had risen, and repaired to the Sultan, to whom he related what had befallen him with the Afrit. Meanwhile, the Vizier returned to the bride's chamber, troubled in mind about his daughter, and said to her, "O my daughter, expound thy case to me." "O my father," answered she, "what more can I tell thee? Indeed, the bridegroom, he before whom they displayed me yesterday, lay with me all night and took my virginity, and I am with child by him. If thou believe me not, there is his turban, just as he left it, on the settle, and his trousers under the bed, with I know not what wrapped up in them." When her father heard this, he entered the alcove and found Bedreddin's turban; so he took it up and turning it about, said, "This is a Vizier's turban, except that it is of the Mosul cut." Then he perceived an amulet sewn in the cap of the turban so he unsewed the lining and took it out; then took the trousers, in which was the purse of a thousand dinars. In the latter he found the duplicate of Bedreddin's docket of sale to the Jew, naming him as Bedreddin Hassan, son of Noureddin Ali of Cairo. No sooner had he read this, than he cried out and fell down in a swoon; and when he revived, he wondered and said, "There is no god but God the Omnipotent! O my daughter, dost thou know who took thy maidenhead?" "No," answered she; and he said, "It was thy cousin, my brother's son, and these thousand dinars are thy dowry' Glory be to God! Would I knew how this had come about!" Then he opened the amulet and found therein a paper in the handwriting of his brother Noureddin; and when he saw his writing, he knew it and kissed it again and again, weeping and making moan for his brother. Then he read the scroll and found in it a record of the dates of Noureddin's marriage with the Vizier's daughter of Bassora, his going in to her, her conception and the birth of Bedreddin Hassan, and the history of his brother's life till his death. At this he wondered and was moved to joy and comparing the dates with

those of his own marriage and the birth of his daughter the Lady of Beauty, found that they agreed in all respects. So he took the scroll and carrying it to the Sultan, told him the whole story from first to last, at which the King wondered and commanded the case to be at once set down in writing. The Vizier abode all that day awaiting his nephew, but he came not; and when seven days were past and he could learn nothing of him, he said, "By Allah, I will do a thing that none has done before me!" So he took pen and ink and paper and drew a plan of the bride-chamber, showing the disposition of all the furniture therein, as that the alcove was in such a place, this or that curtain in another, and so on with all that was in the room. Then he folded the paper and laid it aside, and causing all the furniture to be taken up and stored away, took Bedreddin's purse and turban and clothes and locked them up with an iron padlock, on which he set a seal, against his nephew's coming. As for the Lady of Beauty, she accomplished the months of her pregnancy and bore a son like the full moon, resembling his father in beauty and grace. They cut his navel and blackened his eyelids with kohl and committed him to the nurses, naming him Agib. His day was as a month and his month as a year, and when seven years had passed over him, his grandfather sent him to school, bidding the master teach him to read the Koran and give him a good education; and he remained at the school four years, till he began to bully the little ones and beat them and abuse them, saying, "Which of you is like me? I am the son of the Vizier of Egypt." At last the children came, in a body, to complain to the monitor of Agib's behavior to them, and he said, "I will tell you how to do with him, so that he shall leave coming to the school and you shall never see him again. It is this: when he comes to-morrow, sit down round him and let one of you say to the others, 'By Allah, none shall play at this game except he tell us the names of his father and mother; for he who knows not his parents' names is a bastard and shall not play with us.'" So next day, when Agib came to the school, they all assembled round him, and one of them said, "We will play a game, in which no one shall join except he tell us the names of his father and mother." And they all said, "By Allah, it is good." Then said one of them, "My name is Majid, my mother's name is Alawiyeh and my father's Izeddin." And the others said the like, till it came to Agib's turn and he said, "My name is Agib, my mother is the Lady of Beauty and my father Shemseddin, Vizier of Egypt." "By Allah," cried they, "the Vizier is not thy father." Said he, "He is indeed my father." Then they all laughed and clapped their hands at him, saying, "He does not know his father! Arise and go out from us, for none shall play with us, except he know his father's name." Thereupon they dispersed from around him and laughed him to scorn, leaving him choked with tears and mortification. Then said the monitor to him, "O Agib, knowst thou not that the Vizier is thy mother's father, thy grandfather and not thy father? As for thy father, thou knowest him not nor do we, for the Sultan married thy mother to a humpbacked groom; but the Jinn came and lay with her, and thou hast no known father. Wherefore, do thou leave evening thyself with the boys in the school, till thou know who is thy father; for till then thou wilt pass for a misbegotten brat amongst them. Dost thou not see that the huckster's son knows his own father? Thy grandfather is the Vizier of Egypt, but as for thy father, we know him not, and we say, thou hast no father. So return to thy senses." When Agib heard the insulting words of the children and the monitor, he went out at once and ran to his mother, to complain to her; but his tears would not let him speak awhile. When she heard his sobs and saw his tears,

her heart was on fire for him and she said to him, "O my son, why dost thou weep? Tell me what is the matter." So he told her what the children and the monitor had said and said to her, "Who is my father, O my mother?" "Thy father is the Vizier of Egypt," answered she; but he said, "Do not lie to me. The Vizier is thy father, not mine. Who then is my father? Except thou tell me the truth, I will kill myself with this dagger." When the Lady of Beauty heard him speak of his father, she wept, as she thought of her cousin and her bridal-night, and repeated the following verses:

Love in my breast, alas! they lit and went away;
Far distant is the camp that holds my soul's delight!
Patience and reason fled from me, when they withdrew;
Sleep failed me, and despair o'ercame me like a blight.
They left me, and with them departed all my joy;
Tranquility and peace with them have taken flight.
They made my lids run down with tears of love laid waste;
My eyes for lack of them brim over day and night.
When as my sad soul longs to see them once again
And waiting and desire are heavy on my spright;
Midmost my heart of hearts their images I trace,
Love and desireful pain and longing for their sight.
O ye, one thought of whom clings round me like a cloak,
Whose love it as a shirt about my body dight,
O my beloved ones, how long will ye delay?
How long must I endure estrangement and despite?

Then she wept and cried out and her son did the like, when in came the Vizier, whose heart burned within him at the sight of their weeping, and he said, "Why do ye weep?" The Lady of Beauty told him what had happened to Agib, and the Vizier also wept and called to mind his brother and all that had passed between them and what had befallen his daughter, and knew not the secret of the matter. Then he rose at once and going to the Divan, related the matter to the Sultan and begged his leave to travel eastward to the city of Bassora and enquire for his nephew. Moreover, he besought him for letters-patent, authorizing him to take Bedreddin, wherever he should find him. And he wept before the King, who took pity on him and wrote him royal letters-patent to his deputies in all his provinces; whereat the Vizier rejoiced and called down blessings on him. Then taking leave of him, he returned to his house, where he equipped himself and his daughter and grandson for the journey, and set out and travelled till he came to the city of Damascus and found it rich in trees and waters, even as says the poet:

I mind me a night and a day spent in Damascus town,
(Time swore 'twould ne'er again their like to man outmete).
We lay in its languorous glades, where the careless calm of the night
And the morn, with its smiling eyes and its twy-coloured tresses, meet.
The dew to its branches clings like a glittering chain of pearl,
Whose jewels the zephyr smites and scatters beneath his feet.

The birds on the branches chant from the open book of the lake;
The breezes write on the scroll and the clouds mark the points, as they fleet.

The Vizier alighted without the city and pitched his tents in an open space called the Plain of Pebbles, saying to his servants, "We will rest here two days." So they went down into the city upon their several occasions, this to sell, that to buy, another to go to the bath and a fourth to visit the Mosque of the Ommiades, whose like is not in the world. Agib also went into the city to look about him, followed by an eunuch, carrying a knotted cudgel of almond-tree wood, wherewith if one smote a camel, it would not rise again. When the people of the city saw Agib's beauty and symmetry (for he was a marvel of loveliness and winning grace, blander than the Northern zephyr, sweeter than limpid water to the thirsty and more delightful than recovery to the sick), a great concourse of folk followed him, whilst others ran on before and sat down in the road, against he should come up, that they might gaze on him, till, as Fate would have it, the eunuch stopped before the shop of Bedreddin Hassan. Now the cook was dead and Bedreddin, having been formally adopted by him, had succeeded to his shop and property; and in the course of the twelve years that had passed over him, his beard had grown and his understanding ripened. When his son and the eunuch stopped before him, he had just finished preparing a mess of pomegranate-seed, dressed with sugar; and when he looked at Agib and saw how beautiful he was, his heart throbbed, blood drew to blood and his bowels yearned to him. So he called to him and said, "O my lord, O thou that hast gotten the mastery of my heart and my soul, thou to whom my bowels yearn, wilt thou not enter my shop and solace my heart by eating of my food?" And the tears welled up, uncalled, from his eyes, and he bethought him of his former estate and compared it with his present condition. When Agib heard his words his heart yearned to him, and he said to the eunuch, "Indeed, my heart inclines to this cook, and meseems he hath lost a child, so let us enter and gladden his soul by partaking of his hospitality. Perhaps God may requite us our kindness to him by reuniting us with my father." "By Allah!" replied the eunuch, "it were a fine thing for a Vizier's son to eat in a cookshop! Indeed, I keep off the folk with this stick, lest they look too closely on thee, and I dare not let thee enter a shop." When Bedreddin heard these words, he wondered and turned to the eunuch, with the tears running down his cheeks, and Agib said to the latter, "Indeed, my heart yearns for him." But he answered, "Leave this talk; indeed, thou shalt not go in." Then Bedreddin turned to the eunuch and said, "O noble sir, why wilt thou not gladden my soul by entering my shop? O thou who art as a chestnut, black without, but with a white heart, thou of whom the poet says ....." The eunuch laughed and said, "What? Say on, by Allah, and be quick about it." So Bedreddin repeated the following verses:

Were he not polished and discreet and worthy of all trust,
He in kings' houses would not be advanced to high estate.
O what a guardian he is for a seraglio!
The very angels of the skies delight on him to wait.

This pleased the eunuch, who laughed and taking Agib by the hand, entered the shop with him. Bedreddin ladled out a dishful of pomegranate-seed, conserved with almonds and sugar, and set it before them, saying, "Ye do me honour. Eat and may health and enjoyment attend you!" And Agib said to him, "Sit down and eat with us,

so haply God may unite us with him for whom we long." "O my son," said Bedreddin, "hast thou then suffered the loss of friends, at thy tender age?" "Yes, O uncle!" answered Agib, "my heart irks me for the loss of a beloved one, who is none other than my father; and indeed my grandfather and myself have come forth to seek for him throughout the world. Alas I how I sigh to be united with him!" Then he wept sore, whilst Bedreddin wept at the sight of his tears and for his bereavement, which recalled to him his own separation from those he loved and from his father and mother, and the eunuch was moved to pity for him. Then they ate together till they were satisfied, and Agib and the eunuch rose and left the shop. At this, Bedreddin felt as if his soul had departed his body and gone with them, for he could not live a moment without their sight, albeit he knew not that Agib was his son. So he rose and shutting his shop, hastened after them and overtook them before they went out at the great gate. The eunuch turned and said to him, "What dost thou want?" "When you left me," replied Bedreddin, "meseemed my soul had quitted my body, and as I had an occasion without the city, I thought to bear you company till I had done my business and so return." The eunuch was vexed and said to Agib, "This is what I feared. Because we entered this fellow's shop and ate that unlucky mouthful, he thinks he has a right to presume upon us, for see, he follows us from place to place." Agib turned and seeing the cook following him, reddened for anger and said to the eunuch, "Let him walk in the high road of the Muslims; but if he follow us when we turn aside to our tents, we will drive him away." Then he bowed his head and walked on, with the eunuch behind him. When they came to the Plain of Pebbles and drew near their tents, Agib turned and saw Bedreddin still following him; whereat he was enraged, fearing least the eunuch should tell his grandfather and vexed that it should be said he had entered a cookshop and the cook had followed him. So he looked at Bedreddin and found his eyes fixed on him, for he was as it were a body without a soul; and it seemed to Agib that his eye was that of a knave or a lewd fellow. So his rage redoubled and he took up a stone and threw it at Bedreddin. It struck him on the forehead and cut it open; and he fell down in a swoon, with the blood streaming down his face, whilst Agib and the eunuch made for the tents. When he came to himself, he wiped away the blood and tore off a piece of the muslin of his turban, with which he bound his head, blaming himself and saying, "I wronged the lad in closing my shop and following him, so that he thought I was some lewd fellow." Then he returned to his shop, where he busied himself with the sale of his meats; and he yearned after his mother at Bassora and wept over her and recited the following verses:

If thou demand fair play of Fate, therein thou dost it wrong;
And blame it not, for twas not made, indeed, for equity.
Take what lies ready to thy hand and lay concern aside,
For troubled days and days of peace in life must surely be.

Meanwhile, the Vizier, his uncle, tarried in Damascus three days, then departed for Hems, and passing through that city, fared on by way of Hemah and Aleppo and thence through Diarbekir, Maridin and Mosul, making enquiries at every place he came to, till he arrived at Bassora, where he halted and presented himself before the Sultan, who received him with honour and consideration and asked the reason of his coming. The Vizier related to him his history and told him that Noureddin Ali was his

brother, whereupon the Sultan commended the latter's soul to the mercy of God and said, "Sir, he was my Vizier for fifteen years, and I loved him greatly. Then he died, leaving a son, who abode here but two months after his father's death; since which time he hath disappeared and we have never come upon any news of him. But his mother, who was the daughter of my former Vizier, is still with us." Shemseddin rejoiced to hear that his nephew's mother was still alive and said, "O King, I wish to see her." The King at once gave him leave to visit her; so he betook himself to his brother Noureddin's house and went round about it and kissed its threshold. And he bethought him of his brother and how he had died in a strange land and wept and repeated the following verses:

I wander through the halls, the halls where Leila lived,
And kiss the lifeless walls that of her passage tell.
It is not for the house that I with passion burn,
But for the cherished ones that erst therein did dwell.

Then he entered the gate and found himself in a spacious courtyard, at the end whereof was a door vaulted over with hard stone, inlaid with vari-coloured marbles. He walked round about the house, and casting his eyes on the walls, saw the name of his brother Noureddin written on them in letters of gold. So he went up to the inscription and kissed it and wept for his brother's loss and repeated the following verses:

I sue unto the rising sun, each morn, for news of thee,
And of the lightning's lurid gleam I do for thee enquire.
The hands of passion and of pain sport with me all the night;
Yet I complain not of the ills I suffer from desire.
O my beloved, if the times be yet for me prolonged,
Be all consumed with separation's fire.
Lo! if thy sight one happy day should bless my longing eyes,
There is no other thing on earth that I of Fate require.
Think not that other loves avail to solace me for thee;
My heart can hold no love but thine, my faith can never tire.

Then he walked on till he came to the lodging of his brother's widow. Now from the day of her son's disappearance, she had given herself up to weeping and lamentation day and night; and when the years grew long upon her, she made him a tomb of marble midmost the saloon and there wept for him day and night, sleeping not but thereby. When the Vizier drew near her apartment, he heard her weeping and repeating verses, so he went in to her and saluting her, informed her that he was her husband's brother and told her all that had passed between them, and how her son Bedreddin Hassan had spent a whole night with his daughter, twelve years ago, but had disappeared in the morning, and how she had conceived by him and borne a son, whom he had brought with him. When Bedreddin's mother heard this news of her son and grandson and that the former was haply still alive and saw her husband's brother, she threw herself at his feet and kissed them, repeating the following verses:

May God be good to him who brought me news that they were come;
For never more delightful news unto my ears were borne.

If he would take a worn-out weds for boon, I'd proffer him
A heart that at the parting hour was all to pieces torn.

Then the Vizier sent for Agib; and his grandmother embraced him and wept, but Shemseddin said to her, "This is no time for weeping; it behoves thee to make ready to go with us to Egypt; perhaps God will reunite us with thy son, my nephew." "I hear and obey," answered she, and rising at once, collected her goods and treasures and equipped herself and her handmaids for the journey, whilst the Vizier went to take his leave of the Sultan of Bassora, who sent by him gifts and rarities to the Sultan of Egypt. Then he set out at once on his homeward journey and travelled till he came to Damascus, where he halted and pitched his tents as before, saying to his suite, "We will halt here a week, to buy presents and curiosities for the Sultan." Now the tie of blood drew Agib to his father, so he said to the eunuch, "O Laic, I have a mind to go a-walking; so come, let us go down into the streets of Damascus and see what is become of the cook whose victuals we ate and whose head we broke, for indeed he was kind to us and we used him scurvily." The eunuch replied, "I hear and obey." So they left the tents and going down into the city, stayed not till they came to the cookshop, where they found Bedreddin Hassan standing at the door. It was near the time of afternoon-prayer, and as chance would have it, he had just prepared a mess of pomegranate-seed. Agib looked at him and saw the scar of the blow on his forehead; wherefore his heart yearned to him and he said, "Peace be on thee! Know that my heart is with thee." When Bedreddin saw him, his bowels were troubled and his heart throbbed, and he bowed his head and would have spoken, but could not. Then he raised his head and looked at his son humbly and imploringly and repeated the following verses:

I longed to look on him I love; but when I saw his face,
I was as one amazed and lost the use of tongue and eyes.
I bowed my head down to his feet for reverence and awe,
And would have hidden what I felt, but could it not disguise.
Volumes of plaining and reproach I had within my heart;
Yet, when we met, no word I spoke nor uttered aught but sighs.

Then he said to them, "Heal my heart and eat of my food, for, by Allah, I cannot look at you but my heart throbs! I should not have followed you the other day, but that I was beside myself." "By Allah," replied Agib, "thou art too fond of us! We ate with thee before and thou madest us repent of it, in that thou followedst us and wouldst have put us to shame; so we will not eat with thee, except thou swear not to go out after us nor follow us. Else we will not visit thee again during our present stay, for we abide here a week, that my grandfather may take presents for the King." And Bedreddin said, "I grant you this." So Agib and the eunuch entered, and Bedreddin set before them a dish of pomegranate-seed. Quoth Agib, "Sit down and eat with us, so haply God may grant us relief." At this Bedreddin was glad and sat down and ate with them, with his eyes fixed on Agib's face, for indeed his heart and entrails were taken with his love, till the boy said to him, "What a tiresome dotard thou art! Leave thy staring in my face." When Bedreddin heard this, he repeated the following verses:

Thy face excites in all men's hearts a love they do not own;
Folded in silence and concealed, it may not be made known.

O thou whose beauty puts to shame the splendour of the moon,
Whose grace recalls the shining sight of morning newly blown,
In thy bright visage is a sign that may not be fulfilled,
And there all beauties that incite to tenderness are shown.
Must I then die of thirst, what while thy lips with nectar flow?
Thy face is Paradise to me; must I in hell-fire groan?

So they ate till they were satisfied, when Bedreddin rose and poured water on their hands, wiping them with a napkin of silk, which he loosed from his waist; after which he sprinkled rose-water on them from a casting-bottle he had by him. Then he went out and returned with a pitcher of sherbet, flavoured with rose-water and musk, which he set before them, saying, "Complete your favours to me, by drinking of this sherbet." So Agib took the pitcher and drank and passed it to the eunuch, and it went round amongst them till their stomachs were full, for they had eaten and drunken beyond their wont. Then they went away and made haste in walking till they reached the tents, and Agib went in to his grandmother, who kissed him, and thinking of her son Bedreddin Hassan, wept and repeated the following verses:

But for my hope that God would yet our severed loves unite,
I had not lived for life to me is void of all delight.
I swear there's nothing in my heart but love of thee alone,
By God, who reads the heart and brings the hidden things to light!

And she said to Agib, "O my son, where hast thou been?" Quoth he, "We have been in the city of Damascus. Then she rose and set before him confection of pomegranate-seed and said to the eunuch, "Sit down and eat with thy young master." The eunuch said to himself, "By Allah, we have no mind to eat!" but he sat down, and so did Agib, though his belly was full of what he had already eaten and drunk. Now the conserve lacked sugar, so he took a piece of bread and dipped it therein and ate, but found it insipid, for that he was already surfeited, and exclaimed, "Faugh! what is this nasty mess?" "O my son," said his grandmother, "dost thou find fault with my cookery? I cooked this myself, and there is not a cook in the land can compare with me, except it be thy father Bedreddin Hassan." "O my lady," replied Agib, "this thy dish is naught; for we saw but now in the city a cook who dresses pomegranate-seed, so that the very smell of it opens the heart and the taste would give a full man an appetite; and as for thy mess, compared with his, it is worth neither much nor little." When his grandmother heard this, she was exceeding wroth and said to the eunuch, "Out on thee, dost thou corrupt my grandson and take him into cookshops?" The eunuch was frightened and denied, saying, "We did not enter the shop, but only saw it in passing." "By Allah!" said Agib, "we went in and ate, and it was better than thine." Then his grandmother rose and went and told her brother-in-law, who was incensed against the eunuch and sending for him, said to him, "Why didst thou take my son into a cookshop?" "We did not go in," replied the eunuch. But Agib said, "We did go in and ate of pomegranate-seed, till we were full; and the cook gave us to drink of iced sherbet of sugar." At this, the Vizier's anger redoubled and he questioned the eunuch, but he still denied. Then said the Vizier, "If what thou sayest be true, sit down and eat before us." So he sat down and tried to eat, but could not and threw away the morsel, saying, "O my lord, indeed I am full since yesterday." By this, the Vizier knew that he

had eaten at the cook's and bade his slaves throw him down and beat him. So they drubbed him, till he roared for mercy and said, "O my lord, do not beat me, and I will tell thee the truth." Whereupon the Vizier stopped the beating and said, "Speak the truth." Quoth the eunuch, "Know then that we did enter the shop of a cook, who was dressing pomegranate seed, and he set some of it before us; by Allah, I never ate the like of it in my life, nor did I ever taste aught nastier than that which is before us!" Bedreddin's mother was enraged at this and said to the eunuch, "Thou must go back to the cook and fetch us a dish of his pomegranate-seed and show it to thy master, that he may say which is the better, his or mine." "Good," answered he. So she gave him a dish and half a dinar, and he returned to the shop and said to Bedreddin, "We have made a wager about thy cookery in our lord's household, for they have pomegranate-seed there also; so give me half a dinar's worth of thy confection and let it be of thy best, for I have eaten my bellyful of stick on account of thy cookery." Bedreddin laughed and answered, "By Allah, none can dress this dish aright but myself and my mother, and she is far away." Then he filled the dish with pomegranate-seed and finishing it off with musk and rose-water, gave it to the eunuch, who hastened back with it and delivered it to Bedreddin's mother. No sooner had she tasted it and remarked the excellence of its flavour and cookery, than she knew who had dressed it and shrieked and fell down in a swoon, to the amazement of the Vizier, who sprinkled rose-water on her, till she came to herself and said, "If my son be yet of this world, none made this conserve but he! Without doubt, this cook is my son Bedreddin Hassan, for none knew how to dress this dish but he and I, and I taught him." The Vizier rejoiced greatly at her words, and said, "O how I long to see my brother's son! I wonder if the days will indeed reunite us with him! But it is to God alone that we look for reunion with him." Then he went out forthright and said to his men, "Let twenty of you go to the cook's shop and demolish it; then tie his hands behind him with the linen of his turban, saying, 'It was thou madest that vile mess of pomegranate-seed,' and bring him hither by force, but without doing him any hurt." And they replied, "It is well." Then he mounted and riding to the palace, foregathered with the Viceroy of Damascus and showed him the Sultan's letters-patent. He kissed them and laying them on his head, said to the Vizier, "Who is it hath offended against thee?" Quoth the Vizier, "He is a cook of this city." So the Viceroy at once despatched his chamberlains to the shop and they went thither and found it in ruins and everything in it broken; for whilst the Vizier was at the palace, his men had done his bidding and carried Bedreddin to the tents, where they were then awaiting their master's return, whilst Bedreddin said, "I wonder what they can have found in the pomegranate-seed to bring matters to this pass!" When the Vizier returned to the tents, after having gotten the Viceroy's permission to take his debtor and depart with him, he called for the cook, and they brought Bedreddin before him, with his hands bound behind his back. When he saw his uncle, he wept sore and said, "O my lord, what is my offence against thee?" "Art thou he who made the mess of pomegranate-seed?" asked Shemseddin. "Yes," replied Bedreddin; "didst thou find aught in it to call for the cutting off of my head?" Quoth the Vizier, "That were the least of thy desert." "O my lord," said Bedreddin, "wilt thou not tell me my crime and what ails the pomegranate-seed?" "Presently," answered the Vizier and called to his men, saying, "Bring the camels." So they struck camp and the Vizier caused Bedreddin to be put into a chest, which they locked and set on a camel. Then they departed and journeyed till nightfall,

when they halted to eat and took Bedreddin out of his chest and fed him and locked him up again. Then they set out again and travelled till they reached Kumreh, where they took him out of the chest and brought him before the Vizier, who said to him, "Art thou he who made the mess of pomegranate-seed?" "Yes, O my lord," answered he; and Shemseddin said, "Shackle him." So they shackled him and returned him to the chest and fared on again, till they arrived at Cairo and halted in the suburb of Er Reidaniyeh. Then the Vizier commanded to take Bedreddin out of his chest and sent for a carpenter, to whom he said, "Make a cross of wood for this fellow." Quoth Bedreddin, "What wilt thou do with it?" "I mean to nail thee upon it," replied the Vizier, "and parade thee throughout the city." "And why wilt thou use me thus? asked Bedreddin; and the Vizier answered, "Because of thy villainous mess of pomegranate-seed and for that it lacked pepper." "And because it lacked pepper," said Bedreddin, "wilt thou do all this to me? Is it not enough that thou hast laid my shop in ruins and smashed my gear and imprisoned me and fed me but once a day?" "It lacked pepper," answered the Vizier; "and nothing less than death is thy desert." At this Bedreddin wondered and mourned for himself, till the Vizier said to him, "Of what art thou thinking?" "I was thinking of crack-brains like unto thee," answered Bedreddin, "for hadst thou any sense, thou wouldst not treat me thus." Quoth the Vizier, "It behoves me to punish thee, lest thou do the like again." And Bedreddin said, "Verily, my offence were over-punished by the least of what thou hast already done to me." "It avails not," answered Shemseddin; "I must crucify thee." All this time the carpenter was shaping the cross, whilst Bedreddin looked on; and thus they did till nightfall, when the Vizier took him and clapped him in the chest, saying, "The thing shall be done tomorrow." Then he waited till he knew Bedreddin to be asleep, when he mounted and taking the chest up before him, rode into the town to his own house, where he alighted and said to his daughter, the Lady of Beauty, "Praised be God who hath reunited thee with thy cousin! Arise and order the house as it was on thy wedding-night." So the servants arose and lit the candles, whilst the Vizier took out his plan of the bride chamber and directed them what to do, till they had set everything in its place, so that whoever saw it would not doubt but it was the very night of the wedding. Then he made them lay Bedreddin's turban on the stool, where he had left it, and his trousers and purse under the mattress, and bade his daughter undress herself and go to bed, as on the wedding-night, adding, "When he comes in to thee, say to him, 'Thou has tarried long in the wardrobe,' and call him to lie with thee and hold him in converse till the morning, when we will explain the whole matter to him." Then he took Bedreddin out of the chest and laid him in the vestibule, after he had unbound him and taken off his clothes, leaving him in a shirt of fine silk, and he still asleep and knowing nothing. Presently he turned over and awoke, and finding himself in a lighted vestibule, said to himself, "Surely, I am dreaming." Then he rose and opening the inner door, found himself in the chamber, where he had passed his wedding-night, and knew the alcove and the stool by the bed-side, with his turban and clothes. When he saw this, he was confounded and advanced one foot and drew the other back, saying, "Am I asleep or awake?" And he began to rub his forehead and say, wondering, "By Allah, this is the chamber of the bride that was unveiled before me! But where can I be? I was surely but now in a chest." Whilst he was debating with himself, the Lady of Beauty lifted the curtain of the alcove and said to him, "O my

lord, wilt thou not come in? Thou hast tarried long in the wardrobe." When he heard what she said and saw her face, he laughed and said, "This is certainly an imbroglio of dreams!" Then he entered, sighing, and recalled what had happened and was perplexed, and his affair became confused to him and he knew not what to think. Presently, he caught sight of his turban and trousers, so he handled the latter and feeling the purse of a thousand dinars, said, "God alone is all knowing! I am certainly in the mazes of a dream." Then said the Lady of Beauty to him, "What ails thee to stand agape and seem perplexed? Thou wast not thus the first part of the night." He laughed and said to her, "How long have I been absent from thee?" "God preserve thee!" exclaimed she. "The name of God encompass thee! Thou didst but go out an hour ago to do an occasion and return. Hast thou lost thy wits?" When Bedreddin heard this, he laughed and said, "Thou art right; but when I went out from thee, I forgot myself in the closet and dozed and dreamt that I was a cook in Damascus and abode there twelve years and that there came to me a boy, the son of some great man, and with him an eunuch." Here he put his hand to his forehead and feeling the scar made by the stone, said, "By Allah, O lady, it must have been true, for here is the scar made by the stone, with which he smote me and cut my forehead open. So it would seem as if it had really happened. But perhaps I dreamt it, when we embraced and fell asleep together: for meseemed I journeyed to Damascus without turban or drawers and set up as a cook there." Then he was perplexed and considered awhile and said, "By Allah, I fancied also that I made a mess of pomegranate-seed and put too little pepper in it. By Allah, I must have slept in the closet and dreamt all this!" "God on thee," said the Lady of Beauty, "tell me what else thou didst dream." "By Allah," replied he, "had I not woke up, they would have nailed me to a cross of wood!" "Wherefore?" asked she; and he said, "Because of the lack of pepper in the pomegranate-seed. Meseemed they demolished my shop and broke my utensils in pieces and put me in a chest; then they sent for a carpenter to make a cross and would have crucified me thereon. But praised be God who caused all this to happen to me in sleep and not on wake!" The Lady of Beauty laughed and pressed him to her bosom, and he returned her caresses; then he thought again and said, "By Allah, I cannot help thinking it must have been a reality after all! Indeed I know not what to think of it all." Then he lay down and passed the night in a state of perplexity, saying now, "I was dreaming," and now, "I was awake," till the morning, when his uncle Shemseddin entered and saluted him. When Bedreddin saw him, he said to him, "By Allah, art thou not he who gave orders to bind me and demolish my shop and would have nailed me on a cross, and all because a mess of pomegranate-seed lacked pepper?" "O my son," replied the Vizier, "know that the truth has appeared and that which was hidden is divulged. Thou art my brother's son, and I did all this with thee but that I might certify myself that thou wast indeed he who lay with my daughter on her wedding-night. I could not be sure of this, till I saw that thou knewest the chamber and thy turban and clothes and purse and the scrolls in thy handwriting and that of my brother, for I had never seen thee and did not know thee; and I have brought thy mother with me from Bassora." So saying, he threw himself on him and they embraced and wept for excess of joy. Then said the Vizier to Bedreddin, "O my son, all this came of what passed between thy father and myself." And he told him what had taken place between them and the manner of his father's flight to Bassora; after which he sent for Agib, and when his father saw him, he exclaimed, "This is he

who threw the stone at me!" Quoth the Vizier, "This is thy son." And Bedreddin threw himself on Agib and repeated the following verses:

Long time have I bewailed the sev'rance of our loves,
With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain,
And vowed that, if the days should reunite us two,
My lips should never speak of severance again.
Joy hath o'erwhelmed me so, that for the very stress
Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become to you a habit, O my eyes!
So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Presently, Bedreddin's mother came in and fell on him, repeating the following verses:

When we met, to each other we both did complain
Of the manifold things that we each had to say;
For the lover's complaint of the anguish he feels
The tongue of a messenger cannot convey.

Then she wept and related to him what had befallen her since his departure, and he told her what he had suffered and they thanked God the Most High for their reunion with one another. Two days after his arrival, the Vizier went in to the Sultan and kissing the earth before him, saluted him after the fashion of salutation to kings. The Sultan rejoiced at his return and received him with distinguished favour. Then he desired to hear what had befallen him in his travels; so the Vizier told him all that had passed, and the Sultan said, "Praised be God for that thou hast attained thy desire and returned in safety to thy kinsfolk and family! I must see thy brother's son, so do thou bring him to the Divan tomorrow." Shemseddin replied, "God willing, thy slave shall be present tomorrow." Then he saluted him and returning to his own house, informed his nephew of the King's wish to see him, to which Bedreddin replied, "The slave is obedient to his lord's commands." So next day he accompanied his uncle to the Divan and after saluting the Sultan in the most punctilious and elegant manner, repeated the following verses:

All ranks and classes kiss the earth, in homage to thy state,
For lo I through thee their every wish is crowned with happy fate.
For thou the fount of honour art for those that hope in thee,
And from thy hand the bounties flow that make there rich and great.

The Sultan smiled and signed to him to sit down. So he sat down beside the Vizier, and the King enquired his name. Quoth Bedreddin, "The meanest of thy slaves is known as Bedreddin Hassan of Bassora, who prays for thee day and night." The Sultan was pleased at his words and being minded to try him and prove his knowledge and good-breeding, said to him, "Dost thou remember any verses in praise of a mole on the cheek?" "Yes," replied Bedreddin, and repeated the following:

When I think of my loved one, the sighs from my breast
Burst up and the tears to my eyes quickly start.

She's a mole, that resembles, in beauty and hue,
The black of the eye and the core of the heart.

The Sultan liked these verses and said, "Let us have some more. Heaven bless thy sire! May thy tongue never tire!" So he repeated the following:

The mole's black spot upon her cheek they liken to a grain
Of musk; yet wonder not at that, for wonder were in vain.
But rather wonder at her face, wherein all beauty is:
There is no particle of grace that it doth not contain.

The Sultan shook with delight and said to him, "More! God bless thy life!" So he repeated the following:

O thou, the moles upon whose cheek recall
Globules of musk upon cornelian strewed,
Grant me thy favours, be not hard of heart,
O thou, my heart's desire, my spirit's food!

Then said the King, "Thou hast done well, O Hassan, and hast acquitted thyself most excellently. But tell me how many meanings hath the word khal in the Arabic language." "Fifty," replied Hassan, "and some say eight and-fifty." Quoth the King, "Thou art right. Canst thou tell me the points of excellence in beauty?" "Yes," answered Bedreddin, "Brightness of face, purity of skin, shapeliness in the nose, softness in the eyes, sweetness in the mouth, elegance in speech, slenderness of shape and quickness of wit; and the perfection of beauty is in the hair. And indeed Es Shihab el Hijazi has brought them all together in the following doggrel:

Say to the face, 'Be bright,' and to the skin, say,
'See, I show thee what befits thee best: 'tis purity.'
For elegance of shape the nose we chiefly prize,
And languor soft it is, that best becomes the eyes.
Then say unto the mouth, 'Sweetness, but mark thou me;
Let fragrancy of breath fail never unto thee.'
Chaste be the speech, the shape be slender and well knit,
And quickness mark the thought, the manners and the wit.
Then say that in the hair is ever beauty's prime.
Give ear to me and eke forgive my doggrel rhyme."

The Sultan rejoiced in his converse and said to him "What is the meaning of the popular saying, 'Shureih is more cunning than the fox'?" "Know, O King," answered Bedreddin, "may God aid thee! that Shureih was wont during the days of the plague, to go out to Nejef, and whenever he stood up to pray, there came a fox, which would plant itself over against him and distract him from his devotions by mimicking his movements. This went on for some time, till the man became weary of it; so one day he took off his shirt and put it on a cane and shook out the sleeves. Then he set his turban on top of the cane and tied a girdle round the middle of the effigy and planted it in the place where he used to say his prayers. Presently up came the fox, according to his wont, and stood over against the figure; whereupon Shureih came behind him and

took him: hence the saying." When the Sultan heard Bedreddin's explanation, he said to his uncle Shemseddin, "Verily, this thy nephew is perfect in all kinds of culture. I do not believe that his like is to be found in Egypt." At this, Bedreddin arose and kissed the earth and sat down again in the posture of a servant before his master. When the Sultan had thus assured himself of his proficiency in the liberal arts, he rejoiced greatly and bestowing on him a splendid dress of honour, invested him with an office, whereby he might better his condition. Then Bedreddin arose and kissing the earth before the King, wished him enduring glory and craved leave to retire. The Sultan gave him leave; so he returned home with his uncle and they set food before them and they ate, after which Bedreddin repaired to his wife's apartment and told her what had passed between the Sultan and himself. Quoth she, "He cannot fail to make thee his boon-companion and load thee with favours and presents; and by the grace of God, the splendours of thy perfections shall shine like the greater light, wherever thou goest, by land or sea." Then said he, "I purpose to make an ode in the King's praise, that he may redouble in affection for me." "That is well thought," replied she. "Consider it well and word thy thought elegantly, and I doubt not but it will procure thee his favour." So Bedreddin shut himself up and composed the following verses, which he copied in an ornamental hand:

My King hath reached the height of lordlihead;
The shining path of virtue he cloth tread.
His justice blocks the ways against his foes
And peace and plenty showers on every stead.
Bold as a lion, pious, quick of wit,
Angel or King, he's whichsoe'er is said.
He sends the suppliant content away.
Words fail, indeed, to paint his goodlihead.
In time of gifts, he's like the brilliant moon;
Like night, in battle, lowering and dread.
Our necks are girt with his munificence;
He rules by favours on the noble shed.
May God prolong his life for our behoof
And ward the blows of Fortune from his head.

When he had finished transcribing the poem, he despatched it by one of his uncle's slaves to the King, who perused it, and it gladdened his heart; so he read it out to those present before him and they praised it exceedingly. Then he sent for Bedreddin to his sitting-chamber and said to him, "Henceforth thou art my boon-companion and I appoint thee a stipend of a thousand dirhems a month, over and above what I have already given thee." So he arose and kissing the earth three times before the Sultan, wished him abiding glory and length of life. Then Bedreddin increased in honour and estate, so that his report spread into all countries, and he abode in the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, he and his uncle and family, till Death overtook him.'

When the Khalif Haroun er Reshid heard this story from the mouth of his Vizier Jaafer, he wondered and said, 'It behoves that these stories be written in letters of gold.'

Then he set the slave at liberty and assigned the young man who had killed his wife such a monthly allowance as sufficed to make his life easy. Moreover he gave him one of his female slaves to wife, and he became one of his boon-companions.

Story of the Hunchback

THERE lived once in the city of Bassora a tailor, who was openhanded and loved pleasure and merrymaking: and he was wont, he and his wife, to go out by times, a-pleasuring, to the public places of recreation. One day they went out as usual and were returning home in the evening, when they fell in with a hunchback, the sight of whom would make the disappointed laugh and dispel chagrin from the sorrowful. So they went up to look at him and invited him to go home and make merry with them that night. He consented and accompanied them to their house; whereupon, the night being now come, the tailor went out to the market and buying fried fish and bread and lemon and conserve of roses by way of dessert, set them before the hunchback, and they ate. Presently, the tailor's wife took a great piece of fish and cramming it into the hunchback's mouth, clapped her hand over it, saying, 'By Allah, thou must swallow it at one gulp; and I will give thee no time to chew it.' So he bolted it; but there was a great bone in it, which stuck in his gullet, and his hour being come, it choked him, and he died at once. When the tailor saw this, he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Alas, poor wretch, that he should have come by his death at our hands!' 'Why dost thou waste time in idle lamentation?' rejoined his wife. 'Hast thou not heard it said.....?' And she repeated the following verses:

What ails me that I waste the time in idle grief,
Until I find no friend mishap for me to bear?
Who but a fool would sit upon an unquenched fire?
To wait upon mischance as great a folly were.

'What is to be done?' asked he; and she replied, 'Rise and take the hunchback in thine arms and cover him with a silk handkerchief: then go out with him, and I will go before thee: and if thou meet any one, say, "This is my son: his mother and I are taking him to the doctor, that he may look at him." So he rose and taking the hunchback in his arms, carried him along the streets, preceded by his wife, who kept saying, 'O my son, God keep thee! Where has this smallpox attacked thee and in what part dost thou feel pain?' So that all who saw them said, 'It is a child ill of smallpox.' They went along, enquiring for a doctor, till the people directed them to the house of one, who was a Jew. They knocked at the gate, and a black servant-maid came down and opened the door and seeing a man carrying a child and a woman with him, said to them, 'What is your business?' 'We have a sick child here,' answered the tailor's wife, 'whom we want the doctor to look at: so take this quarter-dinar and give it to thy master, and let him come down and see my son.' The girl went up to tell her master, leaving the tailor and his wife in the vestibule, whereupon the latter said to her husband, 'Let us leave the hunchback here and be off.' So the tailor carried the dead man to the top of the stairs and propping him up against the wall, went away, he and his wife. Meanwhile the serving-maid went in to the Jew and said to him, 'There are a man and a woman at the gate, with a sick child; and they have given me a quarter-dinar for thee, that thou mayst go down and see the child and prescribe for him.' When the Jew saw the quarter-dinar, he was glad and rose hastily and went down in the dark. Hardly had he made a step, when he stumbled on the dead body and threw it down, and it rolled to the bottom of

the stairs. So he cried out to the girl to make haste with the light, and she brought it, whereupon he went down and examining the hunchback, found that he was dead. 'O Esdras and Moses and the ten Commandments!' exclaimed he; 'O Aaron and Joshua, son of Nun! I have stumbled against the sick person and he has fallen downstairs and is dead! How shall I get the body out of my house?' Then he took it up and carrying it into the house, told his wife what had happened. Quoth she, 'Why dost thou sit still? If he be found here when the day rises, we shall both of us lose our lives. Let us carry him up to the roof and throw him over into the house of our neighbour the Muslim; for if he abide there a night, the dogs will come down on him from the terraces and eat him all up.' Now the neighbour in question was controller of the Sultan's kitchen and was wont to bring home great store of fat and broken meats; but the cats and mice used to eat it, or, if the dogs scented a fat sheep's tail, they would come down from the roofs and tear at it; and in this way he lost much of what he brought home. So the Jew and his wife carried the hunchback up to the roof, and letting him down, through the windshaft, into the controller's house, stood him up against the wall and went away. Hardly had they done so, when the controller, who had been spending the evening with some of his friends, hearing a recitation of the Koran, came home and going up with a lighted candle, found a man standing in the corner, under the ventilator. When he saw this, he said, 'By Allah, this is a fine thing! He who steals my goods is none other than a man.' Then he turned to the hunchback and said to him, 'So it is thou that stealest the meat and fat. I thought it was the cats and dogs, and I kill the cats and dogs of the quarter and sin against them. And all the while it is thou comest down through the windshaft! But I will take my wreak of thee with my own hand.' So he took-a great cudgel and smote him on the breast, and he fell down. Then he examined him and finding that he was dead, cried out in horror, thinking that he had killed him, and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Supreme, the Omnipotent!' And he feared for himself and said, 'May God curse the fat and the sheep's tails, that have caused this man's death to be at my hand!' Then he looked at the dead man and seeing him to be humpbacked, said, 'Did it not suffice thee to be a hunchback, but thou must turn thief and steal meat and fat? O Protector, extend to me Thy gracious protection!' Then he took him up on his shoulders and going forth with him, carried him to the beginning of the market, where he set him on his feet against the wall of a shop, at the corner of a dark lane, and went away. After awhile, there came up a Christian, the Sultan's broker, who had sallied forth, in a state of intoxication, intending for the bath, for in his drunkenness he thought that matins were near. He came staggering along, till he drew near the hunchback and squatted down over against him to make water, when, happening to look round, he saw a man standing against the wall. Now some one had snatched off the broker's turban early in the night, and seeing the hunchback standing there he concluded that he meant to play him the same trick. So he clenched his fist and smote him on the neck. Down fell the hunchback, whilst the broker called to the watchman of the market and fell on the dead man, pummelling and throttling him in the excess of his drunken rage. Presently, the watchman came up and finding a Christian kneeling on a Muslim and beating him, said to the former, 'What is the matter?' 'This fellow tried to snatch off my turban,' answered the broker; and the watchman said, 'Get up from him.' So he rose, and the watchman went up to the hunchback and finding him dead, exclaimed, 'By Allah, it is

a fine thing that a Christian should kill a Muslim!' Then he seized the broker and tying his hands behind him, carried him to the house of the prefect of police, where they passed the night; and all the while the broker kept saying, 'O Messiah! O Virgin! how came I to kill this man? Indeed, he must have been in a great hurry to die of one blow with the fist!' And his drunkenness left him and reflection came in its stead. As soon as it was day, the prefect came out and commanded to hang the supposed murderer and bade the executioner make proclamation of the sentence. So they set up a gallows, under which they made the broker stand, and the hangman put the rope round his neck and was about to hoist him up, when behold, the controller of the Sultan's kitchen, passing by, saw the broker about to be hanged, and pressing through the crowd, cried out to the executioner, saying, 'Stop! Stop! I am he who killed the hunchback.' Quoth the prefect, 'What made thee kill him?' And he replied, 'I came home last night and found this man who had come down the windshaft to steal my goods; so I struck him with a cudgel on the breast and he died. Then I took him up and carried him to the market and set him up against the wall in such a place. Is it not enough for me to have killed a Muslim, without burdening my conscience with the death of a Christian also? Hang therefore none but me.' When the prefect heard this, he released the broker and said to the executioner, 'Hang up this man on his own confession.' So he loosed the rope from the broker's neck and threw it round that of the controller, and placing him under the gallows, was about to hang him, when behold, the Jewish physician pushed through the press and cried out, 'Stop! It was I and none else who killed him! I was sitting at home last night, when a man and a woman knocked at the door, carrying this hunchback, who was sick, and gave my servant a quarter-dinar, bidding her give it to me and tell me to come down to see him. Whilst she was gone, they brought the hunchback into the house and setting him on the stairs, went away. Presently, I came down and not seeing him, stumbled on him in the dark, and he fell to the foot of the stair and died forthright. Then we took him up, I and my wife, and carried him on to the roof, whence we let him down, through the windshaft, into the house of this controller, which adjoins my own. When he came home and found the hunchback, he took him for a robber and beat him, so that he fell to the ground, and he concluded that he had killed him. So is it not enough for me to have killed one Muslim unwittingly, without burdening myself with the death of another wittingly?' When the prefect heard the Jew's story, he said to the hangman, 'Let the controller go, and hang the Jew.' So the hangman took the Jew and put the rope round his neck, when behold, the tailor pressed through the folk and cried out to him, 'Hold thy hand! None killed him save I, and it fell out thus. I had been out a-pleasuring yesterday and coming back in the evening, met this hunchback, who was drunk and singing lustily to a tambourine. So I carried him to my house and bought fish, and we sat down to eat. Presently, my wife took a piece of fish and crammed it down the hunchback's throat; but it went the wrong way and stuck in his gullet and choked him, so that he died at once. So we lifted him up, I and my wife, and carried him to the Jew's house, where the girl came down and opened the door to us, and I said to her, "Give thy master this quarter-dinar and tell him that there are a man and a woman at the door, who have brought a sick person for him to see." So she went in to tell her master, and whilst she was gone, I carried the hunchback to the top of the stair, where I propped him up, and went away with my wife. When the Jew came out, he

stumbled over him and thought that he had killed him.' Then he said to the Jew, 'Is not this the truth?' 'It is,' replied the Jew. And the tailor turned to the prefect and said, 'Let the Jew go, and hang me.' When the prefect heard the tailor's story, he wondered at the adventure of the hunchback and exclaimed, 'Verily, this is a matter that should be recorded in books!' Then he said to the hangman, 'Let the Jew go, and hang the tailor on his own confession.' So the hangman took the tailor and put the rope round his neck, saying, 'I am tired of taking this man and loosing that, and no one hanged after all.'

Now the hunchback in question was the favourite buffoon of the Sultan, who could not bear him out of his sight: so when he got drunk and did not make his appearance that night or next day, the Sultan asked the courtiers about him and they replied, 'O our lord, the chief of the police has come upon him dead and ordered his murderer to be hanged: but, as the hangman was about to hoist him up, there came a second and a third and a fourth, each declaring himself to be the sole murderer and giving the prefect an account of the manner in which the crime had been committed.' When the King heard this, he cried out to one of his chamberlains, saying, 'Go down to the chief of the police and bring me all four of them.' So the chamberlain went down at once to the place of execution, where he found the hangman on the point of hanging the tailor and cried out to him to stop. Then he gave the King's order to the prefect, who took the tailor, the physician, the controller and the broker, and brought them all, together with the dead hunchback, before the King. When he came into the presence, he kissed the earth and told the King all that had passed; whereat he was moved to wonder and mirth and commended the story to be written in letters of gold, saying to the courtiers, 'Did you ever hear a more wonderful story than that of this hunchback?' With this came forward the Christian broker and said, 'O King of the age, with thy leave, I will tell thee a thing that happened to myself and which is still stranger and more wonderful and pleasant than the story of the hunchback.' Quoth the King, 'Let us hear it.' Then said the broker, 'O King of the age, I came to this city with merchandise, and Fate made me settle here with you, but

The Christian Broker's Story.

I AM by birth a Copt, and a native of Cairo, where I was brought up. My father was a broker, and when I came to man's estate, he died and I became a broker in his stead. One day, as I was sitting in my shop, there came up to me a young man as handsome as could be, richly clad and riding on an ass. When he saw me, he saluted me, and I rose to do him honour. Then he pulled out a handkerchief, containing a sample of sesame, and said to me, "What is the worth of an ardebb of this?" "A hundred dirhems," replied I; and he said, "Take porters and measures and come to-morrow to the Khan of El Jaweli, by the Gate of Victory, where thou wilt find me." Then he went away, leaving with me the handkerchief containing the sample of sesame; and I went round to the buyers and agreed for a hundred and twenty dirhems an ardebb. Next day, I took four gaugers and carried them to the Khan, where I found him awaiting me. As soon as he saw me, he rose and opened his magazines, and we measured the contents and found them fifty ardebbs of sesame, making five thousand dirhems. Then said he to me, "Thou shalt have ten dirhems an ardebb to thy brokerage; so take the price and lay by four thousand five hundred dirhems for me; and when I have made an end of selling my other goods, I will come to thee and take the amount." "It is well," replied I, and kissed his hand and went away, having made that day a profit of a thousand dirhems, besides the brokerage. I saw no more of him for a month, at the end of which time he came to me and said, "Where is the money?" I rose and saluted him and said to him, "Wilt thou not eat somewhat with me?" But he refused, saying, "Get the money ready, and I will come back for it." So I brought out the money and sat down to await his return, but saw no more of him for another month, at the end of which time he came to me and said, "Where is the money?" I rose and saluted him and said, "Wilt thou not eat a morsel with me?" But he refused, saying, "Have the money ready against my return," and rode away. So I fetched the dirhems and sat awaiting him; but he did not come near me for another month, and I said, "Verily, this young man is the incarnation of liberality." At the end of the month, he came up, riding on a mule and clad in sumptuous raiment. His face shone like the moon at its full and he seemed as if he had just come from the bath, with his rosy cheeks and flower-white forehead and mole like a grain of ambergris, even as says the poet:

Within one mansion of the sky the sun and moon combine;
With all fair fortune and delight of goodliness they shine.
Their beauty stirs all those that see to passion and to love:
Good luck to them, for that they move to ravishment divine!
In grace and beauty they increase and aye more perfect grow:
All souls yearn out to them for love, all hearts to them incline.
Blessed be God, whose creatures are so full of wonderment!
Whate'er He wills He fashions forth, even as He doth design.

When I saw him, I rose and saluted him and kissed his hand, saying, "O my lord, wilt thou not take thy money?" "What hurry is there?" replied he; "wait till I have made an end of my business, when I will come and take it." Then he went away, and I said to myself, "By Allah, when he comes next time, I must press him to eat with me," for I

had traded with his money and profited largely by it. At the end of the year he came again, dressed even more richly than before, and I conjured him to dismount and eat of my victual; and he said to me, "I consent, on condition that what thou expendest on me shall be of my money in thy hands." "So be it," replied I, and made him sit down, whilst I made ready what was needful of meat and drink and so forth and set the tray before him, saying, "In the name of God." So he came to the table and put out his left hand and ate with me; and I wondered at his using his left hand. When we had done eating, I poured water on his hand and gave him wherewith to wipe it. Then we sat talking, after I had set sweetmeats before him, and I said to him, "O my lord, I prithee relieve my mind by telling me why thou eatest with thy left hand. Belike something ails thy right hand?" When he heard my words, he recited the following verses:

Ask not, I prithee, my friend, of the anguish that burns in my heart
'Twould but the infirmities show that now in my bosom lie hid.
If with Selma I company now and harbour with Leila no more,
Believe me, 'tis none of my will; needs must, if necessity bid.

Then he drew his right arm out from his sleeve, and behold, it was a stump without a hand, the latter having been cut off at the wrist. I was astonished at this, and he said to me, "Thou seest that my eating with the left hand arose, not from conceit, but from necessity; and there hangs a strange story by the cutting off of my right hand." "And how came it to be cut off?" asked I. "Know," answered he, "that I am a native of Baghdad and the son of one of the principal men of that city. When I came to man's estate, I heard the pilgrims and travellers and merchants talk of the land of Egypt, and this abode in my thought till my father died, when I laid out a large sum of money in the purchase of stuffs of Baghdad and Mosul, with which I set out on my travels and God decreed me safety, till I reached this your city." And he wept and recited the following verses:

It chances oft that the blind man escapes a pit, Whilst he that is clear of sight falls into it: The ignorant man can speak with impunity A word that is death to the wise and the ripe of wit: The true believer is pinched for his daily bread, Whilst infidel rogues enjoy all benefit. What is a man's resource and what shall he do? It is the Almighty's will: we must submit.

"So I entered Cairo," continued he, "and put up at the Khan of Mesrour, where I unpacked my goods and stored them in the magazines. Then I gave the servant money to buy me something to eat and lay down to sleep awhile. When I awoke, I went to the street called Bein el Kesrein and presently returned and passed the night at the Khan. Next morning, I said to myself, 'I will walk through the bazaars and see the state of the market.' So I opened a bale and took out certain stuffs, which I gave to one of my servants to carry, then repaired to the Bazaar of Jergis, where I was accosted by the brokers, who had heard of my arrival. They took my stuffs and cried them for sale, but could not get the prime cost of them. I was vexed at this; but the chief of the brokers said to me, 'O my lord, I will tell thee how thou mayst make a profit of thy goods. Thou shouldst do as the other merchants do and sell thy goods on credit, for a fixed period, on a contract drawn up by a scrivener, and duly witnessed, and employ a money-changer and take thy money every Monday and Thursday. So shalt thou profit

two dirhems for every one; and besides this, thou canst amuse thyself meanwhile at leisure in viewing Cairo and the Nile.' Quoth I, 'This advice is good,' and carried the brokers to the Khan. They took my stuffs and transported them to the bazaar, where I sold them to various merchants, taking their bonds for the value. These bonds I deposited with a money-changer, who gave me an acknowledgment in writing, with which I returned to my Khan. Here I abode a month, breaking my fast with a cup of wine every morning and sending out for mutton and sweetmeats, till the time came when my receipts began to fall due. So, every Monday and Thursday, I used to repair to the bazaar and sit in the shop of one or other of the merchants, whilst the scrivener and money-changer went round to collect the money from the different merchants, till after the time of afternoon-prayer, when they brought me the amount, and I counted it and gave receipts for it, then took it and returned to my Khan. One day I went to the bath and retured to the Khan, where I broke my fast on a cup of wine, after which I slept a little. When I awoke, I ate a fowl, and scenting myself, repaired to the shop of a merchant called Bedreddin el Bustani, who welcomed me; and I sat talking with him till the market should open. Presently, there came up a lady of stately figure, wearing a magnificent head-dress and exhaling perfumes, as she walked along with a swimming gait. She stopped before Bedreddin and saluted him, raising her kerchief and showing a pair of large black eyes. He returned her salute and stood talking with her; and when I heard her speech, the love of her got hold upon my heart. Then she said to Bedreddin, 'Hast thou any stuffs of figured cloth of gold?' So he brought out to her a piece that he had had of me and she bought it of him for twelve hundred dirhems, saying, 'I will take it with me and send thee the price.' 'It may not be, O my lady,' answered he. 'This is the owner of the stuff and I owe him the price of it.' 'Out on thee!' said she. 'Do I not use to take great store of costly stuffs of thee, at a greater profit than thou askest, and send thee the money?' 'Yes,' rejoined he; 'but I am in pressing need of the price to-day.' With this she took the piece of stuff and threw it back into his lap, saying, 'You merchants have no respect for any one!' Then she turned to go, and I felt as if my soul went with her; so I rose and stopped her, saying, 'O my lady, favour me by retracing thy gracious steps!' She smiled and saying, 'For thy sake, I will return,' came back and sat down in the shop opposite me. Then I said to Bedreddin, 'What is the price set upon this piece?' And he replied, 'Eleven hundred dirhems.' 'The other hundred shall be thy profit,' rejoined I. 'Give me a piece of paper and I will write thee a discharge for it! So I wrote him a docket to that effect and gave the piece of stuff to the lady, saying, 'Take it and, if thou wilt, bring me the price next market-day; or, better still, accept it as a gift from me to thee.' 'May God requite thee with good,' answered she, 'and make thee my husband and master of my property!' (And God heard her prayer.) 'O my lady,' replied I, 'this piece of stuff is thine and another like it, if thou wilt but let me see thy face.' So she lifted her veil, and I took one look at her face, that caused me a thousand regrets, and fell so violently in love with her, that I was no longer master of my reason. Then she let down her veil and taking the piece of stuff, said, 'O my lord, leave me not desolate!' and went away, whilst I remained sitting in the shop till the time of afternoon-prayer was past, lost to the world and fairly distraught for love; and the violence of my passion prompted me to make enquiries about her of the merchant, who replied, 'She is a lady of wealth, the daughter of an Amir, who died and left her a large fortune.' Then I took leave of him and returned to the Khan, where they set the

evening meal before me; but I could not eat, for thinking of her, and laid down to rest. But sleep came not to me and I lay awake till daylight, when I rose and changed my dress. I broke my fast on a cup of wine and a morsel of bread and going to the market, saluted Bedreddin and sat down by him in his shop. Presently up came the lady, followed by a slave-girl, and more richly dressed than before, and saluting me, instead of Bedreddin, said to me, in a voice than which I never heard a sweeter or softer, 'Send with me some one to take the twelve hundred dirhems, the price of the stuff.' 'What hurry is there?' asked I. And she said, 'May we never lose thee!' And gave me the money. Then I sat talking with her, and presently I made signs to her, by which she understood that I desired to enjoy her and rose hastily, as if vexed with me, and went away. My heart clung to her and I rose and followed in her track; but as I went along, a slave-girl accosted me, saying. 'O my lord, my mistress would speak with thee.' At this I was astonished, and said, 'There is no one who knows me here.' 'O my lord,' answered the slave, 'how quickly thou hast forgotten her! My mistress is she who was to-day at the shop of the merchant Bedreddin.' So I followed her to the money-changer's, where I found the lady, who drew me to her side and said to me, 'O my beloved, thou hast made prize of my heart, and love of thee has conquered my soul. Since the day I saw thee first, I have taken no delight in sleep nor in meat nor drink.' 'My sufferings have been still greater than thine,' answered I; 'and my state dispenses me from complaint.' Then said she, 'O my lord, shall I come to thee or wilt thou come to me?' Quoth I, 'I am a stranger here and have no lodging but the Khan; so by thy favour, it shall be at thy house.' 'It is well,' replied she; 'to-night is Friday eve, and nothing can be done; but to-morrow, after the morning-prayer, mount thine ass and enquire for the house of Berekat the Syndic, known as Abou Shameh, in the Hebbaniyeh quarter; for I live there; and do not delay, for I shall be expecting thee.' At this, I rejoiced greatly and took leave of her and returned to the Khan, where I passed a sleepless night. As soon as it was day, I rose and changed my clothes and perfumed myself with essences and sweet-scented smoke. Then I took fifty dinars in a handkerchief and went out to the Zuweyleh Gate, where I hired an ass, bidding the driver carry me to the Hebbaniyeh. So he set off with me and brought me in the twinkling of an eye to a by-street called El Munkeri, where I bade him go in and enquire for the Syndic's house. After a little he returned and said, 'Alight.' But I made him guide me to the house, where I dismounted and giving him a quarter-dinar, said, 'Come back to-morrow at daybreak and fetch me away.' 'In the name of God,' answered he, and went away. Then I knocked at the gate and there came out two young girls, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons, and said to me, 'Enter, for our mistress awaits thee, and she slept not last night for joyance in thee.' So I entered and they brought me, through a vestibule, into an upper chamber with seven doors, paved with vari-coloured marbles and furnished with hangings and carpets of coloured silk. The walls were plastered with stucco-royal, in which one might see his own face, and the roof was ribbed with gold and bordered with inscriptions emblazoned in ultramarine. All around were latticed windows overlooking a garden, full of fruits of all colours, with streams running and birds singing on the branches, and midmost the hall was a fountain, at whose angles stood birds fashioned in red gold, spouting forth water as it were pearls and jewels; and indeed the place comprised all kinds of beauty and dazzled the beholder with its radiance. I entered and sat down; but hardly had I done so, when the lady came up to me, crowned with a diadem of

pearls and jewels and having her eyebrows pencilled and her hands stained with henna. When she saw me, she smiled on me and embraced me and pressed me to her bosom; and she set her mouth to mine and sucked my tongue, and I did the like with her. Then she said, 'Can it be true that thou art indeed come to me?' 'I am thy slave,' answered I; and she said, 'Welcome, a thousand times! By Allah, since I first saw thee, sleep has not been sweet to me nor food pleasant!' Quoth I, 'So has it been with me also.' Then we sat down to converse, and I bowed my head for bashfulness. Presently, she set before me a tray of the most exquisite meats, such as ragouts and fritters soaked in honey and fricassees and fowls stuffed with sugar and pistachio-nuts, and we ate till we were satisfied. Then they brought ewer and basin and I washed my hands, after which we scented ourselves with rose-water mingled with musk and sat down again to converse. We complained to each other of the sufferings we had undergone, and my love for her took such hold on me, that all my wealth was of little account to me, in comparison with her. We passed the time in toying and kissing and dalliance, till nightfall, when the damsels set before us a banquet of food and wine and we sat carousing half the night. Then we went to bed and I lay with her till the morning, never in my life saw I the like of that night. As soon as it was day, I arose and took leave of her, after having slipped under the mattress the handkerchief containing the dinars; and she wept and said 'O my lord, when shall I see that fair face again?' 'I will be with thee at eventide,' answered I, and going out, found the ass-man waiting for me at the door. So I mounted and rode to the Khan of Mesrour, where I alighted and gave the driver half a dinar, saying, 'Come back at sun down.' And he said, 'Good.' Then I broke my fast and went out to seek the price of my stuffs, after which I returned and taking a roast lamb and some sweetmeats, called a porter and despatched them by him to the lady, paying him his hire in advance. I occupied myself with my affairs till sunset, when the ass-driver came for me and I took fifty dinars in a handkerchief and rode to the house, where I found the marble floor swept, the brass burnished, the lamps filled and the candles lighted, the meats ready dished and the wines strained. When my mistress saw me, she threw her arms round my neck and exclaimed, 'Thou hast desolated me by thine absence!' Then they set the tables and we ate till we were satisfied, when the serving-maids took away the tray of food and set on wine. We gave not over drinking till midnight, when we went to the sleeping-chamber and lay together till morning. Then I rose and went away, leaving the fifty dinars with her as before. I found the ass-driver at the door and mounting, rode to the Khan, where I slept awhile, then went out to prepare the evening-meal. I took a brace of geese with broth on two platters of dressed rice, together with colocasia-roots, fried and soaked in honey, and wax candles and fruits and conserves and flowers and nuts and almonds, and sent them all to her. As soon as it was night, I mounted the ass as usual, taking with me fifty dinars in a handkerchief, and rode to the house, where we ate and drank and lay together till morning, when I left the handkerchief and dinars with her and rode back to the Khan. I ceased not to lead this life, till one fine morning I found myself without a single dirhem and said, 'This is Satan's doing!' And I repeated the following verses:

When a rich man grows poor, his lustre dies away,
Like to the setting sun that pales with ended day.
Absent, his name is not remembered among men:

Present, he hath no part in life and its array.
He passes through the streets and fain would hide his head
And pours out floods of tears in every desert way.
By Allah, when distress and want descend on men,
But strangers midst their kin and countrymen are they.

Then I left the Khan and walked along Bein el Kesrein till I came to the Zuweyleh Gate, where I found the folk crowded together and the gate blocked up for the much people. As Fate would have it, I saw there a trooper, against whom I pressed, without meaning it, so that my hand came on his pocket and I felt a purse inside. I looked and seeing a string of green silk hanging from the pocket, knew that it belonged to the purse. The crowd increased every moment and just then, a camel bearing a load of wood jostled the trooper on the other side and he turned to ward it off from him, lest it should tear his clothes. When I saw this, Satan tempted me; so I pulled the string and drew out a little purse of blue silk, full of something that chinked like money. Hardly had I done so, when the soldier turned and feeling his pocket lightened, put his hand to it and found it empty; whereupon he turned to me and raising his mace, smote me on the head I fell to the ground, whilst the people came round us and seizing the soldier's horse by the bridle, said to him, 'Is it because he pushed against thee in the throng, that thou smitest this young man such a blow?' But he cried out at them and said, 'This fellow is an accursed thief!' With this I came to myself and stood up, and the folk looked at me and said, 'This is a comely youth and would not steal aught.' Some took part for me and others against me and there was a great clamour, and the people pulled at me and would have rescued me from the trooper; but as Fate would have it, the chief of the police and the captain and officers of the watch entered by the gate at this moment; and the prefect, seeing the crowd about the soldier and myself, enquired what was the matter. 'O my lord,' replied the soldier, 'this fellow is a thief. I had a blue purse in my pocket, containing twenty dinars, and he took it, whilst I was in the crush.' 'Was any one else by thee?' asked the magistrate, and the trooper answered, 'No.' Then the prefect cried out to the officers of the watch, who seized me and stripping me by his order, found the purse in my clothes. He took it and found in it twenty dinars, as the soldier had said, whereat he was wroth and calling to the officers to bring me before him, said to me, 'O young man tell me the truth. Didst thou steal this purse?' At this I hung down my head and said to myself, 'It is useless for me to say I did not steal the purse, for they found it in my clothes: and if I confess to the theft, I fall into trouble.' So I raised my head and said, 'Yes: I took it.' When the prefect heard what I said, he wondered and called for witnesses, who came forward and attested by confession. Then he bade the hangman cut off my right hand, and he did so; after which he would have cut off my left foot also; but the trooper took pity on me and interceded for me with the prefect, who left me and went away; whilst the folk remained round me and gave me a cup of wine to drink. As for the trooper, he gave me the purse, saying, 'Thou art a comely youth, and it befits not that thou be a thief.' And I repeated the following verses:

By Allah, trusty brother mine, I am indeed no thief,
Nor, O most bountiful of men, a highwayman am I.
But the vicissitudes of fate overthrew me suddenly,

And care and stress and penury full sorely did me try.
It was not thou, but God who cast the fatal shaft at me,
The shaft that made from off my head the crown of honour fly.

Then he left me, and I went away, after having wrapt my hand in a piece of rag and thrust it into my bosom. I betook me to my mistress's house, faint and ill at ease and pale by reason of what had befallen me, and threw myself on the couch. She saw that my colour was changed and said to me, 'What ails thee and why do I see thee thus changed?' 'My head irks me,' answered I; 'I am not well.' When she heard this, she was vexed and concerned for me and said to me, 'Fret not my heart, O my lord! Sit up and raise thy head and let me know what has happened to thee to-day, for thy face tells me a tale.' 'Spare me this talk,' replied I. But she wept and said, 'Meseems thou art tired of me, for I see that thou art contrary to thy wont.' But I was silent, and she continued to talk to me, though I made her no answer, till nightfall, when she brought me food: but I refused it, fearing to let her see me eat with my left hand, and said to her, 'I do not care to eat at present.' Quoth she 'Tell me what has befallen thee to-day and what ails thee, that thou art troubled and broken in heart and spirit.' 'Presently,' replied I; 'I will tell thee at my leisure.' Then she brought me wine, saying, 'Take it for it will dispel thy care: thou must indeed drink and tell me what is thy matter with thee.' 'Must I tell thee?' said I; and she answered, 'Yes.' Then said I, 'If it must be so, give me to drink with thine own hand.' So she filled and drank then filled again and gave me the cup. I took it from her with my left hand and repeated the following verses with tears running from my eyes:

When God would execute His will in anything
On one endowed with sight, hearing and reasoning,
He stops his ears and blinds his eyes and draws his wit
From him, as one draws out the hairs to paste that cling:
Till, His decrees fulfilled, He gives him back his wit,
That therewithal he may receive admonishing.

At this she gave a loud cry and said to me, 'What makes thee weep? Thou settest my heart on fire. And what ails thee to take the cup with thy left hand?' 'I have a boil on my right hand,' answered I; and she said, 'Put it out and I will lance it for thee.' 'It is not ripe for lancing,' answered I; 'so do not torment me, for I will not show it thee at present.' Then I drank off the cup, and she plied me with wine till I became drowsy and fell asleep in my place; whereupon she looked at my right arm and saw that it was but a stump without a hand. So she searched me and found the purse of gold and my severed hand wrapt in a piece of rag. With this, there overcame her such grief as none ever knew, and she ceased not to lament for my sake till the morning. When I awoke, I found she had made me a dish of broth of four boiled fowls, which she brought to me, together with a cup of wine. I ate and drank and laying down the purse, would have gone out; but she said to me, 'Whither goest thou?' 'Where my business calls me,' replied I; and she said, 'Thou shalt not go: sit down.' So I sat down, and she said, 'Has thy love for me brought thee to such a pass, that thou hast wasted thy substance and lost thy hand on my account? Since this is so, I call God to witness against me that I will never part with thee: and thou shalt see the truth of my words.' Then she sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and said to them, 'Draw up a contract of marriage between

me and this young man and bear witness that I have received the dowry.' So they drew up our marriage contract, and she said to them, 'Be witness that all my money that is in this chest and all that belongs to me and all my slaves, male and female, are the property of this young man.' So they took act of this and withdrew, after having received their fees. Then she took me by the hand and leading me to a closet, opened a large chest and said to me, 'See what is herein.' I looked and behold, it was full of handkerchiefs. Quoth she, 'This is the money I had of thee; for every time thou gavest me a handkerchief, with fifty dinars in it, I wrapped it together and threw it into this chest; so now take thy money, for indeed it returns to thee, and thou to-day art become of high estate. Fate afflicted thee, so that thou didst lose thy right hand for my sake, and I can never requite thee: nay, though I gave my life, it were little and I should still remain thy debtor.' Then she said to me, 'Take possession of thy property!' and transferred the contents of the other chest to that which contained the money I had given her. At this, my heart was gladdened and my grief forsook me, and I rose and kissed and thanked her. Quoth she, 'Thou hast lost thy hand for love of me, and how can I requite thee? By Allah, if I gave my life for thy love, it were far short of thy due!' Then she made over to me by deed all her clothes and jewels and other property and lay not down to sleep that night, being in sore concern on my account, till I told her all that had befallen me. I passed the night with her; but before we had lived together a month's time, she fell grievously ill and sickness was upon her, by reason of her grief for the loss of my hand; and she endured but fifty days before she was numbered of the folk of the other world. So I laid her in the ground and had recitations of the Koran made over her tomb and gave much money in alms for her; after which I returned to the house and found that she had left much substance in money and houses and lands. Among her storehouses was one full of sesame, whereof I sold part to thee; and it was the fact of my being busied in selling the rest of my goods and all that was in the storehouses, that diverted my attention from thee; nor have I till now made an end of receiving the price. This, then, is the reason of the cutting off of my right hand and of my eating with the left. Now thou shalt not baulk me in what I am about to say, for that I have eaten of thy victual; and it is that I make thee a gift of the money that is in thy hands." "Indeed," replied I, "thou hast shown me the utmost kindness and liberality." Then said he, "Wilt thou journey with me to my native country, whither I am about to return with a lading of Cairo and Alexandria stuffs?" "I will well," answered I, and appointed with him for the end of the month. So I sold all I had and bought merchandise; then we set out, he and I, and journeyed till we came to this town, where he sold his goods, and buying others in their stead, set out again for Egypt. But it was my lot to abide here, so that there befell me in my strangerhood what befell last night. This, then, is my story, O King of the age. Is it not more marvellous than that of the hunchback?' 'Not so,' answered the King; 'and needs must you all be hanged.' Then came forward the controller of the Sultan's kitchen and said, 'With thy leave, I will tell thee what happened to me but lately and if it be more marvellous than the story of the hunchback, do thou grant us our lives.' 'So be it,' answered the King. Then said the controller, 'Know, O King, that

The Controller's Story.

I WAS the night before last in company with a number of persons who were assembled for the purpose of hearing a recitation of the Koran. The doctors of the law attended, and when the readers had made an end of reading, the table was spread, and amongst other things they set before us a ragout flavoured with cumin-seed. So we sat down to eat it; but one of our number held back and abstained from eating. We conjured him to eat of the ragout; but he swore that he would not, and we pressed him till he said, "Press me not; what has already befallen me through eating of this dish suffices me." And he repeated the following verses:

Shoulder thy tray, 'fore God, and get thee gone with it, And to thine eyes apply such salve as thou deem'st fit.

"For God's sake," said we, "tell us the reason of thy refusal to eat of the ragout!" "If I must eat of it," replied he, "I will not do so, except I may wash my hands forty times with soap, forty times with potash and forty times with galingale, in all a hundred and twenty times." So the master of the house ordered his servants to bring water and all that he required; and the young man washed his hands as he had said. Then he sat down, as if afraid, and dipping his hand into the ragout, began to eat, though with evident repugnance and as if doing himself violence, whilst we regarded him with the utmost wonder; for his hand trembled and we saw that his thumb had been cut off and he ate with his four fingers only. So we said to him, "God on thee, what has become of thy thumb? Is thy hand thus by the creation of God or has it been mutilated by accident?" "O my brothers, answered he, "it is not this thumb alone that has been cut off, but also that of the other hand and the great toe of each of my feet, as ye shall see." Then he bared his left hand and his feet, and we saw that the left hand was even as the right and that each of his feet lacked the great toe. At this sight, our amazement increased and we said to him, "We are impatient to know thy history and the manner of the cutting off of thy thumbs and great toes and the reason of thy washing thy hands a hundred and twenty times." "Know then," answered he, "that my father was chief of the merchants of Baghdad in the time of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid; but he was given to drinking wine and listening to the lute and other instruments, so that when he died, he left nothing. I buried him and had recitations of the Koran made over him and mourned for him days and nights. Then I opened his shop and found he had left little but debts. However, I compounded with his creditors for time to pay and betook myself to buying and selling, paying them something week by week on account, till at last I succeeded in clearing off the debts and began to add to my capital. One day, as I sat in my shop, there came up to the entrance of the bazaar a lady, than whom my eyes never saw a fairer, richly clad and decked and riding on a mule, with one slave walking before and another behind her. She halted the mule at the entrance of the bazaar and entered, followed by an eunuch, who said to her, 'O my lady, come out, without telling any one, or thou wilt bring us into trouble.' And he stood before her, whilst she looked at the shops. She found no shop open but mine, so came up, with the eunuch behind her, and sitting down in my shop, saluted me; never did I hear aught sweeter than her voice or more pleasant than her speech. Then she

unveiled her face and I saw she was like the moon and stole at her a glance that cost me a thousand sighs. My heart was captivated with her love and I could not take my eyes off her face; and I repeated the following verses:

Say to the fairest fair, her in the dove-coloured veil,
"Death would be welcome to me, to save me from thy bale:
Grant me thy favours, I pray! so I may live perchance.
Lo! I stretch forth my palm: let not thy bounties fail."

When she heard this, she answered me by repeating the following verses:

Power to forget thee, for desire, fails even unto me:
My heart and all my soul will love none other after thee.
If my eyes ever look on aught except thy loveliness,
May union after severance ne'er brighten them with glee!
I've sworn an oath by my right hand ne'er to forget thy grace.
My sad heart pineth for thy love and never may win free.
Passion hath given me to drink a brimming cup of love;
Would it had given the self-same draught to drink, dear heart, to thee!
If thou shouldst ask me what I'd crave most earnestly of God,
"The Almighty's favour first, then thine," I'd say, "my prayer shall be."

Then she said to me, 'O youth, hast thou any handsome stuffs?' 'O my lady,' answered I, 'thy slave is poor: but wait till the merchants open their shops, and I will get thee what thou wilt.' Then we sat talking, she and I, whilst I was drowned in the sea of her love and dazed with passion for her, till the merchants opened their shops, when I rose and fetched her all she sought, to the value of five thousand dirhems. She gave the stuffs to the slave and leaving the bazaar, mounted the mule and rode away, without telling me whence she came, and I was ashamed to ask her. So I became answerable to the merchants for the price of the goods and thus took on myself a debt of five thousand dirhems. Then I went home, drunken with love of her, and they set the evening-meal before me. I ate a mouthful and lay down to rest, musing upon her beauty and grace: but sleep came not to me. A week passed thus, and the merchants sought their money of me, but I persuaded them to wait another week, at the end of which time she came up, riding on the mule and attended by an eunuch and two slaves. She saluted me and said, 'O my lord, we have been long in bringing thee the price of the stuffs; but now fetch a money-changer and take the amount.' So I sent for the money-changer, and the eunuch counted me out the money, and we sat talking, the lady and I, till the market opened, when she said to me, 'Get me this and this.' So I got her from the merchants what she wanted, and she took it and went away, without saying a word to me about the price. As soon as she was out of sight, I repented me of what I had done, for the price of what I had bought for her was a thousand dinars, and I said to myself, 'What doting is this? She has brought me five thousand dirhems, and taken a thousand dinars' worth of goods.' And I feared lest I should be beggared, through having to pay the merchants their money, and said, 'They know none but me and this woman is none other than a cheat, who hath cozened me with her beauty and grace, for she saw that I was young and laughed at me; and I did not ask her address.' She did not come again for more than a month, and I abode in constant distress and

perplexity, till at last the merchants dunned me for their money and pressed me so that I put up my property for sale and looked for nothing but ruin. However, as I was sitting in my shop, one day, absorbed in melancholy thought, she rode up and dismounting at the gate of the bazaar, came in and made towards me. When I saw her, my anxiety ceased and I forgot my troubles. She came up to me and greeting me with her pleasant speech, said to me, 'Fetch the money-changer and take thy money.' So she gave me the price of the goods I had gotten for her and more, and fell to conversing freely with me, till I was like to die of joy and delight. Presently, she said to me, 'Hast thou a wife?' 'No,' answered I; 'I have never known woman.' And fell a-weeping. Quoth she, 'Why dost thou weep?' 'It is nothing,' replied I; and giving the eunuch some of the dinars, begged him to use his influence with her for me; but he laughed and said, 'She is more in love with thee than thou with her. She had no occasion for the stuffs she bought of thee and did all this but out of love for thee. So ask of her what thou wilt; she will not deny thee.' When she saw me give the eunuch money, she returned and sat down again; and I said to her, 'Be charitable to thy slave and pardon him what he is about to say.' Then I told her what was in my mind, and she assented and said to the eunuch, 'Thou shalt carry my message to him.' Then to me, 'Do as the eunuch bids thee.' Then she rose and went away, and I paid the merchants what I owed them, and they all profited; but as for me, I gained nought but regret for the breaking off of our intercourse. I slept not all that night; but before many days were past, the eunuch came to me, and I made much of him and asked after his mistress. 'She is sick for love of thee,' replied he; and I said, 'Tell me who she is.' Quoth he, 'She is one of the waiting-women of the Lady Zubeideh, the wife of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, who brought her up and advanced her to be stewardess of the harem and granted her the right of going in and out at will. She told her mistress of thee and begged her to marry her to thee; but she said, "I will not do this, till I see the young man; and if he be worthy of thee, I will marry thee to him." So now we wish to bring thee into the palace at once and if thou succeed in entering without being seen, thou wilt win to marry her; but if the affair get wind, thou wilt lose thy head. What sayst thou?' And I answered, 'I will go with thee and abide the risk of which thou speakest.' Then said he, 'As soon as it is night, go to the mosque built by the Lady Zubeideh on the Tigris and pray and pass the night there.' 'With all my heart,' answered I. So at nightfall I repaired to the mosque, where I prayed and passed the night. Just before daybreak, there came up some eunuchs in a boat, with a number of empty chests, which they deposited in the mosque and went away all, except one who remained behind and whom, on examination, I found to be he who served as our go-between. Presently, in came my mistress herself and I rose to her and embraced her. She kissed me, weeping, and we talked awhile; after which she made me get into one of the chests and locked it upon me. Then the eunuchs came back with a number of packages; and she fell to stowing them in the chests and locking the latter one by one, till she had filled them all. Then they embarked the chests in the boat and made for the Lady Zubeideh's palace. With this, reflection came to me and I said to myself, 'My lust will surely bring me to destruction, nor do I know whether I shall gain my end or no!' And I began to weep, shut up as I was in the chest, and to pray to God to deliver me from the peril I was in, whilst the boat ceased not going till it reached the palace gate, where they lifted out the chests and amongst them that in which I was. Then they carried them into the palace, passing

through a troop of eunuchs, guardians of the harem and door-keepers, till they came to the post of the chief of the eunuchs, who started up from sleep and called out to the lady, saying, 'What is in those chests?' Quoth she, 'They are full of wares for the Lady Zubeideh.' 'Open them,' said he, 'one by one, that I may see what is in them.'— 'Why wilt thou open them?' asked she: but he cried out at her, saying, 'Give me no words! They must and shall be opened.' Now the first that they brought to him to open was that in which I was: and when I felt this, my senses failed me and I bepissed myself for terror, and the water ran out of the chest. Then said she to the eunuch, 'O chief, thou hast undone me and thyself also, for thou hast spoiled that which is worth ten thousand dinars. This box contains coloured dresses and four flasks of Zemzem water; and now one of the bottles has broken loose and the water is running out over the clothes and their colours will be ruined.' Then said the eunuch, 'Take up thy chests and begone with God's malison!' So the slaves took up the chests and hurried on with them, till suddenly I heard a voice saying, 'Alas! Alas! the Khalif! the Khalif!' When I heard this, my heart died within me and I spoke the words which whoso says shall not be confounded, that is to say, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I have brought this affliction on myself.' Presently I heard the Khalif say to my mistress, 'Harkye, what is in those chests of thine ?' 'Clothes for the Lady Zubeideh,' answered she; and he said, 'Open them to me.' When I heard this, I gave myself up for lost and said, 'By Allah, this is the last of my worldly days!' and began to repeat the profession of the Faith. Then I heard the lady say to the Khalif, 'These chests have been committed to my charge by the Lady Zubeideh, and she does not wish their contents to be seen of any one.'— 'No matter,' said he; 'I must open them and see what is in them.' And he cried out to the eunuchs saying, 'Bring them to me.' At this, I made sure of death and swooned away. Then the slaves brought the chests up to him and opened them, one after another, and he saw in them perfumes and stuffs and rich clothes, till none remained unopened but that in which I was. They put their hands to it to open it, but the lady made haste and said to the Khalif, 'This one thou shalt see in the Lady Zubeideh's presence, for that which is in it is her secret.' When he heard this, he ordered them to carry in the chests; so they took up that in which I was and carried it, with the rest, into the harem and set it down in the middle of the saloon; and indeed my spittle was dried up for fear. Then my mistress opened the chest and took me out, saying, 'Fear not: no harm shall befall thee, but be of good courage and sit down, till the Lady Zubeideh comes, and thou shalt surely win thy wish of me.' So I sat down, and after awhile, in came ten maidens like moons and ranged themselves in two rows, one facing the other, and after them other twenty, high-bosomed maids with the Lady Zubeideh, who could hardly walk for the weight of her dresses and ornaments. As she drew near, the damsels dispersed from around her, and I advanced and kissed the earth before her. She signed to me to be seated and questioned me of my condition and family, to which I made such answers as pleased her, and she said to my mistress, 'O damsel, our nurturing of thee has not been in vain.' Then she said to me, 'Know that this damsel is to us even as our own child, and she is a trust committed to thee by God.' I kissed the earth again before her, well pleased that I should marry my mistress, and she bade me sojourn ten days in the palace. So I abode there ten days, during which time I saw not my mistress nor any one save a serving-maid, who brought me the morning and evening meals. After this the Lady Zubeideh took counsel with

the Khalif on the marriage of her favourite, and he gave leave and assigned her a wedding portion of ten thousand dinars. So the Lady Zubeideh sent for the Cadi and the witnesses, and they drew up our marriage contract, after which the women made sweetmeats and rich viands and distributed them among the inmates of the harem. Thus they did other ten days, at the end of which time my mistress entered the bath. Meanwhile, they set before me a tray of food, on which was a basin containing a ragout of fricasseed fowls' breasts dressed with cumin-seed and flavoured with sugar and rose-water, mixed with musk, and many another dish, such as amazed the wit; and by Allah, I did not hesitate, but fell upon the ragout and ate my fill of it. Then I wiped my hands, but forgot to wash them and sat till it grew dark, when they lit the candles and the singing-women came with tambourines and proceeded to display the bride and carry her in procession from room to room, receiving largesse of gold and pieces of silk, till they had made the round of the palace. Then they brought her to me and disrobed her. When I found myself alone in bed with her, I embraced her, hardly believing in my good fortune; but she smelt the odour of the ragout on my hands and gave a loud cry, at which the maids came running to her from all sides. I was alarmed and trembled, not knowing what was the matter, and the girls said to her, 'What ails thee, O sister?' Quoth she, 'Take this madman away from me: methought he was a man of sense.' 'What makes thee think me mad?' asked I. 'O madman,' answered she, 'what made thee eat of ragout of cumin-seed, without washing thy hands? By Allah, I will punish thee for thy misconduct! Shall the like of thee come to bed to the like of me, with unwashed hands?' Then she took from her side a whip of plaited thongs and laid on to my back and buttocks till I swooned away for the much beating; when she said to the maids, 'Take him and carry him to the chief of the police, that he may cut off the hand wherewith he ate of the ragout and washed it not.' When I heard this, I said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Wilt thou cut off my hand, because I ate of a ragout and did not wash?' And the girls interceded with her, saying, 'O our sister, forgive him this once!' But she said, 'By Allah, I must and will dock him of somewhat!' Then she went away and I saw no more of her for ten days, at the end of which time, she came in to me and said, 'O black-a-vice, I will not make peace with thee, till I have punished thee for eating ragout of cumin-seed, without washing thy hands!' Then she cried out to the maids, who bound me; and she took a sharp razor and cut off my thumbs and toes, as ye have seen. Thereupon I swooned away and she sprinkled the severed parts with a powder which staunched the blood; and I said, 'Never again will I eat of ragout of cumin-seed without washing my hands forty times with potash, forty times with galingale and forty times with soap!' And she took of me an oath to that effect. So when the ragout was set before me, my colour changed and I said to myself, 'It was this that was the cause of the cutting off of my thumbs and toes.' And when ye forced me, I said, 'I must needs fulfil the oath I have taken.'" "And what befell thee after this?" asked the others. "After this," replied he, "her heart was appeased and I lay with her that night. We abode thus awhile, till she said to me, one day, 'It befits not that we continue in the Khalif's palace: for none ever came hither but thou, and thou wonst not in but by the grace of the Lady Zubeideh. Now she has given me fifty thousand dinars; so take this money and go out and buy us a commodious house.' So I went forth and bought a handsome and spacious house, whither she transported all her goods and valuables." Then (continued the controller) we ate and went away: and after,

there happened to me with the hunchback that thou wottest of. This then is my story and peace be on thee.' Quoth the King, 'This story is not more agreeable than that of the hunchback: on the contrary, it is less so, and you must all be hanged.' Then came forward the Jewish physician and kissing the earth, said, 'O King of the age, I will tell thee a story more wonderful than that of the hunchback.' 'Tell on,' answered the King; and the Jew said, 'The strangest adventure that ever befell me was as follows:

The Jewish Physician's Story.

IN my younger days I lived at Damascus, where I studied my art; and one day, as I sat in my house, there came to me a servant with a summons from the governor of the city. So I followed him to the house and entering the saloon, saw, lying on a couch of juniper-wood, set with plates of gold, that stood at the upper end, a sick youth, never was seen a handsomer. I sat down at his head and offered up a prayer for his recovery. He made a sign to me with his eyes and I said to him, "O my lord, give me thy hand." So he put forth his left hand, at which I wondered and said to myself, "By Allah, it is strange that so handsome a young man of high family should lack good breeding! This can be nothing but conceit." However, I felt his pulse and wrote him a prescription and continued to visit him for ten days, at the end of which time he recovered and went to the bath, whereupon the governor gave me a handsome dress of honour and appointed me superintendent of the hospital at Damascus. I accompanied him to the bath, the whole of which they had cleared for his accommodation, and the servants came in with him and took off his clothes within the bath, when I saw that his right hand had been newly cut off, and this was the cause of his illness. At this I was amazed and grieved for him: then looking at his body I saw on it the marks of beating with rods, for which he had used ointments. I was perplexed at this and my perplexity appeared in my face. The young man looked at me and reading my thought, said to me, "O physician of the age, marvel not at my case. I will tell thee my story, when we leave the bath." Then we washed and returning to his house, partook of food and rested awhile; after which he said to me, "What sayest thou to taking the air in the garden?" "I will well," answered I; so he bade the slaves carry out carpets and cushions and roast a lamb and bring us some fruit. They did as he bade them, and we ate of the fruits, he using his left hand for the purpose. After awhile, I said to him, "Tell me thy story." "O physician of the age," answered he, "hear what befell me. Know that I am a native of Mosul and my father was the eldest of ten brothers, who were all married, but none of them was blessed with children except my father, to whom God had vouchsafed me. So I grew up among my uncles, who rejoiced in me with exceeding joy, till I came to man's estate. One Friday, I went to the chief mosque of Mosul with my father and my uncles, and we prayed the congregational prayers, after which all the people went out, except my father and uncles, who sat conversing of the wonders of foreign lands and the strange things to be seen in various cities. At last they mentioned Egypt and one of my uncles said, 'Travellers say that there is not on the face of the earth aught fairer than Cairo and its Nile.' Quoth my father, 'Who has not seen Cairo has not seen the world. Its dust is gold and its Nile a wonder; its women are houris and its houses palaces: its air is temperate and the fragrance of its breezes outvies the scent of aloes-wood: and how should it be otherwise, being the mother of the world? Bravo for him who says,' And he repeated the following verses:

Shall I from Cairo wend and leave the sweets of its delight?
What sojourn after it indeed were worth a longing thought?
How shall I leave its fertile plains, whose earth unto the scent

Is very perfume, for the land contains no thing that's naught?
It is indeed for loveliness a very Paradise,
With all its goodly carpet spread and cushions richly wrought.
A town that maketh heart and eye yearn with its goodliness,
Uniting all that of devout and profligate is sought,
Or comrades true, by God His grace conjoined in brotherhood,
Their meeting-place the groves of palms that cluster round about.
O men of Cairo, if it be God's will that I depart,
Let bonds of friendship and of love unite us still in thought!
Name not the city to the breeze, lest for its rival lands
It steal the perfumes, wherewithal its garden-ways are fraught.

'And if,' added my father, 'you saw its gardens in the evenings, with the tree-shadows sloping over them, you would behold a marvel and incline to them with delight.' And they fell to describing Cairo and the Nile. When I heard their accounts of Cairo, my mind dwelt on it and I longed to visit it; and when they had done talking, each went to his own dwelling. As for me, I slept not that night, for stress of yearning after Egypt, nor was meat nor drink pleasant to me. After awhile, my uncles prepared to set out for Cairo, and I wept before my father, till he made ready for me merchandise and consented to my going wish them, saying to them, 'Let him not enter Egypt, but leave him to sell his goods at Damascus.' Then I took leave of my father and we left Mosul and journeyed till we reached Aleppo, where we abode some days. Then we fared on, till we came to Damascus and found it a city as it were a paradise, abounding in trees and rivers and birds and fruits of all kinds. We alighted at one of the Khans, where my uncles tarried awhile, selling and buying: and they sold my goods also at a profit of five dirhems on every one, to my great satisfaction; after which they left me and went on to Egypt, whilst I abode at Damascus in a handsome house, such as the tongue fails to describe, which I had hired for two dinars a month. Here I remained, eating and drinking and spending the money in my hands, till, one day, as I sat at the door of my lodging, there came up a young lady, clad in costly apparel, never saw my eyes richer. I winked at her; and she entered without hesitation. I entered with her and shut the door, and she raised her kerchief and did off her veil, when I found her of surpassing beauty, and love of her took hold upon my heart. So I rose and fetched a tray of the most delicate viands and fruits and all that was needed for a carouse, and we ate and sported and drank till we were warm with wine. Then I lay with her the most delightful of nights, till the morning, when I offered to give her ten dinars; but she frowned and knit her brows and said, 'For shame! Thinkest thou I covet thy money?' And she took out from the bosom of her shift ten dinars and laid them before me, saying, 'By Allah, except thou take them, I will never come back!' So I accepted them, and she said to me, 'O my beloved, expect me again in three days' time, when I will be with thee between sundown and nightfall; and do thou provide us with these dinars the like of yesterday's entertainment.' So saying, she bade me adieu and went away, taking my reason with her. At the end of the three days, she came again, dressed in gold brocade and wearing richer ornaments than before. I had made ready a repast; so we ate and drank and lay together, as before, till the morning, when she gave me other ten dinars and appointed me again for three days thence. Accordingly, I made

ready as before, and at the appointed time she came again, more richly dressed than ever, and said to me, 'O my lord, am I not fair?' 'Yea, by Allah!' answered I. Then she said, 'Wilt thou give me leave to bring with me a young lady handsomer than I and younger, that she may frolic with us and that thou and she may laugh and make merry and rejoice her heart, for she has been sad at heart this long time past and has asked me to let her go out and spend the night abroad with me?' 'Ay, by Allah!' answered I; and we drank till we were warm with wine and slept together till the morning, when she gave me twenty dinars and said to me, 'Add to thy usual provision, on account of the young lady who will come with me.' Then she went away, and on the fourth day, I made ready as usual, and soon after sundown she came, accompanied by another damsel, wrapped in a veil. They entered and sat down; and when I saw them, I repeated the following verses:

How lovely and how pleasant is our day!
The railer's absent, reckless of our play,
Love and delight and wine with us abide,
Each one enough to charm the wit away;
The full moon glitters through the falling veil;
Bough-like, the shapes within the vestments sway:
The rose blooms in the cheeks, and in the eyes
Narcissus languishes, in soft decay.
Delight with those I love fulfilled for me
And life, as I would have it, fair and gay!

Then I lighted the candles and received them with joy and gladness. They put off their outer clothing, and the new damsel unveiled her face, when I saw that she was like the moon at its full, never beheld I one more beautiful. Then I rose and set meat and drink before them, and we ate and drank: and I began to feed the new damsel and to fill her cup and drink with her. At this the first lady was secretly jealous and said to me, 'Is not this girl more charming than I?' 'Ay, by Allah!' replied I. Quoth she, 'It is my intent that thou lie with her this night.' And I answered, 'On my head and eyes!' Then she rose and spread the bed for us, and I took the young lady and lay with her that night till the morning, when I awoke and found myself wet, as I thought, with sweat. I sat up and tried to rouse the damsel, but when I shook her by the shoulders, her head rolled off the pillow. Thereupon my reason fled and I cried out, saying, 'O gracious Protector, extend to me Thy protection!' Then I saw that she had been murdered, and the world became black in my sight and I sought the lady my first mistress, but could not find her. So I knew that it was she who had murdered the girl, out of jealousy, and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! What is to be done?' I considered awhile, then rose and taking off my clothes, dug a hole midmost the courtyard, in which I laid the dead girl, with her jewellery and ornaments, and throwing back the earth over her, replaced the marble of the pavement. After this I washed and put on clean clothes and taking what money I had left, locked up the house and took courage and went to the owner of the house, to whom I paid a year's rent, telling him that I was about to join my uncles at Cairo. Then I set out and journeying to Egypt, foregathered with my uncles, who rejoiced in me and I found that they had made an end of selling their goods. They enquired the reason of my coming,

and I said, 'I yearned after you;' but did not let them know that I had any money with me. I abode with them a year, enjoying the pleasures of the city and the Nile and squandering the rest of my money in feasting and drinking, till the time drew near for my uncles' departure when I hid myself from them and they sought for me, but could hear no news of me and said, 'He must have gone back to Damascus.' So they departed, and I came out from my hiding and sojourned in Cairo three years, sending year by year the rent of the house at Damascus to its owner, until at last I had nothing left but one year's rent. At this my breast was straitened and I set out and journeyed till I reached Damascus, where my landlord received me with joy. I alighted at the house and found everything locked up as I had left it: so I opened the closets and took out what was in them and found under the bed, where I had lain with the murdered girl, a necklet of gold set with jewels. I took it up and cleansing it of her blood, examined it and wept awhile. Then I abode in the house two days and on the third day, I went to the bath and changed my clothes. I had now no money left and the devil prompted me to sell the necklet, that destiny might be accomplished; so I took it to the market and handed it to a broker, who made me sit down in the shop of my landlord and waited till the market was full, when he took the necklet and offered it for sale privily without my knowledge. The price bidden for it was two thousand dinars; but the broker returned and said to me, 'This necklet is a brass counterfeit of Frank manufacture, and a thousand dirhems have been bidden for it.' 'Yes,' answered I; 'I knew it to be brass, for we had it made for such an one, that we might mock her: and now my wife has inherited it and we wish to sell it; so go and take the thousand dirhems.' When the broker heard this, his suspicions were roused; so he carried the necklet to the chief of the market, who took it to the prefect of police and said to him, 'This necklet was stolen from me, and we have found the thief in the habit of a merchant.' So the officers fell on me unawares and brought me to the prefect, who questioned me and I told him what I had told the broker: but he laughed and said, 'This is not the truth.' Then, before I knew what was toward, his people stripped me and beat me with rods on my sides, till for the smart of the blows I said, 'I did steal it,' bethinking me that it was better to confess that I stole it than let them know that she who owned it had been murdered in my house, lest they should put me to death for her. So they wrote down that I had stolen it and cut off my hand. The stump they seared with boiling oil and I swooned away: but they gave me wine to drink, and I revived and taking up my hand, was returning to my lodging, when the landlord said to me, 'After what has passed, thou must leave my house and look for another lodging, since thou art convicted of theft.' 'O my lord,' said I, 'have patience with me two or three days, till I look me out a new lodging.' 'So be it,' he answered and I returned to the house, where I sat weeping and saying, 'How shall I return to my people with my hand cut off and they know not that I am innocent?' Then I abode in sore trouble and perplexity for two days, and on the third day the landlord came in to me, and with him some officers of police and the chief of the market, who had accused me of stealing the necklace. I went out to them and enquired what was the matter, but they seized on me, without further parley, and tied my hands behind me and put a chain about my neck, saying, 'The necklet that was with thee has been shown to the Governor of Damascus, and he recognizes it as one that belonged to his daughter, who has been missing these three years.' When I heard this, my heart sank within me, and I said to myself, 'I am lost without resource; but I

must needs tell the governor my story; and if he will, let him kill me, and if he will, let him pardon me.' So they carried me to the governor's house and made me stand before him. When he saw me, he looked at me out of the corner of his eye and said to those present, 'Why did ye cut off his hand? This man is unfortunate and hath committed no offense; and indeed ye wronged him in cutting off his hand.' When I heard this, I took heart and said to him, 'By Allah, O my lord, I am no thief! But they accused me of this grave offence and beat me with rods in the midst of the market, bidding me confess, till for the pain of the beating, I lied against myself and confessed to the theft, although I am innocent.' 'Fear not,' said the governor; 'no harm shall come to thee.' Then he laid the chief of the market under arrest, saying to him, 'Give this man the price of his hand, or I will hang thee and seize on all thy goods.' And he cried out to the officers, who took him and dragged him away, leaving me with the governor, who made his people unbind me and take the chain off my neck. Then he looked at me and said, 'O my son, speak the truth and tell me how thou camest by the necklet.' And he repeated the following verse:

To tell the whole truth is thy duty, although It bring thee to burn on the brasier of woe!

'By Allah, O my lord,' answered I, 'such is my intent!' And I told him all that had passed between me and the first lady and how she had brought the second one to me and had slain her out of jealousy. When he heard my story, he shook his head and beat hand upon hand; then putting his handkerchief to his eyes, wept awhile and repeated the following verses:

I see that Fortune's maladies are many upon me,
For, every dweller in the world, sick unto death is he.
To every gathering of friends there comes a parting day:
And few indeed on earth are those that are from parting free?

Then he turned to me and said, 'Know, O my son, that she who first came to thee was my eldest daughter. I brought her up in strict seclusion and when she came to womanhood, I sent her to Cairo and married her to my brother's son. After awhile, he died and she came back to me: but she had learnt profligate habits from the natives of Cairo: so she visited thee four times and at last brought her younger sister. Now they were sisters by the same mother and much attached to each other; and when this happened to the elder, she let her sister into her secret, and she desired to go out with her. So she asked thy leave and carried her to thee; after which she returned alone, and I questioned her of her sister, finding her weeping for her; but she said, "I know nothing of her." However, after this, she told her mother privily what had happened and how she had killed her sister; and her mother told me. Then she ceased not to weep and say, "By Allah, I will never leave weeping for her till I die!" And so it fell out. This, O my son, is what happened, and now I desire that thou baulk me not in what I am about to say to thee; it is that I purpose to marry thee to my youngest daughter, for she is a virgin and born of another mother, and I will take no dower from thee, but on the contrary will appoint thee an allowance, and thou shalt be to me as my very son.' 'I will well,' replied I; 'how could I hope for such good fortune?' Then he sent at once for the Cadi and the witnesses and married me to his daughter, and I went in to her.

Moreover, he got me a large sum of money from the chief of the market and I became in high favour with him. Soon after, news came to me that my father was dead so the governor despatched a courier to fetch me the property he had left behind him, and now I am living in all prosperity. This is how I came to lose my right hand." His story amazed me (continued the Jew) and I abode with him three days, after which he gave me much money and I set out and travelled, till I reached this thy city. The sojourn liked me well, so I took up my abode here and there befell me what thou knowest with the hunchback.' Quoth the King, 'This thy story is not more wonderful than that of the hunchback, and I will certainly hang you all. However, there still remains the tailor, who was the head of the offending.' Then he said to the tailor, 'O tailor, if thou canst tell me aught more wonderful than the story of the hunchback, I will pardon you all your offenses.' So the tailor came forward and said, 'Know, O King of the age, that a most rare thing happened to me yesterday before I fell in with the hunchback.

The Tailor's Story.

YESTERDAY morning early I was at an entertainment given by a friend of mine, at which there were assembled near twenty men of the people of the city, amongst them tailors and silk-weavers and carpenters and other craftsmen. As soon as the sun had risen, they set food before us that we might eat, when behold, the master of the house entered, and with him a comely young man, a stranger from Baghdad, dressed in the finest of clothes and perfectly handsome, except that he was lame. He saluted us, while we rose to receive him; and he was about to sit down, when he espied amongst us a certain barber; whereupon he refused to sit and would have gone away. But we stopped him and the host seized him and adjured him, saying, "What is the reason of thy coming in and going out again at once?" "By Allah, O my lord," answered he, "do not hinder me, for the cause of my turning back is yonder barber of ill-omen sitting there." When the host heard this, he wondered and said, "How comes this young man, who is from Baghdad. to be troubled in his mind about this barber?" Then we looked at the young man and said to him, "Tell us the reason of thine anger against the barber." "O company," replied he, "there befell me a strange adventure with this barber in my native city of Baghdad; he was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my lameness, and I have sworn that I will never sit in the same place with him nor tarry in any city of which he is an inhabitant. I left Baghdad, to be rid of him, and took up my abode in this city and lo, I find him with you! But now not another night shall pass, before I depart hence." So we begged him to sit down and tell us what had passed between him and the barber in Baghdad, whereat the latter changed colour and hung down his head. Then said the young man, "Know, O company, that my father was one of the chief merchants of Baghdad, and God had vouchsafed him no child but myself. When I grew up to man's estate, my father was translated to the mercy of God, leaving me great wealth in money and slaves and servants, and I began to dress handsomely and feed daintily. Now God had made me a hater of women, and one day, as I was going along one of the streets of Baghdad, a company of women stopped the way before me; so I fled from them, and entering a by-street without an outlet, sat down upon a stone bench at the other end. I had not sat long, before the lattice of one of the houses in the street opened and a young lady, as she were the moon at its full, never in my life saw I her like, put forth her head and began to water some flowers she had on the balcony. Then she turned right and left and seeing me watching her, smiled and shut the window and went away. Therewithal, fire flamed up in my heart and my mind was taken up with her, and my hatred (of women) was changed to love. I continued sitting there, lost to the world, till sundown, when the Cadi of the city came riding up the street, with slaves before him and servants behind him, and alighting, entered the very house at which the young lady had appeared. By this I guessed that he was her father; so I went home, sorrowful, and fell on my bed, oppressed with melancholy thoughts. My women came in to me and sat round me, puzzled to know what ailed me; but I would not speak to them nor answer their questions, and they wept and lamented over me. Presently, in came an old woman, who looked at me and saw at once what was the matter with me. So she sat down at my head and spoke me fair and said, 'O my son, tell me what ails thee, and I

will bring thee to thy desire.' So I told her what had happened to me, and she said, 'O my son, this girl is the Cadi's daughter of Baghdad; she is kept in strict seclusion, and the window at which thou sawest her is that of her apartment, where she dwells alone, her father occupying a great suite of rooms underneath. I often visit her, and thou shalt not come at her but through me; so gird thy middle and be of good cheer.' So saying, she went away, whilst I took comfort at what she said and arose in the morning well, to the great satisfaction of my people. By-and-by the old woman came in, chopfallen, and said to me, 'O my son, do not ask how I have fared with her! When I opened the subject to her, she said to me, "An thou leave not this talk, pestilent hag that thou art, I will assuredly use thee as thou deserves!" But needs must I have at her again.' When I heard this, it added sickness to my sickness: but after some days, the old woman came again and said to me, 'O my son, I must have of thee a present for good news.' With this, life returned to me, and I said, 'Whatever thou wilt is thine.' Then said she, 'O my son, I went yesterday to the young lady, who seeing me broken-spirited and tearful-eyed, said to me, "O my aunt, what ails thee that I see thy heart thus straitened?" Whereupon I wept and replied, "O my lady, I am just come from a youth who loves thee and is like to die for thy sake." Quoth she (and indeed her heart was moved to pity), "And who is this youth of whom thou speakest?" "He is my son," answered I, "and the darling of my heart. He saw thee, some days since, at the window, tending thy flowers, and fell madly in love with thee. I told him what passed between thee and me the other day, whereupon his disorder increased and he took to his bed and will surely die." At this her colour changed and she said, "Is all this on my account?" "Yea, by Allah!" answered I. "What wouldst thou have me do?" Then said she, "Go back to him and salute him for me and tell him that my sufferings are twice as great as his. And on Friday, before the time of prayer, let him come hither and I will come down and open the door to him. Then I will carry him to my chamber, where we can converse awhile and he can go away, before my father comes back from the mosque."' When I heard this, my anguish ceased and my heart was comforted. So I took off the clothes I was wearing and gave them to the old woman; and she said, 'Be of good cheer.' 'There is no pain left in me,' answered I; and she went away. My household and friends rejoiced in my restoration to health, and I abode thus till Friday, when the old woman entered and asked me how I did, to which I replied that I was well and in good case. Then I dressed and perfumed myself and sat down to await the going in of the folk to the mosque, that I might betake myself to the young lady. But the old woman said to me, 'Thou hast time and to spare; so thou wouldst do well to go to the bath and have thy head shaved, to do away the traces of thy disorder.' 'It is well thought,' answered I; 'I will first have my head shaved and then go to the bath.' Then I said to my servant, 'Go to the market and bring me a barber, and look that he be no meddler, but a man of sense, who will not split my head with his much talk.' So he went out and returned with this wretched old man. When he came in, he saluted me, and I returned his salutation. Then said he, 'Surely, I see thee thin of body.' And I replied, 'I have been ill.' Quoth he, 'God cause affliction and trouble and anxiety to depart from thee!' 'May God hear thy prayer!' answered I: and he said, 'Be of good cheer, O my lord, for indeed recovery is come to thee. Dost thou wish to be polled or let blood? Indeed, it is reported, on the authority of Ibn Abbas (whom God accept!), that the Prophet said, "Whoso is polled on a Friday, God shall avert from him threescore and ten diseases;" and again, "He

who is cupped on a Friday is safe from loss of sight and a host of other ailments."' 'Leave this talk,' said I; 'come, shave my head at once, for I am yet weak.' With this he pulled out a handkerchief, from which he took an astrolabe with seven plates, mounted in silver, and going into the courtyard, held the instrument up to the sun's rays and looked for some time. Then he came back and said to me, 'Know that eight degrees and six minutes have elapsed of this our day, which is Friday, the tenth of Sefer, in the six hundred and fifty-third year of the Flight of the Prophet (upon whom be the most excellent of blessing and peace!) and the seven thousand three hundred and twentieth year of the Alexandrian era, and the planet now in the ascendant, according to the rules of mathematics, is Mars, which being in conjunction with Mercury, denotes a favourable time for cutting hair; and this also indicates to me that thou purposest to foregather with some one and that your interview will be propitious; but after this there occurs a sign, respecting a thing which I will not name to thee.' 'By Allah,' exclaimed I, 'thou weariest me and pesterest me with thy foolish auguries, when I only sent for thee to shave my head! So come, shave me at once and give me no more talk.' 'By Allah,' rejoined he, 'if thou knewest what is about to befall thee, thou wouldst do nothing this day; and I counsel thee to do as I shall tell thee, by observation of the stars.' 'By Allah,' said I, 'I never saw a barber skilled in astrology except thee: but I think and know that thou art prodigal of idle talk. I sent for thee to shave my head, and thou plaguest me with this sorry prate!' 'What more wouldst thou have!' replied he. 'God hath vouchsafed thee a barber, who is an astrologer, versed in the arts of alchemy and white magic, syntax, grammar and lexicology, rhetoric and logic, arithmetic, astronomy and geometry, as well as in the knowledge of the Law and the Traditions of the Prophet and in exegesis. Moreover, I have read many books and digested them and have had experience of affairs and understand them thoroughly. In short, I have examined into all things and studied all arts and crafts and sciences and mastered them; and thy father loved me because of my lack of officiousness, for which reason my service is obligatory on thee. I am no meddler, as thou pretendest, and on this account I am known as the Silent, the Grave One. Wherefore it behoves thee to give thanks to God and not cross me for I am a true counsellor to thee and take an affectionate interest in thee. I would I were in thy service a whole year, that thou mightst do me justice: and I would ask no hire of thee for this.' When I heard this, I said, 'Thou wilt certainly be the death of me this day!' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'I am he whom the folk call the Silent, by reason of my few words, to distinguish me from my six brothers, the eldest of whom was called Becbac, the second Heddar, the third Fekic, the fourth El Kouz el Aswani, the fifth El Feshar, the sixth Shecashic and the seventh (myself) Samit.' Whilst he thus overwhelmed me with his talk, I thought my gall-bladder would burst so I said to the servant, 'Give him a quarter-dinar and let him go, for God's sake! I won't have my head shaved to-day.' 'What words are these, O my lord?' said he. 'By Allah, I will take no hire of thee till I have served thee; and needs must I serve thee, for indeed it is incumbent on me to do so and fulfil thy need; and I care not if I take no money of thee. If thou knowest not my worth, I know thine; and I owe thy father (may God the Most High have mercy on him!) many a kindness, for he was a generous man. By Allah, he sent for me one day as it were this blessed day, and I went in to him and found a company of his friends with him. He would have had me let him blood; but I pulled out my astrolabe and taking an altitude for him, found the

aspect inauspicious and the hour unfavourable for the letting of blood. I told him of this and he conformed to my advice and put off the operation to a more convenient season. So I recited the following verses in his honour:

I came one day unto my lord, that I might let him blood,
But found that for his body's health the season was not good;
So sat me down and talked with him of many a pleasant thing
And all the treasures of my mind before him freely strewed.
Well pleased, he listened, then, "O mine of knowledge!" he did say,
"Thy wit and wisdom overpass the bounds of likelihood!"
"Not so," quoth I; "my wit indeed were little, but for thee,
O prince of men, that pour'st on me thy wisdom like a flood!
Thou seem'st indeed the lord of grace, bounty and excellence,
World's treasure-house of knowledge, wit, sense and mansuetude!"

Thy father was charmed and cried out to the servant, saying, "Give him a hundred and three dinars and a dress of honour." The servant did as he bade, and I waited till a favourable moment, when I let him blood; and he did not cross me, but thanked me, and all present also praised me. When the cupping was over, I could not help saying to him, "By Allah, O my lord, what made thee say to the servant, 'Give him a hundred and three dinars'?" Quoth he, "One dinar was for the astrological observation, another for thine entertaining converse, the third for the bloodletting and the remaining hundred and the dress for thy verses in my honour."' 'May God show no mercy to my father,' exclaimed I, 'for knowing the like of thee?' He laughed and said, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is His Apostle! Glory be to Him who changes but is not changed! I took thee for a man of sense; but I see thou dotest for illness. God says, in His precious Book, that Paradise is prepared for "those who restrain their wrath and forgive men", and in any case thou art excused. But I am ignorant of the cause of thy haste, and thou must know that thy father and grandfather did nothing without consulting me, for indeed it is said that he with whom one takes counsel should be trustworthy and that he who takes counsel shall not be disappointed. It is said also that he who hath not an elder (to advise him) will never be an elder himself; and indeed the poet says:

Ere thou decide to venture thyself in aught, Consult an experienced man and cross him not.

And indeed thou wilt find none better versed in affairs than I, and I am here standing on my feet to serve thee. I am not vexed with thee: why shouldst thou be vexed with me? But I will bear with thee for the sake of the favours I owe thy father.' 'By Allah,' exclaimed I, 'O thou whose tongue is as long as a jackass's tail, thou persistest in pestering me with talk and pelting me with words, when all I want of thee is to shave my head and take thyself off!' Then he lathered my head, saying, 'I know that thou art vexed with me, but I bear thee no malice; for thy wit is weak and thou art a boy: it was but yesterday I took thee on my shoulders and carried thee to the school' 'O my brother,'. cried I, 'for God's sake, do what I want and go thy way!' And I rent my clothes. When he saw me do this, he took the razor and fell to sharpening it and stinted not, till I was well-nigh distraught. Then he came up to me and shaved a part of

my head, then held his hand and said, 'O my lord, hurry is of the Devil and deliberation of the Merciful One. Methinks thou knowest not my station; verily my hand falls on the heads of kings and amirs and viziers and sages and learned men: and it was of me the poet said:

All the trades are like necklets of jewels and gold
And this barber indeed's the chief pearl of the strings.
He excelleth all others that boast of their skill.
And under his hand are the topknots of kings.'

'Leave what concerns thee not,' said I: 'indeed thou hast straitened my breast and troubled my mind.' Quoth he, Meseems thou art in haste. 'Yes, yes, yes!' answered I, and he, 'Thou wouldst do well to proceed with deliberation, for haste is of the Devil and bequeaths repentance and disappointment. Verily he upon whom be blessing and peace hath said, "The best affair is that which is undertaken with deliberation." By Allah, thy case troubles me, and I would have thee let me know what it is thou art in such haste to do, for I fear me it is other than good.' Then said he, 'It wants three hours yet of the time of prayer. However, I do not wish to be in doubt as to this, but am minded to know the time for certain; for speech, when it is conjectural, is but faulty, especially in the like of me, whose merit is plain and known of all men; and it does not befit me to talk at random, as do the common sort of astrologers.' So saying, he threw down the razor and taking up the astrolabe, went out under the sun and stood a long while, after which he returned and said to me, 'It wants three hours of the time of prayer, neither more nor less.' 'By Allah,' answered I, 'hold thy tongue, for thou breakest my heart in pieces!' So he took his razor and after sharpening it as before, shaved another part of my head. Then he said, 'I am concerned about thy haste; and indeed thou wouldst do well to tell me the cause of it, for thou knowest that thy father and grandfather did nothing without my counsel.' When I saw that there was no getting rid of him, I said to myself, 'The time of prayer draws near and I wish to go to her before the folk come out from the mosque. If I am delayed much longer, I know not how I shall come at her.' Then I said to him, 'Be quick and leave this prating and officiousness, for I have to go to an entertainment at the house of one of my friends.' When he heard me speak of an entertainment, he said, 'This thy day is a blessed one for me! Verily, yesterday I invited a party of my intimate friends and I have forgotten to provide aught for them to eat. I bethought me of it but now, on hearing thee speak of an entertainment. Alack, how I shall be disgraced in their eyes!' 'Be in no concern for that,' answered I. 'Have I not told thee that I am bidden abroad to-day? All the meat and drink in the house shall be thine, so thou despatch my affair and make haste to shave my head.' 'God requite thee with good!' rejoined he. 'Tell me what thou hast for my guests, that I may know.' Quoth I, 'I have five dishes of meat and ten fricasseed fowls and a roasted lamb.' 'Bring them out to me,' said he, 'that I may see them.' So I had all this brought, and when he saw it, he said, 'There lacks the wine.' 'I have a flagon or two in the house,' answered I; and he said, 'Have it brought out.' So I sent for it, and he exclaimed, 'God bless thee for a generous soul! But there are still the perfumes and the essences.' So I brought him a box, containing fifty dinars' worth of aloes-wood and ambergris and musk and other perfumes. By this, the time began to run short and my heart was straitened; so I said to him, 'Take it all and finish shaving

my head, by the life of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!' 'By Allah,' said he, 'I will not take it till I see all that is in it.' So I made the servant open the box, and the barber threw down the astrolabe and sitting down on the ground, turned over the contents, till I was well-nigh distracted. Then he took the razor and coming up to me, shaved some little of my head and recited the following verse:

The boy after his father's guise grows up and follows suit As surely as the tree springs up from out its parent root.

Then said he, 'O my son, I know not whether to thank thee or thy father; for my entertainment to-day is all due to thy kindness and liberality, and none of my company is worthy of it; though I have none but men of consideration, such as Zentout the bath-keeper and Selya the corn-chandler and Silet the bean-seller and Akresheh the grocer and Hemid the scavenger and Said the camel-driver and Suweyd the porter and Abou Mukarish the bathman and Cassim the watchman and Kerim the groom. There is not among them all one curmudgeon or make-bate or meddler or spoil-sport; each has his own dance that he dances and his own couplets that he repeats, and the best of them is that they are like thy servant, knowing not abundance of talk nor meddlesomeness. The bath-keeper sings enchantingly to the tambourine and dances and says, "I am going, O my mother, to fill my jar!" As for the corn-chandler, he brings more skill to it than any of them; he dances and says, "O mourner, my mistress, thou dost not fall short!" and draws the very heart out of one for laughing at him. Whilst the scavenger sings, so that the birds stop to listen to him, and dances and says, "News with my wife is not kept in a chest!" And indeed he is a witty, accomplished rogue, and of his excellence I use to say the following:

My life redeem the scavenger! I love him passing dear,
For, in his goodly gait, he's like the zephyr-shaken bough.
Fate blessed my eyes with him one night; and I to him did say,
(Whilst in my bosom, as I spoke, desire did ebb and flow,)
"Thou'st lit thy fire within my heart!" Whereto he answer made
"What wonder though the scavenger have turned a fire-man now?"

And indeed each is perfection in all that can charm the wit with mirth and jollity. But hearing is not like seeing; and indeed if thou wilt join us and put off going to thy friends, it will be better both for us and for thee: for the traces of sickness are yet upon thee and belike thou art going amongst talkative folk, who will prate of what does not concern them, or there may be amongst them some impertinent busybody who will split thy head, and thou still weak from illness.' 'This shall be for another day,' answered I and laughed in spite of my anger. 'Finish what thou hast to do for me and go in peace and enjoy thyself with thy friends, for they will be awaiting thy coming.' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'I only seek to bring thee in company with these pleasant folk, amongst whom there is neither meddlesomeness nor excess of talk; for never, since I came to years of discretion, could I endure to consort with those who ask of what concerns them not, nor with any except those who are, like myself, men of few words. Verily, if thou wert once to see them and company with them, thou wouldst forsake all thy friends.' 'God fulfil thy gladness with them!' rejoined I. 'Needs must I foregather with them one of these days.' And he said, 'I would it were to be to-day, for I had made

up my mind that thou shouldst make one of us: but if thou must indeed go to thy friends to-day, I will take the good things, with which thy bounty hath provided me for them, to my guests, and leave them to eat and drink, without waiting for me, whilst I return to thee in haste and accompany thee whither thou goest; for there is no ceremony between me and my friends to hinder me from leaving them.' 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' cried I. 'Go thou to thy friends and make merry with them and let me go to mine and be with them this day, for they expect me.' 'I will not let thee go alone,' replied he: and I said, 'None can enter where I am going but myself.' Then said he, 'I believe thou hast an assignation with some woman to-day; else thou wouldst take me with thee, for it is the like of me that furnishes a merry-making; or if thou go to any one with whom thou wouldst be private, I am the fittest of all men for thy purpose, for I would help thee to what thou desirest and look that none saw thee. I fear lest thou go in to some strange woman and lose thy life; for in this city one cannot do aught of the kind, especially on a day like this and under so keen and masterful a chief of the police as ours of Baghdad.' 'Out on thee, O wretched old man!' cried I. 'Avaunt! what words are these thou givest me?' 'O dolt!' rejoined he, 'thou sayest to me what is not true and hidest thy mind from me; but I know that this is so and am certain of it, and I only seek to help thee this day.' I was fearful lest my people or the neighbours should hear the barber's talk, so kept silence, whilst he finished shaving my head; by which time the hour of prayer was come and it was wellnigh time for the exhortation. When he had done, I said to him, 'Take the meat and drink and carry them to thy friends. I will await thy return.' For I thought it best to dissemble with the accursed fellow and feign compliance with his wishes, so haply he might go away and leave me. Quoth he, 'Thou art deceiving me and wilt go alone and cast thyself into some peril, from which there will be no escape for thee. For God's sake, do not go till I return, that I may accompany thee and see what comes of thine affair.' 'It is well,' answered I: 'do not be long absent.' Then he took all that I had given him and went out; but, instead of going home with it, the cursed fellow delivered it to a porter, to carry to his house, and hid himself in a by-street. As for me, I rose at once, for the Muezzins had already chanted the Salutation, and, dressing myself in haste, went out and hurried to the house where I had seen the young lady. I found the old woman standing at the door, awaiting me, and went up with her to the young lady's apartment. Hardly had I done so, when the master of the house returned from the mosque and entering the saloon, shut the door. I looked out from the window and saw this barber (God's malison on him!) sitting over against the door, and said, 'How did this devil find me out?' At this moment, as God had decreed it for my undoing, it befell that a slave-girl belonging to the master of the house committed some offence, for which he beat her. She cried out, and a male slave came in to deliver her, whereupon the Cadi beat him also, and he too cried out. The cursed barber concluded that it was I he was beating and fell to tearing his clothes and strewing dust on his head, shrieking and calling for help. So the folk came round him, and he said to them, 'My master is being murdered in the Cadi's house!' Then he ran, shrieking, to my house, with the folk after him, and told my people and servants: and before I knew what was forward, up they came, with torn clothes and dishevelled hair, calling out, 'Alas, our master!' and the barber at their head, in a fine pickle, tearing his clothes and shouting. They made for the house in which I was, headed by the barber, crying out,

'Woe is us for our murdered master!' And the Cadi, hearing the uproar at his door, said to one of his servants, 'Go and see what is the matter.' The man went out and came back, saying, 'O my lord, there are more than ten thousand men and women at the door, crying out, "Woe is us for our murdered master!" and pointing to our house.' When the Cadi heard this, he was troubled and vexed; so he went to the door and opening it, saw a great concourse of people; whereat he was amazed and said, 'O folk, what is the matter?' 'O accursed one, O dog, O hog,' replied my servants, 'thou hast killed our master!' Quoth he, 'And what has your master done to me that I should kill him? Behold, this my house is open to you!' 'Thou didst beat him but now with rods,' answered the barber; 'for I heard his cries.' 'What has he done that I should beat him?' repeated the Cadi; 'and what brings him into my house?' 'Be not a vile, perverse old man!' replied the barber; 'I know the whole story. The long and the short of it is that thy daughter is in love with him and he with her; and when thou knewest that he had entered the house, thou badest thy servants beat him, and they did so. By Allah, none shall judge between us and thee but the Khalif! So bring us out our master, that his people may take him, before I go and fetch him forth of thy house and thou be put to shame.' When the Cadi heard this, he was dumb for amazement and confusion before the people, but presently said to the barber, 'If thou speak truth, come in and fetch him out.' Whereupon the barber pushed forward and entered the house. When I saw this, I looked about for a means of escape, but saw no hiding-place save a great chest that stood in the room. So I got into the chest and pulled the lid down on me and held my breath. Hardly had I done this, when the barber came straight to the place where I was and catching up the chest, set it on his head and made off with it in haste. At this, my reason forsook me and I was assured that he would not let me be; so I took courage and opening the chest, threw myself to the ground. My leg was broken in the fall, and the door of the house being opened, I saw without a great crowd of people. Now I had much gold in my sleeve, which I had provided against the like of this occasion; so I fell to scattering it among the people, to divert their attention from me; and whilst they were busy scrambling for it, I set off running through the by-streets of Baghdad, and this cursed barber, whom nothing could divert from me, after me. Wherever I went, he followed, crying out, 'They would have bereft me of my master and slain him who has been a benefactor to me and my family and friends! But praised be God who aided me against them and delivered my lord from their hands! Where wilt thou go now? Thou persistedst in following thine own evil devices, till thou broughtest thyself to this pass, and if God had not vouchsafed me to thee, thou hadst never won free from this strait, for they would have plunged thee into irremediable ruin. How long dost thou expect I shall live to save thee? By Allah, thou hast well-nigh undone me by thy folly and thy perverseness in wishing to go by thyself! But I will not reproach thee with ignorance, for thou art little of wit and hasty.' 'Does not what thou hast brought upon me suffice thee,' replied I, 'but thou must pursue me with the like of this talk through the public streets?' And I well-nigh gave up the ghost for excess of rage against him. Then I took refuge in the shop of a weaver in the midst of the market and sought protection of the owner, who drove the barber away. I sat down in the back shop and said to myself, 'If I return home, I shall never be able to get rid of this accursed barber, for he will be with me night and day, and I cannot endure the sight of him.' So I sent out at once for witnesses and made a will, dividing the greater part of my money among my people,

and appointed a guardian over them, to whom I committed the charge of great and small directing him to sell my house and estates. Then I set out at once on my travels, that I might be free of this ruffian, and came to settle in your town, where I have lived for some time. When you invited me and I came hither the first thing I saw was this accursed pimp seated in the place of honour. How, then, can I be at my ease and how can it be pleasant to me to consort with you, in company with this fellow, who brought all this upon me and was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my exile from my country and family?" And he refused to sit down and went away. When we heard the young man's story (continued the tailor), we were beyond measure amazed and diverted and said to the barber, "Is it true that this young man says of thee?" "By Allah," replied he, "I dealt thus with him of my courtesy and good sense and humanity. But for me, he had perished and none but I was the cause of his escape. Well for him that it was in his leg that he suffered and not in his life! Were I a man of many words or a busybody, I had not done him this kindness; but now I will tell you something that happened to me, that ye may know that I am indeed sparing of speech and no impertinent meddler, as were my six brothers; and it is this:

The Barber's Story.

I WAS living at Baghdad, in the time of the Khalif Mustensir Billah, who loved the poor and needy and companied with the learned and the pious. One day, it befell that he was wroth with a band of highway robbers, ten in number, who infested the neighbourhood, and ordered the chief of the Baghdad police to bring them before him on the day of the Festival. So the prefect sallied out and capturing the robbers, embarked with them in a boat. I caught sight of them, as they were embarking, and said to myself, 'These people are surely bound on some party of pleasure; methinks they mean to spend the day in eating and drinking, and none shall be their messmate but I.' So, of the greatness of my courtesy and the gravity of my understanding, I embarked in the boat and mingled with them. They rowed across to the opposite bank, where they landed, and there came up soldiers and police officers with chains, which they put round the necks of the robbers. They chained me with the rest, and, O company, is it not a proof of my courtesy and spareness of speech that I kept silence and did not choose to speak? Then they took us away in chains and next morning they carried us all before the Commander of the Faithful, who bade strike off the heads of the ten robbers. So the herdsman came forward and made us kneel before him on the carpet of blood; then drawing his sword, struck off one head after another, till none was left but myself. The Khalif looked at me and said to the headsman, 'What ails thee thou thou struck off but nine heads?' 'God forbid,' replied he, 'that I should behead only nine, when thou didst order me to behead ten!' Quoth the Khalif, 'Meseems, thou hast beheaded but nine and he who is before thee is the tenth.' 'By thy munificence,' replied the headsman, 'I have beheaded ten!' So they counted the dead men, and behold, they were ten. Then said the Khalif to me, 'What made thee keep silence at such a time and how camest thou in company with these men of blood? Thou art a man of great age, but assuredly thy wit is but little.' When I heard the Khalif's words, I replied, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that I am the Silent Elder, and am thus called to distinguish me from my six brothers. I am a man of great learning, whilst, as for the gravity of my understanding, the excellence of my apprehension and the spareness of my speech, there is no end to them; and by craft I am a barber. I went out early yesterday morning and saw these ten men making for a boat, and thinking they were bound on a party of pleasure, joined myself to them and embarked with them. After awhile, there came up the officers, who put chains round their necks and round mine amongst the rest, but in the excess of my courtesy, I kept silence and did not speak, nor was this other than generosity on my part. Then they brought us before thee and thou didst order the ten robbers' heads to be stricken off; yet did I not make myself known to thee, purely of my great generosity and courtesy, which led me to share with them in their death. But all my life have I dealt thus nobly with the folk, and they still requite me after the foulest fashion.' When the Khalif heard what I said and knew that I was a man of exceeding generosity and few words and no meddler (as this young man would have it, whom I rescued from horrors and who has so scurvily repaid me), he laughed so immoderately that he fell backward. Then said he to me, 'O silent man, are thy six brothers like thee distinguished for wisdom and knowledge and spareness of speech?' 'Never were they like me,' answered I;

‘thou dost me injustice, O Commander of the Faithful, and it becomes thee not to even my brothers with me: for, of the abundance of their speech and their lack of conduct and courtesy, each one of them has gotten some bodily defect. One is blind of an eye, another paralysed, a third blind, a fourth cropped of the ears and nose, a fifth crop-lipped and a sixth hunchbacked and a cripple. Thou must not think, O Commander of the Faithful, that I am a man of many words; but I must needs explain to thee that I am a man of greater worth and of fewer words than they. By each one of my brothers hangs a tale of how he came by his defect, and these I will relate to thee. Know then, O Commander of the Faithful that

Story of the Barber's First Brother.

MY first brother, the hunchback, was a tailor in Baghdad, and plied his craft in a shop, which he hired of a very rich man, who dwelt over against him and had a mill in the lower part of the house. One day, as my brother the hunchback was sitting in his shop, sewing, he chanced to raise his head and saw, at the bay-window of his landlord's house, a lady like the rising full moon, engaged in looking at the passers-by. His heart was taken with love of her and he passed the day gazing at her and neglecting his business, till the evening. Next day, he opened his shop and sat down to sew: but as often as he made a stitch, he looked at the bay-window and saw her as before; and his passion and infatuation for her redoubled. On the third day, as he was sitting in his usual place, gazing on her, she caught sight of him, and perceiving that he had fallen a captive to her love, smiled in his face, and he smiled back at her. Then she withdrew and sent her slave-girl to him with a parcel of red flowered silk. The girl accosted him and said to him, "My lady salutes thee and would have thee cut out for her, with a skilful hand, a shift of this stuff and sew it handsomely." "I hear and obey," answered he; and cut out the shift and made an end of sewing it the same day. Next morning early, the girl came back and said to him, "My mistress salutes thee and would fain know how thou hast passed the night; for she has not tasted sleep by reason of her heart being taken up with thee." Then she laid before him a piece of yellow satin and said to him, "My mistress bids thee cut her two pairs of trousers of this stuff and sew them this day." "I hear and obey," answered he; "salute her for me with abundant salutation and say to her, 'Thy slave is obedient to thy commands so order him as thou wilt.'" Then he applied himself to cut out the trousers and used all diligence in sewing them. Presently the lady appeared at the window and saluted him by signs, now casting down her eyes and now smiling in his face, so that he made sure of getting his will of her. She did not let him budge till he had finished the two pairs of trousers, when she withdrew and sent the slave-girl, to whom he delivered them, and she took them and went away. When it was night, he threw himself on his bed and tossed from side to side, till morning, when he rose and sat down in his shop. By-and-by, the slave-girl came to him and said, "My master calls for thee." When he heard this, he was afraid; but the girl, seeing his alarm, to him, "Fear not: nought but good shall befall thee. My lady would have thee make acquaintance with my master." So my brother rejoiced greatly and went out with her. When he came into his landlord's presence he kissed the earth before him, and the latter returned his salute; then gave him a great piece of linen, saying, "Make this into shirts for me." "I hear and obey," replied my brother, and fell to work at once and cut out twenty shirts by nightfall, without stopping to taste food. Then said the husband "What is thy hire for this?" "Twenty dirhems," answered my brother. So the man cried out to the slave-girl to give him twenty dirhems; but the lady signed to my brother not to take them, and he said, "By Allah, I will take nothing from thee!" And took his work and went away, though he was sorely in want of money. Then he applied himself to do their work, eating and drinking but little for three days, in his great diligence. At the end of this time, the slave-girl came to him and said, "What hast thou done?" Quoth he, "They are finished;" and carried the shirts to his landlord, who would have paid him his hire; but he said, "I will take

nothing," for fear of the lady, and returning to his shop, passed the night without sleep for hunger. Now the lady had told her husband how the case stood, and they had agreed to take advantage of his infatuation to make him sew for them for nothing and laugh at him. Next morning, as he sat in his shop, the servant came to him and said, "My master would speak with thee." So he accompanied her to the husband, who said to him, "I wish thee to make me five cassocks." So he cut them out and took the stuff and went away. Then he sewed them and carried them to the man, who praised his work and offered him a purse of money. He put out his hand to take it, but the lady signed to him from behind her husband not to do so, and he replied, "O my lord, there is no hurry: by-and-by." Then he went out, more abject than an ass, for verily five things at once were sore upon him, love and beggary and hunger and nakedness and toil; nevertheless, he heartened himself with the hope of gaining the lady's favours. When he had made an end of all their work, they put a cheat upon him and married him to their slave-girl. but when he thought to go in to her, they said to him, "Lie this night in the mill; and to-morrow all will be well." My brother concluded that there was some good reason for this and passed the night alone in the mill. Now the husband had set on the miller to make my brother turn the mill; so in the middle of the night, the miller came in and began to say, "This ox is lazy and stands still and will not turn, and there is much wheat to be ground. So I will yoke him and make him finish grinding it this night, for the folk are impatient for their flour." Then he filled the hoppers with grain and going up to my brother, with a rope in his hand, bound him to the yoke and said to him, "Come, turn the mill! Thou thinkest of nothing but eating and voiding." Then he took a whip and laid on to my brother, who began to weep and cry out; but none came to his aid, and he was forced to grind the wheat till near daylight, when the husband came in and seeing him yoked to the shaft and the miller flogging him, went away. At daybreak the miller went away and left him still yoked and well nigh dead; and soon after in came the slave-girl, who unbound him and said to him, "I am grieved for what has befallen thee, and both I and my lady are full of concern for thee." But he had no tongue wherewith to answer her, for excess of beating and toil. Then he returned to his lodging, and presently the notary who had drawn up the marriage contract came to him and saluted him, saying, "God give thee long life! May thy marriage be blessed! Thou hast doubtless passed the night clipping and kissing and dalliance from dusk to dawn." "May God curse thee for a liar, thousandfold cuckold that thou art!" replied my brother. "By Allah, I did nothing but turn the mill in the place of the ox all night!" Quoth the notary, "Tell me thy story." So my brother told him what had happened, and he said, "Thy star agrees not with hers: but if thou wilt, I can alter the contract for thee." And my brother answered, "See if thou have another device." Then the notary left him and he sat down in his shop, till some one should bring him work by which he might earn his day's bread. Presently the slave-girl came to him and said, "My mistress would speak with thee." "Go, my good girl," replied he; "I will have no more to do with thy mistress." So the girl returned to her mistress and told her what my brother had said, and presently she put her head out of the window, weeping and saying, "O my beloved, why wilt thou have no more to do with me?" But he made her no answer. Then she swore to him that all that had befallen him in the mill was without her sanction and that she was guiltless of the whole affair. When he saw her beauty and grace and heard the sweetness of her speech, he forgot

what had befallen him and accepted her excuse and rejoiced in her sight. So he saluted her and talked with her and sat at his sewing awhile, after which the servant came to him and said, "My mistress salutes thee and would have thee to know that her husband purposes to lie this night abroad with some intimate friends of his; so when he is gone, do thou come to us and pass the night with her in all delight till the morning." Now the man had said to his wile, "How shall we do to turn him away from thee?" Quoth she, "Let me play him another trick and make him a byword in the city." But my brother knew nothing of the malice of women. As soon as it was night, the servant came to him and carried him to the house; and when the lady saw him, she said to him, "By Allah, O my lord, I have been longing for thee!" "By Allah," replied he, "make haste and give me a kiss first of all." Hardly had he spoken, when the master of the house came in from an inner room and seized him, saying, "By Allah, I will not let thee go, till I deliver thee to the chief of the police." My brother humbled himself to him; but he would not listen to him and carried him to the prefect, who gave him a hundred lashes with a whip and mounting him on a camel, paraded him about the city, whilst the folk proclaimed aloud, "This is the punishment of those who violate people's harems!" Moreover, he fell off the camel and broke his leg and so became lame. Then the prefect banished him from the city and he went forth, not knowing whither to turn; but I heard of his mishap and going out after him, brought him back and took him to live with me.'

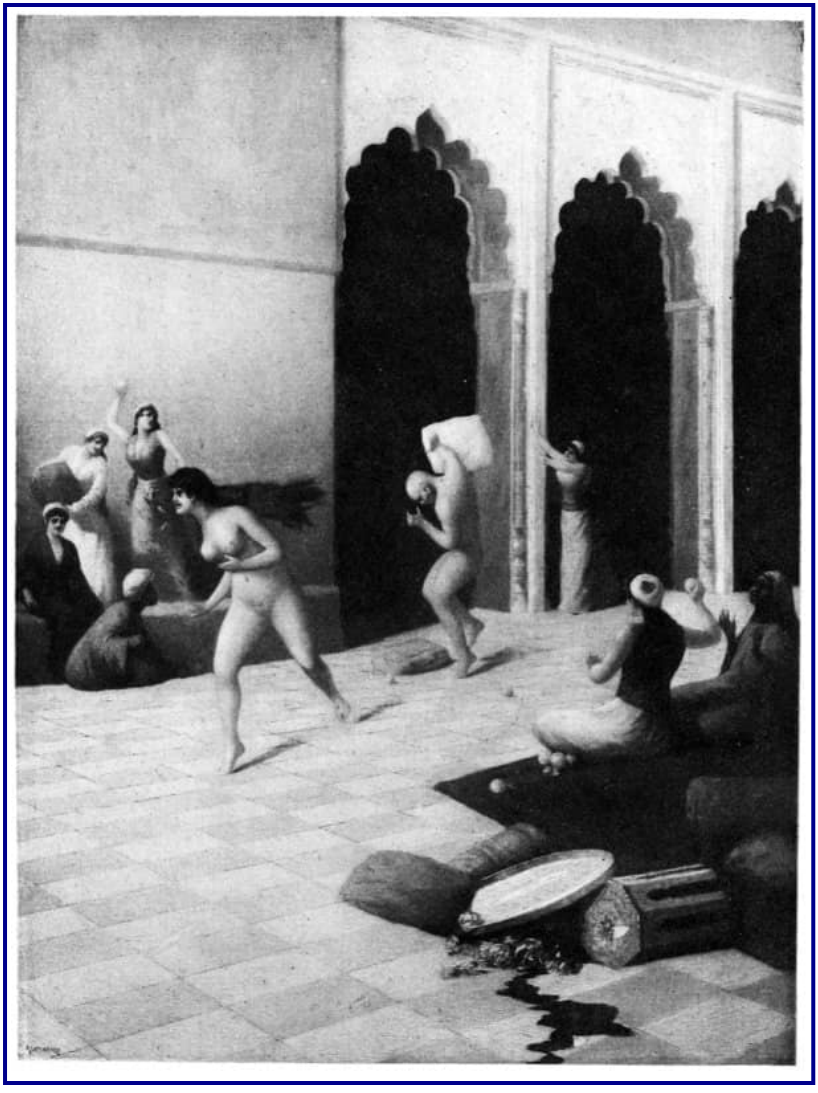
The Khalif laughed at my story and said, 'Thou hast done well, O Silent One, O man of few words!' and bade me take a present and go away. But I said, 'I will take nothing except I tell thee what befell my other brothers: and do not think me a man of many words. Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that

Story of the Barber's Second Brother.

MY second brother's name was Becbac and he was the paralytic. One day, as he was going about his business, an old woman accosted him and said to him, "Harkye, stop a little, that I may tell thee of somewhat, which, if it please thee, thou shalt do for me." My brother stopped and she went on, "I will put thee in the way of a certain thing, so thy words be not many." "Say on," replied my brother; and she, "What sayest thou to a handsome house and a pleasant garden, with running waters and fruits and wine and a fair-faced one to hold in thine arms from dark till dawn?" "And is all this in the world?" asked my brother. "Yes," answered she; "and it shall be thine, so thou be reasonable and leave impertinent curiosity and many words and do as I bid thee." "I will well, O my lady," rejoined my brother; "but what made thee choose me of all men for this affair and what is it pleases thee in me?" Quoth she, "Did I not bid thee be sparing of speech? Hold thy peace and follow me. Thou must know that the young lady, to whom I shall carry thee, loves to have her own way and hates to be crossed, so if thou fall in with her humour, thou shalt come to thy desire of her." And my brother said, "I will not thwart her in aught." Then she went on and he followed her, eager to enjoy what she had promised him, till she brought him to a fine large house, richly furnished and full of servants, and carried him to an upper story. When the people of the house saw him, they said to him, "What dost thou here?" But the old woman bade them, "Let him be and trouble him not; for he is a workman and we have occasion for him." Then she brought him into a fine great gallery, with a fair garden in its midst, and made him sit down upon a handsome couch. He had not sat long, before he heard a great noise and in came a troop of damsels, with a lady in their midst, as she were the moon on the night of its full. When he saw her, he rose and made an obeisance to her; whereupon she bade him welcome and ordered him to be seated. So he sat down and she said to him. "God advance thee! Is all well with thee?" "O my lady," replied my brother, "all is well." Then she called for food, and they brought her a table richly served. So she sat down to eat, making a show of affection to my brother and jesting with him, though all the while she could not keep from laughing: but as often as he looked at her, she signed towards the waiting-maids, as if she laughed at them. My ass of a brother understood nothing, but concluded, in the blindness of his doting, that the lady was in love with him and would admit him to his desire. When they had finished eating, they set on wine, and there came in ten damsels like moons, with strung lutes in their hands, and fell a singing right melodiously; whereupon delight got hold upon him and he took the cup from the lady's hands and drank it off. Then she drank a cup of wine, and he rose and bowed to her, saying, "Health to thee!" She filled him another cup and he drank it off, and she gave him a cuff on the nape of his neck; whereupon he rose and went out in a rage; but the old woman followed him and winked to him to return. So he came back and the lady bade him sit, and he sat down without speaking. Then she dealt him a second cuff, and nothing would serve her but she must make all her maids cuff him also. Quoth he to the old woman, "Never saw I aught finer than this!" And she kept saying, "Enough, enough, I conjure thee, O my lady!" The women cuffed him till he was well-nigh senseless, and he rose and went out again in a rage; but the old woman followed him and said, "Wait a little,

and thou shalt come to what thou wishest." "How much longer must I wait?" asked he. "Indeed I am faint with cuffing." "As soon as she is warm with wine," answered she, "thou shalt have thy desire." So he returned to his place and sat down, whereupon all the damsels rose and the lady bade them fumigate him and sprinkle rose-water on his face. Then said she to him, "God advance thee! Thou hast entered my house and submitted to my conditions; for whoso thwarts me, I turn him away, but he who is patient has his desire." "O my lady," replied he, "I am thy slave and in the hollow of thy hand." "Know then," continued she, "that God has made me passionately fond of frolic, and whoso falls in with my humour comes by what he wishes." Then she ordered the damsels to sing with loud voices, and they sang, till the whole company was in ecstasy: after which she said to one of the maids, "Take thy lord and do what is wanting to him and bring him back to me forthright." So the damsel took my brother, who knew not what she would do with him; but the old woman came up to him and said, "Be patient; there remains but little to do." At this his face cleared and he said, "Tell me what she would have the maid do with me." "Nothing but good," replied she, as I am thy ransom. She only wishes to dye thine eyebrows and pluck out thy moustaches." Quoth he, "As for the dyeing of my eyebrows, that will come off with washing, but the plucking out of my moustaches will be irksome." "Beware of crossing her," said the old woman; "for her heart is set on thee." So my brother suffered them to dye his eyebrows and pluck out his moustaches, after which the damsel returned to her mistress and told her. Quoth she, "There is one thing more to be done; thou must shave his chin, that he may be beardless." So the maid went back and told my brother what her mistress bade her do, whereupon cried my fool of a brother, "How can I do what will dishonour me among the folk?" But the old woman said, "She only wishes to do thus with thee, that thou mayst be as a beardless youth and that no hair may be left on thy face to prick her; for she is passionately in love with thee. Be patient and thou shalt attain thy desire." So he submitted to have his beard shaved off and his face rouged, after which they carried him back to the lady. When she saw him with his eyebrows dyed, his whiskers and moustaches plucked out, his beard shaved off and his face rouged, she was affrighted at him, then laughed till she fell backward and said, "O my lord, thou hast won my heart with thy good nature!" Then she conjured him, by her life, to rise and dance; so he began to dance, and there was not a cushion in the place but she threw it at him, whilst the damsels pelted him with oranges and limes and citrons, till he fell down senseless. When he came to himself, the old woman said to him, "Now thou hast attained thy desire. There is no more beating for thee and there remains but one thing more. It is her wont, when she is heated with wine, to let no one have to do with her till she put off her clothes and remain stark naked. Then she will bid thee strip, in like manner, and run before thee from place to place, as if she fled from thee, and thou after her, till thy yard be in good point, when she will stop and give herself up to thee. So now rise and put off thy clothes." So he rose, well-nigh beside himself, and stripped himself stark naked; whereupon the lady stripped also and saying to my brother, "Follow me, if thou desire aught," set off running in at one place and out at another and he after her, transported for desire, till his yard rose, as he were mad. Presently she entered a dark passage, and in following her, he trod upon a soft place, which gave way with him, and before he knew where he was, he found himself in the midst of the market of the fell-mongers, who were calling skins for sale and buying

and selling. When they saw him in this plight, naked, with yard on end, shaven face, dyed eyebrows and rouged cheeks, they cried out and clapped their hands at him and flogged him with skins upon his naked body, till he swooned away; when they set him on an ass and carried him to the chief of the police, who said, "What is this?" Quoth they, "This fellow came out upon us from the Vizier's house, in this plight." So the prefect gave him a hundred lashes and banished him from Baghdad. However, I went out after him and brought him back privily into the city and made him an allowance for his living, though, but for my generous disposition, I had not put up with such a fellow.



Story of the Barber's Third Brother

The name of my third brother was Fekic and he was blind. One day, chance and destiny led him to a great house and he knocked at the door, desiring speech of the owner, that he might beg of him somewhat. Quoth the master of the house, "Who is at the door?" But my brother was silent and heard him repeat, in a loud voice, "Who is there?" Still he made no answer and presently heard the master come to the door and open it and say, "What dost thou want?" "Charity," replied my brother, "for the love of God the Most High!" "Art thou blind?" asked the man; and my brother said, "Yes." Quoth the other, "Give me thy hand." So my brother put out his hand, thinking that he would give him something; but he took it and drawing him into the house, carried him up, from stair to stair, till they reached the housetop, my brother thinking the while that he would surely give him food or money. Then said he to my brother, "What dost thou want, O blind man?" "Charity, for the love of God!" repeated my brother. "God succour thee!" answered the master of the house. "O man," answered my brother, "why couldst thou not tell me this downstairs?" "O loser," answered he, "why didst thou not answer me, when I asked who was at the door?" Quoth my brother, "What wilt thou with me now?" And the other replied, "I have nothing to give thee." "Then take me down again," said my brother. But he answered, "The way lies before thee." So my brother rose and made his way down the stairs, till he came within twenty steps of the door, when his foot slipped and he rolled to the bottom and broke his head. Then he went out, knowing not whither to turn, and presently fell in with other two blind men, comrades of his, who enquired how he had fared that day. He told them what had passed and said to them, "O my brothers, I wish to take some of the money in my hands and provide my self with it." Now the master of the house had followed him and heard what they said, but neither my brother nor his fellows knew of this. So my brother went on to his lodging and sat down to await his comrades, and the owner of the house entered after him without his knowledge. When the other blind men arrived, my brother said to them, "Shut the door and search the house, lest any stranger have followed us." The intruder, hearing this, caught hold of a rope that hung from the ceiling and clung to it, whilst the blind men searched the whole place, but found nothing. So they came back and sitting down beside my brother, brought out their money, which they counted, and lo, it was twelve thousand dirhems. Each took what he wanted and the rest they buried in a corner of the room. Then they set on food and sat down to eat. Presently my brother heard a strange pair of jaws wagging at his side; so he said to his comrades, "There is a stranger amongst us;" and putting out his hand, caught hold of that of the intruder. Therewith they all fell on him and beat him, crying out, "O Muslims, a thief is come in to us, seeking to take our property!" So much people flocked to them, whereupon the owner of the house caught hold of the blind men and shutting his eyes, feigned to be blind like unto them, so that none doubted of it. Then he complained of them, even as they of him, crying out, "O Muslims, I appeal to God and the Sultan and the chief of the police! I have a grave matter to make known to the chief of the police." At this moment, up came the watch and seizing them all, dragged them before the chief of the police, who enquired what was the matter. Quoth the spy, "See here; thou shalt come at nought except by torture:

so begin by beating me, and after me, beat this my captain." And he pointed to my brother. So they threw the man down and gave him four hundred strokes on the backside. The beating pained him, and he opened one eye; and as they redoubled their blows, he opened the other. When the chief of the police saw this, he said to him, "What is this, O accursed one?" "Give me the seal-ring of pardon!" replied he. "We are four who feign ourselves blind and impose upon people, that we may enter houses and gaze upon women and contrive for their corruption. In this way, we have gotten much money, even twelve thousand dirhems. So I said to my comrades, 'Give me my share, three thousand dirhems.' But they fell on me and beat me and took away my money, and I appeal to God and thee for protection; better thou have my share than they. So, an thou wouldst know the truth of my words, beat each of the others more than thou hast beaten me and he will surely open his eyes." The prefect bade begin with my brother: so they bound him to the whipping-post, and the prefect said, "O rascals, do ye abjure the gracious gifts of God and pretend to be blind?" "Allah! Allah!" cried my brother, "by Allah, there is not one amongst us who can see!" Then they beat him, till he fainted and the prefect said, "Leave him till he revives and then beat him again." And he caused each of the others to be beaten with more than three hundred blows, whilst the sham blind man stood by, saying to them, "Open your eyes, or you will be beaten anew." Then he said to the prefect, "Send some one with me to fetch the money, for these fellows will not open their eyes, lest they be put to shame before the folk." So the prefect sent to fetch the money and gave the impostor three thousand dirhems to his pretended share. The rest he took for himself and banished the three blind men from the city. But, O Commander of the Faithful, I went out and overtaking my brother, questioned him of his case; whereupon he told me what I have told thee. So I carried him back privily into the city and appointed him in secret wherewithal to eat and drink.' The Khalif laughed at my story and said, 'Give him a present and let him go.' By Allah,' rejoined I, 'I will take nothing till I have made known to the Commander of the Faithful what happened to my other brothers, for I am a man of few words.' Then I went on as follows

Story of the Barber's Fourth Brother.

"MY fourth brother, the one-eyed, was a butcher at Baghdad, who sold meat and reared rams; and the notables and men of wealth used to buy meat of him, so that he amassed much wealth and got him cattle and houses. He fared thus a long while' till one day, as he was sitting in his shop, there came up to him an old man with a long beard, who laid down some money and said, "Give me meat for this." So he gave him his money's worth of meat, and the old man went away. My brother looked at the money he had paid him, and seeing that it was brilliantly white, laid it aside by itself. The old man continued to pay him frequent visits for five months, and my brother threw the money he received from him into a chest by itself. At the end of this time, he thought to take out the money to buy sheep; so he opened the chest, but found in it nothing but white paper, cut round. When he saw this, he buffeted his face and cried out, till the folk came round him and he told them his story, at which they wondered. Then he rose, as of his wont, and slaughtering a ram, hung it up within the shop; after which he cut off some of the meat and hung it up outside, saying the while, "Would God that pestilent old man would come!" And surely before long up came the old man, with his money in his hand; whereupon my brother rose and caught hold of him, crying out, "Come to my help, O Muslims, and hear what befell me with this scoundrel!" When the old man heard this, he said to him, "An thou loose me not, I will expose thee before the folk!" "In what wilt thou expose me?" asked my brother, and the other replied, "In that thou sellest man's flesh for mutton." "Thou liest, O accursed one!" cried my brother: and the old man said, "He is the accursed one who has a man hanging up in his shop." "If it be as thou sayest," rejoined my brother, "I give thee leave to take my property and my life." Then said the old man, "Ho, people of the city! an ye would prove the truth of my words, enter this man's shop." So they rushed into the shop, when they saw the ram was become a dead man hanging up and seized on my brother, crying out, "O infidel! O villain!" And his best friends fell to beating him and saying, "Dost thou give us man's flesh to eat?" Moreover, the old man struck him on the eye and put it out. Then they carried the carcase to the chief of the police, to whom said the old man, "O Amir, this fellow slaughters men and sells their flesh for mutton, and we have brought him to thee; so arise and execute the justice of God, to whom belong might and majesty!" My brother would have defended himself, but the prefect refused to hear him and sentenced him to receive five hundred blows with a stick and to forfeit all his property. And indeed, but for his wealth, they had put him to death. Then he banished him from the city and my brother fared forth at a venture, till he came to a great city, where he thought well to set up as a cobbler. So he opened a shop and fell to working for his living. One day, as he went on an occasion, he heard the tramp of horse, and enquiring the cause, was told that the King was going out to hunt and stopped to look on his state. It chanced that the King's eye met his, whereupon he bowed his head, saying, "I take refuge with God from the evil of this day!" And drawing bridle, rode back to his palace, followed by his retinue. Then he gave an order to his guards, who seized my brother and beat him grievously, till he was well-nigh dead, without telling him the reason: after which he returned to his shop, in a sorry plight, and told one of the King's household, who

laughed till he fell backward and said to him, "O my brother, know that the King cannot endure the sight of a one-eyed man; especially if he be blind of the left eye, in which case, he does not let him go without killing him." When my brother heard this, he resolved to fly that city, so went forth and repaired to another country, where he was known of none. Here he abode a long while, till one day, being heavy at heart for what had befallen him, he went out to divert himself. As he was walking along, he heard the tramp of horse behind him; whereupon he exclaimed, "The judgment of God is upon me!" and looked out for a hiding-place, but found none. At last he saw a closed door, and pushing against it, it yielded and he found himself in a long corridor, in which he took refuge. Hardly had he done so, when two men laid hold of him, exclaiming, "Praise be to God, who hath delivered thee into our hands, O enemy of Allah! These three nights thou hast bereft us of sleep and given us no peace and made us taste the agonies of death!" "O folk," said my brother, "what ails you?" And they answered, "Thou givest us the change and goest about to dishonour us and to murder the master of the house! Is it not enough that thou hast brought him to beggary, thou and thy comrades? But give us up the knife, wherewith thou threatenest us every night." Then they searched him and found in his girdle the knife he used to cut leather; and he said, "O folk, have the fear of God before your eyes and maltreat me not, for know that my story is a strange one." "What is thy story?" asked they. So he told them what had befallen him, hoping that they would let him go; however, they paid no heed to what he said, but beat him and tore off his clothes, and finding on his sides the marks of beating with rods, said, "O accursed one, these scars bear witness to thy guilt!" Then they carried him to the chief of the police, whilst he said to himself, "I am undone for my sins and none can save me but God the Most High!" The prefect said to him, "O villain, what made thee enter their house with murderous intent?" "O Amir," replied my brother, "I conjure thee by Allah, hear my words and hasten not to condemn me!" But the two men said to the prefect, "Wilt thou listen to a robber, who beggars the folk and has the scars of beating on his back?" When the Amir saw the scars on my brother's sides, he said to him, "They had not done this to thee, save for some great crime." And he sentenced him to receive a hundred lashes. So they flogged him and mounting him on a camel, paraded him about the city, crying out, "This is the reward and the least of the reward of those who break into people's houses!" Then they thrust him forth the city, and he wandered at random, till I heard what had befallen him and going in search of him, questioned him of his case. So he told me all that passed and I carried him back privily to Baghdad, where I made him an allowance for his living.

Story of the Barber's Fifth Brother.

MY fifth brother, he of the cropt ears, O Commander of the Faithful, was a poor man, who used to ask alms by night and live by day on what he got thus. Now, our father, who was an old man, far advanced in years, fell sick and died, leaving us seven hundred dirhems. So we took each of us a hundred; but when my brother received his share, he was at a loss to know what to do with it, till he bethought him to buy glass of all sorts and sell it at a profit. So he bought a hundred dirhems' worth of glass and putting it in a great basket, sat down, to sell it, on a raised bench, at the foot of a wall, against which he leant his back. As he sat, with the basket before him: he fell to musing in himself and said, "I have laid out a hundred dirhems on this glass and I will sell it for two hundred, with which I will buy other glass and sell it for four hundred; nor will I cease to buy and sell thus, till I have gotten much wealth. With this I will buy all kinds of merchandise and jewels and perfumes and gain great profit on them, till, God willing, I will make my capital a hundred thousand dirhems. Then I will buy a handsome house, together with slaves and horses and trappings of gold, and eat and drink, nor will I leave a singing-man or woman in the city but I will have them to sing to me. As soon as I have amassed a hundred thousand dirhems, I will send out marriage-brokers to demand for me in marriage the daughters of kings and viziers; and I will seek the hand of the Vizier's daughter, for I hear that she is perfect in beauty and of surpassing grace. I will give her a dowry of a thousand dinars, and if her father consent, well; if not, I will take her by force, in spite of him. When I return home, I will buy ten little eunuchs and clothes for myself such as are worn by kings and sultans and get me a saddle of gold, set thick with jewels of price. Then I will mount and parade the city, with slaves before and behind me, whilst the folk salute me and call down blessings upon me: after which I will repair to the Vizier, the girl's father, with slaves behind and before me, as well as on my either hand. When he sees me, he will rise and seating me in his own place, sit down below me, for that I am his son-in-law. Now I will have with me two eunuchs with purses, in each a thousand dinars, and I will deliver him the thousand dinars of the dowry and make him a present of other thousand, that he may have cause to know my nobility and generosity and greatness of mind and the littleness of the world in my eyes; and for ten words he proffers me, I will answer him two. Then I will return to my house, and if one come to me on the bride's part, I will make him a present of money and clothe him in a robe of honour; but if he bring me a present, I will return it to him and will not accept it, that they may know that I am great of soul. Then I will command them to bring her to me in state and will order my house fittingly in the meantime. When the time of the unveiling is come, I will don my richest clothes and sit down on a couch of brocaded silk, leaning on a cushion and turning neither to the right nor to the left, for the haughtiness of my mind and the gravity of my understanding. My wife shall stand before me like the full moon, in her robes and ornaments, and I, of my pride and my disdain, will not look at her, till all who are present shall say to me, 'O my lord, thy wife and thy handmaid stands before thee: deign to look upon her! for standing is irksome to her.' And they will kiss the earth before me many times, whereupon I will lift my eyes and give one glance at her, then bend down my head again. Then they will carry her to the bride-

chamber, and meanwhile I will rise and change my clothes for a richer suit. When they bring in the bride for the second time, I will not look at her till they have implored me several times, when I will glance at her and bow down my head; nor will I leave to do thus, till they have made an end of displaying her, when I will order one of my eunuchs to fetch a purse of five hundred dinars and giving it to the tire-women, command them to lead me to the bride-chamber. When they leave me alone with the bride, I will not look at her or speak to her, but will lie by her with averted face, that she may say I am high of soul. Presently her mother will come to me and kiss my head and hands and say to me, 'O my lord, look on thy handmaid, for she longs for thy favour, and heal her spirit. But I will give her no answer; and when she sees this, she will come and kiss my feet repeatedly and say, 'O my lord, verily my daughter is a beautiful girl, who has never seen man; and if thou show her this aversion, her heart will break; so do thou incline to her and speak to her.' Then she will rise and fetch a cup of wine, and her daughter will take it and come to me; but I will leave her standing before me, whilst I recline upon a cushion of cloth of gold, and will not look at her for the haughtiness of my heart, so that she will think me to be a Sultan of exceeding dignity and will say to me, 'O my lord, for God's sake, do not refuse to take the cup from thy servant's hand, for indeed I am thy handmaid.' But I will not speak to her, and she will press me, saying, 'Needs must thou drink it,' and put it to my lips. Then I will shake my fist in her face and spurn her with my foot thus." So saying, he gave a kick with his foot and knocked over the basket of glass, which fell to the ground, and all that was in it was broken. "All this comes of my pride!" cried he, and fell to buffeting his face and tearing his clothes and weeping. The folk who were going to the Friday prayers saw him, and some of them looked at him and pitied him, whilst others paid no heed to him, and in this way my brother lost both capital and profit. Presently there came up a beautiful lady, on her way to the Friday prayers, riding on a mule with a saddle of gold and attended by a number of servants and filling the air with the scent of musk, as she passed along. When she saw the broken glass and my brother weeping, she was moved to pity for him; so she asked what ailed him and was told that he had a basket full of glass, by the sale of which he thought to make his living, but it was broken, and this was the cause of his distress. So she called one of her attendants and said to him, "Give this poor man what is with thee." And he gave my brother a purse in which he found five hundred dinars, whereupon he was like to die for excess of joy and called down blessings on her. Then he returned to his house, a rich man; and as he sat considering, some one knocked at the door. So he rose and opened and saw an old woman whom he knew not. "O my son," said she, "the time of prayer is at hand, and I have not yet made the ablution; so I beg thee to let me do so in thy house." "I hear and obey," replied he, and bade her come in. So she entered and he brought her an ewer, wherewith to wash, and sat down, beside himself for joy in the dinars When she had made an end of her ablutions, she came up to where he sat and prayed a two-bow prayer, after which she offered up a goodly prayer my brother, who thanked her and putting his hand to the bag of money, gave her two dinars, saying in himself, "This is an alms from me." "Glory to God!" exclaimed she. "Why dost thou look on one, who loves thee, as if she were a beggar? Put up thy money! I have no need of it; or if thou want it not, return it to her who gave it thee, when thy glass was broken." "O my mother," asked he, "how shall I do to come at her?" "O my son," replied she, "she hath

an inclination for thee, but she is the wife of a wealthy man of the city; so take all thy money with thee and follow me, that I may guide thee to thy desire: and when thou art in company with her, spare neither fair words nor persuasion, and thou shalt enjoy her beauty and her wealth to thy heart's content." So my brother took all his money and rose and followed the old woman, hardly believing in his good fortune. She led him on till they came to the door of a great house, at which she knocked, and a Greek slave-girl came out and opened to them. Then the old woman took my brother and brought him into a great saloon, spread with magnificent carpets and hung with curtains, where he sat down, with his money before him and his turban on his knee. Presently in came a young lady richly dressed, never saw eyes handsomer than she; whereupon my brother rose to his feet, but she smiled upon him and welcoming him, signed to him to be seated. Then she bade shut the door and taking my brother by the hand, led him to a private chamber, furnished with various kinds of brocaded silk. Here he sat down and she seated herself by his side and toyed with him awhile; after which she rose and saying, "Do not stir till I come back," went away. After awhile, in came a great black slave, with a drawn sword in his hand, who said to him, "Woe to thee! who brought thee hither and what dost thou want?" My brother could make no answer, being tongue-tied for fear; so the black seized him and stripping him of his clothes, beat him with the flat of his sword till he swooned away. Then the pestilent black concluded that he was dead, and my brother heard him say, "Where is the salt-wench?" Whereupon in came a slave-girl, with a great dish of salt, and the black strewed salt upon my brother's wounds; but he did not stir, lest he should know that he was alive and finish him. Then the salt-girl went away and the black cried out, "Where is the cellaress?" With this in came the old woman, and taking my brother by the feet, dragged him to an underground vault, where she threw him down upon a heap of dead bodies. There he remained two whole days, but God made the salt the means of saving his life, for it stayed the flow of blood. Presently, he found himself strong enough to move; so he rose and opening the trap-door, crept out fearfully; and God protected him, so that he went on in the darkness and hid himself in the vestibule till the morning, when he saw the cursed old woman sally forth in quest of other prey. So he went out after her, without her knowledge, and made for his own house, where he dressed his wounds and tended himself till he was whole. Meanwhile he kept a watch upon the old woman and saw her accost one man after another and carry them to the house. However, he said nothing; but as soon as he regained health and strength, he took a piece of stuff and made it into a bag, which he filled with broken glass and tied to his middle. Then he disguised himself in the habit of a foreigner, that none might know him, and hid a sword under his clothes. Then he went out and presently falling in with the old woman, accosted her and said to her, with a foreign accent, "O dame, I am a stranger, but this day arrived here, and know no one. Hast thou a pair of scales wherein I may weigh nine hundred dinars? I will give thee somewhat of the money for thy pains." "I have a son, a moneychanger," replied she, "who has all kinds of scales; so come with me to him, before he goes out, and he will weigh thy gold for thee." And he said, "Lead the way." So she led him to the house and knocked at the door; and the young lady herself came out and opened it; whereupon the old woman smiled in her face, saying, "I bring thee fat meat to-day." Then the damsel took him by the hand and carrying him to the same chamber as before, sat with him awhile, then rose and went out, bidding him stir not

till she came back. Ere long in came the villainous black, with his sword drawn, and said to my brother, "Rise, O accursed one!" So he rose and as the slave went on before him, he drew the sword from under his clothes and smiting him with it, made his head fly from his body; after which he dragged the corpse by the feet to the vault and cried out, "Where is the salt-wench?" Up came the girl with the dish of salt, and seeing my brother sword in hand, turned to fly; but he followed her and smote her and struck off her head. Then he called out, "Where is the cellaress?" And in came the old woman, to whom said he, "Dost thou know me, O pestilent old woman?" "No, my lord," replied she; and he said, "I am he of the five hundred dinars, to whose house thou camest to make the ablution and pray, and whom thou didst after lure hither." "Fear God and spare me!" exclaimed she. But he paid no heed to her and striking her with the sword, cut her in four. Then he went in search of the young lady; and when she saw him, her reason fled and she called out for mercy. So he spared her and said to her, "How camest thou to consort with this black?" Quoth she, "I was slave to a certain merchant and the old woman used to visit me, till I became familiar with her. One day she said to me, 'We have to-day a wedding at our house, the like of which was never beheld, and I wish thee to see it.' 'I hear and obey,' answered I, and rising, donned my handsomest clothes and jewellery and took with me a purse containing a hundred dinars. Then she brought me hither, and hardly had I entered the house, when the black seized on me, and I have remained in this case these three years, through the perfidy of the accursed old woman." Then said my brother, "Is there aught of his in the house?" "He had great store of wealth," replied she: "and if thou canst carry it away, do so, and may God prosper it to thee!" Then she opened to him several chests full of purses, at which he was confounded, and said to him, "Go now and leave me here and fetch men to carry off the money." So he went out and hired ten men, but, when he returned, he found the door open and the damsel gone, and nothing left but a little of the money and the household stuff. By this, he knew that she had cheated him; so he opened the closets and took what was in them, together with the rest of the money, leaving nothing in the house, and passed the night in all content. When he arose in the morning, he found at the door a score of troopers, who seized him, saying, "The chief of the police seeks for thee." My brother implored them to let him return to his house, but they would grant him no delay, though he offered them a large sum of money, and binding him fast with cords, carried him off. On the way, there met them a friend of my brother, who clung to his skirts and implored him to stop and help to deliver him from their hands. So he stopped and enquired what was the matter; to which they replied, "The chief of the police has ordered us to bring this man before him, and we are doing so." The man interceded with them and offered them five hundred dinars to let my brother go, saying, "Tell the magistrate that ye could not find him." But they refused and dragged him before the prefect, who said to him, "Whence hadst thou these stuffs and money?" Quoth my brother, "Grant me indemnity." So the magistrate gave him the handkerchief of pardon, and he told him all that had befallen him, from first to last, including the flight of the damsel, adding, "Take what thou wilt, so thou leave me enough to live on." But the prefect took the whole of the stuff and money for himself and fearing lest the affair should reach the Sultan's ears, said to my brother, "Depart from this city, or I will hang thee." "I hear and obey," replied my brother, and set out for another town. On the way thieves fell on him and stripped him and beat him and

cut off his ears. But I heard of his misfortunes and went out after him, taking him clothes, and brought him back privily to the city, where I made him an allowance for meat and drink.

Story of the Barber's Sixth Brother

My sixth brother, he of the cropt lips, O Commander of the Faithful, was once rich, but after became poor. One day he went out to seek somewhat to keep life in him and came presently to a handsome house, with a wide and lofty portico and servants and others at the door, ordering and forbidding. My brother enquired of one of those standing there and he told him that the house belonged to one of the Barmecide family. So he accosted the door-keepers and begged an alms of them. "Enter," said they, "and thou shalt get what thou seekest of our master." Accordingly, he entered and passing through the vestibule, found himself in a mansion of the utmost beauty and elegance, paved with marble and hung with curtains and having in the midst a garden whose like he had never seen. He stood awhile perplexed, knowing not whither to direct his steps: then seeing the door of a sitting-chamber, he entered and saw at the upper end a man of comely presence and goodly beard. When the latter saw my brother, he rose and welcomed him and enquired how he did; to which he replied that he was in need of charity. Whereupon the other showed great concern and putting his hand to his clothes, rent them, exclaiming, "Art thou hungry in a city of which I am an inhabitant? I cannot endure this!" and promised him all manner of good. Then said he, "Thou must eat with me." "O my lord," replied my brother, "I can wait no longer; for I am sore an hungred." So, the Barmecide cried out, "Ho, boy! bring the ewer and the basin!" and said to my brother, "O my guest, come forward and wash thy hands." My brother rose to do so, but saw neither ewer nor basin. However, the host made as if he were washing his hands and cried out, "Bring the table." But my brother saw nothing. Then said the Barmecide, "Honour me by eating of this food and be not ashamed." And he made as if he ate, saying the while, "Thou eatest but little: do not stint thyself, for I know thou art famished." So my brother began to make as if he ate, whilst the other said to him, "Eat and note the excellence of this bread and its whiteness." My brother could see nothing and said to himself, "This man loves to jest with the folk." So he replied, "O my lord, never in my life have I seen whiter or more delicious bread." And the host said, "I gave five hundred dinars for the slave-girl who bakes it for me." Then he called out, "Ho, boy! bring the frumenty first and do not spare butter on it." And turning to my brother, "O my guest," said he, "sawst thou ever aught better than this frumenty? Eat, I conjure thee, and be not ashamed!" Then he cried out again, "Ho, boy! bring in the pasty with the fatted grouse in it." And he said to my brother, "Eat, O my guest, for thou art hungry and needest it." So my brother began to move his jaws and make as if he chewed; whilst the other ceased not to call for dish after dish and press my brother to eat, though not a thing appeared. Presently, he cried out, "Ho, boy I bring us the chickens stuffed with pistachio-kernels!" And said to my brother, "These chickens have been fattened on pistachio-nuts; eat, for thou hast never tasted the like of them." "O my lord," replied my brother, "they are indeed excellent." Then the host feigned to put his hand to my brother's mouth, as if to feed him, and ceased not to name various dishes and expatiate upon their excellence. Meanwhile my brother was starving, and hunger was so sore on him that his soul

lusted for a cake of barley bread. Quoth the Barmecide, "Didst thou ever taste aught more delicious than the seasoning of these dishes?" "Never, O my lord," replied my brother. "Eat heartily and be not ashamed," repeated the host. "O my lord," said my brother, "I have had enough of meat." So the Barmecide cried out, "Take away and bring the sweetmeats." Then he said, "Eat of this almond conserve, for it is excellent, and of these fritters. My life on thee, take this one before the syrup runs out of it!" "May I never be bereaved of thee, O my lord!" replied my brother, and asked him of the abundance of musk in the fritters. "It is my custom," said the other, "to have three pennyweights of musk and half that quantity of ambergris put into each fritter." All this time my brother was wagging his jaws and moving his head and mouth, till the host said, "Enough of this! Bring us the dessert." Then said he to him, "Eat of these almonds and walnuts and raisins and of this and that," naming different kinds of dried fruits, "and be not ashamed." "O my lord," answered my brother, "indeed I am full: I can eat no more." "O my guest," repeated the other, "if thou have a mind to eat more, for God's sake do not remain hungry!" "O my lord," replied my brother, "how should one who has eaten of all these dishes be hungry?" Then he considered and said to himself "I will do that which shall make him repent of having acted thus." Presently the host called out, "Bring me the wine," and making as if it had come, feigned to give my brother to drink, saying, "Take this cup, and if it please thee, let me know." "O my lord," replied he, "it has a pleasant smell, but I am used to drink old wine twenty years of age." "Then knock at this door," said his host; "for thou canst not drink of aught better." "O my lord, this is of thy bounty!" replied my brother and made as if he drank. "Health and pleasure to thee!" exclaimed the host, and feigned, in like wise, to fill a cup and drink it off and hand a second cup to my brother, who pretended to drink and made as if he were drunken. Then he took the Barmecide unawares and raising his arm, till the whiteness of his arm-pit appeared, dealt him such a buffet on the neck that the place rang to it. Then he gave him a second cuff and the host exclaimed, "What is this, O vile fellow?" "O my lord," replied my brother "thou hast graciously admitted thy slave into thine abode and fed him with thy victual and plied him with old wine, till he became drunk and dealt unmannerly by thee; but thou art too noble not to bear with his ignorance and pardon his offence." When the Barmecide heard my brother's words, he laughed heartily and exclaimed, "Long have I used to make mock of men and play the fool with those who are apt at jesting and horse-play; but never have I come across any, who had patience and wit to enter into all my humours, but thee; so I pardon thee, and now thou shalt be my boon companion, in very deed, and never leave me." Then he bade his servants lay the table in good earnest, and they set on all the dishes of which he had spoken, and he and my brother ate till they were satisfied, after which they removed to the drinking-chamber, where they found damsels like moons, who sang all manner of songs and played on all kinds of musical instruments. There they remained, drinking, till drunkenness overcame them, and the host used my brother as a familiar friend, so that he became as it were his brother, and bestowed on him a dress of honour and loved him with an exceeding love. Next morning, they fell again to feasting and carousing, and ceased not to lead this life for twenty years, at the end of which time the Barmecide died and the Sultan laid hands on all his property and squeezed my brother, till he stripped him of all he had. So he left the city and fled forth at random, but the Arabs fell on him midway and

taking him prisoner, carried him to their camp, where the Bedouin, his captor, tortured him, saying, "Ransom thyself with money, or I will kill thee." My brother fell a-weeping and replied, "By Allah, I have nought! I am thy prisoner; do with me as thou wilt." Thereupon the Bedouin took out a knife and cut off my brother's lips, still urging his demand. Now this Bedouin had a handsome wife, who used to make advances to my brother, in her husband's absence, and offer him her favours, but he held off from her. One day, she began to tempt him as usual, and he toyed with her and took her on his knee, when lo, in came the Bedouin, and seeing this, cried out, "Woe to thee, thou villain! Wouldst thou debauch my wife?" Then he took out a knife and cut off my brother's yard, after which he set him on a camel and carried him to a mountain, where he threw him down and left him. Here he was found by some travellers, who recognized him and gave him meat and drink and acquainted me with his plight, whereupon I went forth to him and brought him back to Baghdad, where I provided him with enough to live on. This then, O Commander of the Faithful, is the history of my brothers, and I was unwilling to go away without relating it to thee, that I might disabuse thee of thine error in confounding me with them. And now thou knowest that I have six brothers and support them all.' When the Khalif heard my words, he laughed and said, 'Thou sayst sooth, O Silent One! Thou art neither a man of many words nor an impertinent meddler; but now go out from this city and settle in another.' And he banished me from the city; so I left Baghdad and travelled in foreign countries, till I heard of his death and the coming of another to the Khalifate. Then I returned to Baghdad, where I found my brothers dead and fell in with this young man, to whom I rendered the best of services, for without me he had been killed. Indeed he accuses me of what is foreign to my nature and what he relates of my impertinence is false; for verily I left Baghdad on his account and wandered in many countries, till I came to this city and happened on him with you; and was not this, O good people, of the generosity of my nature?"

When we heard the barber's story (continued the tailor) and saw the abundance of his speech and the way in which he had oppressed the young man, we laid hands on him and shut him up, after which we sat down in peace and ate and drank till the time of the call to afternoon-prayer, when I left the company and returned home. My wife was sulky and said to me, "Thou hast taken thy pleasure all day, whilst I have been moping at home. So now, except thou carry me abroad and amuse me for the rest of the day, it will be the cause of my separation from thee." So I took her out and we amused ourselves till nightfall, when we returned home and met the hunchback, brimming over with drunkenness and repeating the following verses:

The glass is pellucid, and so is the wine:
So bring them together and see them combine:
Tis a puzzle; one moment, all wine and no cup;
At another, in turn, 'tis all cup and no wine.

So I invited him to pass the evening with us and went out to buy fried fish, after which we sat down to eat. Presently my wife took a piece of bread and fish and crammed them into his mouth, and he choked and died. Then I took him up and made shift to throw him into the house of the Jewish physician. He in his turn let him

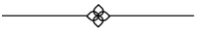
down into the house of the controller, who threw him in the way of the Christian broker. This, then, is my story. Is it not more wonderful than that of the hunchback?'

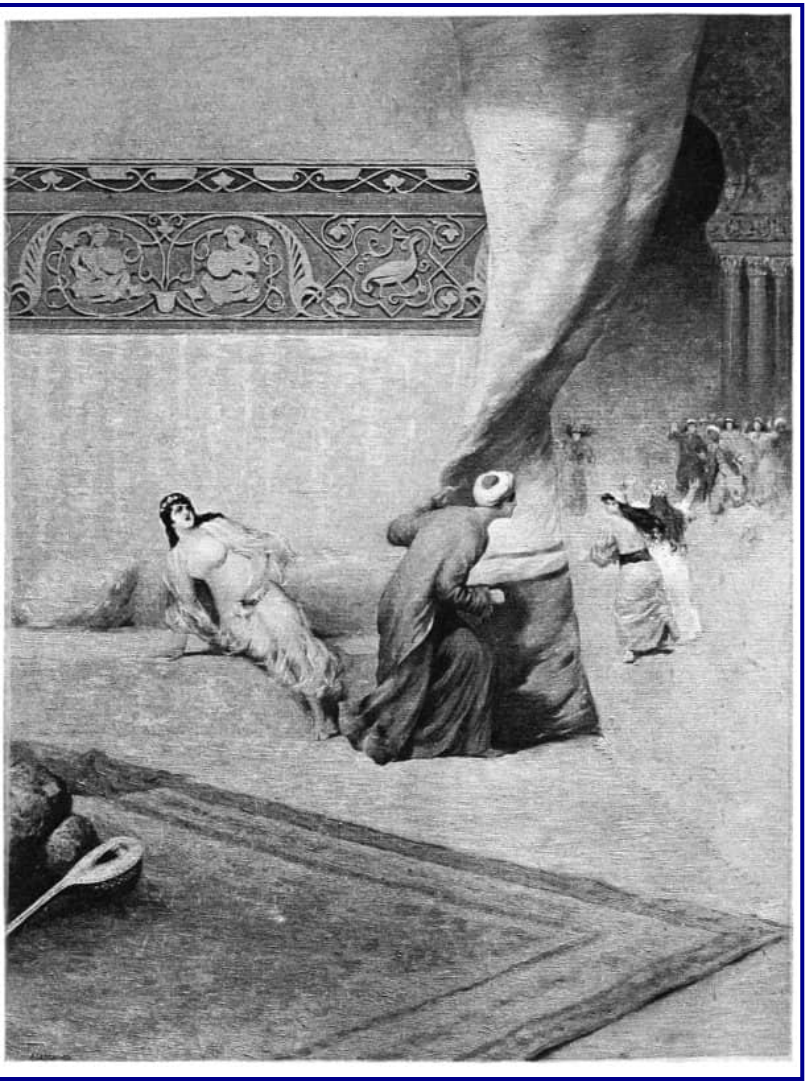
When the King heard the tailor's story, he shook his head for delight and showed astonishment, saying, 'This that passed between the young man and the meddlesome barber is indeed more pleasant and more wonderful than the story of that knave of a hunchback.' Then he bade the tailor take one of the chamberlains and fetch the barber out of his duresse, saying, 'Bring him to me, that I may hear his talk, and it shall be the means of the release of all of you. Then we will bury the hunchback, for he is dead since yesterday, and set up a tomb over him.' So the chamberlain and the tailor went away and presently returned with the barber. The King looked at him and behold, he was a very old man, more than ninety years of age, of a swarthy complexion and white beard and eyebrows, flap-eared, long-nosed and simple and conceited of aspect. The King laughed at his appearance and said to him, 'O silent man, I desire thee to tell me somewhat of thy history.' 'O King of the age,' replied the barber, 'why are all these men and this dead hunchback before thee?' Said the King, 'Why dost thou ask?' 'I ask this,' rejoined the barber, 'that your Majesty may know that I am no impertinent meddler and that I am guiltless of that they lay to my charge of overmuch talk; for I am called the Silent, and indeed I am the man of my name, as says the poet:

Thine eyes shall seldom see a man that doth a nickname bear, But, if thou search, thou'lt find the name his nature doth declare.

So the King said, 'Explain the hunchback's case to him and repeat to him the stories told by the physician, the controller, the broker and the tailor.' They did as he commanded, and the barber shook his head and exclaimed, 'By Allah, this is indeed a wonder of wonders!' Then said he, 'Uncover the hunchback's body, that I may see it.' They did so, and he sat down and taking the hunchback's head in his lap, looked at his face and laughed till he fell backward. Then said he, 'To every death there is a cause; but the story of this hunchback deserves to be recorded in letters of gold!' The bystanders were astounded at his words and the King wondered and said to him, 'O silent man, explain thy words to us.' 'O King of the age,' replied the barber, 'by thy munificence, there is yet life in this hunchback.' Then he pulled out from his girdle a barber's budget, whence he took a pot of ointment and anointed therewith the neck of the hunchback and its veins. Then he took out a pair of tweezers and thrusting them down the hunchback's throat, drew out the piece of fish and its bone, soaked in blood. Thereupon the hunchback sneezed and sat up, and passing his hand over his face, exclaimed, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His Apostle!' At this all present wondered and the King laughed, till he fainted, and so did the others. Then said the King, 'By Allah, this is the most wonderful thing I ever saw! O Muslims, O soldiers all, did you ever in your lives see a man die and come to life again? For verily, had not God vouchsafed him this barber to be the cause of his preservation, he had been dead!' 'By Allah,' said they, 'this is a wonder of wonders!' Then the King caused the whole history to be recorded and laid up in the royal treasury; after which he bestowed splendid dresses of honour on the Jew, the broker and the controller and sent them away. Then he gave the tailor a costly dress of honour and appointed him his own tailor, with a suitable stipend, and made peace between him and the hunchback, on whom he also bestowed a rich and fair dress of honour

and made him his boon-companion, appointing him due allowances. As for the barber, he made him a like present and appointed him state barber and one of his boon-companions, assigning him regular allowances and a fixed salary. And they all ceased not from the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, till there overtook them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of companies.





Noureddin Ali and the Damsel Enis El Jelis.

THERE was once a King in Bassora who cherished the poor and needy and loved his subjects and bestowed of his wealth on those who believed in Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve!) and he was even as the poet hath described him:

A King who, when the hostile hosts assault him in the field,
Smites them and hews them, limb from limb, with trenchant sword and spear
Full many a character of red he writes upon the breasts
What time the mailed horsemen break before his wild career.

His name was King Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, and he had two Viziers, one called Muin ben Sawa and the other Fezl ben Khacan. Fezl was the most generous man of his time; noble and upright of life, all hearts concurred in loving him, and the wise complied with his counsel, whilst all the people wished him long life; for that he was a compend of good qualities, encouraging good and preventing evil and mischief. The Vizier Muin, on the contrary, was a hater of mankind and loved not good, being indeed altogether evil; even as says of him the poet:

Look thou consort with the generous, sons of the gen'rous; for lo!
The generous, sons of the gen'rous, beget the gen'rous, I trow.
And let the mean-minded men, sons of the mean-minded, go,
For the mean-minded, sons of the mean, beget none other than so.

And as much as the people loved Fezl, so much did they hate Muin. It befell one day, that the King, being seated on his throne, with his officers of state about him, called his Vizier Fezl and said to him, 'I wish to have a slave-girl of unsurpassed beauty, perfect in grace and symmetry and endowed with all praiseworthy qualities.' Said the courtiers, 'Such a girl is not to be had for less than ten thousand dinars!' whereupon the King cried out to his treasurer and bade him carry ten thousand dinars to Fezl's house. The treasurer did so, and the Vizier went away, after the King had charged him to go to the market every day and employ brokers and had given orders that no girl worth more than a thousand dinars should be sold, without being first shown to the Vizier. Accordingly, the brokers brought him all the girls that came into their hands, but none pleased him, till one day a broker came to his house and found him mounting his horse, to go to the palace; so he caught hold of his stirrup and repeated the following verses:

O thou whose bounties have restored the uses of the state,
O Vizier helped of heaven, whose acts are ever fortunate!
Thou hast revived the virtues all were dead among the folk.
May God's acceptance evermore on thine endeavours wait!

Then said he, 'O my lord, she for whom the august mandate was issued is here.' 'Bring her to me,' replied the Vizier. So he went away and returned in a little with a damsel of elegant shape, swelling-breasted, with melting black eyes and smooth cheeks, slender-waisted and heavy-hipped, clad in the richest of clothes. The dew of her lips was

sweeter than syrup, her shape more symmetrical than the bending branch and her speech softer than the morning zephyr, even as says one of those who have described her:

A wonder of beauty! Her face full moon of the palace sky;
Of a tribe of gazelles and wild cows the dearest and most high!
The Lord of the empyrean hath given her pride and state,
Elegance, charm and a shape that with the branch may vie;
She hath in the heaven of her face a cluster of seven stars,
That keep the ward of her cheek to guard it from every spy.
So if one think to steal a look, the imps of her glance
Consume him straight with a star, that shoots from her gleaming eye.

When the Vizier saw her she pleased him exceedingly, so he turned to the broker and said to him, 'What is the price of this damsel?' 'Her price is ten thousand dinars,' replied he, 'and her owner swears that this sum will not cover the cost of the chickens she hath eaten, the wine she hath drunk and the dresses of honour bestowed on her teachers; for she hath learnt penmanship and grammar and lexicology and the exposition of the Koran and the rudiments of law and theology, medicine and the calendar, as well as the art of playing on instruments of music.' Then said the Vizier, 'Bring me her master.' So the broker brought him at once, and behold, he was a foreigner, who had lived so long that time had worn him to bones and skin. Quoth the Vizier to him, 'Art thou content to sell this damsel to the Sultan for ten thousand dinars?' 'By Allah,' replied the merchant, 'if I made him a present of her, it were but my duty!' So the Vizier sent for the money and gave it to the slave-dealer, who said, 'By the leave of our lord the Vizier, I have something to say.' 'Speak,' said the Vizier: and the slave-dealer said, 'If thou wilt be ruled by me, thou wilt not carry the damsel to the King to-day, for she is newly off a journey; the change of air has affected her and the journey has fretted her. But let her abide in thy palace ten days, that she may recover her good looks. Then send her to the bath and dress her in the richest of clothes and go up with her to the Sultan, and this will be more to thy profit.' The Vizier considered the man's advice and approved it; so he took her to his palace, where he appointed her a separate lodging and a daily allowance of meat and drink and so forth, and she abode thus awhile.

Now the Vizier Fezl had a son like the rising full moon, with shining visage, red cheeks covered with a tender down and a mole like a grain of ambergris; as says of him the poet and therein errs not:

A moon, whose glances slay the folk, on whom he turns his eye;
A branch, whose graces break all hearts, as he goes stately by
Slack as the night his browlocks are, his face the hue of gold;
Fair is his person, and his shape the spear-shaft doth outvie.
Ah me, how hard his heart, how soft and slender is his waist!
Why is the softness not transferred from this to that, ah why?
Were but the softness of his sides made over to his heart,
He'd ne'er to lovers be unjust nor leave them thus to sigh.
O thou that blam'st my love of thee, excuse me rather thou,

Nor chide me, if my body pine for languor like to die.
The fault, indeed, lies not with me, but with my heart and eye;
So chide me not, but let me be in this my misery.

Now he knew not the affair of the damsel, and his father had lessoned her, saying, 'Know, O my daughter, that I have bought thee for the bed of the King Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, and I have a son who leaves no girl in the quarter but he has to do with her; so be on thy guard against him and beware of letting him see thy face or hear thy voice.' 'I hear and obey,' replied she; and the Vizier left her and went away. Some days after this it chanced, as Fate would have it, that the damsel went to the bath in the house, where some of the serving-women washed her, after which she arrayed herself in rich apparel, and her beauty and grace redoubled. Then she went in to the Vizier's wife and kissed her hand; and the lady said to her, 'May it profit thee, O Enis el Jelis! How didst thou find the bath?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I lacked but thy presence there.' Thereupon said the mistress to her waiting-women, 'Come with me to the bath, for it is some days since I went thither.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they; and rose and accompanied her to the bath, after Enis el Jelis had retired to her own chamber and the lady had set two little slave-girls to keep the door, charging them to let none go in to the damsel. Presently, as Enis el Jelis sat resting after the bath, in came the Vizier's son, whose name was Noureddin Ali, and asked after his mother and her women, to which the two little slaves replied that they had gone to the bath. The damsel heard Noureddin's voice and said to herself, 'I wonder what like is this youth, of whom his father says that there is not a girl in the quarter but he has had to do with her. By Allah, I long to see him!' So she rose, fresh as she was from the bath, and going to the door, looked at Noureddin and saw that he was like the moon at its full. The sight cost her a thousand sighs, and Noureddin, chancing to look that way, caught a glance of her that caused him also a thousand regrets, and each fell into the snare of the other's love. Then he went up to the two little slaves and cried out at them, whereupon they fled before him and stood afar off to see what he would do. And behold, he went up to the door of the damsel's chamber and entering, said to her, 'Art thou she whom my father bought for me?' 'Yes,' answered she: whereupon Noureddin, who was heated with wine, went up to her and embraced her, whilst she wreathed her arms about his neck and met him with kisses and sighs and amorous gestures. Then he sucked her tongue and she his, and he did away her maidenhead. When the two little slaves saw their young master go in to the damsel, they cried out and shrieked. So, as soon as he had done his desire, he rose and fled, fearing the issue of his conduct. When the Vizier's wife heard the slaves' cries, she sprang up and came out of the bath, with the sweat dripping from her, saying, 'What is this clamour in the house?' Then she came up to the two little slaves, and said to them, 'Out on you! what is the matter?' 'Our lord Noureddin came in and beat us,' answered they: 'so we fled and he went in to the damsel and embraced her, and we know not what he did after this: but when we cried out to thee, he fled.' Thereupon, the mistress went in to Enis el Jelis and enquired what had happened. 'O my lady,' answered she, 'as I was sitting here, there came in a handsome young man, who said to me, "Art thou she whom my father bought for me?" I answered, "Yes;" (for by Allah, O my lady, I believed that he spoke the truth!) and with this he came up to me and embraced me.' 'Did he nought else with thee?' asked the lady. 'Yes,' replied Enis el Jelis: 'he took of me three kisses.' 'He did not leave

thee without deflowering thee!' cried the Vizier's wife, and fell to weeping and buffeting her face, she and her women, fearing that Noureddin's father would kill him. Whilst they were thus, in came the Vizier and asked what was the matter, and his wife said to him, 'Swear that thou wilt hearken to what I say.' 'It is well,' replied he. So she told him what his son had done, and he was greatly afflicted and tore his clothes and buffeted his face and plucked out his beard. 'Do not kill thyself,' said his wife: 'I will give thee the ten thousand dinars, her price, of my own money.' But he raised his head and said to her, 'Out on thee! I have no need of her price, but I fear to lose both life and goods.' 'How so?' asked his wife, and he said, 'Dost thou not know that yonder is our enemy Muin ben Sawa, who, when he hears of this affair, will go up to the Sultan and say to him, "Thy Vizier, who thou wilt have it loves thee, had of thee ten thousand dinars and bought therewith a slave-girl, whose like was never seen; but when he saw her, she pleased him and he said to his son, 'Take her: thou art worthier of her than the Sultan.' So he took her and did away her maidenhead, and she is now with him." The King will say, "Thou liest!" To which Muin will reply, "With thy leave, I will fall on him at unawares and bring her to thee." The King will order him to do this, and he will come down upon the house and take the damsel and bring her before the King, who will question her and she will not be able to deny what has passed. Then Muin will say, "O my lord, thou knowest that I give thee true counsel, but I am not in favour with thee." Thereupon the Sultan will make an example of me, and I shall be a gazing-stock to all the people and my life will be lost.' Quoth his wife, 'Tell none of this thing, which has happened privily, but commit thy case to God and trust in Him to deliver thee from this strait.' With this the Vizier's heart was set at rest, and his wrath and chagrin subsided.

Meanwhile, Noureddin, fearing the issue of the affair, spent the whole day in the gardens and came back by night to his mother's apartment, where he slept and rising before day, returned to the gardens. He lived thus for a whole month, not showing his face to his father, till at last his mother said to the Vizier, 'O my lord, shall we lose our own son as well as the damsel? If things continue thus for long, the lad will flee forth from us.' 'What is to be done?' said he: and she answered, 'Do thou watch this night, and when he comes, seize on him and frighten him. I will rescue him from thee and do thou then make peace with him and give him the girl, for she loves him and he her; and I will pay thee her price.' So the Vizier watched that night and when his son came, he seized him and throwing him down, knelt on his breast and made as if he would cut his throat; but his mother came to his succour and said to her husband, 'What wilt thou do with him?' Quoth he, 'I mean to kill him.' And Noureddin said to his father 'Am I of so little account with thee?' Whereupon the Vizier's eyes filled with tears and he replied, 'O my son, is the loss of my goods and my life of so little account in thine eyes?' Quoth Noureddin, 'Hear, O my father, what the poet says:

Pardon me: true, I have sinned: yet the sagacious man
Ceases never to pardon freely the erring wight.
Surely, therefore, thy foe may hope for pardon from thee,
Since he is in the abyss and thou on honour's height!'

Then the Vizier rose from off his breast, saying, 'O my son, I forgive thee!' for his heart was softened. Noureddin rose and kissed the hand of his father, who said to him,

'If I knew that thou wouldst deal fairly by Enis el Jelis, I would give her to thee.' 'O my father,' replied Noureddin, 'how should I not deal fairly by her?' Quoth the Vizier, 'O my son, I charge thee not to take another wife nor concubine to share with her nor sell her.' 'O my father,' answered Noureddin, 'I swear to thee that I will do none of these things.' Then he went in to the damsel and abode with her a whole year, whilst God caused the King to forget the affair. The matter, indeed, came to Muin's ears, but he dared not speak of it, by reason of the favour in which the Vizier Fezl stood with the Sultan. At the end of the year, the Vizier Fezl went one day to the bath and coming out, whilst still in a sweat, the air smote him and he caught cold and took to his bed. His malady gained upon him and sleeplessness was long upon him; so he called his son Noureddin and said to him, 'O my son, know that fortune is lotted out and the term of life fixed, and needs must every soul drain the cup of death.' And he repeated the following verses:

I'm dead: yet glory be to Him that dieth not;
For that I needs must die, indeed, full well I wot,
He is no king, who dies with kingship in his hand,
For sovranty belongs to Him that dieth not.

Then he continued, 'O my son, I have no charge to lay on thee, except that thou fear God and look to the issue of thine actions and cherish the damsel Enis el Jelis.' 'O my father,' said Noureddin, 'who is like unto thee? Indeed thou art renowned for the practice of virtue and the praying of the preachers for thee in the pulpits.' Quoth Fezl, 'O my son, I hope for acceptance from God the Most High.' Then he pronounced the two professions of the faith and was numbered among the blessed. The palace was filled with crying and lamentation, and the news of his death reached the King and the people of the city, and even the children in the schools wept for Fezi ben Khacan. Then his son Noureddin arose and took order for his funeral, and the Amirs and Viziers and grandees were present, amongst them the Vizier Muin ben Sawa; and as the funeral train came forth of the palace, one of the mourners recited the following verses:

The fifth day I departed and left my friends alone:
They laid me out and washed me upon a slab of stone;
Then stripped me of the raiment that on my body was,
That they might put upon me clothes other than my own
On four men's necks they bore me unto the place of prayer
And prayed a prayer above me by no prostration known.
Then in a vaulted dwelling they laid me. Though the years
Shall waste, its door will never be open to them thrown.

When they had laid him in the earth, Noureddin returned with the folk; and he lamented with groans and tears and the tongue of the case repeated the following verses:

On the fifth day they departed in the eventide, and
I Took of them the last leave-taking, when they went and left me here.
When they turned away and left me, lo! the soul with them did go.
And I said, "Return." It answered, "Where, alas! should I recur;

Shall I come back to a body whence the life and blood are flown?
Nothing now but bones are left it, rattling in the sepulchre.
Lo! my eyes, excess of weeping hath put out their sight, I trow,
And a deafness eke is fallen on my ears: I cannot hear."

He abode a long while in great grief for his father, till one day, as he sat in his house, there came a knocking at the door; so he rose and opening the door, found there a man who had been one of his father's friends and boon-companions. He entered and kissing Noureddin's hand, said to him, 'O my lord, he who has left the like of thee is not dead; and to this pass (death) came even the lord of the first and the last. O my lord, take comfort and leave mourning!' Thereupon Noureddin rose and going to the guest-chamber, transported thither all that he needed. Then his friends gathered together to him and he took his slave-girl again and collecting round him ten of the sons of the merchants, began to eat meat and drink wine, giving entertainment after entertainment and dispensing gifts and favours with a lavish hand, till one day his steward came to him and said, 'O my lord Noureddin, hast thou not heard the saying, "He who spends and does not reckon, becomes poor without knowing it?"' And he repeated the following verses:

I'll hold my money fast, knowing, as well as I know,
That 'tis my sword and shield against my every foe.
If I should lavish it on those who love me not,
My luck among the folk would change to grief and woe.
So I will eat and drink my wealth for my own good
Nor upon any man a single doit bestow.
I will preserve with care my money from all those
By nature base and true to none. 'Tis better so
Than that I e'er should say unto the mean of soul,
"Lend me so much I'll pay to-morrow five-fold mo,"
And see my friend avert his face and turn away,
Leaving my soul cast down, as 'twere a dog's, I trow!
O what a sorry lot is his, who hath no pelf,
E'en though his virtues bright like to the sun should show!

'O my lord,' continued the steward, 'this lavish expense and prodigal giving waste away wealth.' When Noureddin heard his steward's words, he looked at him and said, 'I will not hearken to one word of all thou hast said, for I have heard the following saying of the poet:

If I be blessed with wealth and be not liberal with it,
May my hand wither and my foot eke paralysed remain!
Show me the niggard who hath won glory by avarice!
Show me the liberal man his own munificence hath slain!

And he said, 'Know, O steward, it is my desire that so long as there remains in thy hands enough for my morning meal, thou trouble me not with taking care for my evening meal.' Therewith the steward went away and Noureddin continued his extravagant way of living; and if any of his boon-companions chanced to say to him,

'This thing is handsome,' he would answer, 'It is thine as a gift;' or if another said, 'O my lord, such and such a house is handsome,' he would say, 'Take it: it is thine.' In this manner he continued to live for a whole year, giving his friends a banquet in the morning and another in the evening, till one day as they were sitting together, the damsel Enis el Jelis repeated the following verses:

Thou madest fair thy thought of Fate, when that the days were fair,
And fearedst not the unknown ills that they to thee might bring:
The nights were fair and calm to thee; thou wert deceived by them,
For in the peace of night is born full many a troublous thing.

Just as she had finished, there came a knocking at the door; so Noureddin rose to open it, and one of his companions followed him without his knowledge. At the door he found his steward and said to him, 'What is the matter?' 'Omylord,' replied he, 'what I feared for thee has come to pass!' 'How so?' asked Noureddin; and the steward said, 'Know that there remains not a dirhem's worth, less nor more, in my hands. Here are registers containing an account of the original state of thy property and the way in which thou hast spent it.' At this, Noureddin bowed his head and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God!' When the man who had followed him secretly to spy on him heard what the steward said, he returned to his companions and said to them, 'Look what ye do; for Noureddin Ali is bankrupt.' When Noureddin returned, they read trouble in his face; so one of them rose and said to him, 'O my lord, maybe thou wilt give me leave to retire?' 'Why wilt thou go away to-day?' said he. 'My wife is brought to bed,' replied the other; 'and I cannot be absent from her; I wish to return and see how she does.' So Noureddin gave him leave, whereupon another rose and said, 'O my lord, I wish to go to my brother, for he circumcises his son to-day.' And each made some excuse to retire, till they were all gone and Noureddin remained alone. Then he called his slave-girl and said to her, 'O Enis el Jelis, hast thou seen what has befallen me?' And he related to her what the steward had told him. 'O my lord,' replied she, 'some nights ago I had it in my mind to speak with thee of this matter; but I heard thee reciting the following verses:

If fortune be lavish to thee, look thou be lavish with it
Unto all classes of men, ere it escapes from thy hand!
Munificence will not undo it, whilst it is constant to thee,
Nor, when it turneth away, will avarice force it to stand.

When I heard thee speak thus, I held my peace and cared not to say aught to thee.' 'O Enis el Jelis,' said Noureddin, 'thou knowest that I have not expended my substance but on my friends, who have beggared me, and I think they will not leave me without help.' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'they will not profit thee in aught.' Said he, 'I will rise at once and go to them and knock at their doors: maybe I shall get of them somewhat with which I may trade and leave pleasure and merry-making.' So he rose and repaired to a certain street, where all his ten comrades lived. He went up to the first door and knocked, whereupon a maid came out and said, 'Who art thou?' 'Tell thy master,' replied he, 'that Noureddin Ali stands at the door and says to him, "Thy slave kisses thy hands and awaits thy bounty."' The girl went in and told her master, who cried out at her, saying, 'Go back and tell him that I am not at home.' So she returned and said

to Noureddin, 'O my lord, my master is from home.' With this, he went away, saying to himself, 'Though this fellow be a whoreson knave and deny himself, another may not be so.' Then he came to the second door and sent in a like message to the master of the house, who denied himself as the first had done, whereupon Noureddin repeated the following verse:

They're gone who, if before their door thou didst arrest thy feet, Would on thy poverty bestow both flesh and roasted meat.

And said 'By Allah, I must try them all: there may be one amongst them who will stand me in the stead of the rest.' So he went round to all the ten, but not one of them opened his door to him or showed himself to him or broke a cake of bread in his face; whereupon he repeated the following verses:

A man in time of affluence is like unto a tree,
Round which the folk collect, as long as fruit thereon they see,
Till, when its burden it hath cast, they turn from it away,
Leave it to suffer heat and dust and all inclemency.
Out on the people of this age! perdition to them all!
Since not a single one of ten is faithful found to be.

Then he returned to his slave-girl, and indeed his concern was doubled, and she said to him, 'O my lord, did I not tell thee that they would not profit thee aught?' 'By Allah,' replied he, 'not one of them would show me his face or take any notice of me!' 'O my lord! said she, 'sell some of the furniture and household stuff, little by little, and live on the proceed, against God the Most High provide.' So he sold all that was in the house, till there was nothing left, when he turned to her and said, 'What is to be done now?' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'it is my advice that thou rise and take me down to the market and sell me. Thou knowest that thy father bought me for ten thousand dinars; perhaps God may help thee to near that price, and if it be His will that we be reunited, we shall meet again.' 'O Enis el Jelis,' replied Noureddin, 'by Allah, I cannot endure to be parted from thee for a single hour!' 'By Allah, O my lord,' rejoined she, 'nor is it easy to me; but necessity compels, as says the poet:

Necessity in life oft drives one into ways That to the courteous mind are foreign and abhorred. We do not trust our weight unto a rope, unless It be to do some thing adapted to the cord.'

With this, he rose to his feet and took her, whilst the tears streamed down his cheeks like rain and he recited with the tongue of the case what follows:

Stay and vouchsafe me one more look before our parting hour,
To soothe the anguish of a heart well-nigh for reverence slain!
Yet, if it irk thee anywise to grant my last request,
Far rather let me die of love than cause thee aught of pain!

Then he went down to the market and delivered the damsel to a broker, to whom he said, 'O Hajj Hassan, I would have thee note the value of her thou hast to offer for sale!' 'O my lord Noureddin,' replied the broker, 'I have not forgotten my business. Is not this Enis el Jelis, whom thy father bought of me for ten thousand dinars?' 'Yes,'

said Noureddin. Then the broker went round to the merchants, but found they were not all assembled; so he waited till the rest had arrived and the market was full of all kinds of female slaves, Turks and Franks and Circassians and Abyssinians and Nubians and Egyptians and Tartars and Greeks and Georgians and others; when he came forward and said, 'O merchants! O men of wealth! every round thing is not a walnut nor every long thing a banana; every thing red is not meat nor everything white fat. O merchants, I have here this unique pearl, this unvalued jewel! What price shall I set on her?' 'Say four thousand five hundred dinars,' cried one. So the broker opened the biddings for her at that sum and as he was yet calling, behold, the Vizier Muin ben Sawa passed through the market and seeing Noureddin standing in a corner, said to himself, 'What doth the son of Khacan here? Has this gallows-bird aught left to buy girls withal?' Then he looked round and seeing the broker crying out and the merchants round him, said to himself, 'Doubtless he is ruined and has brought the damsel Enis el Jelis hither to sell her! What a solace to my heart!' Then he called the crier, who came up and kissed the ground before him, and he said to him, 'Show me the girl thou art crying for sale.' The broker dared not cross him, so he answered, 'O my lord, in the name of God!' And brought the damsel and showed her to him. She pleased him and he said, 'O Hassan, what is bidden for this damsel?' 'Four thousand five hundred dinars,' replied the broker, 'as an upset price.' Quoth the Vizier, 'I take that bid on myself.' When the merchants heard this, they hung back and dared not bid another dirhem, knowing what they did of the Vizier's tyranny. Then Muin looked at the broker and said to him, 'What ails thee to stand still? Go and offer four thousand dinars for her, and the five hundred shall be for thyself.' So the broker went to Noureddin and said to him, 'O my lord, thy slave is gone for nothing!' 'How so?' said he. The broker answered, 'We had opened the biddings for her at four thousand five hundred dinars, when that tyrant Muin ben Sawa passed through the market and when he saw the damsel, she pleased him and he said to me, "Call me the buyer for four thousand dinars, and thou shalt have five hundred for thyself." I doubt not but he knows she belongs to thee, and if he would pay thee down her price at once, it were well; but I know, of his avarice and upright, he will give thee a written order on some of his agents and will send after thee to say to them, "Give him nothing." So as often as thou shalt go to seek the money, they will say, "We will pay thee presently," and so they will put thee off day after day, for all thy high spirit, till at last, when they are tired of thine importunity, they will say, "Show us the bill." Then, as soon as they get hold of it, they will tear it up, and so thou wilt lose the girl's price.' When Noureddin heard this, he looked at the broker and said to him, 'What is to be done?' 'I will give thee a counsel,' answered he, 'which if thou follow, it will be greatly to thine advantage.' 'What is that?' asked Noureddin. 'Do thou come to me presently,' said the broker, 'when I am standing in the midst of the market and taking the girl from my hand, give her a cuff and say to her, "O baggage, I have kept my vow and brought thee down to the market, because I swore that I would put thee up for sale and make the brokers cry thee." If thou do this, it may be the device will impose upon the Vizier and the folk, and they will believe that thou broughtest her not to the market but for the quittance of thine oath.' 'This is a good counsel,' said Noureddin. Then the broker left him and returning to the midst of the market, took the damsel by the hand; then beckoned to Muin and said to him, 'O my lord, here comes her owner.' With this up came

Noureddin and snatching the girl from the broker, gave her a cuff and said to her, 'Out on thee, thou baggage! I have brought thee down to the market for the quittance of my oath; so now begone home and look that thou cross me not again. Out on thee! do I need thy price, that I should sell thee? The furniture of my house would fetch many times thy value, if I sold it.' When Muin saw this, he said to Noureddin, 'Out on thee! Hast thou aught left to sell?' And he made to lay violent hands on him; but the merchants interposed, for they all loved Noureddin, and the latter said to them, 'Behold, I am in your hands, and ye all know his tyranny!' 'By Allah,' exclaimed the Vizier, 'but for you, I would have killed him!' Then all the merchants signed to Noureddin with their eyes as who should say, 'Work thy will of him; not one of us will come betwixt him and thee.' Whereupon Noureddin, who was a stout-hearted fellow, went up to the Vizier and dragging him from his saddle, threw him to the ground. Now there was in that place a mortar-pit, into the midst of which he fell, and Noureddin fell to cuffing and pummelling him, and one of the blows smote his teeth, dyeing his beard with his blood. There were with the Vizier ten armed slaves, who, seeing their master thus evil entreated, clapped their hands to their swords and would have drawn them and fallen on Noureddin, to kill him; but the bystanders said to them, 'This is a Vizier and that a Vizier's son; it may be they will make peace with one another anon, in which case you will have gotten the hatred of both of them. Or a blow may fall on your lord, and you will all die the foulest of deaths; so you would do wisely not to interfere.' So they held aloof and when Noureddin had made an end of beating the Vizier, he took his slave-girl and went home; and Muin rose, with his white clothes dyed of three colours with black mud, red blood and ashes. When he saw himself in this plight, he put a halter round his neck and taking a bundle of coarse grass in either hand, went up to the palace and standing under the King's windows, cried out, 'O King of the age, I am a man aggrieved!' So they brought him before the Sultan, who looked at him and knowing him for his chief Vizier, asked who had entreated him thus. Whereupon he wept and sobbed and repeated the following verses:

Shall fortune oppress me, and that in thy day, O King?
Shall wolves devour me, whilst thou art a lion proud?
Shall all that are thirsty drink of thy water-tanks
And shall I thirst in thy courts, whilst thou art a rain-fraught cloud?

'O my lord,' continued he, 'thus fare all who love and serve thee.' 'Make haste,' said the Sultan, 'and tell me how this happened and who hath dealt thus with thee, whose honour is a part of my own honour.' 'Know then, O my lord,' replied the Vizier, 'that I went out this day to the slave-market to buy me a cook-maid, when I saw in the bazaar a damsel, whose like for beauty I never beheld. She pleased me and I thought to buy her for our lord the Sultan; so I asked the broker of her and her owner, and he replied, "She belongs to Noureddin Ali son of Fezl ben Khacan." Now our lord the Sultan aforetime gave his father ten thousand dinars to buy him a handsome slave-girl, and he bought therewith this damsel, who pleased him, so that he grudged her to our lord the Sultan and gave her to his own son. When Fezl died, his son sold all that he possessed of houses and gardens and household stuff and squandered the price, till he became penniless. Then he brought the girl down to the market, to sell her, and handed her to the broker, who cried her and the merchants bid for her, till her price

reached four thousand dinars; whereupon I said to myself, "I will buy her for our lord the Sultan, for it was his money that paid for her." So I said to Noureddin, "O my son, sell her to me for four thousand dinars." He looked at me and replied, "O pestilent old man, I will sell her to a Jew or a Christian rather than to thee!" "I do not buy her for myself," said I, "but for our lord and benefactor the Sultan." When he heard my words, he flew into a passion and dragging me off my horse, for all I am an old man, beat me till he left me as thou seest; and all this has befallen me but because I thought to buy the girl for thee.' Then the Vizier threw himself on the ground and lay there, weeping and trembling. When the Sultan saw his condition and heard his story, the vein of anger started out between his eyes, and he turned to his guards, who stood before him, forty swordsmen, and said to them, 'Go down at once to the house of Noureddin ben Fezl, and sack it and raze it; then take him and the damsel and drag them hither with their hands bound behind them.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they: and arming themselves, set out for Noureddin's house. Now there was with the Sultan a man called Ilmeddin Senjer, who had aforetime been servant to Noureddin's father Fezl ben Khacan, but had left his service for that of the Sultan, who had advanced him to be one of his chamberlains. When he heard the Sultan's order and saw the enemies intent upon killing his master's son, it was grievous to him; so he went out from before the Sultan and mounting his steed, rode to Noureddin's house and knocked at the door. Noureddin came out and knowing him, would have saluted him: but he said, 'O my lord, this is no time for greeting or converse.' 'O Ilmeddin,' asked Noureddin, 'what is the matter?' 'Arise and flee for your lives, thou and the damsel,' replied he: 'for Muin ben Sawa hath laid a snare for you; and if you fall into his hands, he will kill you. The Sultan hath despatched forty swordsmen against you and I counsel you flee ere evil overtake you.' Then Senjer put his hand to his pouch and finding there forty dinars, took them and gave them to Noureddin, saying, 'O my lord, take these and journey with them. If I had more, I would give them to thee; but this is no time to take exception.' So Noureddin went in to the damsel and told her what had happened, at which she wrung her hands. Then they went out at once from the city, and God let down the veil of His protection over them, so that they reached the river-bank, where they found a ship about to sail. Her captain stood in the waist, saying, 'Whoso has aught to do, whether in the way of victualling or taking leave of his friends, or who has forgotten any necessary thing, let him do it at once and return, for we are about to sail.' And every one said, 'O captain, we have nothing left to do.' Whereupon he cried out to his crew, saying, 'Ho, there! cast off the moorings and pull up the pickets!' Quoth Noureddin, 'Whither bound, O captain?' 'To the Abode of Peace, Baghdad,' replied he. So Noureddin and the damsel embarked with him, and they launched out and spread the sails, and the ship sped forth, as she were a bird in full flight, even as says right well the poet:

Look at a ship, how ravishing a sight she is and fair!
In her swift course she doth outstrip the breezes of the air.
She seems as 'twere a scudding bird that, lighting from the sky,
Doth on the surface of the stream with outspread pinions fare.

Meanwhile the King's officers came to Noureddin's house and breaking open the doors, entered and searched the whole place, but could find no trace of him and the

damsel; so they demolished the house and returning to the Sultan, told him what they had done; whereupon he said, 'Make search for them, wherever they are!' And they answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then he bestowed upon the Vizier Muin a dress of honour and said to him, 'None shall avenge thee but myself.' So Muin's heart was comforted and he wished the King long life and returned to his own house. Then the Sultan caused proclamation to be made in the town, saying, 'O all ye people! It is the will of our lord the Sultan that whoso happens on Noureddin Ali ben Khacan and brings him to the Sultan shall receive a dress of honour and a thousand dinars, and he who conceals him or knows his abiding-place and informs not thereof, deserves the exemplary punishment that shall befall him.' So search was made for Noureddin, but they could find neither trace nor news of him; and meantime he and the damsel sailed on with a fair wind, till they arrived safely at Baghdad and the captain said to them, 'This is Baghdad, and it is a city of safety: the winter hath departed from it, with its cold, and the season of the Spring is come, with its roses; its trees are in blossom and its streams flowing.' So Noureddin landed, he and the damsel, and giving the captain five dinars, walked on awhile, till chance brought them among the gardens and they came to a place swept and sprinkled, with long benches on either hand and hanging pots full of water. Overhead was a trelliswork of canes shading the whole length of the alley, and at the further end was the door of a garden; but this was shut. 'By Allah,' said Noureddin to the damsel, 'this is a pleasant place!' And she answered, 'O my lord, let us sit down on these benches and rest awhile.' So they mounted and sat down on the benches, after having washed their faces and hands; and the air smote on them and they fell asleep, glory be to Him who never sleeps! Now the garden in question was called the Garden of Delight and therein stood a pavilion called the Pavilion of Pictures, belonging to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, who used, when sad at heart, to repair thither and there sit. In this pavilion were fourscore windows and fourscore hanging lamps and in the midst a great chandelier of gold. When the Khalif entered, he was wont to have all the windows opened and to order his boon-companion Isaac ben Ibrahim and the slave-girls to sing, till his care left him and his heart was lightened. Now the keeper of the garden was an old man by name Gaffer Ibrahim, and he had found, from time to time, on going out on his occasions, idlers taking their case with courtezans in the alley leading to the door of the garden, at which he was sore enraged; so he complained to the Khalif, who said, 'Whomsoever thou findest at the door of the garden, do with him as thou wilt.' As chance would have it, he had occasion to go abroad that very day and found these two sleeping at the gate, covered with one veil; whereupon, 'By Allah,' said he, 'this is fine! These two know not that the Khalif has given me leave to kill any one whom I may catch at the door of the garden: but I will give them a sound drubbing, that none may come near the gate in future.' So he cut a green palm-stick and went out to them and raising his arm, till the whiteness of his armpit appeared, was about to lay on to them, when he bethought himself and said, 'O Ibrahim, wilt thou beat them, knowing not their case? Maybe they are strangers or wayfarers, and destiny hath led them hither. I will uncover their faces and look on them.' So he lifted up the veil from their faces and said, 'They are a handsome pair! It were not fitting that I should beat them.' Then he covered their faces again, and going to Noureddin's feet, began to rub them, whereupon the young man awoke, and seeing an old man of venerable appearance rubbing his feet, was abashed and drawing

them in, sat up; then took Ibrahim's hand and kissed it. Quoth the old man, 'O my son, whence art thou?' 'O my lord,' replied Noureddin, 'we are strangers.' And the tears started to his eyes. 'O my son,' said Ibrahim, 'know that the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) hath charged us to be hospitable to strangers. Wilt thou not rise, O my son, and pass into the garden and take thy pleasure therein and gladden thy heart?' 'O my lord,' said Noureddin, 'to whom does the garden belong?' And he replied, 'O my son, I inherited it from my family.' Now his object in saying this was to put them at their ease and induce them to enter the garden. So Noureddin thanked him and rose, he and the damsel, and followed him into the garden. They entered through a gateway, vaulted like a gallery and overhung with vines bearing grapes of various colours, the red like rubies and the black like ebony, and passing under a bower of trellised boughs, found themselves in a garden, and what a garden! There were fruit-trees growing singly and in clusters and birds warbling melodiously on the branches, whilst the thousand-voiced nightingale repeated the various strains: the turtle-dove filled the place with her cooing, and there sang the blackbird, with its warble like a human voice, and the ring-dove, with her notes like a drinker exhilarated with wine. The trees were laden with all manner of ripe fruits, two of each: the apricot in its various kinds, camphor and almond and that of Khorassan, the plum, whose colour is as that of fair women, the cherry, that does away discoloration of the teeth, and the fig of three colours, red and white and green. There bloomed the flower of the bitter orange, as it were pearls and coral, the rose whose redness puts to shame the cheeks of the fair, the violet, like sulphur on fire by night, the myrtle, the gillyflower, the lavender, the peony and the blood-red anemone. The leaves were jewelled with the tears of the clouds; the camomile smiled with her white petals like a lady's teeth, and the narcissus looked at the rose with her negro's eyes: the citrons shone like cups and the limes like balls of gold, and the earth was carpeted with flowers of all colours; for the Spring was come and the place beamed with its brightness; whilst the birds sang and the stream rippled and the breeze blew softly, for the attemperance of the air. Ibrahim carried them up into the pavilion, and they gazed on its beauty and on the lamps aforesaid in the windows; and Noureddin called to mind his banquetings of time past and said, 'By Allah, this is a charming place!' Then they sat down and the gardener set food before them; and they ate their fill and washed their hands; after which Noureddin went up to one of the windows and calling the damsel, fell to gazing on the trees laden with all manner of fruits. Then he turned to the gardener and said to him, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, hast thou no drink here, for folk use to drink after eating?' The old man brought him some fresh sweet cold water, but he said, 'This is not the kind of drink I want.' 'Belike,' said Ibrahim, 'thou wishest for wine?' 'I do,' replied Noureddin. 'God preserve me from it!' said the old man. 'It is thirteen years since I did this thing, for the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) cursed its drinker, its presser, its seller and its carrier.' 'Hear two words from me,' said Noureddin. 'Say on,' replied Ibrahim. 'If,' said Noureddin, 'that unlucky ass there be cursed, will any part of the curse fall on thee?' 'Not so,' replied the old man. 'Then,' said Noureddin, 'take this dinar and these two dirhems and mount the ass and stop at a distance (from the wineshop); then call the first man thou seest buying, and say to him, "Take these two dirhems and buy me this dinar's worth of wine and set it on the ass." Thus thou wilt be neither the purchaser nor the carrier of the wine and no part of the curse will fall on thee.' At this the gardener

laughed and said, 'O my son, never have I seen one readier-witted than thou nor heard aught sweeter than thy speech.' So he did as Noureddin had said, and the latter thanked him, saying, 'We are dependent on thee, and it is only fitting that thou comply with our wishes; so bring us what we require.' 'O my son,' replied he, 'there is my buttery before thee.' (Now this was the store-room provided for the Commander of the Faithful.) Enter and take what thou wilt; there is more there than thou needest.' So Noureddin entered the pantry and found therein vessels of gold and silver and crystal, incrusted with all kinds of jewels, and was amazed and delighted at what he saw. Then he took what he wanted and set it on and poured the wine into flagons and decanters, whilst Ibrahim brought them fruits and flowers and withdrew and sat down at a distance. So they drank and made merry, till the wine got the mastery of them, so that their cheeks flushed and their eyes sparkled and their hair became dishevelled. Then said Ibrahim to himself, 'What ails me to sit apart? Why should I not sit with them? When shall I find myself in company with the like of these two, who are like two moons?' So he came and sat down at the corner of the dais, and Noureddin said to him, 'O my lord, my life on thee, come and sit with us!' So he came and sat by them, and Noureddin filled a cup and said to him, 'Drink, that thou mayst know the flavour of it.' 'God forbid!' replied he. 'I have not done such a thing these thirteen years.' Noureddin did not press him, but drank off the cup, and throwing himself on the ground, feigned to be overcome with drunkenness. Then said the damsel, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, see how he serves me!' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'what ails him?' 'This is how he always treats me,' said she; 'he drinks awhile, then falls asleep and leaves me alone, with none to bear me company over my cup nor to whom I may sing whilst he drinks.' 'By Allah,' said he (and indeed her words touched his heart and made his soul incline to her), 'this is not well!' Then she looked at him and filling a cup said to him, 'I conjure thee, on my life, not to refuse me, but take this cup and drink it off and solace my heart.' So he took it and drank it off and she filled a second cup and set it on the chandelier, saying, 'O my lord, there is still this one left for thee.' 'By Allah, I cannot take it,' answered he; 'that which I have drunk suffices me.' 'By Allah,' said she, 'thou must indeed drink it.' So he took the cup and drank; and she filled him a third cup, which he took and was about to drink, when behold, Noureddin opened his eyes and sitting up, exclaimed, 'Hello, Gaffer Ibrahim, what is this? Did I not adjure thee just now, and thou refusedst, saying, "I have not done such a thing these thirteen years"?' 'By Allah,' replied he (and indeed he was abashed), 'it is her fault, not mine.' Noureddin laughed and they sat down again to carouse, but the damsel turned to Noureddin and whispered to him, 'O my lord, drink and do not press him, and I will show thee some sport with him.' Then she began to fill her master's cup and he to fill to her, and so they did time after time, till at last Ibrahim looked at them and said, 'What manner of good fellowship is this? God's malison on the glutton who keeps the cup to himself! Why dost thou not give me to drink, O my brother? What manners are these, O Blessed One!' At this they laughed till they fell backward; then they drank and gave him to drink and ceased not to carouse thus, till a third part of the night was past. Then said the damsel, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, with thy leave, I will light one of these candles.' 'Do so,' said he; 'but light no more then one.' So she rose and beginning with one candle, lighted fourscore and sat down again. Presently Noureddin said, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, how stands my favour with thee? May I not light one of these lamps ?' 'Light

one,' replied he, 'and plague me no more.' So Noureddin rose and lighted one lamp after another, till he had lighted the whole eighty and the palace seemed to dance with light. Quoth Ibrahim (and indeed intoxication had mastered him), 'Ye are more active than I.' Then he rose and opened all the windows and sat down again; and they fell to carousing and reciting verses, till the place rang with their mirth.

Now as God the All-powerful, who appointeth a cause to everything, had decreed, the Khalif was at that moment seated at one of the windows of his palace, overlooking the Tigris, in the light of the moon. He saw the lustre of the candles and lamps reflected in the river and lifting his eyes, perceived that it came from the garden-palace, which was in a blaze with light. So he called Jaafer the Barmecide and said to him, 'O dog of a Vizier, has the city of Baghdad been taken from me and thou hast not told me?' 'What words are these?' said Jaafer. 'If Baghdad were not taken from me,' rejoined the Khalif, 'the Pavilion of Pictures would not be illuminated with lamps and candles, nor would its windows be open. Out on thee! Who would dare to do this except the Khalifate were taken from me?' Quoth Jaafer (and indeed he trembled in every limb), 'Who told thee that the pavilion was illuminated and the windows open?' 'Come hither and look,' replied the Khalif. So Jaafer came to the window and looking towards the garden, saw the pavilion flaming with light, in the darkness of the night, and thinking that this might be by the leave of the keeper, for some good reason of his own, was minded to make an excuse for him. So he said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, Gaffer Ibrahim said to me last week, "O my lord Jaafer, I desire to circumcise my sons during thy life and that of the Commander of the Faithful." "What dost thou want?" asked I; and he said, "Get me leave from the Khalif to hold the festival in the pavilion." So I said to him, "Go, circumcise them, and I will see the Khalif and tell him." So he went away and I forgot to tell thee.' 'O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'thou hast committed two offences against me, first, in that thou didst not tell me, secondly, in that thou didst not give the old man what he sought; for he only came and told thee this, by way of hinting a request for some small matter of money, to help him out with the expenses; and thou gavest him nothing nor toldest me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'I forgot.' 'By the virtue of my forefathers,' rejoined the Khalif, 'I will not pass the rest of the night but with him, for he is a pious man, who consorts with the elders of the faith and the fakirs: doubtless they are now assembled with him and it may be that the prayer of one of them may profit us both in this world and the next. Besides, my presence will advantage him and he will be pleased.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' objected Jaafer, 'the night is far spent, and they will now be about to break up.' 'It matters not,' replied the Khalif; 'I must and will go to them.' And Jaafer was silent, being perplexed and knowing not what to do. Then the Khalif rose to his feet and taking with him Jaafer and Mesrour the eunuch, they all three disguised themselves as merchants and leaving the palace, walked on through the by-streets till they came to the garden. The Khalif went up to the gate and finding it open, was surprised and said to the Vizier, 'Look, Jaafer, how Gaffer Ibrahim has left the gate open to this hour, contrary to his wont!' They entered and walked on till they came under the pavilion, when the Khalif said, 'O Jaafer, I wish to look in upon them privily before I join them, that I may see what they are about, for up to now I hear no sound nor any fakir naming God.' Then he looked about and seeing a tall walnut-tree, said to Jaafer, 'I will climb this tree, for its branches come near the windows, and so look in

upon them.' So he mounted the tree and climbed from branch to branch, till he reached a bough that came up to one of the windows. On this he seated himself and looking in at the window, saw a young lady and a young man as they were two moons (glory be to Him who created them and fashioned them!), and by them Gaffer Ibrahim seated, with a cup in his hand, saying, 'O princess of fair ones, drink without music is nothing worth; indeed I have heard a poet say:

Pass round the wine in the great and the small cup too,
And take the bowl from the hands of the shining moon.
But without music, I charge you, forbear to drink,
For sure I see even horses drink to a whistled tune.'

When the Khalif saw this, the vein of anger started out between his eyes and he descended and said to the Vizier, 'O Jaafer, never saw I men of piety in such a case! Do thou mount this tree and look upon them, lest the benisons of the devout escape thee.' So Jaafer climbed up, perplexed at these words, and looking in, saw Noureddin and the damsel and Gaffer Ibrahim with a cup in his hand. At this sight, he made sure of ruin and descending, stood before the Commander of the Faithful, who said to him, 'O Jaafer, praised be God who hath made us of those who observe the external forms of the Divine ordinances!' Jaafer could make no answer for excess of confusion, and the Khalif continued, 'I wonder how these people came hither and who admitted them into my pavilion! But the like of the beauty of this youth and this girl my eyes never beheld!' 'Thou art right, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, hoping to propitiate him. Then said the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, let us both mount the branch that overlooks the window, that we may amuse ourselves with looking at them.' So they both climbed the tree and looking in, heard Ibrahim say, 'O my lady, I have laid aside gravity in drinking wine, but this is not thoroughly delectable without the melodious sound of the strings. 'By Allah,' replied Enis el Jelis, 'if we had but some musical instrument, our joy would be complete!' When the old man heard what she said, he rose to his feet, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'I wonder what he is going to do.' 'I know not,' replied Jaafer. Then Ibrahim went out and returned with a lute; and the Khalif looked at it and knew it for that of Isaac the boon-companion. 'By Allah,' said he, 'if this damsel sing ill, I will crucify you, all of you; but if she sing well, I will pardon them and crucify thee.' 'God grant she may sing ill!' said Jaafer 'Why so?' asked the Khalif. 'Because,' replied Jaafer 'if thou crucify us all together, we shall keep each other company.' The Khalif laughed at his speech; then the damsel took the lute and tuning it, played a measure which made all hearts yearn to her, then sang the following verses:

O ye that to help unhappy lovers are fain!
We burn with the fire of love and longing in vain.
Whatever ye do, we merit it: see, we cast
Ourselves on your ruth! Do not exult in our pain.
For we are children of sadness and low estate.
Do with us what you will; we will not complain.
What were your glory to slay us within your courts?
Our fear is but lest you sin in working us bane.

'By Allah,' said the Khalif, 'it is good, O Jaafer! Never in my life have I heard so enchanting a voice!' 'Belike,' said Jaafer, 'the Khalif's wrath hath departed from him.' 'Yes,' said the Khalif, 'it is gone.' Then they descended from the tree, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'I wish to go in and sit with them and hear the damsel sing before me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'if thou go in to them, they will most like be troubled and Gaffer Ibrahim will assuredly die of fright.' 'O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'thou must teach me some device, whereby I may foregather with them, without being known of them.' So they walked on towards the Tigris, considering of this affair, and presently came upon a fisher man standing fishing under the windows of the pavilion. Now some time before this, the Khalif (being in the pavilion) had called to Gaffer Ibrahim and said to him, 'What is this noise I hear under the windows?' 'It is the voices of the fishermen, fishing,' answered he; and the Khalif commanded him to go down and forbid them to resort thither; so the fishermen were forbidden to fish there. However, that night a fisherman named Kerim, happening to pass by and seeing the garden gate open, said to himself, 'This is a time of negligence: I will take advantage of it to fish.' So he went in, but had hardly cast his net, when the Khalif came up alone and standing behind him, knew him and called out to him, saying, 'Ho, Kerim!' The fisherman, hearing himself called by his name, turned round, and seeing the Khalif, trembled in every limb and exclaimed, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I did it not in mockery of the edict; but poverty and distress drove me to what thou seest.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Make a cast in my name.' At this the fisherman was glad and going to the bank, cast his net, then waiting till it had spread out to the utmost and settled down, pulled it up and found in it various kinds of fish. The Khalif was pleased and said, 'O Kerim, put off thy clothes.' So he put off a gown of coarse woollen stuff, patched in a hundred places and full of disgusting vermin, and a turban that had not been unwound for three years, but to which he had sewn every rag he came across. The Khalif pulled off his cassock and mantle and two vests of Alexandria and Baalbec silk and saying to the fisherman, 'Take these and put them on,' donned the latter's gown and turban and tied a chin band round the lower part of his face. Then said he to the fisherman, 'Go about thy business.' So he kissed the Khalif's feet and thanked him and recited the following verses:

Thou hast heaped benefits on me, past all that I could crave!
My tongue suffices not to praise thy goodness to thy slave.
So I will thank thee whilst I live; and when I come to die,
My very bones shall never cease to thank thee in the grave.

Hardly had he finished, when the lice began to crawl over the skin of the Khalif, who fell to snatching them with either hand from his neck and throwing them down, exclaiming, 'Out on thee, O fisherman, this gown is swarming with vermin!' 'O my lord,' replied the fisherman, 'they torment thee just now, but before a week has passed, thou wilt not feel them nor think of them.' The Khalif laughed and said, 'Out on thee! Dost thou think I mean to leave this gown on my body?' 'O my lord,' said the fisherman, 'I desire to say one word to thee.' 'Say on,' answered the Khalif. 'It occurs to me, O Commander of the Faithful,' said the fisherman, 'that if thou wish to learn hunting, so thou mayst have an useful trade ready to thy hand, this gown will be the very thing for thee.' The Khalif laughed, and the fisherman went his way. Then the

Khalif took up the basket of fish, and laying a little grass over it, carried it to Jaafer and stood before him. Jaafer, concluding that it was Kerim the fisherman, was alarmed for him and said, 'O Kerim, what brings thee hither? Flee for thy life, for the Khalif is in the garden to-night, and if he see thee, thou wilt lose thy head.' At this the Khalif laughed, and Jaafer knew him and said, 'Surely thou art our lord the Khalif?' 'Yes, O Jaafer,' replied he. 'And thou art my Vizier and I came hither with thee; yet thou knewest me not; so how should Gaffer Ibrahim know me, and he drunk? Stay here, till I come back.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer. Then the Khalif went up to the door of the pavilion and knocked softly, whereupon said Noureddin, 'O Gaffer Ibrahim, some one knocks at the door.' 'Who is at the door?' cried the old man; and the Khalif replied, 'It is I, O Gaffer Ibrahim!' 'Who art thou?' asked the gardener. 'I, Kerim the fisherman,' rejoined the Khalif. 'I hear thou hast company, so have brought thee some fine fish.' When Noureddin heard the mention of fish, he was glad, he and the damsel, and they both said to Ibrahim, 'O my lord, open the door and let him bring the fish in to us.' So he opened the door, and the Khalif entered, in his fisherman's disguise, and began by saluting them. Quoth Ibrahim, 'Welcome to the brigand, the robber, the gambler! Let us see thy fish.' So the Khalif showed them the fish and behold, they were still alive and moving, whereupon the damsel exclaimed, 'O my lord, these are indeed fine fish! Would that they were fried!' 'By Allah, O my mistress,' replied Ibrahim, 'thou art right.' Then said he to the Khalif, 'O fisherman, why didst thou not bring us the fish ready fried? Go now and fry them and bring them to us.' 'It shall be done at once,' answered he. Said they, 'Be quick about it.' So he went out, running, and coming up to Jaafer, cried out, 'Hallo, Jaafer!' 'Here am I, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied he. 'They want the fish fried,' said the Khalif. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'give it to me and I will fry it for them.' 'By the tombs of my forefathers,' said the Khalif, 'none shall fry it but I, with my own hand!' So he repaired to the keeper's hut, where he searched and found all that he required, even to salt and saffron and marjoram and so forth. Then he laid the fish on the frying-pan and setting it on the brazier, fried them handsomely. When they were done, he laid them on a banana-leaf, and gathering some lemons from the garden, carried the dish to the pavilion and set it before them. So Noureddin and the damsel and Ibrahim came forward and ate, after which they washed their hands and Noureddin said to the Khalif, 'O fisherman, thou hast done us a right welcome service this night!' Then he put his hand to his pouch and taking out three of the dinars that Senjer had given him, said, 'O fisherman, excuse me. By Allah, had I known thee before that which has lately befallen me, I had done away the bitterness of poverty from thy heart; but take this as an earnest of my good will!' Then he threw the dinars to the Khalif, who took them and kissed them and put them up. Now the Khalif's sole desire in all this was to hear the damsel sing; so he said to Noureddin, 'O my lord, thou hast rewarded me munificently, but I beg of thy great bounty that thou wilt let this damsel sing an air, that I may hear her.' So Noureddin said, 'O Enis el Jelis!' 'Yes,' replied she. And he said, 'My life on thee, sing us something for the sake of this fisherman, for he wishes to hear thee.' So she took the lute and struck the strings, after she had tuned them, and sang the following verses:

The fingers of the lovely maid went wandering o'er the lute,
And many a soul to ravishment its music did compel.

She sang, and lo, her singing cured the deaf man of his ill,
And he that erst was dumb exclaimed, "Thou hast indeed done well!"

Then she played again, so admirably that she ravished their wits, and sang the following verses:

Thou honour'dst us, when thou didst in our land alight;
Thy lustre hath dispelled the moonless midnight gloom!
Wherefore with camphor white and rose-water and musk
It e'en behoveth us our dwelling to perfume.

At this the Khalif was agitated and so overcome with emotion that he was not master of himself for excess of delight, and he exclaimed, 'By Allah, it is good! By Allah, it is good! By Allah, it is good!' Quoth Noureddin, 'O fisherman, doth this damsel please thee?' 'Ay, by Allah!' replied he. Whereupon said Noureddin, 'I make thee a present of her, the present of a generous man who does not go back on his giving nor will revoke his gift.' Then he sprang to his feet and taking a mantle, threw it over the pretended fisherman and bade him take the damsel and begone. But she looked at him and said, 'O my lord, art thou going away without bidding me adieu? If it must be so, at least, stay whilst I bid thee farewell and make known my case.' And she repeated the following verses:

I am filled full of longing pain and memory and dole,
Till I for languor am become a body without soul.
Say not to me, beloved one, "Thou'lt grow consoled for me;"
When such affliction holds the heart, what is there can console?
If that a creature in his tears could swim as in a sea,
I to do this of all that breathe were surely first and sole.
O thou, the love of whom doth fill my heart and overflow,
Even when wine, with water mixed, fills up the brimming bowl,
O thou for whom desire torments my body and my spright!
This severance is the thing I feared was writ on fortune's scroll.
O thou, whose love from out my heart shall nevermore depart,
O son of Khacan, thou my wish, my hope unshared and whole,
On my account thou didst transgress against our lord and king
And left'st thy native land for me, to seek a foreign goal.
Thou givest me unto Kerim, may he for aye be praised!
And may th' Almighty for my loss my dearest lord console!

When she had finished, Noureddin answered her by repeating the following:

She bade me adieu on the day of our parting
And said, whilst for anguish she wept and she sighed,
"Ah, what wilt thou do, when from me thou art severed?"
"Ask that of the man who'll survive," I replied.

When the Khalif heard what she said in her verses, 'Thou hast given me to Kerim,' his interest in her redoubled and it was grievous to him to separate them; so he said to Noureddin, 'O my lord, verily the damsel said in her verses that thou hadst

transgressed against her master and him who possessed her; so tell me, against whom didst thou transgress and who is it that has a claim on thee?' 'By Allah, O fisherman,' replied Noureddin 'there hangs a rare story by me and this damsel, a story, which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, would serve as a lesson to him who can profit by example.' Said the Khalif, 'Wilt thou not tell us thy story and acquaint us with thy case? Peradventure it may bring thee relief, for the help of God is near at hand.' 'O fisher man,' said Noureddin, 'wilt thou hear our story in prose or verse?' 'Prose is but words,' replied the Khalif, 'but verse is strung pearls.' Then Noureddin bowed his head and spoke the following verses.

O my friend, I have bidden farewell to repose,
And the anguish of exile has doubled my woes
I once had a father, who loved me right dear,
But left me, to dwell in the tombs, where all goes.
There fell on me after him hardship and pain
And Fate broke in pieces my heart with its blows.
He bought me a slave-girl, the fairest of maids;
Her shape shamed the branch and her colour the rose.
I wasted the substance he left me, alas!
And lavished it freely on these and on those,
Till for need I was minded to sell the fair maid,
Though sorely I grudged at the parting, God knows!
But lo! when the crier 'gan call her for sale,
A scurvy old skin-flint to bid for her chose.
At this I was angered beyond all control
And snatched her away ere the crier could close;
Whereupon the old rancorous curmudgeon flamed up
With despite and beset me with insults and blows.
In my passion I smote him with right hand and left,
Till my wrath was assuaged; after which I arose
And returning, betook me in haste to my house,
Where I hid me for feat of the wrath of my foes.
Then the king of the city decreed my arrest:
But a kind-hearted chamberlain pitied my woes
And warned me to flee from the city forthright,
Ere my enemies' springes my life should enclose.
So we fled from our house in the dead of the night
And came to Baghdad for a place of repose.
I have nothing of value, nor treasures nor gold,
Or I'd handsel thee, fisherman, freely with those!
But I give thee, instead, the beloved of my soul,
And in her thou hast gotten my heart's blood, God knows!

When he had finished, the Khalif said to him, 'O my lord Noureddin, explain to me thy case more fully!' So he told him the whole story from beginning to end, and the Khalif said to him, 'Whither dost thou now intend?' 'God's world is wide!' replied

he. Quoth the Khalif, 'I will write thee a letter to carry to the Sultan Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, which when he reads, he will do thee no hurt.' 'Who ever heard of a fisherman writing to kings?' said Noureddin. 'Such a thing can never be.' 'True,' replied the Khalif; 'but I will tell thee the reason. Know that he and I learnt in the same school, under one master, and that I was his monitor. Since that time, fortune has betided him and he is become a Sultan, whilst God hath abased me and made me a fisherman: yet I never send to him to seek aught, but he does my desire; nay, though I should ask of him a thousand favours a day, he would comply.' When Noureddin heard this, he said, 'Good: write that I may see.' So the Khalif took pen and inkhorn and wrote as follows: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! This letter is from Haroun er Reshid son of el Mehdi to His Highness Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, whom I have compassed about with my favour and made governor for me in certain of my dominions. The bearer of these presents is Noureddin son of Felz ben Khacan the Vizier. As soon as they come to thy hand, do thou put off thy kingly dignity and invest him therewith, and look thou oppose not my commandment, so peace be on thee.' Then he gave the letter to Noureddin, who took it and kissed it, then put it in his turban and set out at once on his journey. As soon as he was gone, Gaffer Ibrahim fumed to the Khalif and said to him, 'O vilest of fishermen, thou hast brought us a couple of fish, worth a score of paras, and hast gotten three dinars for them; and thinkest thou to take the damsel also?' When the Khalif heard this, he cried out at him and made a sign to Mesrour, who discovered himself and rushed upon him. Now Jaafer had sent one of the gardeners to the doorkeeper of the palace for a suit of the royal raiment for the Commander of the Faithful; so he went and returning with the suit, kissed the earth before the Khalif and gave it to him. Then he threw off the clothes he had on and dressed himself in those which the gardener had brought, to the great amazement of Gaffer Ibrahim, who bit his nails in bewilderment and exclaimed, 'Am I asleep or awake?' 'O Gaffer Ibrahim,' said the Khalif, 'what state is this in which I see thee?' With this, he recovered from his drunkenness and throwing himself on the ground, repeated the following verses:

Forgive the error into which my straying feet did fall,
For the slave sues for clemency from him to whom he's thrall!
Lo, by confessing I have done what the offence requires!
Where then is that for which good grace and generous mercy call?

The Khalif forgave him and bade carry the damsel to the palace, where he assigned her a separate lodging and servants to wait upon her, saying to her, 'Know that we have sent thy master to be Sultan in Bassora, and God willing, we will despatch him a dress of honour and thee with it.'

Meanwhile, Noureddin fared on, till he reached Bassora, when he repaired to the Sultan's palace and gave a loud cry. The Sultan heard him and sent for him; and when he came into his presence, he kissed the earth before him and pulling out the letter, gave it to him. The Sultan, seeing that the superscription was in the handwriting of the Khalif, rose to his feet and kissed the letter three times, then read it and said, 'I hear and obey God and the Commander of the Faithful!' Then he summoned the four Cadis and the Amirs and was about to divest himself of the kingly office, when in came the Vizier Muin ben Sawa. The Sultan gave him the Khalif's letter, and he read it,

then tore it in pieces and putting it in his mouth, chewed it and threw it away. 'Out on thee!' exclaimed the Sultan (and indeed he was angry); 'what made thee do that?' 'By thy life, O our lord the Sultan,' replied Muin, 'this fellow hath never seen the Khalif nor his Vizier: but he is a gallows-bird, a crafty imp who, happening upon a blank sheet in the Khalif's handwriting, hath written his own desire in it. The Khalif would surely not have sent him to take the Sultanate from thee, without a royal mandate and a patent appended thereto, nor would he have omitted to send with him a chamberlain or a vizier. But he is alone and hath never come from the Khalif, never! never!' 'What is to be done?' said the Sultan. 'Leave him to me,' replied the Vizier: 'I will send him in charge of a chamberlain to the city of Baghdad. If what he says be true, they will bring us back royal letters-patent and a diploma of investiture; and if not, I will pay him what I owe him.' When the Sultan heard the Vizier's words, he said, 'Take him.' So Muin carried Noureddin to his own house and cried out to his servants, who threw him down and beat him, till he swooned away. Then he caused heavy shackles to be put on his feet and carried him to the prison, where he called the gaoler, whose name was Cuteyt, and said to him, 'O Cuteyt, take this fellow and throw him into one of the underground cells in the prison and torture him night and day.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he, and taking Noureddin into the prison, locked the door on him. Then he bade sweep a bench behind the door and laying thereon a mattress and a leather rug, made Noureddin sit down. Moreover, he loosed his fetters and treated him kindly. The Vizier sent every day to the gaoler, charging him to beat him, but he abstained from this, and things abode thus forty days' time. On the forty-first day, there came a present from the Khalif: which when the Sultan saw, it pleased him and he took counsel about it with his Viziers, one of whom said, 'Mayhap this present was intended for the new Sultan.' Quoth Muin, 'We should have done well to put him to death at his first coming;' and the Sultan said, 'By Allah, thou remindest me of him! Go down to the prison and fetch him, and I will strike off his head.' 'I hear end obey,' replied Muin. 'With thy leave I will have proclamation made in the city, "Whoso hath a mind to look upon the beheading of Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, let him repair to the palace!" So, great and small will come out to gaze on him and I shall heal my heart and mortify those that envy me.' 'As thou wilt,' said the Sultan; whereupon the Vizier went out, rejoicing, and commanded the chief of the police to make the aforesaid proclamation. When the folk heard the crier, they all mourned and wept, even to the little ones in the schools and the tradersin the shops, and some hastened to get them places to see the sight, whilst others repaired to the prison thinking to accompany him thence. Presently, the Vizier came to the prison, attended by ten armed slaves, and the gaoler said to him, 'What seekest thou, O our lord the Vizier?' 'Bring me that gallows-bird,' replied the Vizier; and the gaoler said, 'He is in the sorriest of plights for the much beating I have given him.' Then Cuteyt went into the prison, where he found Noureddin repeating the following verses:

Who shall avail me against the woes that my life enwind?
Indeed my disease is sore and the remedy hard to find.
Exile hath worn my heart and my spirit with languishment,
And evil fortune hath turned my very lovers unkind.
O folk, is there none of you all will answer my bitter cry!
Is there never a merciful friend will help me of all mankind?

Yet death and the pains of death are a little thing to me;
I have put off the hope of life and left its sweets behind.
O Thou that sentest the Guide, the Chosen Prophet to men,
The Prince of the Intercessors, gifted to loose and bind,
I prithee, deliver me and pardon me my default,
And put the troubles to flight that crush me, body and mind!

The gaoler took off his clean clothes and clothing him in two filthy garments, carried him to the Vizier. Noureddin looked at him, and knowing him for his enemy who still sought to compass his death, wept and said to him, 'Art thou then secure against Fate? Hast thou not heard the saying of the poet?

Where are now the old Chosroes, tyrants of a bygone day? Wealth they gathered; but their treasures and themselves have passed away!

O Vizier,' continued he, 'know that God (blessed and exalted be He!) doth whatever He will!' 'O Ali,' replied the Vizier, 'dost thou think to fright me with this talk? Know that I mean this day to strike off thy head in despite of the people of Bassora, and let the days do what they will, I care not; nor will I take thought to thy warning, but rather to what the poet says:

Let the days do what they will, without debate, And brace thy spirit against the doings of Fate.

And also how well says another:

He who lives a day after his foe Hath compassed his wishes, I trow!

Then he ordered his attendants to set Noureddin on the back of a mule, and they said to the youth (for indeed it was grievous to them), 'Let us stone him and cut him in pieces, though it cost us our lives.' 'Do it not,' replied Noureddin. 'Have ye not heard what the poet says?

A term's decreed for me, which I must needs fulfil,
And when its days are spent, I die, do what I will.
Though to their forest dens the lions should me drag,
Whilst but an hour remains, they have no power to kill.'

Then they proceeded to proclaim before Noureddin, 'This is the least of the punishment of those who impose upon kings with forgery!' And they paraded him round about Bassora, till they came beneath the windows of the palace, where they made him kneel down on the carpet of blood and the headsman came up to him and said, 'O my lord, I am but a slave commanded in this matter: if thou hast any desire, let me know, that I may fulfil it; for now there remains of thy life but till the Sultan shall put his head out of the window.' So Noureddin looked in all directions and repeated the following verses:

I see the headsman and the sword, I see the carpet spread,
And cry "Alas, my sorry plight! Alas, my humbled head!"
How is't I have no pitying friend to help me in my need?
Will no one answer my complaint or heed the tears I shed?

My time of life is past away and death draws nigh to me:
Will no one earn the grace of God by standing me in stead?
Will none take pity on my state and succour my despair
With but a cup of water cold, to ease my torments dread?

The people fell to weeping for him, and the headsman rose and brought him a draught of water; but the Vizier smote the gugglet with his hand and broke it: then he cried out at the executioner and bade him strike off Noureddin's head. So he proceeded to bind the latter's eyes; whilst the people cried out against the Vizier and there befell a great tumult and dispute amongst them. At this moment there arose a great cloud of dust and filled the air and the plain; and when the Sultan, who was sitting in the palace, saw this, he said to his attendants, 'Go and see what is the meaning of that cloud of dust.' 'When we have cut off this fellow's head,' replied Muin; but the Sultan said, 'Wait till we see what this means.'

Now the cloud of dust in question was raised by Jaafer the Barmecide, Vizier to the Khalif, and his retinue; and the reason of his coming was as follows. The Khalif passed thirty days without calling to mind the affair of Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, and none reminded him of it, till one night, as he passed by the apartment of Enis el Jelis, he heard her weeping and reciting the following verse, in a low and sweet voice:

Thine image is ever before me, though thou art far away, Nor doth my tongue give over the naming of thee aye!

And her weeping redoubled; when lo, the Khalif opened the door and entering the chamber, found her in tears. When she saw him, she fell to the earth and kissing his feet three times, repeated the following verses:

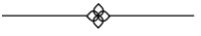
O thou pure of royal lineage and exalted in thy birth!
O thou tree of fruitful branches, thou the all unstained of race!
I recall to thee the promise that thy noble bounty made:
God forbid thou shouldst forget it or withhold the gifted grace!

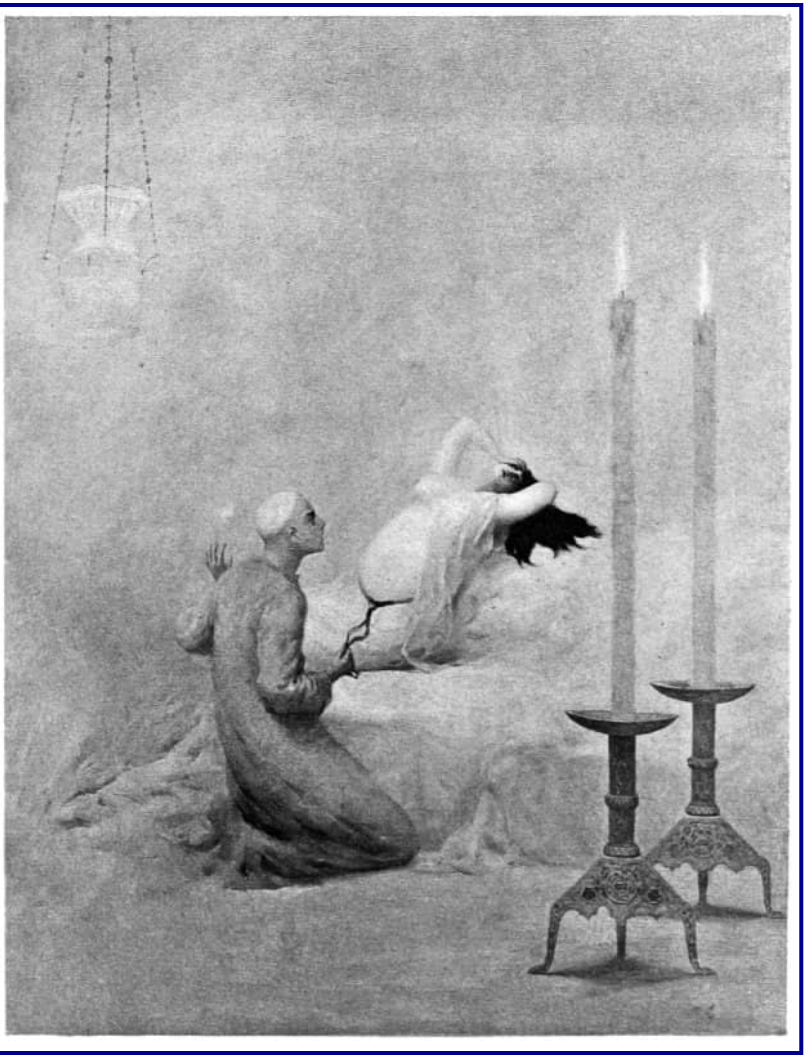
Quoth the Khalif, 'Who art thou?' And she answered, 'I am she whom thou hadst as a present from Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, and I crave the fulfilment of thy promise to send me to him with the dress of honour; for I have now been here thirty days, without tasting sleep.' Thereupon the Khalif sent for Jaafer and said to him, 'O Jaafer, it is thirty days since we had news of Noureddin Ali ben Khacan, and I doubt me the Sultan has killed him; but by the life of my head and the tombs of my forefathers, if aught of ill have befallen him, I will make an end of him who was the cause of it, though he be the dearest of all men to myself! So it is my wish that thou set out at once for Bassora and bring me news of my cousin Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini and how he hath dealt with Noureddin; and do thou tell my cousin the young man's history and how I sent him to him with my letter, and if thou find that the King hath done otherwise than after my commandment, lay hands on him and his Vizier Muin ben Sawa and bring them to us, as thou shalt find them. Nor do thou tarry longer on the road than shall suffice for the journey, or I will strike off thy head.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Jaafer, and made ready at once and set out for Bassora, where he arrived in due course. When he came up and saw the crowd and turmoil, he enquired what was

the matter and was told how it stood with Noureddin Ali, whereupon he hastened to go in to the Sultan and saluting him, acquainted him with his errand and the Khalif's determination, in case of any foul play having befallen Noureddin, to destroy whosoever should have been the cause of it. Then he seized upon the Sultan and his Vizier and laid them in ward, and commanding Noureddin to be released, seated him on the throne in the place of Mohammed ben Suleiman. After this Jaafer abode three days at Bassora, the usual guest-time, and on the morning of the fourth day, Noureddin turned to him and said, 'I long for the sight of the Commander of the Faithful.' Then said Jaafer to Mohammed ben Suleiman, 'Make ready, for we will pray the morning-prayer and take horse for Baghdad.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.' So they prayed the morning-prayer and set out, all of them, taking with them the Vizier Muin ben Sawa, who began to repent of what he had done. Noureddin rode by Jaafer's side and they fared on without ceasing, till they arrived in due course at the Abode of Peace, Baghdad, and going in to the Khalif's presence, told him how they had found Noureddin nigh upon death. The Khalif said to Noureddin, 'Take this sword and strike off thine enemy's head.' So he took the sword and went up to Muin ben Sawa, but the latter looked at him and said, 'I did according to my nature; do thou according to thine.' So Noureddin threw the sword from his hand and said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he hath beguiled me with his speech,' and he repeated the following verse:

Lo, with the cunning of his speech my heart he hath beguiled, For generous minds are ever moved by artful words and mild!

'Leave him, thou,' said the Khalif, and turning to Mesrour, commanded him to behead Muin. So Mesrour drew his sword and smote off the Vizier's head. Then said the Khalif to Noureddin, 'Ask a boon of me.' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'I have no need of the sovereignty of Bassora: all my desire is to have the honour of serving thee and looking on thy face.' 'With all my heart,' replied the Khalif. Then he sent for Enis el Jelis and bestowed plentiful favours upon them both, assigning them a palace at Baghdad and regular allowances. Moreover, he made Noureddin one of his boon-companions, and the latter abode with him in the enjoyment of the most delectable life, till Death overtook him.





Ghanim Ben Eyoub the Slave of Love.

THERE lived once at Damascus, in the days of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, a wealthy merchant, who had a son like the moon at its full and withal sweet of speech, called Ghanim ben Eyoub, and a daughter called Fitneh, unique in her beauty and grace. Their father died and left them abundant wealth and amongst other things a hundred loads of silk and brocade and bladders of musk, on each of which was written, 'This is of the loads intended for Baghdad,' he having been about to make the journey thither, when God the Most High took him to Himself. After awhile, his son took the loads and bidding farewell to his mother and kindred and townsfolk, set out for Baghdad with a company of merchants, committing himself to God the Most High, who decreed him safety, so that he arrived without hindrance at that city. Here he hired a handsome house, which he furnished with carpets and cushions and hangings, and stored his goods therein and put up his mules and camels. Then he abode awhile, resting, whilst the merchants and notables of Baghdad came and saluted him; after which he took a parcel containing ten pieces of costly stuffs, with the prices written on them, and carried it to the bazaar, where the merchants received him with honour and made him sit down in the shop of the chief of the market, to whom he delivered the parcel of stuffs. He opened it and taking out the stuffs, sold them for him at a profit of two dinars on every one of prime cost. At this Ghanim rejoiced and went on to sell his stuffs, little by little, for a whole year. On the first day of the following year, he repaired, as usual, to the bazaar in the market-place, but found the gate shut and enquiring the reason, was told that one of the merchants was dead and that all the others had gone to wail in his funeral and was asked if he were minded to gain the favour of God by going with them. He assented and enquired where the funeral was to be held, whereupon they directed him to the place. So he made the ablution and repaired with the other merchants to the place of prayer, where they prayed over the dead, then went before the bier to the burial-place without the city and passed among the tombs till they came to the grave. Here they found that the dead man's people had pitched a tent over the tomb and brought thither lamps and candles. So they buried the dead and sat down to listen to the reading of the Koran over the tomb. Ghanim sat with them, being overcome with bashfulness and saying to himself, 'I cannot well go away till they do.' They sat listening to the recitation till nightfall, when the servants set the evening meal and sweetmeats before them and they ate till they were satisfied, then sat down again, after having washed their hands. But Ghanim was troubled for his house and property being in fear of thieves, and said to himself, 'I am a stranger here and thought to be rich, and if I pass the night abroad, the thieves will steal the money and the goods.' So he arose and left the company, having first asked leave to go about a necessary business, and following the beaten track, came to the gate of the city, but found it shut and saw none going or coming nor heard aught but the dogs barking and the wolves howling, for it was now the middle of the night. At this he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! I was in fear for my property and came back on its account, but now I find the gate shut and am become in fear for my life!' And he retraced his steps, seeking a place where he might pass the night, till he found a tomb enclosed by four walls, with a palm-tree in its midst and a gate of granite. The

gate stood open; so he entered and lay down, but sleep came not to him and fright and oppression beset him, for that he was alone among the tombs. So he rose to his feet and opening the door, looked out and saw, in the distance, a light making for the tomb from the direction of the city-gate. At this he was afraid and hastening to shut the gate, climbed up into the palm-tree and hid himself among the branches. The light came nearer and nearer, till he could see three black slaves, two carrying a chest and a third a lantern, an adze and a basket of plaster. When they came to the tomb, one of those who were carrying the chest cried out to the other, 'Hello, Sewab!' 'What ails thee, O Kafour?' said the other. 'Were we not here at nightfall,' asked the first, 'and did we not leave the gate open?' 'True,' replied Sewab. 'See,' said the other, 'it is now shut and barred.' 'How small is your wit!' broke in the bearer of the lantern, whose name was Bekhit. 'Do ye not know that the owners of the gardens use to come out of Baghdad to tend them, and when the night overtakes them, they enter this place and shut the gate, for fear the blacks like ourselves should catch them and roast them and eat them?' 'Thou art right,' replied the others; 'but, by Allah, none of us is less of wit than thou!' 'If you do not believe me,' said Bekhit, 'let us go into the tomb and I will unearth the rat for you; I doubt not but that, when he saw the light and us making for the tomb, he took refuge in the palm-tree, for fear of us.' When Ghanim heard this, he said to himself, 'O most damnable of slaves, may God not have thee in His keeping for this thy craft and quickness of wit! There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! How shall I escape from these blacks?' Then said the two bearers to him of the lantern, 'Climb over the wall and open the door to us, O Bekhit, for we are tired of carrying the chest on our shoulders; and thou shalt have one of those that we seize inside, and we will fry him for thee so featly that not a drop of his fat shall be lost.' But he said, 'I am afraid of somewhat that my little sense has suggested to me; we should do better to throw the chest over the wall; for it is our treasure.' 'If we throw it over, it will break,' replied they. And he said, 'I fear lest there be brigands within who kill four and steal their goods; for they are wont when night falls on them, to enter these places and divide their spoil.' 'O thou of little wit!' rejoined they, 'how could they get in here?' Then they set down the chest and climbing the wall, got down and opened the gate, whilst Bekhit held the light for them, after which they shut the door and sat down. Then said one of them, 'O my brothers, we are tired with walking and carrying the chest, and it is now the middle of the night, and we have no breath left to open the tomb and bury the chest: so let us rest two or three hours, then rise and do what we have to do. Meanwhile each of us shall tell how he came to be an eunuch and all that befell him from first to last, to pass away the time, whilst we rest ourselves.' 'Good,' answered the others; and Bekhit said, 'O my brothers, I will begin.' 'Say on,' replied they. So he began as follows, 'Know, O my brothers, that

Story of the Eunuch Bekhit.

I WAS brought from my native country, when I was five years old, by a slave-merchant, who sold me to one of the royal messengers. My master had a three-year-old daughter, with whom I was reared, and they used to make sport of me, letting me play with the girl and dance and sing to her, till I reached the age of twelve and she that of ten; and even then they did not forbid me from her. One day, I went in to her and found her sitting in an inner room, perfumed with essences and scented woods, and her face shone like the round of the moon on its fourteenth night, as if she had just come out of the bath that was in the house. She began to sport with me, and I with her. Now I had just reached the age of puberty, and my yard rose on end, as it were a great bolt. Then she threw me down and mounting my breast, pulled me hither and thither, till my yard became uncovered. When she saw this, and it in point, she seized it in her hand and fell to rubbing it against the lips of her kaze, outside her trousers. At this, heat stirred in me and I put my arms round her, whilst she wreathed hers about my neck and strained me to her with all her might, till, before I knew what I did, my yard thrust through her trousers, and entering her kaze, did away her maidenhead. When I saw what I had done, I fled and took refuge with one of my comrades. Presently, her mother came in to her, and seeing her in this state, was lost to the world. However, she smoothed the matter over and hid the girl's condition from her father, of the love they bore me, nor did they cease to call to me and coax me, till they took me from where I was. After two months had passed by, her mother married her to a young man, a barber, who used to shave her father, and portioned and fitted her out of her own monies, whilst her father knew nothing of what had passed. Then they took me unawares and gelded me: and when they brought her to her husband, they made me her eunuch, to go before her, wherever she went, whether to the bath or to her father's house. On the wedding-night, they slaughtered a young pigeon and sprinkled the blood on her shift; and I abode with her a long while, enjoying her beauty and grace, by way of kissing and clipping and clicketing, till she died and her husband and father and mother died also; when they seized me for the Treasury and I found my way hither, where I became your comrade. This then, O my brothers, is my story and how I came to be docked of my cullions; and peace be on you.' Then said the second eunuch, 'Know, O my brothers, that

Story of the Eunuch Kafour.

FROM the time when I was eight years old, I was wont to tell the slave-merchants one lie every year, so that they fell out with one another, till at last my master lost patience with me and carrying me down to the market, delivered me to a broker and bade him cry me for sale, saying, "Who will buy this slave with his fault?" He did so, and it was asked him, "What is his fault?" Quoth he, "He tells one lie every year." Then came up one of the merchants and said to the broker, "How much have they bidden for this slave, with his fault?" "Six hundred dirhems," replied the broker. "And twenty dirhems for thyself," said the merchant. So he brought him to the slave-dealer, who took the money, and the broker carried me to my master's house and went away, after having received his brokerage. The merchant clothed me as befitted my condition, and I bode in his service the rest of the year, until the new year came in with good omen. It was a blessed season, rich in herbage and the fruits of the earth, and the merchants began to give entertainments every day, each bearing the cost in turn, till it came to my master's turn to entertain them in a garden without the city. So he and the other merchants repaired to the garden, taking with them all that they required of food and so forth, and sat, eating and drinking and carousing, till noon, when my master, having need of something from the house, said to me, "O slave, mount the mule and go to the house and get such and such a thing from thy mistress and return quickly." I did as he bade me and started for the house, but as I drew near, I began to cry out and weep copiously, whereupon all the people of the quarter collected, great and small; and my master's wife and daughters, hearing the noise I was making, opened the door and asked me what was the matter. Quoth I, "My master and his friends were sitting beneath an old wall, and it fell on them: and when I saw what had befallen them, I mounted the mule and came hither, in haste, to tell you." When my master's wife and daughters heard this, they shrieked aloud and tore their clothes and buffeted their faces, whilst the neighbours came round them. Then my mistress overturned the furniture of the house, pell-mell, tore down the shelves, broke up the casements and the lattices and smeared the walls with mud and indigo. Presently she said to me, "Out on thee, O Kafour! Come and help me tear down these cupboards and break up these vessels and porcelain!" So I went to her and helped her break up all the shelves in the house, with everything on them, after which I went round about the roofs and every part of the house, demolishing all I could and leaving not a single piece of china or the like in the house unbroken, till I had laid waste the whole place, crying out the while, "Alas, my master!" Then my mistress sallied forth, with her face uncovered and only her kerchief on, accompanied by her sons and daughters, and said to me, "Go thou before us and show us the place where thy master lies dead under the wall, that we may take him out from the ruins and lay him on a bier and carry him to the house and give him a goodly funeral." So I went on before them, crying out, "Alas, my master!" and they after me, bareheaded, crying out, "Alas! Alas for the man!" And there was not a man nor a woman nor a boy nor an old woman in the quarter but followed us, buffeting their faces and weeping sore. On this wise, I traversed the city with them, and the folk asked what was the matter, whereupon they told them what they had heard from me, and they exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in

God!" Then said one of them, "He was a man of consideration; so let us go to the chief of the police and tell him what has happened." So they repaired to the magistrate and told him, whereupon he mounted and taking with him workmen with spades and baskets, set out for the scene of the accident, following my track, with all the people after him. I ran on before them, buffeting my face and throwing dust on my head and crying out, followed by my mistress and her children, shrieking aloud. But I outran them and reached the garden before them, and when my master saw me in this state and heard me crying out, "Alas, my mistress! Alas! Alas! Who is left to take pity on me, now that my mistress is dead? Would God I had died instead of her!" he was confounded and his colour paled. Then said he to me, "What ails thee, O Kafour? What is the matter?" "O my lord," replied I, "When thou sentest me to the house, I found that the wall of the saloon had given way and the whole of it had fallen in upon my mistress and her children." "And did not thy mistress escape?" "No, by Allah, O my master!" answered I. "Not one of them was saved, and the first to die was my mistress, thine elder daughter." "Did not my younger daughter escape?" asked he. "No," replied I; and he said, "What became of the mule I use to ride? Was she saved?" "No, by Allah," answered I; "the walls of the house and of the stable fell in on all that were in the dwelling, even to the sheep and geese and fowls, so that they all became a heap of flesh and the dogs ate them: not one of them is saved." "Not even thy master, my elder son?" asked he. "No, by Allah!" repeated I. "Not one of them was saved, and now there remains neither house nor inhabitants nor any trace of them: and as for the sheep and geese and fowls, the dogs and cats have eaten them." When my master heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and he lost command of his senses and his reason, so that he could not stand upon his feet, for he was as one taken with the rickets and his back was broken. Then he rent his clothes and plucked out his beard and casting his turban from his head, buffeted his face, till the blood streamed down, crying out, "Alas, my children! Alas, my wife! Alas, what a misfortune! To whom did there ever happen the like of what hath befallen me?" The other merchants, his companions, joined in his tears and lamentations and rent their clothes, being moved to pity of his case; and my master went out of the garden' buffeting his face and staggering like a drunken man, for stress of what had befallen him and the much beating he had given his face. As he came forth of the garden-gate, followed by the other merchants, behold, they saw a great cloud of dust and heard a great noise of crying and lamentation. They looked, and behold, it was the chief of the police with his officers and the townspeople who had come out to look on, and my master's family in front of them, weeping sore and shrieking and lamenting. The first to accost my master were his wife and children; and when he saw them, he was confounded and laughed and said to them, "How is it with you all and what befell you in the house?" When they saw him, they exclaimed, "Praised be God for thy safety!" and threw themselves upon him, and his children clung to him, crying, "Alas, our father! Praised be God for thy preservation, O our father!" Then said his wife, "Thou art well, praised be God who hath shown us thy face in safety!" And indeed she was confounded and her reason fled, when she saw him, and she said, "O my lord, how did you escape, thou and thy friends the merchants?" "And how fared it with thee in the house?" asked he. "We were all in good health and case," answered they; "nor has aught befallen us in the house, save that thy slave Kafour came to us, bareheaded, with his clothes torn and crying out, 'Alas, my master! Alas, my

master!' So we asked what was the matter, and he said, 'The wall of the garden has fallen on my master and his friends, and they are all dead.'" "By Allah," said my master, "he came to me but now, crying out, 'Alas, my mistress! Alas, her children!' and said, 'My mistress and her children are all dead.'" Then he looked round and seeing me with my torn turban hanging down my neck, shrieking and weeping violently and strewing earth on my head, cried out at me. So I came to him and he said, "Woe to thee, O pestilent slave, O whore-son knave, O accurst of race! What mischiefs hast thou wrought! But I will strip thy skin from thy flesh and cut thy flesh off thy bones!" "By Allah," replied I, "thou canst do nothing with me, for thou boughtest me with my fault, with witnesses to testify against thee that thou didst so and that thou knewest of my fault, which is that I tell one lie every year. This is but half a lie, but by the end of the year, I will tell the other half, and it will then be a whole lie." "O dog, son of a dog," exclaimed my master, "O most accursed of slaves, is this but a half lie? Indeed, it is a great calamity! Go out from me; thou art free before God!" "By Allah," rejoined I, "if thou free me, I will not free thee, till I have completed my year and told the other half lie. When that is done, take me down to the market and sell me, as thou boughtest me, to whosoever will buy me with my fault: but free me not, for I have no handicraft to get my living by: and this my demand is according to the law, as laid down by the doctors in the chapter of Manumission." Whilst we were talking, up came the people of the quarter and others, men and women, together with the chief of the police and his suite. So my master and the other merchants went up to him and told him the story and how this was but half a lie, at which the people wondered and deemed the lie an enormous one. And they cursed me and reviled me, whilst I stood laughing and saying, "How can my master kill me, when he bought me with this fault?" Then my master returned home and found his house in ruins, and it was I who had laid waste the most part of it, having destroyed things worth much money, as had also done his wife, who said to him, "It was Kafour who broke the vessels and the china." Thereupon his rage redoubled and he beat hand upon hand, exclaiming, "By Allah, never in my life did I see such a son of shame as this slave; and he says this is only half a lie! How if he had told a whole one? He would have laid waste a city or two!" Then in his rage he went to the chief of the police, who made me eat stick till I fainted: and whilst I was yet senseless, they fetched a barber, who gelded me and cauterized the parts. When I revived, I found myself an eunuch, and my master said to me, "Even as thou hast made my heart bleed for the most precious things I had, so will I grieve thy heart for that of thy members by which thou settest most store." Then he took me and sold me at a profit, for that I was become an eunuch, and I ceased not to make trouble, wherever I came, and was shifted from Amir to Amir and notable to notable, being bought and sold, till I entered the palace of the Commander of the Faithful, and now my spirit is broken and I have abjured my tricks, having lost my manhood.'

When the others heard his story, they laughed and said, 'Verily, thou art dung, the son of dung! Thou liedst most abominably!' Then said they to the third slave, 'Tell us thy story.' 'O my cousins,' replied he, 'all that ye have said is idle: I will tell you how I came to lose my cullions, and indeed, I deserved more than this, for I swived my mistress and my master's son: but my story is a long one and this is no time to tell it, for the dawn is near, and if the day surprise us with this chest yet unburied, we shall be blown upon and lose our lives. So let us fall to work at once, and when we get back to

the palace, I will tell you my story and how I became an eunuch.' So they set down the lantern and dug a hole between four tombs, the length and breadth of the chest, Kafour plying the spade and Sewab clearing away the earth by basketsful, till they had reached a depth of half a fathom, when they laid the chest in the hole and threw back the earth over it: then went out and shutting the door, disappeared from Ghanim's sight. When he was sure that they were indeed gone and that he was alone in the place, his heart was concerned to know what was in the chest and he said to himself; 'I wonder what was in the chest!' However, he waited till break of day, when he came down from the palm-tree and scraped away the earth with his hands, till he laid bare the chest and lifted it out of the hole. Then he took a large stone and hammered at the lock, till he broke it and raising the cover, beheld a beautiful young lady, richly dressed and decked with jewels of gold and necklaces of precious stones, worth a kingdom, no money could pay their price. She was asleep and her breath rose and fell, as if she had been drugged. When Ghanim saw her, he knew that some one had plotted against her and drugged her; so he pulled her out of the chest and laid her on the ground on her back. As soon as she scented the breeze and the air entered her nostrils and lungs, she sneezed and choked and coughed, when there fell from her mouth a pastille of Cretan henbane, enough to make an elephant sleep from night to night, if he but smelt it. Then she opened her eyes and looking round, exclaimed in a sweet and melodious voice, 'Out on thee, O breeze! There is in thee neither drink for the thirsty nor solace for him whose thirst is quenched! Where is Zehr el Bustan?' But no one answered her; so she turned and cried out, 'Ho, Sebiheh, Shejeret ed Durr, Nour el Huda, Nejmet es Subh, Shehweh, Nuzheh, Hulweh, Zerifeh! Out on ye, speak!' But no one answered her; and she looked about her and said, 'Woe is me! they have buried me among the tombs! O Thou who knowest what is in the breasts and who wilt requite at the Day of Resurrection, who hath brought me out from among the screens and curtains of the harem and laid me between four tombs?' All this while Ghanim was standing by: then he said to her, 'O my lady, here are neither screens nor curtains nor palaces; only thy bond slave Ghanim ben Eyoub, whom He who knoweth the hidden things hath brought hither, that he night save thee from these perils and accomplish for thee all that thou desirest.' And he was silent. When she saw how the case stood, she exclaimed, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!' Then she put her hands to her face and turning to Ghanim, said in a sweet voice, 'O blessed youth, who brought me hither! See, I am now come to myself.' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'three black eunuchs came hither, bearing this chest;' and told her all that had happened and how his being belated had proved the means of her preservation from death by suffocation. Then he asked her who she was and what was her story. 'O youth,' said she, 'praised be God who hath thrown me into the hands of the like of thee! But now put me back into the chest and go out into the road and hire the first muleteer or horse-letter thou meetest, to carry it to thy house. When I am there, all will be well and I will tell thee my story and who am I, and good shall betide thee on my account.' At this he rejoiced and went out into the road. It was now broad day and the folk began to go about the ways: so he hired a muleteer and bringing him to the tomb, lifted up the chest, in which he had already replaced the young lady, and set it on the mule. Then he fared homeward, rejoicing, for that she was a damsel worth ten thousand dinars and adorned with jewels and apparel of great value, and love for her

had fallen on his heart. As soon as he came to the house, he carried in the chest and opening it, took out the young lady, who looked about her, and seeing that the place was handsome, spread with carpets and decked with gay colours, and noting the stuffs tied up and the bales of goods and what not, knew that he was a considerable merchant and a man of wealth. So she uncovered her face and looking at him, saw that he was a handsome young man and loved him. Then said she to him, 'O my lord, bring us something to eat.' 'On my head and eyes,' replied he, and going to the market, bought a roasted lamb, a dish of sweetmeats, dried fruits and wax candles, besides wine and drinking gear and perfumes. With these he returned to the house, and when the damsel saw him, she laughed and kissed and embraced him. Then she fell to caressing him, so that love for her redoubled on him and got the mastery of his heart. They ate and drank, each in love with the other, for indeed they were alike in age and beauty, till nightfall, when Ghanim rose and lit the lamps and candles, till the place blazed with light; after which he brought the wine-service and set on the banquet. Then they sat down again and began to fill and give each other to drink; and they toyed and laughed and recited verses, whilst joy grew on them and each was engrossed with love of the other, glory be to Him, who uniteth hearts! They ceased not to carouse thus till near upon daybreak, when drowsiness overcame them and they slept where they were till the morning. Then Ghanim arose and going to the market, bought all that they required in the way of meat and drink and vegetables and what not, with which he returned to the house; and they both sat down and ate till they were satisfied, when he set on wine. They drank and toyed with each other, till their cheeks flushed and their eyes sparkled and Ghanim's soul yearned to kiss the girl and lie with her. So he said to her, 'O my lady, grant me a kiss of thy mouth; maybe it will quench the fire of my heart.' 'O Ghanim,' replied she, 'wait till I am drunk: then steal a kiss from me, so that I may not know thou hast kissed me.' Then she rose and taking off her upper clothes, sat in a shift of fine linen and a silken kerchief. At this, desire stirred in Ghanim and he said to her, 'O my mistress, wilt thou not vouchsafe me what I asked of thee!' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'this may not be, for there is a stubborn saying written on the ribbon of my trousers.' Thereupon Ghanim's heart sank and passion grew on him the more that what he sought was hard to get; and he recited the following verses:

I sought of her who caused my pain A kiss to ease me of my woe.
"No, no!" she answered; "hope it not!" And I, "Yes, yes! It shall be so!"
Then said she, smiling, "Take it then, With my consent, before I know."
And I, "By force!" "Not so," said she: "I freely it on thee bestow."
So do not question what befell, But seek God's grace and ask no mo;
Think what thou wilt of us; for love Is with suspect made sweet, I trow.
Nor do I reck if, after this, Avowed or secret be the foe.

Then love increased on him, and the fires were loosed in his heart, while she defended herself from him, saying, 'I can never be thine.' They ceased not to make love and carouse, whilst Ghanim was drowned in the sea of passion and distraction and she redoubled in cruelty and coyness, till the night brought in the darkness and let fall on them the skirts of sleep, when Ghanim rose and lit the lamps and candles and renewed the banquet and the flowers; then took her feet and kissed them, and finding them like fresh cream, pressed his face on them and said to her, 'O my lady, have pity on the

captive of thy love and the slain of thine eyes; for indeed I were whole of heart but for thee!' And he wept awhile. 'O my lord and light of my eyes,' replied she, 'by Allah, I love thee and trust in thee, but I know that I cannot be thine.' 'And what is there to hinder?' asked he. Quoth she, 'Tonight, I will tell thee my story, that thou mayst accept my excuse.' Then she threw herself upon him and twining her arms about his neck, kissed him and wheedled him, promising him her favours; and they continued to toy and laugh till love got complete possession of them. They abode thus for a whole month, sleeping nightly on one couch, but whenever he sought to enjoy her, she put him off, whilst mutual love increased upon them, till they could hardly abstain from one another. One night as they lay, side by side, both heated with wine, he put his hand to her breast and stroked it, then passed it down over her stomach to her navel. She awoke and sitting up, put her hand to her trousers and finding them fast, fell asleep again. Presently, he put out his hand a second time and stroked her and sliding down to the ribbon of her trousers, began to pull at it, whereupon she awoke and sat up. Ghanim also sat up beside her and she said to him, 'What dost thou want?' 'I want to lie with thee,' answered he, 'and that we may deal frankly one with the other.' Quoth she, 'I must now expound my case to thee, that thou mayst know my condition and my secret and that my excuse may be manifest to thee.' 'It is well,' replied he. Then she opened the skirt of her shift, and taking up the ribbon of her trousers, said to him, 'O my lord, read what is on this ribbon.' So he took it and saw, wrought in letters of gold, the following words, 'I am thine, and thou art mine, O descendant of the Prophet's Uncle!' When he read this, he dropped his hand and said to her, 'Tell me who thou art.' 'It is well,' answered she; 'know that I am one of the favourites of the Commander of the Faithful and my name is Cout el Culoub. I was reared in his palace, and when I grew up, he looked on me, and noting my qualities and the beauty and grace that God had bestowed on me, conceived a great love for me; so he took me and assigned me a separate lodging and gave me ten female slaves to wait on me and all this jewellery thou seest on me. One day he went on a journey to one of his provinces and the Lady Zubeideh came to one of my waiting-women and said to her, "I have somewhat to ask of thee." "What is it, O my lady?" asked she. "When thy mistress Cout el Culoub is asleep," said Zubeideh, "put this piece of henbane up her nostrils or in her drink, and thou shalt have of me as much money as will content thee." "With all my heart," replied the woman, and took the henbane, being glad because of the money and because she had aforetime been in Zubeideh's service. So she put the henbane in my drink, and when it was night, I drank, and the drug had no sooner reached my stomach than I fell to the ground, with my head touching my feet, and knew not but that I was in another world. When Zubeideh saw that her plot had succeeded, she put me in this chest and summoning the slaves, bribed them and the doorkeepers, and sent the former to do with me as thou sawest. So my delivery was at thy hands, and thou broughtest me hither and hast used me with the utmost kindness. This is my story, and I know not what is come of the Khalif in my absence. Know then my condition, and divulge not my affair.' When Ghanim heard her words and knew that she was the favourite of the Commander of the Faithful, he drew back, being smitten with fear of the Khalif, and sat apart from her in one of the corners of the place, blaming himself and brooding over his case and schooling his heart to patience, bewildered for love of one who might not be his. Then he wept, for excess of longing, and bemoaned the

injustice and hostility of Fortune (Glory be to Him who occupies hearts with love!) reciting the following verses:

The heart of the lover's racked with weariness and care,
For his reason ravished is for one who is passing fair.
It was asked me, "What is the taste of love?" I answer made,
"Love is sweet water, wherein are torment and despair."

Thereupon Cout el Culoub arose and pressed him to her bosom and kissed him, for love of him mastered her heart, so that she discovered to him her secret and the passion that possessed her and throwing her arms about his neck, embraced him; but he held off from her, for fear of the Khalif. Then they talked awhile (and indeed they were both drowned in the sea of mutual love) till day, when Ghanim rose and going to the market as usual, took what was needful and returned home. He found her in tears; but when she saw him, she ceased weeping and smiled and said, 'Thou hast made me desolate, O beloved of my heart! By Allah, the hour that thou hast been absent from me has been to me as a year! I have let thee see how it is with me for the excess of my passion for thee; so come now, leave what has been and take thy will of me.' 'God forbid that this should be!' replied he. 'How shall the dog sit in the lion's place? Verily, that which is the master's is forbidden to the slave.' And he withdrew from her and sat down on a corner of the mat. Her passion increased with his refusal; so she sat down beside him and caroused and sported with him, till they were both warm with wine, and she was mad for dishonour with him. Then she sang the following verses:

The heart of the slave of passion is all but broken in twain:
How long shall this rigour last and this coldness of disdain?
O thou that turnest away from me, in default of sin,
Rather to turn towards than away should gazelles be fain!
Aversion and distance eternal and rigour and disdain;
How can youthful lover these hardships all sustain?

Thereupon Ghanim wept and she wept because he did, and they ceased not to drink till nightfall, when he rose and spread two beds, each in its place. 'For whom is the second bed?' asked she. 'One is for me and the other for thee,' answered he. 'Henceforth we must lie apart, for that which is the master's is forbidden to the slave.' 'O my lord,' exclaimed she, 'let us leave this, for all things happen according to fate and predestination.' But he refused, and the fire was loosed in her heart and she clung to him and said, 'By Allah, we will not sleep but together!' 'God forbid!' answered he, and he prevailed against her and lay apart till the morning, whilst love and longing and distraction redoubled on her. They abode thus three whole months, and whenever she made advances to him, he held aloof from her, saying, 'Whatever belongs to the master is forbidden to the slave.' Then, when this was prolonged upon her and affliction and anguish grew on her, for the weariness of her heart she recited the following verses:

O marvel of beauty, how long this disdain?
And who hath provoked thee to turn from my pain?
All manner of elegance in thee is found
And all fashions of fairness thy form doth contain.

The hearts of all mortals thou stir'st with desire
And on everyone's lids thou mak'st sleeplessness reign.
I know that the branch has been plucked before thee;
So, Ocapparis-branch, thou dost wrong, it is plain.
I used erst to capture myself the wild deer.
How comes it the chase doth the hunter enchain?
But the strangest of all that is told of thee is,
I was snared, and thou heard'st not the voice of my pain.
Yet grant not my prayer. If I'm jealous for thee
Of thyself how much more of myself? Nor again,
As long as life lasteth in me, will I say,
"O marvel of beauty, how long this disdain?"'

Meanwhile, the Lady Zubeideh, when, in the absence of the Khalif, she had done this thing with Cout el Culoub, abode perplexed and said to herself, 'What answer shall I make the Khalif, when he comes back and asks for her?' Then she called an old woman, who was with her, and discovered her secret to her, saying, 'What shall I do, seeing that Cout el Culoub is no more?' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'the time of the Khalif's return is at hand; but do thou send for a carpenter and bid him make a figure of wood in the shape of a corpse. We will dig a grave for it and bury it in the middle of the palace: then do thou build an oratory over it and set therein lighted lamps and candles and command all in the palace to put on mourning. Moreover, do thou bid thy slave-girls and eunuchs, as soon as they know of the Khalif's approach, spread straw in the vestibules, and when the Khalif enters and asks what is the matter, let them say, "Cout el Culoub is dead, may God abundantly replace her to thee! and for the honour in which she was held of our mistress, she hath buried her in her own palace." When the Khalif hears this, it will be grievous to him and he will weep: then will he cause recitations of the Koran to be made over her and will watch by night over her tomb. If he should say to himself, "My cousin Zubeideh has compassed the death of Cout el Culoub out of jealousy," or if love-longing should master him and he order to take her forth of the tomb, fear thou not; for when they dig and come to the figure, he will see it as it were a human body, shrouded in costly grave-clothes; and if he desire to take off the swathings, do thou forbid him and say to him, "It is unlawful to look upon her nakedness." The fear of the world to come will restrain him and he will believe that she is dead and will cause the image to be restored to its place and thank thee for what thou hast done: and so, if it please God, thou shalt be delivered from this strait.' Her advice commended itself to Zubeideh, who bestowed on her a dress of honour and a sum of money, bidding her do as she had said. So she at once ordered a carpenter to make the aforesaid figure, and as soon as it was finished, she brought it to Zubeideh, who shrouded it and buried it and built a pavilion over it, in which she set lighted lamps and candles and spread carpets round the tomb. Moreover, she put on black and ordered her household to do the same, and the news was spread abroad in the palace that Cout el Culoub was dead. After awhile, the Khalif returned from his journey and entered the palace, thinking only of Cout el Culoub. He saw all the pages and damsels and eunuchs in mourning, at which his heart quaked; and when he went in to the Lady Zubeideh, he found her also clad in black. So he asked the cause of this

and was told that Cout el Culoub was dead, whereupon he fell down in a swoon. As soon as he came to himself, he enquired of her tomb, and Zubeideh said to him, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that for the honour in which I held her, I have buried her in my own palace.' Then he repaired to her tomb, in his travelling dress, and found the place spread with carpets and lit with lamps. When he saw this, he thanked Zubeldeh for what she had done and abode perplexed, halting between belief and distrust, till at last suspicion got the better of him and he ordered the grave to be opened and the body exhumed. When he saw the figure and would have taken off the swathings to look upon the body, the fear of God the Most High restrained him, and the old woman (taking advantage of his hesitation) said, 'Restore her to her place.' Then he sent at once for readers and doctors of the Law and caused recitations of the Koran to be made over her grave and sat by it, weeping, till he lost his senses. He continued to frequent the tomb for a whole month, at the end of which time, he chanced one day, after the Divan had broken up and his Amirs and Viziers had gone away to their houses, to enter the harem, where he laid down and slept awhile, whilst one damsel sat at his head, fanning him, and another at his feet, rubbing them. Presently he awoke and opening his eyes, shut them again and heard the damsel at his head say to her at his feet, 'Hist, Kheizuran!' 'Well, Kezib el Ban?' answered the other. 'Verily,' said the first, 'our lord knows not what has passed and watches over a tomb in which there is only a carved wooden figure, of the carpenter's handiwork.' 'Then what is become of Cout el Culoub?' enquired the other. 'Know,' replied Kezib el Ban. 'that the Lady Zubeideh bribed one of her waiting-women to drug her with henbane and laying her in a chest, commanded Sewab and Kafour to take it and bury it among the tombs.' Quoth Kheizuran, 'And is not the lady Cout el Culoub dead?' 'No,' replied the other; 'God preserve her youth from death! but I have heard the Lady Zubeideh say that she is with a young merchant of Damascus, by name Ghanim ben Eyoub, and has been with him these four months, whilst this our lord is weeping and watching anights over an empty tomb.' When the Khalif heard the girls' talk and knew that the tomb was a trick and a fraud and that Cout el Culoub had been with Ghanim ben Eyoub for four months, he was sore enraged and rising up, summoned his officers of state, whereupon the Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide came up and kissed the earth before him, and the Khalif said to him, 'O Jaafer, take a company of men with thee and fall upon the house of Ghanim ben Eyoub and bring him to me, with my slave-girl Cout el Culoub, for I will assuredly punish him!' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer, and setting out with his guards and the chief of the police, repaired to Ghanim's house. Now the latter had brought home a pot of meat and was about to put forth his hand to eat of it, he and Cout d Culoub, when the damsel, happening to look out, found the house beset on all sides by the Vizier and the chief of the police and their officers and attendants, with drawn swords in their hands, encompassing the place, as the white of the eye encompasses the black. At this sight, she knew that news of her had reached the Khalif, her master, and made sure of ruin, and her colour paled and her beauty changed. Then she turned to Ghanim and said to him, 'O my love, fly for thy life!' 'What shall I do?' said he; 'and whither shall I go, seeing that my substance and fortune are in this house?' 'Delay not,' answered she, 'lest thou lose both life and goods.' 'O my beloved and light of my eyes,' rejoined he, 'how shall I do to get away, when they have surrounded the house?' 'Fear not,' said she: and taking off his clothes, made him put

on old and ragged ones, after which she took the empty pot and put in it a piece of bread and a saucer of meat, and placing the whole in a basket, set it on his head and said, 'Go out in this guise and fear not for me, for I know how to deal with the Khalif.' So he went out amongst them, carrying the basket and its contents, and God covered him with His protection and he escaped the snares and perils that beset him, thanks to the purity of his intent. Meanwhile, Jaafer alighted and entering the house, saw Cout el Culoub, who had dressed and decked herself after the richest fashion and filled a chest with gold and jewellery and precious stones and rarities and what else was light of carriage and great of value. When she saw Jaafer, she rose and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O my lord, the pen hath written from of old that which God hath decreed.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' rejoined Jaafer, 'I am commanded to seize Ghanim ben Eyoub.' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'he made ready merchandise and set out therewith for Damascus and I know nothing more of him; but I desire thee to take charge of this chest and deliver it to me in the palace of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'I hear and obey,' said Jaafer, and bade his men carry the chest to the palace, together with Cout el Culoub, commanding them to use her with honour and consideration. And they did his bidding, after they had plundered Ghanim's house. Then Jaafer went in to the Khalif and told him what had happened, and he bade lodge Cout el Culoub in a dark chamber and appointed an old woman to serve her, thinking no otherwise than that Ghanim had certainly debauched her and lain with her. Then he wrote a letter to the Amir Mohammed ben Suleiman ez Zeini, the viceroy of Damascus, to the following purport, 'As soon as this letter reaches thee, lay hands on Ghanim ben Eyoub and send him to me.' When the letter came to the viceroy, he kissed it and laid it on his head, then caused proclamation to be made in the streets of Damascus, 'Whoso is minded to plunder, let him betake himself to the house of Ghanim ben Eyoub!' So they repaired to the house, where they found that Ghanim's mother and sister had made him a tomb midmost the house and sat by it, weeping for him, whereupon they seized them, without telling them the cause, and carried them before the Sultan, after having plundered the house. The viceroy questioned them of Ghanim, and they replied, 'This year or more we have had no news of him.' So they restored them to their place.

Meanwhile Ghanim, finding himself despoiled of his wealth and considering his case, wept till his heart was well-nigh broken. Then he fared on at random, till the end of the day, and hunger was sore on him and he was worn out with fatigue. Coming to a village, he entered a mosque, where he sat down on a mat, leaning his back against the wall, and presently sank to the ground, in extremity for hunger and weariness, and lay there till morning, his heart fluttering for want of food. By reason of his sweating, vermin coursed over his skin, his breath grew fetid and he became in sorry case. When the people of the town came to pray the morning-prayer, they found him lying there, sick and weak with hunger, yet showing signs of gentle breeding. As soon as they had done their devotions, they came up to him and finding him cold and starving, threw over him an old mantle with ragged sleeves and said to him, 'O stranger, whence art thou and what ails thee?' He opened his eyes and wept, but made them no answer; whereupon, one of them, seeing that he was starving, brought him a saucerful of honey and two cakes of bread. So he ate a little and they sat with him till sunrise, when they went about their occupations. He abode with them in this state for a month, whilst sickness and infirmity increased upon him, and they wept for him and pitying his

condition, took counsel together of his case and agreed to send him to the hospital at Baghdad. Meanwhile, there came into the mosque two beggar women, who were none other than Ghanim's mother and sister; and when he saw them, he gave them the bread that was at his head and they slept by his side that night, but he knew them not. Next day the villagers fetched a camel and said to the driver, 'Put this sick man on thy camel and carry him to Baghdad and set him down at the door of the hospital, so haply he may be medicined and recover his health, and God will reward thee.' 'I hear and obey,' said the camel-driver. So they brought Ghanim, who was asleep, out of the mosque and laid him, mat and all, on the back of the camel; and his mother and sister came out with the rest of the people to look on him, but knew him not. However, after considering him, they said, 'Verily, he favours our Ghanim! Can this sick man be he?' Presently, he awoke and finding himself bound with ropes on the back of a camel, began to weep and complain, and the people of the village saw his mother and sister weeping over him, though they knew him not. Then they set out for Baghdad, whither the camel-driver forewent them and setting Ghanim down at the door of the hospital, went away. He lay there till morning, and when the people began to go about the ways, they saw him and stood gazing on him, for indeed he was become as thin as a skewer, till the syndic of the market came up and drove them away, saying, 'I will gain Paradise through this poor fellow; for if they take him into the hospital, they will kill him in one day.' Then he made his servants carry him to his own house, where he spread him a new bed, with a new pillow, and said to his wife, 'Tend him faithfully.' 'Good,' answered she; 'on my head be it!' Then she tucked up her sleeves and heating some water, washed his hands and feet and body, after which she clothed him in a gown belonging to one of her slave-girls and gave him a cup of wine to drink and sprinkled rose-water over him. So he revived and moaned, as he thought of his beloved Cout el Culoub! and sorrows were sore upon him.

Meanwhile, Cout el Culoub abode in duresse fourscore days, at the end of which time, the Khalif chancing one day to pass the place in which she was, heard her repeating verses and saying, 'O my beloved, O Ghanim, how great is thy goodness and how chaste is thy nature! Thou didst good to him who hath injured thee, thou guardedst his honour who hath violated thine, and didst protect the harem of him who hath despoiled thee and thine! But thou wilt surely stand, with the Commander of the Faithful, before the Just Judge and be justified of him on the day when the judge shall be the Lord of all (to whom belong might and majesty) and the witnesses the angels!' When the Khalif heard her complaint, he knew that she had been wrongfully entreated and returning to his palace sent Mesrour the eunuch for her. She came before him, with bowed head, tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, and he said to her, 'O Cout el Culoub, I find thou taxest me with injustice and tyranny and avouchest that I have wronged him who did me good. Who is this that hath guarded my honour and whose honour I have violated, and who hath protected my harem, whilst I have enslaved his?' 'Ghanim ben Eyoub,' replied she; 'for by thy munificence, O Commander of the Faithful, he never approached me by way of lewdness nor with evil intent!' Then said the Khalif, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Ask what thou wilt of me, O Cout el Culoub, and it shall be granted to thee.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said she, 'I ask of thee my beloved Ghanim ben Eyoub.' The Khalif granted her prayer, and she said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, if I bring him to thee, wilt thou bestow me

on him?' 'If he come,' replied the Khalif, 'I will bestow thee on him, the gift of a generous man who does not go back on his giving.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said she, 'suffer me to go in quest of him: it may be God will unite me with him.' 'Do what seemeth good to thee,' answered he. So she rejoiced and taking with her a thousand dinars, went out and visited the elders of the various religious orders and gave alms for Ghanim's sake. Next day she went to the merchants' bazaar and told the chief of the market what she sought and gave him money, saying, 'Bestow this in alms on strangers.' The following week she took other thousand dinars and going to the market of the goldsmiths and jewellers, called the syndic and gave him the money, saying, 'Bestow this in alms on strangers.' The syndic, who was none other than Ghanim's benefactor, looked at her and said, 'O my lady, wilt thou go to my house and look upon a strange youth I have there and see how goodly and elegant he is?' (Now this stranger was Ghanim, but the syndic had no knowledge of him and thought him to be some unfortunate debtor, who had been despoiled of his property, or a lover parted from his beloved.) When she heard his words, her heart fluttered and her bowels yearned, and she said to him, 'Send with me some one who shall bring me to thy house.' So he sent a little boy, who led her thither and she thanked him for this. When she reached the house, she went in and saluted the syndic's wife, who rose and kissed the ground before her, knowing her. Then said Cout el Culoub, 'Where is the sick man who is with thee?' 'O my lady,' replied she, weeping, 'here he is, lying on this bed. By Allah, he is a man of condition and bears traces of gentle breeding!' So Cout el Culoub turned and looked at him, but he was as if disguised in her eyes, being worn and wasted till he was become as thin as a skewer, so that his case was doubtful to her and she was not certain that it was he. Nevertheless, she was moved to compassion for him and wept, saying, 'Verily, strangers are unhappy, though they be princes in their own land!' And his case was grievous to her and her heart ached for him, though she knew him not to be Ghanim. Then she appointed him wine and medicines and sat by his head awhile, after which she mounted and returned to her palace and continued to make the round of the bazaars in search of Ghanim.

Meanwhile Ghanim's mother and sister arrived at Baghdad and fell in with the charitable syndic, who carried them to Cout el Culoub and said to her, 'O princess of benevolent ladies, there be come to our city this day a woman and her daughter, who are fair of face and the marks of gentle breeding and fortune are manifest upon them, though they are clad in hair garments and have each a wallet hanging to her neck; and they are tearful-eyed and sorrowful-hearted. So I have brought them to thee, that thou mayest shelter them and rescue them from beggary, for they are not fit to ask alms, and if God will, we shall enter Paradise through them.' 'O my lord,' exclaimed she, 'thou makest me long to see them! Where are they? Bring them to me.' So he bade the eunuch bring them in; and when she looked on them and saw that they were both possessed of beauty, she wept for them and said, 'By Allah, they are people of condition and show signs of former fortune.' 'O my lady,' said the syndic's wife, 'we love the poor and destitute, because of the recompense that God hath promised to such as succour them: as for these, belike the oppressors have done them violence and robbed them of their fortune and laid waste their dwelling-place.' Then Ghanim's mother and sister wept sore, recalling their former prosperity and contrasting it with their present destitute and miserable condition and thinking of Ghanim, whilst Cout

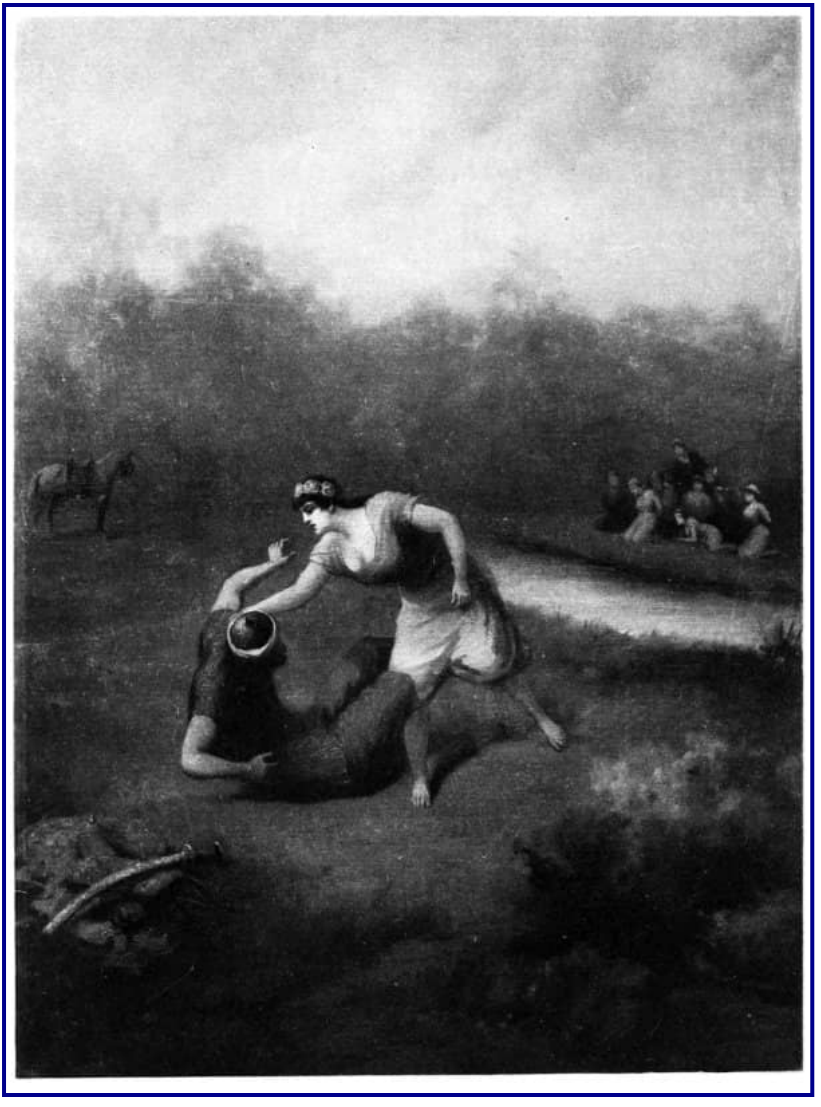
el Culoub wept because they did. And they exclaimed, 'We beseech God to reunite us with him whom we desire, and he is none other than our son Ghanim ben Eyoub!' When Cout el Culoub heard this, she knew them to be the mother and sister of her beloved and wept till she lost her senses. When she revived, she turned to them and said, 'Have no care and grieve not, for this day is the first of your prosperity and the last of your adversity.' Then she bade the syndic take them to his own house and let his wife carry them to the bath and clothe them handsomely. And she charged him to take care of them and treat them with all honour, and gave him a sum of money. Next day, she mounted and riding to his house, went in to his wife, who rose and kissed her hands and thanked her for her goodness. There she saw Ghanim's mother and sister, whom the syndic's wife had taken to the bath and clothed afresh, so that the traces of their former condition were now plainly apparent. She sat awhile, conversing with them, after which she enquired for the sick youth, and the syndic's wife replied, 'He is in the same state.' Then said Cout el Culoub, 'Come, let us go and visit him.' So they all went into the room where he lay and sat down by him. Presently, Ghanim heard them mention the name of Cout el Culoub, whereupon his life came back to him, wasted and shrunken as he was, and he raised his head from the pillow and cried out, 'O Cout el Culoub!' 'Yes, O friend!' answered she. 'Draw near to me,' said he. So she looked at him earnestly and knew him and said to him, 'Surely thou art Ghanim ben Eyoub?' 'I am indeed he,' replied he. At this, she fell down in a swoon, and when Ghanim's mother and sister heard their words, they both cried out, 'O joy!' and swooned away. When they recovered, Cout el Culoub exclaimed, 'Praised be God who hath brought us together again and hath reunited thee with thy mother and sister!' Then she told him all that had befallen her with the Khalif and said, 'I have made known the truth to the Commander of the Faithful, who believed me and approved of thee; and now he wishes to see thee.' Then she told him how the Khalif had bestowed her on him, at which he was beyond measure rejoiced, and she returned to the palace at once, charging them not to stir till she came back. There she opened the chest that she had brought from Ghanim's house, and taking out some of the money, carried it to the syndic and bade him buy them each four suits of the best stuffs and twenty handkerchiefs and what else they needed; after which she carried them all three to the bath and commanded to wash them and made ready for them broths and galingale and apple-water against their coming out. When they left the bath, they put on new clothes, and she abode with them three days, feeding them with fowls and broths and sherbet of sugar-candy, till their strength returned to them. After this, she carried them to the bath a second time, and when they came out and had changed their clothes, she took them back to the syndic's house and left them there, whilst she returned to the palace and craving an audience of the Khalif, told him the whole story and how her lord Ghanim and his mother and sister were now in Baghdad. When the Khalif heard this, he turned to his attendants and said, 'Bring hither to me Ghanim.' So Jaafer went to fetch him: but Cout el Culoub forewent him to the syndic's house and told Ghanim that the Khalif had sent for him and enjoined him to eloquence and self-possession and pleasant speech. Then she clad him in a rich habit and gave him much money, bidding him be lavish of largesse to the household of the Khalif, when he went in to him. Presently, Jaafer arrived, riding on his Nubian mule, and Ghanim met him and kissed the ground before him, wishing him long life. Now was the star of his good

fortune risen and shone, and Jaafer took him and brought him to the Khalif. When he entered, he looked at the viziers and amirs and chamberlains and deputies and grandees and captains, Turks and Medes and Arabs and Persians, and then at the Khalif. Then he made sweet his speech and his eloquence and bowing his head, spoke the following verses:

Long life unto a King, the greatest of the great,
Still following on good works and bounties without date!
Glowering with high resolves, a fountain of largesse,
For ever full; 'tis said, of fire and flood and fate,
That they none else would have for monarch of the world,
For sovran of the time and King in Kisra's gate.
Kings, salutation-wise, upon his threshold's earth,
For his acceptance lay the jewels of their state;
And when their eyes behold the glory of his might,
Upon the earth, in awe, themselves they do prostrate.
This humbleness it is that profits them with thee
And wins them wealth and power and rank and high estate.
Upon old Saturn's heights pitch thy pavilion,
Since for thy countless hosts the world is grown too strait,
And teach the stars to know thine own magnificence,
In kindness to the prince who rules the starry state.
May God with His consent for ever favour thee!
For steadfastness of soul and sense upon thee wait:
Thy justice overspreads the surface of the earth,
Till far and near for it their difference abate.

The Khalif was charmed with his eloquence and the sweetness of his speech and said to him, 'Draw near to me.' So he drew near and the Khalif said, 'Tell me thy story and expound to me thy case.' So Ghanim sat down and related to him all that had befallen him, from beginning to end. The Khalif was assured that he spoke the truth; so he invested him with a dress of honour and took him into favour. Then he said to him, 'Acquit me of the wrong I have done thee.' And Ghanim did so, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the slave and all that is his belong to his lord.' The Khalif was pleased with this and bade set apart a palace for Ghanim, on whom he bestowed great store of gifts and assigned him bountiful stipends and allowances, sending his mother and sister to live with him; after which, hearing that his sister Fitneh was indeed a seduction for beauty, he demanded her in marriage of Ghanim, who replied, 'She is thy handmaid and I am thy servant.' The Khalif thanked him and gave him a hundred thousand dinars; then summoned the Cadi and the witnesses, who drew up the contracts of marriage between the Khalif and Fitneh on the one hand and Ghanim and Cout el Culoub on the other; and the two marriages were consummated in one and the same night. On the morrow, the Khalif ordered the history of Ghanim to be recorded and laid up in the royal treasury, that those who came after him might read it and wonder at the dealings of destiny and put their trust in Him who created the night and the day.

VOLUME II.



The History of King Omar Ben Ennuman and His Sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan.

THERE reigned once in the City of Peace, (Baghdad), before the Khalifate of Abdulmelik ben Merwan, a king called Omar ben Ennuman, who was of the mighty giants and had subdued the kings of Persia and the Emperors of the East, for none could warm himself at his fire nor cope with him in battle, and when he was angry, there came sparks out of his nostrils. He had gotten him the dominion over all countries, and God had subjected unto him all creatures; his commands were obeyed in all the great cities and his armies penetrated the most distant lands: the East and West came under his rule, with the regions between them, Hind and Sind and China and Hejaz and Yemen and the islands of India and China, Syria and Mesopotamia and the land of the blacks and the islands of the ocean and all the famous rivers of the earth, Jaxartes and Bactrus, Nile and Euphrates. He sent his ambassadors to the farthest parts of the earth, to fetch him true report, and they returned with tidings of justice and peace, bringing him assurance of loyalty and obedience and invocations of blessings on his head; for he was a right noble king and there came to him gifts and tribute from all parts of the world. He had a son called Sherkan, who was one of the prodigies of the age and the likest of all men to his father, who loved him with an exceeding love and had appointed him to be king after him. The prince grew up till he reached man's estate and was twenty years old, and God subjected all men to him, for he was gifted with great might and prowess in battle, humbling the champions and destroying all who made head against him. So, before long, this Sherkan became famous in all quarters of the world and his father rejoiced in him: and his might waxed, till he passed all bounds and magnified himself, taking by storm the citadels and strong places.

Now King Omar had four lawful wives, but God had vouchsafed him no son by them, except Sherkan, whom he had gotten of one of them, and the rest were barren. Moreover he had three hundred and threescore concubines, after the number of the days of the Coptic year, who were of all nations, and he had lodged them all within his palace. For he had built twelve pavilions, after the number of the months of the year, in each thirty chambers, and appointed to each of his concubines a night, which he lay with her and came not to her again for a full year. As providence would have it, one of them conceived and her pregnancy was made known, whereupon the King rejoiced with an exceeding joy, saying, "Mayhap it will be a son, in which case all my offspring will be males." Then he recorded the date of her conception and made much of her. But when the news came to Sherkan, he was troubled and it was grievous to him, for he said, "Verily, there cometh one who shall dispute the kingdom with me." So he said to himself, "If this damsel bear a male child, I will kill it." But he kept this his intent secret in his heart. Now the damsel in question was a Greek girl, by name Sufiyeh, whom the King of Roum, lord of Caesarea, had sent to King Omar as a present, together with great store of rarities. She was the fairest of face and most graceful of all his women and the most careful of his honour and was gifted with abounding wit and surpassing loveliness. She had served the King on the night of his lying with her,

saying to him, "O King, I desire of the God of the heavens that He grant thee of me a male child, so I may rear him well and do my utmost endeavour to educate him and preserve him from harm." And her words pleased the King. She passed the time of her pregnancy in devout exercises, praying fervently to God to grant her a goodly male child and make his birth easy to her, till her months were accomplished and she sat down on the stool of delivery. Now the King had given an eunuch charge to let him know if the child she should bring forth were male or female; and in like manner his son Sherkan had sent one to bring him news of this. In due time, Sufiyeh was delivered of a child, which the midwives took and found to be a girl with a face more radiant than the moon. So they announced this to the bystanders, whereupon the eunuch carried the news to the King and Sherkan's messenger did the like with his master, who rejoiced with exceeding joy; but after these two had departed, Sufiyeh said to the midwives, "Wait with me awhile, for I feel there is yet somewhat in my entrails." Then she moaned and the pains of labour took her again but God made it easy to her and she gave birth to a second child. The midwives looked at it and found it a boy like the full moon, with flower-white forehead and rose-red cheeks; whereupon the damsel and her eunuchs and attendants rejoiced and she was delivered of the afterbirth, whilst all who were in the palace set up cries of joy. The other damsels heard of this and envied her; and the news came to Omar, who was glad and rejoiced. Then he rose and went to her and kissed her head, after which he looked at the boy and bending down to it, kissed it, whilst the damsels smote the tabrets and played on instruments of music; and he commanded that the boy should be named Zoulmekan and the girl Nuzbet ez Zeman, which was done accordingly. Then he appointed nurses, wet and dry, and eunuchs and attendants to serve them and assigned them rations of sugar and liquors and oil and other necessaries, such as the tongue fails to set out. Moreover the people of Baghdad heard of the children that God had vouchsafed to the King; so they decorated the city and made proclamation of the good news. Then came the amirs and viziers and grandees and wished the King joy of his son and daughter, wherefore he thanked them and bestowed dresses of honour and favours and largesse on them and on all who were present, gentle and simple. Then he bade carry great store of jewellery and apparel and money to Sufiyeh and charged her to rear the children carefully and educate them well. After this wise, four years passed by, during which time the King sent every few days to seek news of Sufiyeh and her children; but all this while, his son Sherkan knew not that a male child had been born to his father, having news only of the birth of his daughter Nuzhet ez Zeman, and they hid the thing from him, until years and days had passed by, whilst he was busied in contending with the men of war and tilting against the cavaliers.

One day, as the King was sitting on his throne, there came in to him his chamberlains, who kissed the earth before him and said, "O King, there be come ambassadors from the King of the Greeks, lord of Constantinople the mighty, and they desire to be admitted to pay their respects to thee: so if the King give them leave to enter, we will admit them, and if not, there is no appeal from his decree." He bade admit them, and when they entered, he turned to them and asked them how they did and the reason of their coming. They kissed the earth before him and replied, "O illustrious King and lord of the long arm, know that King Afridoun, lord of the lands of the Greeks and of the Nazarene armies, holding the empire of Constantinople, hath

sent us to make known to thee that he is now waging grievous war with a fierce rebel, the lord of Caesarea; and the cause of this war is as follows. One of the kings of the Arabs, awhile since, chanced, in one of his conquests, upon a treasure of the time of Alexander, from which he carried away countless riches and amongst other things, three round jewels, of the bigness of an ostrich's egg, from a mine of pure white jewels, never was seen the like. Upon each of these jewels were graven talismans in the Greek character, and they had many properties and virtues, amongst the rest that if one of them were hung round the neck of a new-born child, no ailment would hurt him nor would he moan or be fevered, so long as it was about his neck. When they came to the hands of the Arabian King and he knew their virtues, he sent the three jewels, together with other presents and rarities, as a gift to King Afridoun, and to that end fitted out two ships, one bearing the treasure and presents and the other men to guard them against whoso should offer them hindrance on the sea, being nevertheless assured that none would dare waylay them, for that he was King of the Arabs, more by token that their way lay through the sea in the dominions of the King of Constantinople and they were bound to him, nor were there on the shores of that sea any but subjects of the most mighty King Afridoun. The ships set out and sailed till they drew near our city, when there sallied out on them certain corsairs of the country and amongst them troops of the King of Caesarea, who took all the treasures and rarities in the ships, together with the three jewels, and slew the men. When the news came to our King, he sent an army against them, but they defeated it; then he sent another army, stronger than the first, but they put this also to the rout; whereupon the King was wroth and swore that he would go out against them in person at the head of his whole army and not turn back from them, till he had left Caesarea in ruins and laid waste all the lands and cities over which its King held sway. So he craves of the lord of the age and the time, the King of Baghdad and Khorassan, that he succour us with an army, to the end that glory may redound to him; and he has sent by us somewhat of various kinds of presents and begs the King to favour him by accepting them and accord us his aid." Then they kissed the earth before King Omar and brought out the presents, which were fifty slave-girls of the choicest of the land of the Greeks, and fifty white male slaves in tunics of brocade, rich girdles of gold and silver and in their ears pendants of gold and fine pearls, worth a thousand dinars each. The damsels were adorned after the same fashion and clad in stuffs worth much money. When the King saw them, he rejoiced in them and accepted them. Then he commanded that the ambassadors should be honourably entreated and summoning his viziers, took counsel with them of what he should do. Accordingly, one of them, an old man named Dendan, arose and kissing the earth before King Omar, said, "O King, thou wouldst do well to equip numerous army and set over it thy son Sherkan, with us as his lieutenants; and to my mind it behoves thee to do thus, for two reasons: first, that the King of the Greeks hath appealed to thee for aid and hath sent thee presents, and thou hast accepted them; and secondly, that no enemy dares attack our country, and that if thy host succour the King of the Greeks and his foe be put to the rout, the glory will fall to thee and the news of it will be noised abroad in all cities and countries; and especially, when the tidings reach the islands of the ocean and the people of Western Africa, they will send thee presents and tribute." When the King heard the Vizier's speech, it pleased him and he approved his counsel: so he bestowed on him dress of honour and said to him, "It is

with such as thee that kings take counsel and it befits that thou command the van of the army and my son Sherkan the main battle." Then he sent for Sherkan and expounded the matter to him, telling him what the ambassadors and the Vizier had said, and enjoined him to take arms and prepare to set out, charging him not to cross the Vizier Dendan in aught that he should do. Then he bade him choose from among his troops ten thousand horsemen armed cap-a-pie and inured to war and hardship. Accordingly, Sherkan rose at once and chose out ten thousand horsemen, in obedience to his father's commandment, after which he entered his palace and mustered his troops and distributed money to them, saying, "Ye have three days to make ready." They kissed the earth before him and proceeded at once to make their preparations for the campaign; whilst Sherkan repaired to the armouries and provided himself with all the arms and armour that he needed, and thence to the stables, whence he took horses of choice breeds and others. When the three days were ended, the troops marched out of Baghdad, and King Omar came forth to take leave of his son, who kissed the earth before him, and he gave him seven thousand purses. Then he turned to the Vizier Dendan and commended to his care his son Sherkan's army and charged the latter to consult the Vizier in all things, to which they both promised obedience. After this, the King returned to Baghdad and Sherkan commanded the officers to draw out the troops in battle array. So they mustered them and the number of the army was ten thousand horsemen, besides footmen and followers. Then they loaded the beasts and beat the drums and blew the clarions and unfurled the banners and the standards, whilst Sherkan mounted, with the Vizier Dendan by his side and the standards waving over them, and the army set out and fared on, with the ambassadors in the van, till the day departed and the night came, when they halted and encamped for the night. On the morrow, as soon as God brought in the day, they took horse and continued their march, nor did they cease to press onward, guided by the ambassadors, for the space of twenty days. On the twenty-first day, at nightfall, they came to a wide and fertile valley, whose sides were thickly wooded and covered with grass, and there Sherkan called a three days' halt. So they dismounted and pitched their tents, dispersing right and left in the valley, whilst the Vizier Dendan and the ambassadors alighted in the midst. As for Sherkan, when he had seen the tents pitched and the troops dispersed on either side and had commanded his officers and attendants to camp beside the Vizier Dendan, he gave reins to his horse, being minded to explore the valley and himself mount guard over the army, having regard to his father's injunctions and to the fact that they had reached the frontier of the land of Roum and were now in the enemy's country. So he rode on alone along the valley, till a fourth part of the night was passed, when he grew weary and sleep overcame him, so that he could no longer spur his horse. Now he was used to sleep on horseback; so when drowsiness got the better of him, he fell asleep and the horse paced on with him half the night and entered a forest; but Sherkan awoke not, till the steed smote the earth with his hoof. Then he started from sleep and found himself among trees; and the moon arose and lighted up the two horizons. He was troubled at finding himself alone in this place and spoke the words, which whoso says shall never be confounded, that is to say, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" But as he rode on, in fear of the wild beasts, behold, the trees thinned and the moon shone out upon a meadow as it were one of the meads of Paradise and he heard therein a noise of talk and pleasant laughter such as ravishes the

wit of men. So King Sherkan dismounted and tying his horse to a tree, fared on a little way, till he espied a stream of running water and heard a woman talking and saying in Arabic, "By the virtue of the Messiah, this is not handsome of you! But whoso speaks a word, I will throw her down and bind her with her girdle." He followed in the direction of the voice and saw gazelles frisking and wild cattle pasturing and birds in their various voices expressing joy and gladness: and the earth was embroidered with all manner of flowers and green herbs, even as says of it the poet in the following verses:

Earth has no fairer sight to show than this its blossom-time,
With all the gently running streams that wander o'er its face.
It is indeed the handiwork of God Omnipotent,
The Lord of every noble gift and Giver of all grace!

Midmost the meadow stood a monastery, and within the enclosure was a citadel that rose high into the air in the light of the moon. The stream passed through the midst of the monastery and therenigh sat ten damsels like moons, high-bosomed maids, clad in dresses and ornaments that dazzled the eyes, as says of them the poet:

The meadow glitters with the troops
Of lovely ones that wander there.
Its grace and beauty doubled are
By these that are so passing fair.
Virgins that, with their swimming gait,
The hearts of all that see ensnare;
Along whose necks, like trails of grapes,
Stream down the tresses of their hair:
Proudly they walk, with eyes that dart
The shafts and arrows of despair,
And all the champions of the world
Are slain by their seductive air.

Sherkan looked at the ten girls and saw in their midst a lady like the moon at its full, with ringleted hair and shining forehead, great black eyes and curling brow-locks, perfect in person and attributes, as says the poet:

Her beauty beamed on me with glances wonder-bright:
The slender Syrian spears are not so straight and slight:
She laid her veil aside, and lo, her cheeks rose-red!
All manner lovelyness was in their sweetest sight.
The locks, that o'er her brow fell down, were like the night,
From out of which there shines a morning of delight.

Then Sherkan heard her say to the girls, "Come on, that I may wrestle with you, ere the moon set and the dawn come." So they came up to her, one after another, and she overthrew them, one by one, and bound their hands behind them with their girdles. When she had thrown them all, there turned to her an old woman, who was before her, and said, as if she were wroth with her, "O wanton, dost thou glory in overthrowing these girls? Behold, I am an old woman, yet have I thrown them forty times! So what hast thou to boast of? But if thou have strength to wrestle with me,

stand up that I may grip thee and put thy head between thy feet." The young lady smiled at her words, although her heart was full of anger against her, and said, "O my lady Dhat ed Dewahi, wilt indeed wrestle with me, or dost thou jest with me?" "I mean to wrestle with thee in very deed," replied she. "Stand up to me then," said the damsel, "if thou have strength to do so." When the old woman heard this, she was sore enraged and the hair of her body stood on end, like that of a hedge-hog. Then she sprang up, whilst the damsel confronted her, and said, "By the virtue of the Messiah, I will not wrestle with thee, except I be naked." "O baggage!" So she loosed her trousers and putting her hand under her clothes, tore them off her body; then, taking a handkerchief of silk, she bound it about her middle and became as she were a bald Afriteh or a pied snake. Then she turned to the young lady and said to her, "Do as I have done." All this time, Sherkan was watching them and laughing at the loathly favour of the old woman. So the damsel took a sash of Yemen stuff and doubled it about her waist, then tucked up her trousers and showed legs of alabaster and above them a hummock of crystal, soft and swelling, and a belly that exhaled musk from its dimples, as it were a bed of blood-red anemones, and breasts like double pomegranates. Then the old woman bent to her and they took hold of one another, whilst Sherkan raised his eyes to heaven and prayed to God that the damsel might conquer the old hag. Presently, the former bored in under the latter, and gripping her by the breech with the left hand and by the gullet with the right, hoisted her off the ground; whereupon the old woman strove to free herself and in the struggle wriggled out of the girl's hands and fell on her back. Up went her legs and showed her hairy tout in the moonlight, and she let fly two great cracks of wind, one of which smote the earth, whilst the other smoked up to the skies. At this Sherkan laughed, till he fell to the ground, and said, "He lied not who dubbed thee Lady of Calamities! Verily, thou sawest her prowess against the others." Then he arose and looked right and left, but saw none save the old woman thrown down on her back. So he drew near to hear what should pass between them; and behold, the young lady came up to the old one and throwing over her a veil of fine silk, helped her to dress herself, making excuses to her and saying, "O my lady Dhat ed Dewahi, I did not mean to throw thee so roughly, but thou wriggledst out of my hands; so praised be God for safety!" She returned her no answer, but rose in her confusion and walked away out of sight, leaving the young lady standing alone, by the other girls thrown down and bound. Then said Sherkan to himself, "To every fortune there is a cause. Sleep fell not on me nor did the steed bear me hither but for my good fortune; for of a surety this damsel and what is with her shall be my prize." So he turned back and mounted and drew his scimitar; then he gave his horse the spur and he started off with him, like an arrow from a bow, whilst he brandished his naked blade and cried out, "God is Most Great!" When the damsel saw him, she sprang to her feet and running to the bank of the river, which was there six cubits wide, made a spring and landed on the other side, where she turned and standing, cried out in a loud voice, "Who art thou, sirrah, that breakest in on our pastime, and that with thy whinger bared, as thou wert charging an army? Whence comest thou and whither art thou bound? Speak the truth, and it shall profit thee, and do not lie, for lying is of the loser's fashion. Doubtless thou hast strayed this night from thy road, that thou hast happened on this place. So tell me what thou seekest: if thou wouldst have us set thee in the right road, we will do so, or if thou seek help, we

will help thee." When Sherkan heard her words, he replied, "I am a stranger of the Muslims, who am come out by myself in quest of booty, and I have found no fairer purchase this moonlit night than these ten damsels; so I will take them and rejoin my comrades with them." Quoth she, "I would have thee to know that thou hast not yet come at the booty: and as for these ten damsels, by Allah, they are no purchase for thee! Indeed, the fairest purchase thou canst look for is to win free of this place; for thou art now in a mead, where, if we gave one cry, there would be with us anon four thousand knights. Did I not tell thee that lying is shameful?" And he said, "The fortunate man is he to whom God sufficeth and who hath no need of other than Him." "By the virtue of the Messiah," replied she, "did I not fear to have thy death at my hand, I would give a cry that would fill the meadow on thee with horse and foot; but I have pity on the stranger: so if thou seek booty, I require of thee that thou dismount from thy horse and swear to me, by thy faith, that thou wilt not approach me with aught of arms, and we will wrestle, I and thou. If thou throw me, lay me on thy horse and take all of us to thy booty; and if I throw thee, thou shalt be at my commandment. Swear this to me, for I fear thy perfidy, since experience has it that, as long as perfidy is in men's natures, to trust in every one is weakness. But if thou wilt swear, I will come over to thee." Quoth Sherkan (and indeed he lusted after her and said to himself, "She does not know that I am a champion of the champions."), "Impose on me whatever oath thou deemest binding, and I will swear not to draw near thee till thou hast made thy preparations and sayest, 'Come and wrestle with me.' If thou throw me, I have wealth wherewith to ransom myself, and if I throw thee, I shall get fine purchase." Then said she, "Swear to me by Him who hath lodged the soul in the body and given laws to mankind, that thou wilt not beset me with aught of violence, but by way of wrestling; else mayst thou die out of the pale of Islam." "By Allah," exclaimed Sherkan, "if a Cadi should swear me, though he were Cadi of the Cadis, he would not impose on me the like of this oath!" Then he took the oath she required and tied his horse to a tree, sunken in the sea of reverie and saying in himself, "Glory to Him who fashioned her of vile water!" Then he girt himself and made ready for wrestling and said to her, "Cross the stream to me." Quoth she, "It is not for me to come to thee: if thou wilt, do thou cross over to me." "I cannot do that," replied he, and she said, "O boy, I will come to thee." So she gathered her skirts and making a spring, landed on the other side of the river by him; whereupon he drew near to her, wondering at her beauty and grace, and saw a form that the hand of Omnipotence had tanned with the leaves of the Jinn and which had been fostered by Divine solicitude, a form on which the zephyrs of fair fortune had blown and over whose creation favourable planets had presided. Then she called out to him, saying, "O Muslim, come and wrestle before the day break!" and tucked up her sleeves, showing a fore-arm like fresh curd; the whole place was lighted up by its whiteness and Sherkan was dazzled by it. Then he bent forward and clapped his hands and she did the like, and they took hold and gripped each other. He laid his hands on her slender waist, so that the tips of his fingers sank into the folds of her belly, and his limbs relaxed and he stood in the stead of desire, for there was displayed to him a body, in which was languishment of hearts, and he fell a-trembling like the Persian reed in the hurricane. So she lifted him up and throwing him to the ground, sat down on his breast with buttocks like a hill of sand, for he was not master of his reason. Then she said to him, "O Muslim, it is

lawful among you to kill Christians; what sayst thou to my killing thee?" "O my lady," replied he, "as for killing me, it is unlawful; for our Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) hath forbidden the slaying of women and children and old men and monks." "Since this was revealed unto your prophet," rejoined she, "it behoves us to be even with him therein; so rise: I give thee thy life, for beneficence is not lost upon men." Then she got off his breast and he rose and brushed the earth from his head, and she said to him, "Be not abashed; but, indeed, one who enters the land of the Greeks in quest of booty and to succour kings against kings, how comes it that there is no strength in him to defend himself against a woman?" "It was not lack of strength in me," replied he; "nor was it thy strength that overthrew me, but thy beauty: so if thou wilt grant me another bout, it will be of thy favour." She laughed and said, "I grant thee this: but these damsels have been long bound and their arms and shoulders are weary, and it were fitting I should loose them, since this next bout may peradventure be a long one." Then she went up to the girls and unbinding them, said to them in the Greek tongue, "Go and put yourselves in safety, till I have brought to nought this Muslim's craving for you." So they went away, whilst Sherkan looked at them and they gazed at him and the young lady. Then she and he drew near again and set breast against breast; but, when he felt her belly against his, his strength failed him, and she feeling this, lifted him in her hands, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, and threw him to the ground. He fell on his back, and she said to him, "Rise, I give thee thy life a second time. I spared thee before for the sake of thy prophet, for that he forbade the killing of women, and I do so this second time because of thy weakness and tender age and strangerhood; but I charge thee, if there be, in the army sent by King Omar ben Ennuman to the succour of the King of Constantinople, a stronger than thou, send him hither and tell him of me, for in wrestling there are divers kinds of strokes and tricks, such as feinting and the fore-tripe and the back-tripe and the leg-crick and the thigh-twist and the jostle and the cross-buttock." "By Allah, O my lady," replied Sherkan, (and indeed he was greatly incensed against her), "were I the chief Es Sefedi or Mohammed Caimal or Ibn es Seddi, I had not observed the fashion thou namest; for, by Allah, it was not by thy strength that thou overthrewest me, but by filling me with the desire of thy buttocks, because we people of Chaldaea love great thighs, so that nor wit nor foresight was left in me. But now if thou have a mind to try another fall with me, with my wits about me, I have a right to this one bout more, by the rules of the game, for my presence of mind has now returned to me." "Hast thou not had enough of wrestling, O conquered one?" rejoined she. "However, come, if thou wilt; but know that this bout must be the last." Then they took hold of each other and he set to in earnest and warded himself against being thrown down: so they strained awhile, and the damsel found in him strength such as she had not before observed and said to him, "O Muslim, thou art on thy guard!" "Yes," replied he; "thou knowest that there remaineth but this bout, and after each of us will go his own way." She laughed and he laughed too: then she seized the opportunity to bore in upon him unawares, and gripping him by the thigh, threw him to the ground, so that he fell on his back. She laughed at him and said, "Thou art surely an eater of bran; for thou art like a Bedouin bonnet, that falls at a touch, or a child's toy, that a puff of air overturns. Out on thee, thou poor creature! Go back to the army of the Muslims and send us other than thyself, for thou lackest thews, and cry us among the Arabs and Persians and Turks and

Medes, 'Whoso has might in him, let him come to us.'" Then she made a spring and landed on the other side of the stream and said to Sherkan, laughing, "It goes to my heart to part with thee; get thee to thy friends, O my lord, before the morning, lest the knights come upon thee and take thee on the points of their lances. Thou hast not strength enough to defend thee against women; so how couldst thou make head against men and cavaliers?" And she turned to go back to the monastery. Sherkan was confounded and called out to her, saying, "O my lady, wilt thou go away and leave the wretched stranger, the broken-hearted slave of love?" So she turned to him, laughing, and said, "What wouldst thou? I grant thy prayer." "Have I set foot in thy country and tasted the sweetness of thy favours," replied Sherkan, "and shall I return without eating of thy victual and tasting thy hospitality? Indeed I am become one of thy servitors." Quoth she, "None but the base refuses hospitality; on my head and eyes be it! Do me the favour to mount and ride along the bank of the stream, abreast of me, for thou art my guest." At this Sherkan rejoiced and hastening back to his horse, mounted and rode along the river-bank, keeping abreast of her, till he came to a drawbridge, that hung by pulleys and chains of steel, made fast with hooks and padlocks. Here stood the ten damsels awaiting the lady, who spoke to one of them in the Greek tongue and said to her, "Go to him and take his horse's rein and bring him over to the monastery." So she went up to Sherkan and led him over the bridge to the other side and he followed her, amazed at what he saw and saying in himself, "Would the Vizier Dendan were with me, to look on these fair faces with his own eyes." Then he turned to the young lady and said to her, "O wonder of beauty, now art thou doubly bound to me, firstly, by the bond of comradeship, and secondly for that thou carriest me to thy house and I accept of thy hospitality and am at thy disposal and under thy protection. So do me the favour to go with me to the land of Islam, where thou shalt look upon many a lion-hearted prince and know who I am." His speech angered her and she said to him, "By the virtue of the Messiah, thou art keen of wit with me! But I see now what depravity is in thy heart and how thou allowest thyself to say a thing that proves thee a traitor. How should I do what thou sayest, when I know that, if I came to thy King Omar ben Ennuman, I should never win free of him? For he has not the like of me among his women nor in his palace, all lord of Baghdad and Khorassan as he is, with his twelve palaces, in number as the months of the year, and his concubines therein, in number as the days thereof; and if I come to him, he will not respect me, for that ye hold it lawful to take possession of the like of me, as it is said in your scripture, 'That which your right hand possesses.' So how canst thou speak thus to me? As for thy saying, 'Thou shalt look upon the champions of the Muslims,' by the Messiah, thou sayst that which is not true; for I saw your army, when it reached our country, these two days ago, and I did not see that your ordinance was that of kings, but beheld you only as a rabble of men collected together. And as for thy saying, 'Thou shalt know who I am,' I did not show thee courtesy of any intent to honour thee, but out of pride in myself; and the like of thee should not say this to the like of me, even though thou be Sherkan himself, King Omar ben Ennuman's son, who is renowned in these days." "And dost thou know Sherkan?" asked he. "Yes," replied she; "and I know of his coming with an army of ten thousand horse, for that he was sent by his father with these troops to the succour of the King of Constantinople." "O my lady," rejoined Sherkan, "I conjure thee, as thou believest in thy religion, tell me the cause of all this, that I may know

truth from falsehood and with whom the fault lies." "By the virtue of thy faith," replied she, "were it not that I fear lest the news of me be bruited abroad that I am of the daughters of the Greeks, I would adventure myself and sally forth against the ten thousand horse and kill their chief, the Vizier Dendan, and take their champion Sherkan. Nor would there be any reproach to me in this, for I have read books and know the Arabic language and have studied good breeding and polite letters. But I have no need to vaunt my own prowess to thee, for thou hast tasted of my quality and proved my strength and skill and pre-eminence in wrestling; nor if Sherkan himself had been in thy place to-night and it had been said to him, 'Leap this river,' could he have done so. And I could wish well that the Messiah would throw him into my hands here in this monastery, that I might go forth to him in the habit of a man and pull him from his saddle and take him prisoner and lay him in fetters." When Sherkan heard this, pride and heat and warlike jealousy overcame him and he was minded to discover himself and lay violent hands on her but her beauty held him back from her, and he repeated the following verse:

Their charms, whatever fault the fair commit, A thousand intercessors bring for it.

So she went up, and he after her; whilst he looked at her back and saw her buttocks smiting against each other, like the billows in the troubled sea; and he recited the following verses:

In her face an advocate harbours, who blots out her every fault
From the hearts of mankind, for he is mighty to intercede.
Whenas I look at her face, I cry in my wonder aloud,
"The moon of the skies in the night of her full is risen indeed!"
If the Afrit of Belkis himself should wrestle a fall with her,
Her charms would throw him forthright, for all his strength and speed.

They went on till they reached a vaulted gate, arched over with marble. This she opened and entered with Sherkan into a long vestibule, vaulted with ten arches from each of which hung a lamp of crystal, shining like the rays of the sun. The damsels met her at the end of the vestibule, bearing perfumed flambeaux and having on their heads kerchiefs embroidered with all manner jewels and went on before her, till they came to the inward of the monastery, where Sherkan saw couches set up all around, facing one another and overhung with curtains spangled with gold. The floor was paved with all kinds of variegated marbles, and in the midst was a basin of water, with four-and-twenty spouts of gold around it, from which issued water like liquid silver; whilst at the upper end stood a throne covered with silks of royal purple. Then said the damsel, "O my lord, mount this throne." So he seated himself on it, and she withdrew: and when she had been absent awhile, he asked the servants of her, and they said, "She hath gone to her sleeping-chamber; but we will serve thee as thou shalt order." So they set before him rare meats and he ate till he was satisfied, when they brought him a basin of gold and an ewer of silver, and he washed his hands. Then his mind reverted to his troops, and he was troubled, knowing not what had befallen them in his absence and thinking how he had forgotten his father's injunctions, so that he abode oppressed with anxiety and repenting of what he had done, till the dawn broke and the day appeared, when he

lamented and sighed and became drowned in the sea of melancholy, repeating the following verses:

I lack not of prudence and yet in this case
I've been fooled; so what shift shall avail unto me?
If any could ease me of love and its stress,
Of my might and my virtue I'd set myself free.
But alas! my heart's lost in the maze of desire,
And no helper save God in my strait can I see.

Hardly had he finished, when up came more than twenty damsels like moons, encompassing the young lady, who appeared amongst them as the full moon among stars. She was clad in royal brocade and girt with a woven girdle set with various kinds of jewels, that straitly clasped her waist and made her buttocks stand out as they were a hill of crystal upholding a wand of silver; and her breasts were like double pomegranates. On her head she wore a network of pearls, gemmed with various kinds of jewels, and she moved with a coquettish swimming gait, swaying wonder-gracefully, whilst the damsels held up her skirts. When Sherkan saw her beauty and grace, he was transported for joy and forgot his army and the Vizier Dendan end springing to his feet, cried out, "Beware, beware of that girdle rare!" and repeated the following verses:

Heavy of buttocks, languorous of gait,
With limber shape and breasts right delicate,
She hides what passion in her bosom burns;
Yet cannot I my heat dissimulate.
Her maidens, like strung pearls, behind her fare,
Now all dispersed now knit in ordered state.

She fixed her eyes on him and considered him awhile, till she was assured of him, when she came up to him and said, "Indeed the place is honoured and illumined by thy presence, O Sherkan! How didst thou pass the night, O hero, after we went away and left thee? Verily lying is a defect and a reproach in kings, especially in great kings; and thou art Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman; so henceforth tell me nought but truth and strive not to keep the secret of thy condition, for falsehood engenders hatred and enmity. The arrow of destiny hath fallen on thee, and it behoves thee to show resignation and submission." When Sherkan heard what she said, he saw nothing for it but to tell her the truth so he said, "I am indeed Sherkan, son of Omar ben Ennuman, whom fortune hath afflicted and cast into this place: so now do whatsoever thou wilt." She bowed her head a long while, then turned to him and said, "Reassure thyself and be of good cheer; for thou art my guest, and bread and salt have passed between us; so art thou in my safeguard and under my protection. Have no fear; by the virtue of the Messiah, if all the people of the earth sought to harm thee, they should not come at thee till the breath had left my body for thy sake; for thou art under my protection and that of the Messiah." Then she sat down by his side and began to sport with him, till his alarm subsided and he knew that, had she been minded to kill him, she would have done so on the past night. After awhile, she spoke in the Greek tongue to one of her serving-women, who went away and returned in a little with a goblet and a tray of food; but Sherkan abstained from eating, saying in himself, "Maybe she hath

put somewhat in this meat." She knew what was in his thought; so she turned to him and said, "By the virtue of the Messiah, the case is not as thou deemest, nor is there aught in this food of what thou suspectest! Were I minded to kill thee, I had done so before now." Then she came to the table and ate a mouthful of every dish, whereupon Sherkan came forward and fell to. She was pleased at this, and they both ate till they were satisfied, after which she let bring perfumes and sweet-smelling herbs and wines of all colours and kinds, in vessels of gold and silver and crystal. She filled a first cup and drank it off, before offering it to Sherkan, even as she had done with the food. Then she filled a second time and gave the cup to him. He drank and she said to him, "See, O Muslim, how thou art in the utmost delight and pleasure of life!" And she ceased not to drink and to ply him with drink, till he took leave of his wits, for the wine and the intoxication of love for her. Presently she said to the serving-maid, "O Merjaneh, bring us some instruments of music." "I hear and obey," replied Merjaneh, and going out, returned immediately with a lute, a Persian harp, a Tartar flute and an Egyptian dulcimer. The young lady took the lute and tuning it, sang to it in a dulcet voice, softer than the zephyr and sweeter than the waters of Tesnim, the following verses:

May Allah assoilzie thine eyes!
How much is the blood they have shed!
How great is the tale of the shafts thy pitiless glances have sped!
I honour the mistress, indeed, that harshly her suitor entreats;
'Tis sin in the loved to relent or pity a lover misled.
Fair fortune and grace to the eyes that watch the night, sleepless, for thee,
And hail to the heart of thy slave, by day that is heavy as lead!
'Tis thine to condemn me to death, for thou art my king and my lord.
With my life I will ransom the judge, who heapeth unright on my head.

Then each of the damsels rose and taking an instrument played and sang to it in the Greek language. The lady their mistress, sang also, to Sherkan's delight. Then she said to him, "O Muslim, dost thou understand what I say?" "No," replied he; "it was the beauty of thy finger-tips that threw me into ecstasies." She laughed and said, "If I sang to thee in Arabic, what wouldst thou do?" "I should lose the mastery of my reason," replied he. So she took an instrument and changing the measure, sang the following verses:

Parting must ever bitter be;
How shall one bear it patiently?
Three things are heavy on my heart,
Absence, estrangement, cruelty.
I love a fair to whom I'm thrall,
And severance bitter is to me.

Then she looked at Sherkan and found he had lost his senses for delight: and he lay amongst them insensible awhile, after which he revived and recalling the singing inclined to mirth. Then they fell again to drinking and ceased not from sport and merriment till the day departed with the evening and the night let fall her wings. Thereupon she rose and retired to her chamber. Sherkan enquired after her and being told that she was gone to her bedchamber, said, "I commend her to the safe-keeping of

God and to His protection!" As soon as it was day, a waiting-woman came to him and said, "My mistress bids thee to her." So he rose and followed her, and as he drew near her lodging, the damsels received him with smitten tabrets and songs of greeting and escorted him to a great door of ivory set with pearls and jewels. Here they entered and he found himself in a spacious saloon, at the upper end of which was a great estrade, carpeted with various kinds of silk, and round it open lattices giving upon trees and streams. About the place were figures, so fashioned that the air entered them and set in motion instruments of music within them, and it seemed to the beholder as if they spoke. Here sat the young lady, looking on the figures; but when she saw Sherkan, she sprang to her feet and taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her and asked him how he had passed the night. He blessed her and they sat talking awhile, till she said to him, "Knowest thou aught touching lovers and slaves of passion?" "Yes," replied he; "I know some verses on the subject." "Let me hear them," said she. So he repeated the following verses:

Pleasure and health, O Azzeh, and good digestion to thee!
How with our goods and our names and our honours thou makest free!
By Allah, whene'er I blow hot, she of a sudden blows cold,
And no sooner do I draw near, than off at a tangent flies she!
Indeed, as I dote upon Azzeh, as soon as I've cleared me of all
That stands between us and our loves, she turns and abandons me; noontide rest,
As a traveller that trusts in the shade of a cloud for his
But as soon as he halts, the shade flits and the cloud in the distance cloth flee.

When she heard this, she said, "Verily Kutheiyir was a poet of renown and a master of chaste eloquence and attained rare perfection in praise of Azzeh, especially when he says:

'If Azzeh should before a judge the sun of morning cite,
Needs must the umpire doom to her the meed of beauty bright;
And women all, who come to me, at her to rail and flite,
God make your cheeks the sandal-soles whereon her feet alight!'

"And indeed it is reported," added she, "that Azzeh was endowed with the extreme of beauty and grace." Then she said to Sherkan, "O king's son, dost thou know aught of Jemil's verses to Butheineh?" "Yes," replied he; "none knows Jemil's verses better than I." And he repeated the following:

"Up and away to the holy war, Jemil!" they say; and I,
"What have I to do with waging war except among the fair?"
For deed and saying with them alike are full of ease and cheer,
And he's a martyr who tilts with them and falleth fighting there.
If I say to Butheineh, "What is this love, that eateth my life away?"
She answers, "Tis rooted fast in thy heart and will increase fore'er."
Or if I beg her to give me back some scantling of my wit,
Wherewith to deal with the folk and live, she answereth, "Hope it ne'er!"
Thou willst my death, ah, woe is me! thou willst nought else but that;
Yet I, I can see no goal but thee, towards which my wishes fare.

"Thou hast done well, O king's son," said she, "and Jemil also did excellently well. But what would Butheineh have done with him that he says, 'Thou wishest to kill me and nought else?'" "O my lady," replied he, "she sought to do with him what thou seekest to do with me, and even that will not content thee." She laughed at his answer, and they ceased not to carouse till the day departed and the night came with the darkness. Then she rose and went to her sleeping-chamber, and Sherkan slept in his place till the morning. As soon as he awoke, the damsels came to him with tambourines and other instruments of music, according to their wont, and kissing the earth before him, said to him, "In the name of God, deign to follow us; for our mistress bids thee to her." So he rose and accompanied the girls, who escorted him, smiting on tabrets and other instruments of music, to another saloon, bigger than the first and decorated with pictures and figures of birds and beasts, passing description. Sherkan wondered at the fashion of the place and repeated the following verses:

My rival plucks, of the fruits of the necklets branching wide,
Pearls of the breasts in gold enchased and beautified
With running fountains of liquid silver in streams
And cheeks of rose and beryl, side by side.
It seemeth, indeed, as if the violet's colour vied
With the sombre blue of the eyes, with antimony dyed.

When the lady saw Sherkan, she came to meet him, and taking him by the hand, said to him, "O son of King Omar ben Ennuman, hast thou any skill in the game of chess?" "Yes," replied he; "but do not thou be as says the poet." And he repeated the following verses:

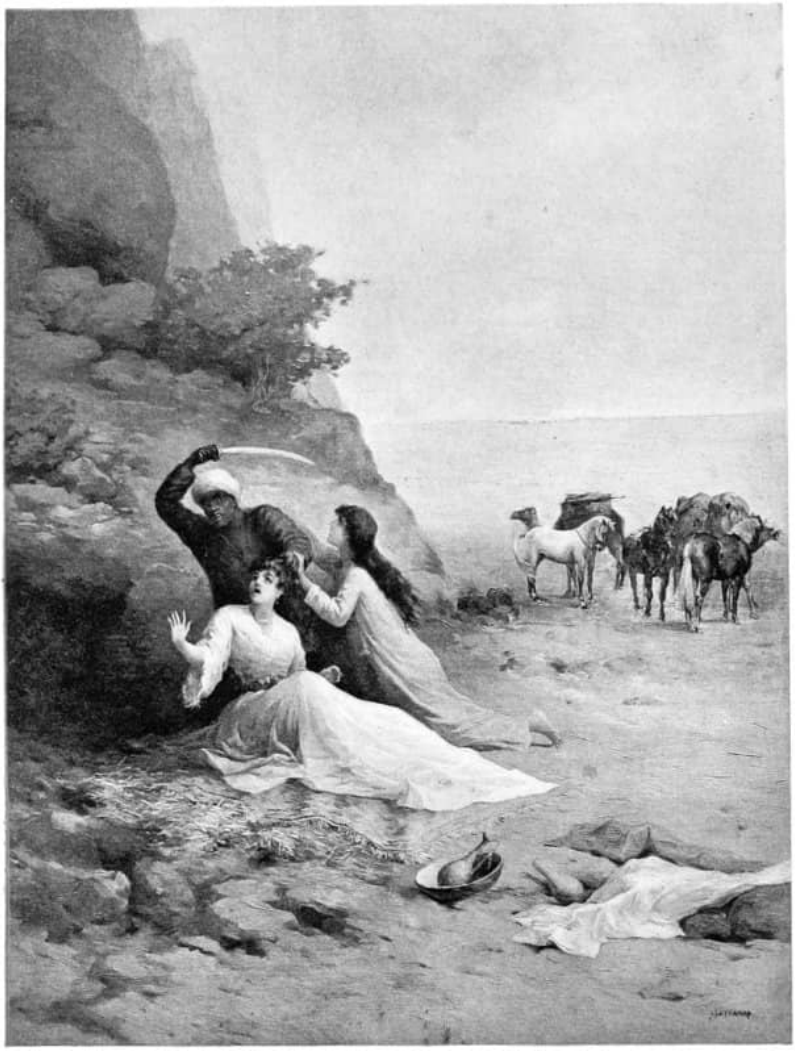
I speak, and passion, the while, folds and unfolds me aye;
But a draught of the honey of love my spirits thirst could stay.
I sit at the chess with her I love, and she plays with me,
With white and with black; but this contenteth me no way.
Meseemeth as if the king were set in the place of the rook
And sought with the rival queens a bout of the game to play.
And if I looked in her eyes, to spy the drift of her moves,
The amorous grace of her glance would doom me to death straightaway.

Then she brought the chess-board and played with him; but instead of looking at her moves, he looked at her face and set the knight in the place of the elephant and the elephant in the place of the knight. She laughed and said to him, "If this be thy play, thou knowest nothing of the game." "This is only the first bout," replied he; "take no count of it." She beat him, and he replaced the pieces and played again with her; but she beat him a second time and a third and a fourth and a fifth. So she fumed to him and said, "Thou art beaten in everything." "O my lady," answered he, "how should one not be beaten, who plays with the like of thee?" Then she called for food, and they ate and washed their hands, after which the maids brought wine, and they drank. Presently, the lady took the dulcimer, for she was skilled to play thereon, and sang to it the following verses:

Fortune is still on the shift, now gladness and now woe;
I liken it to the tide, in its ceaseless ebb and flow.
So drink, if thou have the power, whilst it is yet serene,
Lest it at unawares depart, and thou not know.

They gave not over carousing till nightfall, and this day was pleasanter than the first. When the night came, the lady went to her sleeping-chamber, leaving Sherkan with the damsels. So he threw himself on the ground and slept till the morning, when the damsels came to him with tambourines and other musical instruments, according to their wont. When he saw them, he sat up; and they took him and carried him to their mistress, who came to meet him and taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her side. Then she asked him how he had passed the night, to which he replied by wishing her long life; and she took the lute and sang the following verses:

Incline not to parting, I pray, For bitter its taste is alway. The sun at his setting grows pale, To think he must part from the day.



Hardly had she made an end of singing, when there arose of a sudden a great clamour, and a crowd of men and knights rushed into the place, with naked swords gleaming in their hands, crying out in the Greek tongue, "Thou hast fallen into our hands, O Sherkan! Be sure of death!" When he heard this, he said to himself, "By Allah, she hath laid a trap for me and held me in play, till her men should come! These are the knights with whom she threatened me: but it is I who have thrown myself into this peril." Then he turned to the lady to reproach her, but saw that she had changed colour; and she sprang to her feet and said to the new-comers, "Who are ye?" "O noble princess and unpeered pearl," replied the knight their chief, "dost thou know who is this man with thee?" "Not I," answered she. "Who is he?" Quoth the knight, "He is the despoiler of cities and prince of cavaliers, Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman. This is he who captures the citadels and masters the most impregnable strengths. The news of him reached King Herdoub, thy father, by the report of the old princess Dhat ed Dewahi; and thou hast done good service to the army of the Greeks by helping them to lay hands on this pestilent lion." When she heard this, she looked at the knight and said to him, "What is thy name?" And he answered, "My name is Masoureh son of thy slave Mousoureh ben Kasherdeh, chief of the nobles." Quoth she, "And how camest thou in to me without my leave?" "O our lady," replied he, "when I came to the gate, neither chamberlain nor porter offered me any hindrance; but all the gate-keepers rose and forewent me as of wont; though, when others come, they leave them standing at the gate, whilst they ask leave for them to enter. But this is no time for long talk, for the King awaits our return to him with this prince, who is the mainstay of the army of Islam, that he may kill him and that his troops may depart whence they came, without our having the toil of fighting them." "Thou sayest an ill thing," rejoined the princess. "Verily, the lady Dhat ed Dewahi lied; and she hath avouched a vain thing, of which she knows not the truth; for by the virtue of the Messiah, this man who is with me is not Sherkan, nor is he a captive, but a stranger, who came to us, seeking hospitality, and we received him as a guest. So, even were we assured that this was Sherkan and did we know that it was he beyond doubt, it would suit ill with my honour that I should deliver into your hands one who hath come under my safeguard. Betray me not, therefore, in the person of my guest, neither bring me into ill repute among men; but return to the King my father and kiss the earth before him and tell him that the case is not according to the report of the lady Dhat ed Dewahi." "O Abrizeh," replied the knight Masoureh, "I cannot go back to the King without his enemy." Quoth she (and indeed she was angry), "Out on thee! Return to him with the answer, and no blame shall fall on thee." But he said, "I will not return without him." At this her colour changed and she exclaimed, "A truce to talk and idle words; for of a verity this man would not have come in to us, except he were assured that he could of himself make head against a hundred horse; and if I said to him, 'Art thou Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman?' he would answer, 'Yes.' Nathless, it is not in your power to hinder him; for if ye beset him, he will not turn back from you, till he have slain all that are in the place. Behold, he is with me and I will bring him before you, with his sword and buckler in his hands." "If I be safe from thy wrath," replied Masoureh, "I am not safe from that of thy father, and when I see him, I shall sign to the knights to take him prisoner, and we will carry him, bound and abject, to the King." When she heard this, she said, "The thing shall not pass thus, for it would be a disgrace. This

man is but one and ye are a hundred. So, an ye be minded to attack him, come out against him, one after one, that it may appear to the King which is the valiant amongst you." "By the Messiah," rejoined Masoureh, "thou sayest sooth, and none but I shall go out against him first!" Then she said, "Wait till I go to him and tell him and hear what he says. If he consent, it is well but if he refuse, ye shall not anywise come at him, for I and my damsels and all that are in the house will be his ransom." So she went to Sherkan and told him the case, whereat he smiled and knew that she had not betrayed him, but that the matter had been bruited abroad, till it came to the King, against her wish. So he laid all the blame on himself, saying, "How came I to venture myself in the country of the Greeks?" Then he said to her, "Indeed, to let them tilt against me, one by one, were to lay on them a burden more than they can bear. Will they not come out against me, ten by ten?" "That were knavery and oppression," replied she. "One man is a match for another." When he heard this, he sprang to his feet and made towards them, with his sword and battle-gear; and Masoureh also sprang up and rushed on him. Sherkan met him like a lion and smote him with his sword upon the shoulder, that the blade came out gleaming from his back and vitals. When the princess saw this, Sherkan's prowess was magnified in her eyes and she knew that she had not overthrown him by her strength, but by her beauty and grace. So she turned to the knights and said to them, "Avenge your chief!" Thereupon out came the slain man's brother, a fierce warrior, and rushed upon Sherkan, who delayed not, but smote him on the shoulders, and the sword came out, gleaming, from his vitals. Then cried the princess, "O servants of the Messiah, avenge your comrades!" So they ceased not to come out against him, one by one, and he plied them with the sword, till he had slain fifty knights, whilst the princess looked on. And God cast terror into the hearts of those who were left, so that they held back and dared not meet him in single combat, but rushed on him all at once; and he drove at them with a heart firmer than a rock and smote them as the thresher smiteth the corn, till he had driven sense and life forth of them. Then the princess cried out to her damsels, saying, "Who is left in the monastery?" "None but the porters," replied they; whereupon she went up to Sherkan and embraced him, and he returned with her to the saloon, after he had made an end of the mellay. Now there remained a few of the knights hidden in the cells of the convent, and when Abrizeh saw this, she rose and going away, returned, clad in a strait-ringed coat of mail and holding in her hand a scimitar of Indian steel. And she said, "By the virtue of the Messiah, I will not be grudging of myself for my guest nor will I abandon him, though for this I abide a reproach in the land of the Greeks!" Then she counted the dead and found that he had slain fourscore of the knights and other twenty had taken flight. When she saw how he had dealt with them, she said to him, "God bless thee, O Sherkan! The cavaliers may well glory in the like of thee!" Then he rose and wiping his sword of the blood of the slain, repeated the following verses:

How often in battle I've cleft the array
And given the champions to wild beasts a prey!
Ask all men what happened to me and to them,
When I drove through the ranks on the sword-smiting day.
I left ail their lions of war overthrown:
On the sun-scorched sands of those countries they lay.

When he had finished, the princess came up to him and kissed his hand; then she put off her coat of mail, and he said to her, "O my lady, wherefore didst thou don that coat of mail and bare thy sabre?" "It was of my care for thee against yonder wretches," replied she. Then she called the porters and said to them, "How came you to let the king's men enter my house, without my leave!" "O princess," replied they, "we have not used to need to ask leave for the king's messengers, and especially for the chief of the knights." Quoth she, "I think you were minded to dishonour me and slay my guest." And she bade Sherkan strike off their heads. He did so and she said to the rest of her servants, "Indeed, they deserved more than that." Then turning to Sherkan, she said to him, "Now that there hath become manifest to thee what was hidden, I will tell thee my story. Know, then, that I am the daughter of Herdoub, King of Roum; my name is Abrizeh and the old woman called Dhat ed Dewahi is my grandmother, my father's mother. She it was who told my father of thee, and she will certainly cast about to ruin me, especially as thou hast slain my father's men and it is noised abroad that I have made common cause with the Muslims. Wherefore it were wiser that I should leave dwelling here, what while Dhat ed Dewahi is behind me; but I claim of thee the like kindness and courtesy I have shown thee, for my father and I are now become at odds on thine account. So do not thou omit to do aught that I shall say to thee, for indeed all this hath fallen out through thee." At this, Sherkan was transported for joy and his breast dilated, and he said, "By Allah, none shall come at thee, whilst my life lasts in my body! But canst thou endure the parting from thy father and thy folk?" "Yes," answered she. So Sherkan swore to her and they made a covenant of this. Then said she, "Now my heart is at ease; but there is one other condition I must exact of thee." "What is that?" asked Sherkan. "It is," replied she, "that thou return with thy troops to thine own country." "O my lady," said he, "my father, King Omar ben Ennuman, sent me to make war upon thy father, on account of the treasure he took from the King of Constantinople, and amongst the rest three great jewels, rich in happy properties." "Reassure thyself," answered she; "I will tell thee the truth of the matter and the cause of the feud between us and the King of Constantinople. Know that we have a festival called the Festival of the Monastery, for which each year the kings' daughters of various countries and the wives and daughters of the notables and merchants resort to a certain monastery and abide there seven days. I was wont to resort thither with the rest; but when there befell hostility between us, my father forbade me to be present at the festival for the space of seven years. One year, it chanced that amongst the young ladies who resorted to the Festival as of wont, there came the King's daughter of Constantinople, a handsome girl called Sufiyeh. They tarried at the monastery six days, and on the seventh, the folk went away; but Sufiyeh said, 'I will not return to Constantinople, but by sea.' So they fitted her out a ship, in which she embarked, she and her suite, and put out to sea; but as they sailed, a contrary wind caught them and drove the ship from her course, till, as fate and providence would have it, she fell in with a ship of the Christians from the Island of Camphor, with a crew of five hundred armed Franks, who had been cruising about for some time. When they sighted the sails of the ship in which were Sufiyeh and her maidens, they gave chase in all haste and coming up with her before long, threw grapnels on board and made fast to her. Then they made all sail for their own island and were but a little distant from it, when the wind veered and rent their sails and cast them on to a reef on our coast. Thereupon we

sallied forth on them, and looking on them as booty driven to us by fate, slew the men and made prize of the ships, in which we found the treasures and rarities in question and forty damsels, amongst whom was Sufiyeh. We carried the damsels to my father, not knowing that the King's daughter of Constantinople was among them, and he chose out ten of them, including Sufiyeh, for himself, and divided the rest among his courtiers. Then he set apart Sufiyeh and four other girls and sent them to thy father, King Omar ben Ennuman, together with other presents, such as cloth and stuffs of wool and Grecian silks. Thy father accepted them and chose out from amongst the five girls the princess Sufiyeh, daughter of King Afridoun; nor did we hear aught more of the matter till the beginning of this year, when King Afridoun wrote to my father in terms which it befits not to repeat, reproaching and menacing him and saying to him, 'Two years ago, there fell into thy hands a ship of ours, that had been seized by a company of Frankish corsairs and in which was my daughter Sufiyeh, attended by near threescore damsels. Yet thou sentest none to tell me of this and I could not make the case public, lest disgrace fall on my repute among the kings, by reason of my daughter's dishonour. So I kept the affair secret till this year, when I communicated with certain of the Frankish pirates and sought news of my daughter from the kings of the islands. They replied, "By Allah, we carried her not forth of thy realm, but we have heard that King Herdoub took her from certain pirates." And they told me all that had befallen her. So now, except thou wish to be at feud with me and design to disgrace me and dishonour my daughter, thou wilt forthright, as soon as this letter reaches thee, send my daughter back to me. But if thou pay no heed to my letter and disobey my commandment, I will assuredly requite thee thy foul dealing and the baseness of thine acts.' When my father read this letter, it was grievous to him and he regretted not having known that Sufiyeh, King Afridoun's daughter, was amongst the captured damsels, that he might have sent her back to her father; and he was perplexed about the affair, for that, after the lapse of so long a time, he could not send to King Omar ben Ennuman and demand her back from him, the more that he had lately heard that God had vouchsafed him children by this very Sufiyeh. So when we considered the matter, we knew that this letter was none other than a great calamity; and nothing would serve but that my father must write an answer to it, making his excuses to King Afridoun and swearing to him that he knew not that his daughter was among the girls in the ship and setting forth how he had sent her to King Omar ben Ennuman and God had vouchsafed him children by her. When my father's reply reached King Afridoun, he rose and sat down and roared and foamed at the mouth, exclaiming, 'What! shall he make prize of my daughter and she become a slave-girl and be passed from hand to hand and sent for a gift to kings, and they lie with her without a contract? By the virtue of the Messiah and the true faith, I will not desist till I have taken my revenge for this and wiped out my disgrace, and indeed I will do a deed that the chroniclers shall chronicle after me.' So he took patience till he had devised a plot and laid great snares, when he sent an embassy to thy father King Omar, to tell him that which thou hast heard so that thy father equipped thee and an army with thee and sent thee to him, Afridoun's object being to lay hold of thee and thine army with thee. As for the three jewels of which he told thy father, he spoke not the truth of them; for they were with Sufiyeh and my father took them from her, when she fell into his hands, she and her maidens, and gave them to me, and they are now with me. So go thou to thy troops

and turn them back, ere they fare farther into the land of the Franks and the country of the Greeks; for as soon as you are come far enough into the inward of the country, they will stop the roads upon you, and there will be no escape for you from their hands till the day of rewards and punishments. I know that thy troops are still where thou leftest them, because thou didst order them to halt there three days; and they have missed thee all this time and know not what to do." When Sherkan heard her words, he was absent awhile in thought then he kissed Abrizeh's hand and said, "Praise be to God who hath bestowed thee on me and appointed thee to be the cause of my salvation and that of those who are with me! But it is grievous to me to part from thee and I know not what will become of thee after my departure." Quoth she, "Go now to thy troops and lead them back, whilst ye are yet near your own country. If the ambassadors are still with them, lay hands on them, that the case may be made manifest to thee, and after three days I will rejoin thee and we will all enter Baghdad together; but forget thou not the compact between us." Then she rose to bid him farewell and assuage the fire of longing; so she took leave of him and embraced him and wept sore; whereupon passion and desire were sore upon him and he also wept and repeated the following verses:

I bade her farewell, whilst my right hand was wiping my eyes,
And still with my left, the while, I held her in close embrace.
Then, "Fearest thou not disgrace?" quoth she; and I answered,
"No. Sure, on the parting-day, for lovers there's no disgrace!"

Then Sherkan left her and went without the monastery, where they brought him his horse and he mounted and rode down the bank of the stream, till he came to the bridge, and crossing it, entered the forest. As soon as he was clear of the trees and came to the open country, he was aware of three horsemen pricking towards him. So he drew his sword and rode on cautiously: but as they drew near he recognized them and behold, it was the Vizier Dendan and two of his officers. When they saw him and knew him, they dismounted and saluting him, asked the reason of his absence, whereupon he told them all that had passed between him and the princess Abrizeh from first to last. The Vizier returned thanks to God the Most High for his safety and said, "Let us at once depart hence, for the ambassadors that were with us are gone to inform their king of our arrival, and belike he will hasten to fall on us and seize us." So they rode on in haste, till they came to the camp, when Sherkan commanded to depart forthright, and the army set out and journeyed by forced marches for five days, at the end of which time they alighted in a thickly wooded valley, where they rested awhile. Then they set out again and fared on till they came to the frontiers of their own country. Here they felt themselves in safety and halted to rest; and the country people came out to them with guest-gifts and victual and fodder for the cattle. They lay there and rested two days; after which Sherkan bade the Vizier Dendan fare forward to Baghdad with his troops, and he did so. But Sherkan himself abode behind with a hundred horse, till the rest of the army had been gone a day, when he mounted, he and his men, and fared on two parasangs' space, till they came to a narrow pass between two mountains and behold, there arose a great cloud of dust in their front. So they halted their horses awhile, till the dust lifted and discovered a hundred cavaliers, as they were fierce lions, cased in complete steel As soon as they came within earshot of

Sherkan and his men, they cried out to them, saying, "By John and Mary, we have gotten what we hoped! We have been following you by forced marches, night and day, till we forewent you in this place. So alight and lay down your arms and yield yourselves, that we may grant you your lives." When Sherkan heard this, his eyes rolled and his cheeks flushed and he said, "O dogs of Nazarenes, how dare ye enter our country and set foot on our earth? And doth not this suffice you, but ye must adventure yourselves and give us such words as these? Do ye think to escape out of our hands and return to your country?" Then he cried out to his hundred horse, saying, "Up and at these dogs, for they are even as you in number!" So saying, he drew his sword and drove at them, without further parley, he and his hundred men. The Franks received them with hearts stouter than stone, and they met, man to man. Then fell champion upon champion and there befell a sore strife and great was the terror and the roar of the battle; nor did they leave jousting and foining and smiting with swords, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness; when they drew apart, and Sherkan mustered his men and found them all unhurt, save four who were slightly wounded. Then said he to them, "By Allah, all my life I have waded in the surging sea of war and battle, but never saw I any so firm and stout in sword-play and shock of men as these warriors!" "Know, O King," replied they, "that there is among them a Frank cavalier, who is their leader, and indeed he is a man of valour and his strokes are terrible: but, by Allah, he spares us, great and small; for whoso falls into his hands, he lets him go and forbears to slay him. By Allah, an he would, he could kill us all!" When Sherkan heard this, he was confounded and said, "To-morrow, we will draw out and defy them to single combat, for we are a hundred to their hundred; and we will seek help against them from the Lord of the heavens." Meanwhile, the Franks came to their leader and said to him, "Of a truth, we have not come by our desire of these this day." "To-morrow," quoth he, "we will draw out and joust against them, one by one." So they passed the night in this mind, and both camps kept watch till the morning. As soon as God the Most High brought on the day, King Sherkan mounted, with his hundred horse, and they betook themselves to the field, where they found the Franks ranged in battle array, and Sherkan said to his men, "Verily, our enemies are of the same mind as we; so up and at them briskly." Then came forth a herald of the Franks and cried out, saying, "Let there be no fighting betwixt us to-day, except by way of single combat, a champion of yours against one of ours!" Thereupon one of Sherkan's men came out from the ranks and spurring between the two parties, cried out, "Who is for jousting? Who is for fighting? Let no laggard nor weakling come out against me to-day!" Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when there sallied forth to him a Frankish horseman, armed cap-a-pie and clad in cloth of gold, riding on a gray horse, and he had no hair on his cheeks. He drove his horse into the midst of the field and the two champions fell to cutting and thrusting, nor was it long before the Frank smote the Muslim with his lance and unhorsing him, took him prisoner and bore him off in triumph. At this, his comrades rejoiced and forbidding him to go out again, sent forth another to the field, to whom sallied out a second Muslim, the brother of the first. The two drove at each other and fought for a little, till the Frank ran at the Muslim and throwing him off his guard by a feint, smote him with the butt-end of his spear and unhorsed him and took him prisoner. After this fashion, the Muslims ceased not to come forth and the Franks to unhorse them and take them prisoner, till the day

departed and the night came with the darkness. Now they had captured twenty cavaliers of the Muslims, and when Sherkan saw this, it was grievous to him, and he mustered his men and said to them, "What is this thing that hath befallen us? To-morrow morning, I myself will go out into the field and seek to joust with their chief and learn his reason for entering our country and warn him against fighting. If he persist, we will do battle with him, and if he proffer peace, we will make peace with him." They passed the night thus, and when God brought on the day, both parties mounted and drew out in battle array. Then Sherkan was about to sally forth, when behold, more than half of the Franks dismounted and marched on foot, before one of them, who was mounted, to the midst of the field. Sherkan looked at this cavalier and behold, he was their chief. He was clad in a tunic of blue satin and a close-ringed shirt of mail; his face was as the full moon at its rising and he had no hair on his cheeks. In his hand he held a sword of Indian steel, and he was mounted on a black horse with a white star, like a dirhem, on his forehead. He spurred into the midst of the field and signing to the Muslims, cried out with fluent speech in the Arabic tongue, saying, "Ho, Sherkan! Ho, son of Omar ben Ennuman, thou that stormest the citadels and layest waste the lands, up and out to joust and battle with him who halves the field with thee! Thou art prince of thy people and I am prince of mine; and whoso hath the upper hand, the other's men shall come under his sway." Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when out came Sherkan, with a heart full of wrath, and spurring his horse into the midst of the field, drove like an angry lion at the Frank, who awaited him with calm and steadfastness and met him as a champion should. Then they fell to cutting and thrusting, nor did they cease to wheel and turn and give and take, as they were two mountains clashing together or two seas breaking one against the other, till the day departed and the night brought on the darkness, when they drew apart and returned, each to his people. As soon as Sherkan reached his comrades, he said to them, "Never in my life saw I the like of this cavalier; and he has one fashion I never yet beheld in any. It is that, when he has a chance of dealing his adversary a deadly blow, he reverses his lance and smites him with the butt. Of a truth, I know not what will be the issue between him and me; but I would we had in our army his like and the like of his men." Then he passed the night in sleep, and when it was morning, the Frank spurred out to the mid-field, where Sherkan met him, and they fell to fighting and circling one about the other, whilst all necks were stretched out to look at them; nor did they cease from battle and swordplay and thrusting with spears, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness, when they drew asunder and returned each to his own camp. Then each related to his comrades what had befallen him with his adversary, and the Frank said to his men, "To-morrow shall decide the matter." So they both passed the night in sleep, and as soon as it was day, they mounted and drove at each other and ceased not to fight till the middle of the day. Then the Frank made a shift, first spurring his horse and then checking him with the bridle, so that he stumbled and threw him; whereupon Sherkan fell on him and was about to smite him with his sword and make an end of the long strife, when the Frank cried out, "O Sherkan, this is not the fashion of champions! It is only the beaten who deal thus with women." When Sherkan heard this, he raised his eyes to the Frank's face and looking straitly at him, knew him for none other than the princess Abrizeh, whereupon he threw the sword from his hand and kissing the earth before her, said to her, "What moved thee to do

this thing?" Quoth she, "I was minded to prove thee in the field and try thy stoutness in battle. These that are with me are all of them my women, and they are all maids; yet have they overcome thy horsemen in fair fight; and had not my horse stumbled with me, thou shouldst have seen my strength and prowess." Sherkan smiled at her speech and said, "Praised be God for safety and for my reunion with thee, O queen of the age!" Then she cried out to her damsels to loose the prisoners and dismount. They did as she bade and came and kissed the earth before her and Sherkan, who said to them, "It is the like of you that kings treasure up against the hour of need." Then he signed to his comrades to salute the princess; so they dismounted all and kissed the earth before her, for they knew the story. After this, the whole two hundred mounted and rode day and night for six days' space, till they drew near to Baghdad when they halted and Sherkan made Abrizeh and her companions put off their male attire and don the dress of the women of the Greeks. Then he despatched a company of his men to Baghdad to acquaint his father with his arrival in company with the princess Abrizeh, daughter of King Herdoub, to the intent that he might send some one to meet her. They passed the night in that place, and when God the Most High brought on the day, Sherkan and his company took horse and fared on towards the city. On the way, they met the Vizier Dendan, who had come out with a thousand horse, by commandment of King Omar, to do honour to the princess Abrizeh and to Sherkan. When they drew near, the Vizier and his company dismounted and kissed the earth before the prince and princess, then mounted again and escorted them, till they reached the city and came to the palace. Sherkan went in to his father, who rose and embraced him and questioned him of what had happened. So he told him all that had befallen him, including what the princess Abrizeh had told him and what had passed between them and how she had left her father and her kingdom and had chosen to depart and take up her abode with them. And he said to his father, "Indeed, the King of Constantinople had plotted to do us a mischief, because of his daughter Sufiyeh, for that the King of Caesarea had made known to him her history and the manner of her being made a gift to thee, he not knowing her to be King Afridoun's daughter; else would he have restored her to her father. And of a verity, we were only saved from these perils by the lady Abrizeh, and never saw I a more valiant than she!" And he went on to tell his father of the wrestling and the jousting from beginning to end. When King Omar heard his son's story, Abrizeh was exalted in his eyes, and he longed to see her and sent Sherkan to fetch her. So Sherkan went out to her and said, "The king calls for thee." She replied, "I hear and obey;" and he took her and brought her in to his father, who was seated on his throne, attended only by the eunuchs, having dismissed his courtiers and officers. The princess entered and kissing the ground before him, saluted him in choice terms. He was amazed at her fluent speech and thanked her for her dealing with his son Sherkan and bade her be seated. So she sat down and uncovered her face, which when the king saw, his reason fled and he made her draw near and showed her especial favour, appointing her a palace for herself and her damsels and assigning them due allowances. Then he asked her of the three jewels aforesaid, and she replied, "O King of the age, they are with me." So saying, she rose and going to her lodging, opened her baggage and brought out a box, from which she took a casket of gold. She opened the casket and taking out the three jewels, kissed them and gave them to the King and went away, taking his heart with her. Then the king sent for his son

Sherkan and gave him one of the three jewels. Sherkan enquired of the other two, and the King replied, "O my son, I mean to give one to thy brother Zoulmekan and the other to thy sister Nuzhet ez Zeman." When Sherkan heard that he had a brother (for up to that time he had only known of his sister) he turned to his father and said to him, "O King, hast thou a son other than myself?" "Yes," answered Omar, "and he is now six years old." And he told him that his name was Zoulmekan and that he and Nuzhet ez Zeman were twins, born at a birth. This news was grievous to Sherkan, but he hid his chagrin and said, "The blessing of God the Most High be upon them!" And he threw the jewel from his hand and shook the dust off his clothes. Quoth his father, "What made thee change colour, when I told thee of this, seeing that the kingdom is assured to thee after me? For, verily, the troops have sworn to thee and the Amirs and grandees have taken the oath of succession to thee; and this one of the three jewels is thine." At this, Sherkan bowed his head and was ashamed to bandy words with his father: so he accepted the jewel and went away, knowing not what to do for excess of anger, and stayed not till he reached the princess Abrizeh's palace. When she saw him, she rose to meet him and thanked him for what he had done and called down blessings on him and his father. Then she sat down and made him sit by her side. After awhile, she saw anger in his face and questioned him, whereupon he told her that God had vouchsafed his father two children, a boy and a girl, by Sufiyeh, and that he had named the boy Zoulmekan and the girl Nuzhet ez Zeman. "He has given me one of the jewels," continued he, "and kept the other two for them. I knew not of Zoulmekan's birth till this day, and he is now six years old. So when I learnt this, wrath possessed me and I threw down the jewel: and I tell thee the reason of my anger and hide nothing from thee. But I fear lest the King take thee to wife, for he loves thee and I saw in him signs of desire for thee: so what wilt thou say, if he wish this?" "Know, O Sherkan," replied the princess, "that thy father has no dominion over me, nor can he take me without my consent; and if he take me by force, I will kill myself. As for the three jewels, it was not my intent that he should give them to either of his children and I had no thought but that he would lay them up with his things of price in his treasury; but now I desire of thy favour that thou make me a present of the jewel that he gave thee, if thou hast accepted it." "I hear and obey," replied Sherkan and gave her the jewel. Then said she, "Fear nothing," and talked with him awhile. Presently she said, "I fear lest my father hear that I am with you and sit not down with my loss, but do his endeavour to come at me; and to that end he may ally himself with King Afridoun and both come on thee with armies and so there befall a great turmoil." "O my lady," replied Sherkan, "if it please thee to sojourn with us, take no thought of them, though all that be in the earth and in the ocean gather themselves together against us!" "It is well," rejoined she; "if ye entreat me well, I will tarry with you, and if ye deal evilly by me, I will depart from you." Then she bade her maidens bring food; so they set the tables, and Sherkan ate a little and went away to his own house, anxious and troubled.

Meanwhile, King Omar betook himself to the lodging of the lady Sufiyeh, who rose to her feet, when she saw him, and stood till he was seated. Presently, his two children, Zoulmekan and Nuzbet ez Zeman, came to him, and he kissed them and hung a jewel round each one's neck, at which they rejoiced and kissed his hands. Then they went to their mother, who rejoiced in them and wished the King long life; and he

said to her, "Why hast thou not told me, all this time, that thou art King Afridoun's daughter, that I might have advanced thee and enlarged thee in dignity and used thee with increase of honour and consideration?" "O King," replied Sufiyeh, "what could I desire greater or more exalted than this my standing with thee, overwhelmed as I am with thy favours and thy goodness? And God to boot hath blessed me by thee with two children, a son and a daughter." Her answer pleased the King and he set apart for her and her children a splendid palace. Moreover, he appointed for their service eunuchs and attendants and doctors and sages and astrologers and physicians and surgeons and in every way redoubled in favour and munificence towards them. Nevertheless, he was greatly occupied with love of the princess Abrizeh and burnt with desire of her night and day; and every night, he would go in to her, and talk with her and pay his court to her, but she gave him no answer, saying only, "O King of the age, I have no desire for men at this present." When he saw that she repelled him, his passion and longing increased till, at last, when he was weary of this, he called his Vizier Dendan and opening his heart to him, told him how love for the princess Abrizeh was killing him and how she refused to yield to his wishes and he could get nothing of her. Quoth the Vizier, "As soon as it is dark night, do thou take a piece of henbane, the bigness of a diner, and go in to her and drink wine with her. When the hour of leave-taking draws near, fill a last cup and dropping the henbane in it, give it to her to drink, and she will not reach her sleeping chamber, ere the drug take effect on her. Then do thou go in to her and take thy will of her." "Thy counsel is good," said the King, and going to his treasury, took thence a piece of concentrated henbane, which if an elephant smelt, he would sleep from year to year. He put it in his bosom and waited till some little of the night was past, when he betook himself to the palace of the princess, who rose to receive him; but he bade her sit down. So she sat down, and he by her, and he began to talk with her of drinking, whereupon she brought the table of wine and set it before him. Then she set on the drinking-vessels, and lighted the candles and called for fruits and confections and sweetmeats and all that pertains to drinking. So they fell to drinking and ceased not to carouse, till drunkenness crept into the princess's head. When the King saw this, he took out the piece of henbane and holding it between his fingers, filled a cup and drank it off; then filled another cup, into which he dropped the henbane, unseen of Abrizeh, and saying, "Thy health!" presented it to her. She took it and drank it off; then rose and went to her sleeping-chamber. He waited awhile, till he was assured that the drug had taken effect on her and gotten the mastery of her senses, when he went in to her and found her lying on her back, with a lighted candle at her head and another at her feet. She had put off her trousers, and the air raised the skirt of her shift and discovered what was between her thighs. When the King saw this, he took leave of his senses for desire and Satan tempted him and he could not master himself, but put off his trousers and fell upon her and did away her maidenhead. Then he went out and said to one of her women, by name Merjaneh, "Go in to thy mistress, for she calls for thee." So she went in to the princess and found her lying on her back, with the blood running down her thighs; whereupon she took a handkerchief and wiped away the blood and tended her mistress and lay by her that night. As soon as it was day, she washed the princess's hands and feet and bathed her face and mouth with rose-water, whereupon she sneezed and yawned and cast up the henbane. Then she revived and washed her hands and mouth and said to Merjaneh, "Tell me what has

befallen me." So she told her what had passed and how she had found her, lying on her back, with the blood running down her thighs, wherefore she knew that the King had played the traitor with her and had undone her and taken his will of her. At this she was afflicted and shut herself up, saying to her damsels, "Let no one come in to me and say to all that I am ill, till I see what God will do with me." The news of her illness came to the King, and he sent her cordials and sherbet of sugar and confections. Some months passed thus, during which time the King's flame subsided and his desire for her cooled, so that he abstained from her. Now she had conceived by him, and in due time, her pregnancy appeared and her belly swelled, wherefore the world was straitened upon her and she said to her maid Merjaneh, "Know that it is not the folk who have wronged me, but I who sinned against myself in that I left my father and mother and country. Indeed, I abhor life, for my heart is broken and I have neither courage nor strength left. I used, when I mounted my horse, to have the mastery of him, but now I have no strength to ride. If I be brought to bed in this place, I shall be dishonoured among my women, and every one in the palace will know that he has taken my maidenhead in the way of shame; and if I return to my father, with what face shall I meet him or have recourse to him? How well says the poet:

Wherewith shall I be comforted, that am of all bereft, To whom nor folk nor home nor friend nor dwelling-place is left?"

Quoth Merjaneh, "It is for thee to command; I will obey." And Abrizeh said, "I would fain leave this place privily, so that none shall know of me but thou, and return to my father and mother; for when flesh stinketh, there is nought for it but its own folk, and God shall do with me as He will." "It is well, O princess," replied Merjaneh. So she made ready in secret and waited awhile, till the King went out to hunt and Sherkan betook himself to certain of the fortresses to sojourn there awhile. Then she said to Merjaneh, "I wish to set out to-night, but how shall I do? For already I feel the pangs of labour, and if I abide other four or five days, I shall be brought to bed here, and how then can I go to my country? But this is what was written on my forehead." Then she considered awhile and said, "Look us out a man who will go with us and serve us by the way, for I have no strength to bear arms." "By Allah, O my lady," replied Merjaneh, "I know none but a black slave called Ghezban, who is one of the slaves of King Omar ben Ennuman; he is a stout fellow and keeps guard at the gate of our palace. The King appointed him to attend us, and indeed we have overwhelmed him with favours. I will go out and speak with him of the matter and promise him money and tell him that, if he have a mind to tarry with us, we will marry him to whom he will. He told me before to-day that he had been a highwayman; so if he consent, we shall have our desire and come to our own country." "Call him, that I may talk with him," said the princess. So Merjaneh went out and said to the slave, "O Ghezban, God prosper thee, do thou fall in with what my lady says to thee." Then she took him by the hand and brought him to Abrizeh. He kissed the princess's hands and when she saw him, her heart took fright at him, but she said to herself, "Necessity is imperious," and to him, "O Ghezban, wilt thou help us against the perfidies of fortune and keep my secret, if I discover it to thee?" When the slave saw her, his heart was taken by storm and he fell in love with her forthright, and could not choose but answer, "O my mistress, whatsoever thou biddest me do, I will not depart from it." Quoth she, "I

would have thee take me and this my maid and saddle us two camels and two of the king's horses and set on each horse a saddle-bag of stuff and somewhat of victual, and go with us to our own country; where, if thou desire to abide with us, I will marry thee to her thou shalt choose of my damsels; or if thou prefer to return to thine own country, we will send thee thither, with as much money as will content thee." When Ghezban heard this, he rejoiced greatly and replied, "O my lady, I will serve thee faithfully and will go at once and saddle the horses." Then he went away, rejoicing and saying in himself, "I shall get my will of them; and if they will not yield to me, I will kill them and take their riches." But this his intent he kept to himself and presently returned, mounted on one horse and leading other two and two camels. He brought the horses to the princess, who mounted one and made Merjaneh mount the other, albeit she was suffering from the pains of labour and could scarce possess herself for anguish. Then they set out and journeyed night and day through the passes of the mountains, till there remained but a day's journey between them and their own country, when the pangs of travail came upon Abrizeh and she could no longer sit her horse. So she said to Ghezban, "Set me down, for the pains of labour are upon me," and cried to Merjaneh, saying, "Do thou alight and sit down by me and deliver me." They both drew rein and dismounting from their horses, helped the princess to alight, and she aswoon for stress of pain. When Ghezban saw her on the ground, Satan entered into him and he drew his sabre and brandishing it in her face, said, "O my lady, vouchsafe me thy favours." With this, she turned to him and said, "It were a fine thing that I should yield to black slaves, after having I refused kings and princes!" And she was wroth with him and said, "What words are these? Out on thee! Do not talk thus in my presence and know that I will never consent to what thou sayst, though I drink the cup of death. Wait till I have cast my burden and am delivered of the after-birth, and after, if thou be able thereto, do with me as thou wilt; but, an thou leave not lewd talk at this time, I will slay myself and leave the world and be at peace from all this." And she recited the following verses:

O Ghezban, unhand me and let me go freer
Sure, fortune is heavy enough upon me.
My Lord hath forbidden me whoredom.
"The fire Shall be the transgressor's last dwelling," quoth He:
So look not on me with the eye of desire,
For surely to lewdness I may not agree;
And if thou respect not mine honour and God
Nor put away filthy behaviour from thee,
I will call with my might on the men of my tribe
And draw them ail hither from upland and lea.
Were I hewn, limb from limb, with the Yemani sword,
Yet never a lecher my visage should see
Of the freeborn and mighty; so how then should I
Let a whoreson black slave have possession of me?

When Ghezban heard this, he was exceeding angry; his eyes grew bloodshot and his face became of the colour of dust; his nostrils swelled, his lips protruded and the terrors of his aspect redoubled. And he repeated the following verses:

Abrizeh, have mercy nor leave me to sigh,
Who am slain by the glance of thy Yemani eye!
My body is wasted, my patience at end,
And my heart for thy cruelty racked like to die.
Thy glances with sorcery ravish all hearts;
My reason is distant and passion is nigh.
Though thou drewst to thy succour the world full of troops,
I'd not stir till my purpose accomplished had I.

Thereupon Abrizeh wept sore and said to him, "Out on thee, O Ghezban! How darest thou demand this of me, O son of shame and nursling of lewdness? Dost thou think all folk are alike!" When the pestilent slave heard this, he was enraged and his eyes reddened: and he came up to her and smote her with the sword on her neck and killed her. Then he made off into the mountains, driving her horse before him with the treasure. In the agonies of death, she gave birth to a son, like the moon, and Merjaneh took him and laid him by her side, after doing him the necessary offices; and behold, the child fastened to its mother's breast, and she dead. When Merjaneh saw this, she cried out grievously and rent her clothes and cast dust on her head and buffeted her cheeks, till the blood came, saying, "Alas, my mistress! Alas, the pity of it! Thou art dead by the hand of a worthless black slave, after all thy prowess!" As she sat weeping, there arose a great cloud of dust and darkened the plain; but, after awhile, it lifted and discovered a numerous army. Now this was the army of King Herdoub, the princess Abrizeh's father, who, hearing that his daughter had fled to Baghdad, she and her maidens, and that they were with King Omar ben Ennuman, had come out with his troops to seek tidings of her from travellers who might have seen her with King Omar at Baghdad. When he had gone a day's journey from his capital, he espied three horsemen afar off and made towards them, thinking to ask whence they came and seek news of his daughter. Now these three were his daughter and Merjaneh and Ghezban; and when the latter saw the troops drawing near, he feared for himself; so he killed Abrizeh and fled. When they came up and King Herdoub saw his daughter lying dead and Merjaneh weeping over her, he threw himself from his horse and fell down in a swoon. So all his company dismounted and pitching the tents, set up a great pavilion for the King, without which stood the grandees of the kingdom. At the sight of her lord the King, Merjaneh's tears redoubled, and when he came to himself, he questioned her and she told him all that had passed, how he that had slain his daughter was a black slave, belonging to King Omar ben Ennuman, and how the latter had dealt with the princess. When King Herdoub heard this, the world grew black in his sight and he wept sore. Then he called for a litter and laying his dead daughter therein, returned to Caesarea and carried her into the palace. Then he went in to his mother Dhat ed Dewahi and said to her, "Shall the Muslims deal thus with my daughter? King Omar ben Ennuman despoiled her by force of her honour and after this, one of his black slaves slew her. By the Messiah, I will assuredly be revenged for her and clear away the stain from my honour! Else I shall kill myself with my own hand." And he wept passing sore. Quoth his mother, "It was none other than Merjaneh killed her, for she hated her in secret. But do not thou fret for taking revenge for thy daughter, for, by the virtue of the Messiah, I will not turn back from King Omar ben Ennuman, till I have

slain him and his sons; and I will assuredly do a deed, passing the power of wise men and champions, of which the chroniclers shall tell in all countries and places: but needs must thou obey me in all I shall direct, for he who is firmly set on aught shall surely compass his desire." "By the virtue of the Messiah," replied he, "I will not cross thee in aught that thou shalt say!" Then said she, "Bring me a number of damsels, high-bosomed maids, and summon the wise men of the time and let them teach them philosophy and the art of conversation and making verses and the rules of behaviour before kings, and let them talk with them of all manner of science and edifying knowledge. The sages must be Muslims, that they may teach the damsels the language and traditions of the Arabs, together with the history of the Khalifs and the pedigree of the Kings of Islam; and if we persevere in this for the space of four years, we shall attain our end. So possess thy soul in patience and wait; for, as one of the Arabs says, 'It is a little thing to wait forty years for one's revenge.' When we have taught the girls these things, we shall be able to do our will with our enemy, for he is a doting lover of women and has three hundred and threescore concubines, to which are now added a hundred of the flower of thy damsels, that were with thy late daughter. So, as soon as we have made an end of their education, I will take them and set out with them." When the King heard his mother's words, he rejoiced and came up to her and kissed her head. Then he rose at once and despatched messengers and couriers to the ends of the earth, to fetch him Muslim sages. So they betook them to distant lands and brought him thence the sages and doctors whom he sought. When they were before him, he made much of them and bestowed on them dresses of honour, appointing them stipends and allowances and promising them much money, whenas they should have taught the damsels. Then he committed the latter to their charge, enjoining them to instruct them in all manner of knowledge, sacred and profane, and all polite accomplishments; and they set themselves to do his bidding.

As for King Omar ben Ennuman, when he returned from hunting, he sought the princess Abrizeh, but found her not nor could any give him news of her. This was grievous to him and he said, "How did she leave the palace, unknown of any? Had my kingdom been at stake in this, it were in a parlous case! Never again will I go a-hunting till I have sent to the gates those who shall keep good guard over them!" And he was sore vexed and heavy at heart for the loss of the princess Abrizeh. Presently, his son Sherkan returned from his journey; and he told him what had happened and how the princess had fled, whilst he was absent a-hunting, whereat he was greatly concerned. Then King Omar took to visiting his children every day and making much of them and brought them wise men and doctors, to teach them, appointing them stipends and allowances. When Sherkan saw this, he was exceeding wroth and jealous of his brother and sister, so that the signs of chagrin appeared in his face and he ceased not to languish by reason of this, till one day his father said to him, "What ails thee, that I see thee grown weak in body and pale of face?" "O my father," replied Sherkan, "every time I see thee fondle my brother and sister and make much of them, jealousy seizes on me, and I fear lest it grow on me, till I slay them and thou slay me in return. This is the reason of my weakness of body and change of colour. But now I crave of thy favour that thou give me one of thine outlying fortresses, that I may abide there the rest of my life, for as the byword says, 'It is better and fitter for me to be at a distance from my friend; for when the eye seeth not, the heart doth not grieve.'" And he bowed his head.

When the King heard Sherkan's words and knew the cause of his ailment, he soothed him and said to him, "O my son, I grant thee this. I have not in my realm a greater than the fortress of Damascus, and the government of it is thine from this time." So saying, he called his secretaries of state and bade them make out Sherkan's patent of investiture to the viceroyalty of Damascus of Syria. Then he equipped Sherkan and formally invested him with the office and gave him his final instructions, enjoining him to policy and good government; and the prince took leave of his father and the grandees and officers of state and set out for his government, taking with him the Vizier Dendan. When he arrived at Damascus, the townspeople beat the drums and blew the trumpets and decorated the city and came out to meet him in great state, whilst all the notables and grandees walked in procession, each according to his rank.

Soon after Sherkan's departure, the governors of King Omar's children presented themselves before him and said to him, "O our lord, thy children's education is now complete and they are versed in all polite accomplishments and in the rules of manners and etiquette." At this the King rejoiced with an exceeding joy and conferred bountiful largesse upon the wise men, seeing Zoulmekan grown up and flourishing and skilled in horsemanship. The prince had now reached the age of fourteen and occupied himself with piety and devout exercises, loving the poor and wise men and the students of the Koran, so that all the people of Baghdad loved him, men and women. One day, the procession of the Mehmil of Irak passed round Baghdad, previously to the departure of the pilgrimage to the holy places and tomb of the Prophet. When Zoulmekan saw the procession, he was seized with longing to go on the pilgrimage; so he went in to his father and said to him, "I come to ask thy leave to make the pilgrimage."

But his father forbade him, saying, "Wait till next year, and I will go with thee." When Zoulmekan saw that the fulfilment of his desire was postponed, he betook himself to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman, whom he found standing at prayer. As soon as she had made an end of her devotions, he said to her, "I am dying of desire to see the Holy House of God at Mecca and to visit the Prophet's tomb. I asked my father's leave, but he forbade me: so I mean to take somewhat of money and set out privily on the pilgrimage, without his knowledge." "I conjure thee by Allah," exclaimed she, "to take me with thee and that thou forbid me not to visit the tomb of the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve!" And he answered, "As soon as it is dark night, do thou leave this place, without telling any, and come to me." Accordingly, she waited till the middle of the night, when she donned a man's habit and went to the gate of the palace, where she found Zoulmekan with camels ready harnessed. So they mounted and riding after the caravan, mingled with the Irak pilgrims, and God decreed them a prosperous journey, so that they entered Mecca the Holy in safety, standing upon Arafat and performing the various rites of the pilgrimage. Then they paid a visit to the tomb of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) and thought to return with the pilgrims to their native land; but Zoulmekan said to his sister, "O my sister, it is in my mind to visit Jerusalem and the tomb of Abraham the friend of God (on whom be peace)." "I also desire to do this," replied she. So they agreed upon this, and he went out and took passage for himself and her and they made ready and set out with a company of pilgrims bound for Jerusalem. That very night she fell sick of an ague and was grievously ill, but presently recovered, after which her brother also sickened. She tended him during the

journey, but the fever increased on him and he grew weaker and weaker, till they arrived at Jerusalem, where they alighted at a khan and hired a lodging there. Here they abode some time, whilst Zoulmekan's weakness increased on him, till he was wasted with sickness and became delirious. At this, his sister was greatly afflicted and exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! It is He who hath decreed this." They sojourned there awhile, his sickness ever increasing and she tending him, till all their money was spent and she had not so much as a dirhem left. Then she sent a servant of the khan to the market, to sell some of her clothes, and spent the price upon her brother; and so she sold all she had, piece by piece, till she had nothing left but an old rug; whereupon she wept and exclaimed, "God is the Orderer of the past and the future!" Presently, her brother said to her, "O my sister, I feel recovery drawing near and I long for a little roast meat." "O my brother," replied she, "I am ashamed to beg; but tomorrow I will enter some rich man's house and serve him and earn somewhat for our living." Then she bethought herself awhile and said, "It is hard to me to leave thee and thou in this state, but I must perforce go." "God forbid!" rejoined he. "Thou wilt be put to shame; but there is no power and no virtue but in God!" And he wept and she wept too. Then she said, "O my brother, we are strangers and this whole year have we dwelt here; yet none hath knocked at our door. Shall we then die of hunger? I know no resource but that I go out and earn somewhat to keep us alive, till thou recover from thy sickness; when we will return to our native land." She sat weeping with him awhile, after which she rose and veiling her head with a camel-cloth, which the owner had forgotten with them, embraced her brother and went forth, weeping and knowing not whither she should go. Zoulmekan abode, awaiting her return, till the evening; but she came not, and the night passed and the morning came, but still she returned not; and so two days went by. At this he was greatly troubled and his heart fluttered for her, and hunger was sore upon him. At last he left the chamber and calling the servant of the inn, bade him carry him to the bazaar. So he carried him to the market and laid him down there; and the people of Jerusalem came round him and were moved to tears at his condition. He signed to them for somewhat to eat; so they took money from some of the merchants and bought food and fed him therewith; after which they carried him to a shop, where they laid him on a mat of palm-leaves and set a vessel of water at his head. At nightfall, they all went away, sore concerned for him, and in the middle of the night, he called to mind his sister, and his sickness redoubled on him, so that he abstained from eating and drinking and became insensible. When the people of the market saw him thus, they took thirty dirhems for him from the merchants and hiring a camel, said to the driver, "Carry this sick man to Damascus and leave him at the hospital; peradventure he may be cured and recover his health." "On my head be it!" replied he; but he said to himself, "How shall I take this sick man to Damascus, and he nigh upon death?" So he carried him away and hid with him till the night, when he threw him down on the fuel-heap in the stoke-hole of a bath and went his way. In the morning, the stoker of the bath came to his work and finding Zoulmekan cast on his back on the fuel-heap, exclaimed, "Could they find no other place in which to throw this dead man?" So saying, he gave him a push with his foot, and he moved, whereupon quoth the stoker, "This is some one who has eaten hashish and thrown himself down at hazard." Then he looked at him and saw that he had no hair on his face and was endowed with grace

and comeliness; so he took pity on him and knew that he was sick and a stranger. "There is no power and no virtue but in God!" said he "I have sinned against this youth; for indeed the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) enjoins hospitality to strangers." Then he lifted him up and carrying him to his own house, committed him to his wife and bade her tend him. So she spread him a bed and laid a cushion under his head, then heated water and washed his hands and feet and face. Meanwhile, the stoker went to the market and buying rose-water and sherbet of sugar, sprinkled Zoulmekan's face with the one and gave him to drink of the other. Then he fetched a clean shirt and put it on him. With this, Zoulmekan scented the breeze of recovery and life returned to him; and he sat up and leant against the pillow. At this the stoker rejoiced and exclaimed, "O my God, I beseech Thee, by Thy hidden mysteries, make the salvation of this youth to be at my hands!" And he nursed him assiduously for three days, giving him to drink of sherbet of sugar and willow-flower water and rose-water and doing him all manner of service and kindness, till health began to return to his body and he opened his eyes and sat up. Presently the stoker came in and seeing him sitting up and showing signs of amendment, said to him, "How dost thou now, O my son?" "Thanks be to God," replied Zoulmekan, "I am well and like to recover, if so He please." The stoker praised the Lord of All for this and going to the market, bought ten chickens, which he carried to his wife and said to her, "Kill two of these for him every day, one in the morning and the other at nightfall." So she rose and killed a fowl, then boiling it, brought it to him and fed him with the flesh and gave him the broth to drink. When he had done eating, she brought hot water and he washed his hands and lay back upon the pillow; whereupon she covered him up and he slept till the time of afternoon-prayer. Then she killed another fowl and boiled it; after which she cut it up and bringing it to Zoulmekan, said, "Eat, O my son!" Presently, her husband entered and seeing her feeding him, sat down at his head and said to him, "How is it with thee now, O my son?" "Thanks be to God for recovery!" replied he. "May He requite thee thy goodness to me!" At this the stoker rejoiced and going out, bought sherbet of violets and rose-water and made him drink it. Now his day's earnings at the bath were five dirhems, of which he spent every day two dirhems for Zoulmekan, one for sweet waters and sherbets and another for fowls; and he ceased not to entreat him thus kindly for a whole month, till the trace of illness ceased from him and he was quite recovered whereupon the stoker and his wife rejoiced and the former said to him, "O my son, wilt thou go with me to the bath?" "Willingly," replied he. So the stoker went to the market and fetched an ass, on which he mounted Zoulmekan and supported him in the saddle, till they came to the bath Then he made him alight and sit down, whilst he repaired to the market and bought lote-leaves and lupin-meal, with which he returned to the bath and said to Zoulmekan, "O my son, in the name of God, enter, and I will wash thy body." So they both entered the inner room of the bath, and the stoker fell to rubbing Zoulmekan's legs and was going on to wash his body with the lote-leaves and powder, when there came to them a bathman, whom the keeper of the bath had sent to Zoulmekan, and seeing the stoker rubbing and washing the latter, said to him, "This is trespassing on the keeper's rights." "By Allah," replied the stoker, "the master overwhelms us with his favours!" Then the bathman proceeded to shave Zoulmekan's head, after which he and the stoker washed and returned to the latter's house, where he clad Zoulmekan in a shirt of fine stuff and a tunic of his own and gave him a

handsome turban and girdle and wound a silken kerchief about his neck. Meanwhile the stoker's wife had killed two chickens and cooked them for him; so, as soon as Zoulmekan entered and seated himself on the couch, the stoker arose and dissolving sugar in willow-flower water, made him drink it. Then he brought the tray of food and cutting up the chickens, fed him with the meat and broth, till he was satisfied, when he washed his hands and praised God for recovery, saying to the stoker, "It is to thee, under God the Most High, that I owe my life!" "Leave this talk," replied the stoker, "and tell us the manner of thy coming to this city and whence thou art; for I see signs of gentle breeding in thy face." "Tell me first how thou camest to fall in with me," said Zoulmekan; "and after I will tell thee my story." "As for that," rejoined the stoker, "I found thee lying on the rubbish-heap, by the door of the stoke-house, as I went to my work, near the morning, and knew not who had thrown thee down there. So I carried thee home with me; and this all I have to tell." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Glory to Him who quickens the bones, though they be rotten! Indeed, O my brother, thou hast not done good to one who is unworthy, and thou shalt reap the reward of this. But where am I now?" "In the city of Jerusalem," replied the stoker; whereupon Zoulmekan called to mind his strangerhood and his separation from his sister and wept. Then he discovered his secret to the stoker and told him his story, repeating the following verses:

They heaped up passion on my soul, beyond my strength to bear,
And for their sake my heart is racked with weariness and care.
Ah, be ye pitiful to me, O cruel that ye are,
For e'en my foes do pity me, since you away did fare!
Grudge not to grant unto mine eyes a passing glimpse of you,
To ease the longing of my soul and lighten my despair.
I begged my heart to arm itself with patience for your loss.
"Patience was never of my wont," it answered; "so forbear."

Then he redoubled his weeping, and the stoker said to him, "Weep not, but rather praise God for safety and recovery." Quoth Zoulmekan, "How far is it hence to Damascus?" "Six days' journey," answered the stoker "Wilt thou send me thither?" asked Zoulmekan. "O my lord," replied the stoker, "how can I let thee go alone, and thou a young lad and a stranger? If thou be minded to make the journey to Damascus, I will go with thee; and if my wife will listen to me and accompany me, I will take up my abode there; for it goes to my heart to part with thee." Then said he to his wife, "Wilt thou go with me to Damascus or wilt thou abide here, whilst I bring this my lord thither and return to thee? For he is bent upon, going to Damascus, and by Allah, it is hard to me to part with him, and I fear for him from the highway robbers." Quoth she, "I will go with you." And he said, "Praised be God for accord!" Then he rose and selling all his own and his wife's gear, bought a camel and hired an ass for Zoulmekan; and they set out and reached Damascus at nightfall after six days' journey. They alighted there, and the stoker went to the market and bought meat and drink. They had dwelt but five days in Damascus, when his wife sickened and after a few days' illness, was translated to the mercy of God. The stoker mourned for her with an exceeding grief, and her death was no light matter to Zoulmekan, for she had tended him assiduously and he was grown used to her. Presently, he turned to the stoker and finding him mourning, said to him, "Do not grieve, for we must all go in at this gate."

"God requite thee with good, O my son!" replied the stoker. "Surely He will compensate us with his bounties and cause our mourning to cease. What sayst thou, O my son? Shall we walk abroad to view Damascus and cheer our spirits?" "Thy will is mine," replied Zoulmekan. So the stoker took him by the hand, and they sallied forth and walked on, till they came to the stables of the Viceroy of Damascus, where they found camels laden with chests and carpets and brocaded stuffs and saddle-horses and Bactrian camels and slaves, white and black, and folk running to and fro and a great bustle. Quoth Zoulmekan, "I wonder to whom all these camels and stuffs and servants belong!" So he asked one of the slaves, and he replied, "These are presents that the Viceroy of Damascus is sending to King Omar ben Ennuman, with the tribute of Syria." When Zoulmekan heard his father's name, his eyes filled with tears and he repeated the following verses:

Ye that are far removed from my desireful sight,
Ye that within my heart are sojourners for aye,
Your comeliness is gone and life no more for me
Is sweet, nor will the pains of longing pass away.
If God one day decree reunion of our loves,
How long a tale of woes my tongue will have to say!

Then he wept and the stoker said to him, "O my son, thou art hardly yet recovered; so take heart and do not weep, for I fear a relapse for thee." And he applied himself to comfort him and cheer him, whilst Zoulmekan sighed and bemoaned his strangerhood and separation from his sister and his family and repeated the following verses, with tears streaming from his eyes:

Provide thee for the world to come, for needs must thou be gone;
Or soon or late, for every one the lot of death is drawn.
Thy fortune in this world is but delusion and regret;
Thy life in it but vanity and empty chaff and awn.
The world, indeed, is but as 'twere a traveller's halting-place,
Who makes his camels kneel at eve and fares on with the dawn.

And he continued to weep and lament, whilst the stoker wept too for the loss of his wife, yet ceased not to comfort Zoulmekan till the morning. When the sun rose, he said to him, "Meseems thou yearnest for thy native land?" "Even so," replied Zoulmekan, "and I may not tarry here; so I will commend thee to God's care and set out with these people and journey with them, little by little, till I come to my country." "And I with thee," said the stoker; "for I cannot bear to part with thee. I have done thee service, and I mean to complete it by tending thee on the way." At this, Zoulmekan rejoiced and said, "May God abundantly requite thee for me!" Then the stoker went out and selling the camel, bought another ass, which he brought to Zoulmekan, saying, "This is for thee to ride by the way; and when thou art weary of riding, thou canst dismount and walk." "May God bless thee and help me to requite thee!" said Zoulmekan. "Indeed, thou hast dealt with me more lovingly than one with his brother." Then the stoker provided himself with victual for the journey, and they waited till it was dark night, when they laid their provisions and baggage on the ass and set out on their journey.

To return to Nuzhet ez Zeman, when she left her brother in the khan and went out to seek service with some one, that she might earn wherewith to buy him the roast meat he longed for, she fared on, weeping and knowing not whither to go, whilst her mind was occupied with concern for her brother and with thoughts of her family and her native land. And she implored God the Most High to do away these afflictions from them and repeated the following verses:

The shadows darken and passion stirs up my sickness amain,
And longing rouses within me the old desireful pain.
The anguish of parting hath taken its sojourn in my breast,
And love and longing and sorrow have maddened heart and brain.
Passion hath made me restless and longing consumes my soul
And tears discover the secret that else concealed had lain.
I know of no way to ease me of sickness and care and woe,
Nor can my weak endeavour reknit love's severed skein.
The fire of my heart with yearnings and longing grief is fed
And for its heat, the lover to live in hell is fain.
O thou that thinkest to blame me for what betides me, enough;
God knows I suffer with patience whate'er He doth ordain.
I swear I shall ne'er find solace nor be consoled for love,
The oath of the children of passion, whose oaths are ne'er in vain!
Bear tidings of me, I prithee, O night, to the bards of love
And that in thee I sleep not be witness yet again!

She walked on, weeping and turning right and left, as she went, till there espied her an old man who had come into the town from the desert with other five Bedouins. He took note of her and seeing that she was charming, but had nothing on her head but a piece of camel-cloth, marvelled at her beauty and said in himself, "This girl is pretty enough to dazzle the wit, but it is clear she is in poor case, and whether she be of the people of the city or a stranger, I must have her." So he followed her, little by little, till presently he came in front of her and stopping the way before her in a narrow lane, called out to her, saying, "Harkye, daughterling, art thou a freewoman or a slave?" When she heard this, she said to him, "By thy life, do not add to my troubles! "Quoth he, "God blessed me with six daughters, but five of them died and only one is left me, the youngest of them all; and I came to ask thee if thou wert of the people of this city or a stranger, that I might take thee and carry thee to her, to bear her company and divert her from mourning for her sisters, If thou hast no parents, I will use thee as one of them, and thou and she shall be as my two children." When she heard what he said, she bowed her head for bashfulness and said to herself, "Surely I may trust myself to this old man." Then she said to him, "O uncle, I am a girl of the Arabs (of Irak) and a stranger, and I have a sick brother; but I will go with thee to thy daughter on one condition; that is, that I may spend the day only with her and go to my brother at night. I am a stranger and was high in honour among my people, yet am I become cast down and abject. I came with my brother from the land of Hejaz and I fear lest he know not where I am." When the Bedouin heard this, he said to himself, "By Allah, I have gotten what I sought!" Then he turned to her and said, "There shall none be dearer to me than thou; I only wish thee to bear my daughter company by day, and

thou shalt go to thy brother at nightfall. Or, if thou wilt, bring him to dwell with us." And he ceased not to give her fair words and coax her, till she trusted in him and agreed to serve him. Then he went on before her and she followed him, whilst he winked to his men to go on in advance and harness the camels and load them with food and water, ready for setting out as soon as he should come up. Now this Bedouin was a base-born wretch, a highway-robber and a brigand, a traitor to his friend and a past master in craft and roguery. He had no daughter and no son, and was but a wayfarer in Jerusalem, when, by the decree of God, he fell in with this unhappy girl. He held her in converse till they came without the city, where he joined his companions and found they had made ready the camels. So he mounted a camel, taking Nuzhet ez Zeman up behind him, and they rode on all night, making for the mountains, for fear any should see them. By this, she knew that the Bedouin's proposal was a snare and that he had tricked her; and she gave not over weeping and crying out the whole night long. A little before the dawn, they halted and the Bedouin came up to Nuzhet ez Zeman and said to her, "O wretch, what is this weeping! By Allah, an thou hold not thy peace, I will beat thee to death, city faggot that thou art!" When she heard this, she abhorred life and longed for death; so she turned to him and said, "O accursed old man, O greybeard of hell, did I trust in thee and hast thou played me false, and now thou wouldst torture me?" When he heard her words, he cried out, "O insolent wretch, dost thou dare to bandy words with me?" And he came up to her and beat her with a whip, saying, "An thou hold not thy peace, I will kill thee." So she was silent awhile, but she called to mind her brother and her former happy estate and wept in secret. Next day, she turned to the Bedouin and said to him, "How couldst thou deal thus perfidiously with me and lure me into these desert mountains, and what wilt thou do with me?" When he heard her words, he hardened his heart and said to her, "O pestilent baggage, wilt thou bandy words with me?" So saying, he took the whip and brought it down on her back, till she well-nigh fainted. Then she bowed down and kissed his feet; and he left beating her and began to revile her, saying, "By my bonnet, if I see or hear thee weeping, I will cut out thy tongue and thrust it up thy kaze, city strumpet that thou art!" So she was silent and made him no reply, for the beating irked her; but sat down, with her arms round her knees and bowing her head, fell a-musing on her case. Then she bethought her of her former ease and affluence and her present abasement, and called to mind her brother and his sickness and forlorn condition and how they were both strangers in a foreign land; whereat the tears coursed down her cheeks and she wept silently and repeated the following verses:

The tides of fate 'twixt good and ill shift ever to and fro,
And no estate of life for men endureth evermo'.
All things that to the world belong have each their destined end
And to all men a term is set, which none may overgo.
How long must I oppression bear and peril and distress!
Ah, how I loathe this life of mine, that nought but these can show!
May God not prosper them, these days, wherein I am oppressed of
Fate, these cruel days that add abjection to my woe!
My purposes are brought to nought, my loves are reft in twain
By exile's rigour, and my hopes are one and all laid low.

O ye, who pass the dwelling by, wherein my dear ones are,
Bear them the news of me and say, my tears for ever flow.

When she had finished, the Bedouin came up to her and taking compassion on her, bespoke her kindly and wiped away her tears. Then he gave her a cake of barley-bread and said to her, "I do not love to be answered, when I am angry: so henceforth give me no more of these insolent words, and I will sell thee to an honest fellow like myself, who will use thee well, even as I have done." "It is well," answered she; and when the night was long upon her and hunger gnawed her, she ate a little of the barley-cake. In the middle of the night, the Bedouin gave the signal for departure; so they loaded the camels and he mounted one of them, taking Nuzhet ez Zeman up behind him. Then they set out and journeyed, without stopping, for three days, till they reached the city of Damascus, where they alighted at the Sultan's khan, hard by the Viceroy's Gate. Now she had lost her colour and her charms were changed by grief and the fatigue of the journey, and she ceased not to weep. So the Bedouin came up to her and said, "Hark ye, city wench! By my bonnet, an thou leave not this weeping, I will sell thee to a Jew!" Then he took her by the hand and carried her to a chamber, where he left her and went to the bazaar. Here he went round to the merchants who dealt in slave-girls and began to parley with them, saying, "I have with me a slave-girl, whose brother fell ill, and I sent him to my people at Jerusalem, that they might tend him till he was cured. The separation from him was grievous to her, and since then, she does nothing but weep. Now I purpose to sell her, and I would fain have whoso is minded to buy her of me speak softly to her and say to her, 'Thy brother is with me in Jerusalem, ill;' and I will be easy with him about her price." Quoth one of the merchants, "How old is she?" "She is a virgin, just come to the age of puberty," replied the Bedouin, "and is endowed with sense and breeding and wit and beauty and grace. But from the day I sent her brother to Jerusalem, she has done nothing but grieve for him, so that her beauty is fallen away and her value lessened." When the merchant heard this, he said, "O chief of the Arabs, I will go with thee and buy this girl of thee, if she be as thou sayest for wit and beauty and accomplishments; but it must be upon conditions, which if thou accept, I will pay thee her price, and if not, I will return her to thee." "If thou wilt," said the Bedouin, "take her up to Prince Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad and of the land of Khorassan, and I will agree to whatever conditions thou mayst impose on me; for when he sees her, she will surely please him, and he will pay thee her price and a good profit to boot for thyself." "It happens," rejoined the merchant, "that I have just now occasion to go to him, that I may get him to sign me patent, exempting me from customs-dues, and I desire of him also a letter of recommendation to his father King Omar. So, if he take the girl, I will pay thee down her price at once." "I agree to this," answered the Bedouin. So they returned together to the khan, where the Bedouin stood at the door of the girl's chamber and called out, saying, "Ho, Najiyeh!" which was the name he had given her. When she heard him, she wept and made no answer. Then he turned to the merchant and said to him, "There she sits. Do thou go up to her and look at her and speak kindly to her, as I enjoined thee." So he went up to her courteously and saw that she was wonder-lovely and graceful especially as she was acquainted with the Arabic tongue; and he said to the Bedouin, "Verily she is even as thou saidst, and I shall get of the Sultan what I will for her." Then he said to her, "Peace be on thee, O daughterling!

How dost thou?" She turned to him and replied, "This was written in the book of Destiny." Then she looked at him and seeing him to be a man of reverend appearance, with a handsome face, said to herself, "I believe this man comes to buy me. If I hold aloof from him, I shall abide with this tyrant, and he will beat me to death. In any case, this man is comely of face and makes me hope for better treatment from him than from this brute of a Bedouin. Mayhap he only comes to hear me talk; so I will give him a fair answer." All this while, she had kept her eyes fixed on the ground; then she raised them to him and said in a sweet voice, "And upon thee be peace, O my lord, and the mercy of God and His blessing! This is what is commanded of the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve! As for thine enquiry how I do, if thou wouldst know my condition, it is such as thou wouldst not wish but to thine enemies." And she was silent. When the merchant heard what she said, he was beside himself for delight in her and turning to the Bedouin, said to him, "What is her price, for indeed she is illustrious!" At this the Bedouin was angry and said, "Thou wilt turn me the girl's head with this talk! Why dost thou say that she is illustrious, for all she is of the scum of slave-girls and of the refuse of the people? I will not sell her to thee." When the merchant heard this, he knew he was dull-witted and said to him, "Calm thyself, for I will buy her of thee, notwithstanding the defects thou mentionest." "And how much wilt thou give me for her?" asked the Bedouin "None should name the child but its father," replied the merchant. "Name thy price for her." "Not so," rejoined the Bedouin; "do thou say what thou wilt give." Quoth the merchant in himself, "This Bedouin is an addle-pated churl. By Allah, I cannot tell her price, for she has mastered my heart with her sweet speech and her beauty: and if she can read and write, it will be the finishing touch to her good fortune and that of her purchaser. But this Bedouin does not know her value." Then he turned to the latter and said to him, "O elder of the Arabs, I will give thee two hundred dinars for her, in cash, clear of the tax and the Sultan's dues." When the Bedouin heard this, he flew into a violent passion and cried out at the merchant, saying, "Begone about thy business! By Allah, wert thou to offer me two hundred dinars for the piece of camel-cloth on her head, I would not sell it to thee! I will not sell her, but will keep her by me, to pasture the camels and grind corn." And he cried out to her, saying, "Come, thou stinkard, I will not sell thee." Then he turned to the merchant and said to him, "I thought thee a man of judgment; but, by my bonnet, if thou begone not from me, I will let thee hear what will not please thee!" "Verily," said the merchant to himself, "this Bedouin is mad and knows not the girl's value, and I will say no more to him about her price for the present; for by Allah, were he a man of sense, he would not say, 'By my bonnet!' By Allah, she is worth the kingdom of the Chosroes and I will give him what he will, though it be all I have." Then he said to him, "O elder of the Arabs, calm thyself and take patience and tell me what clothes she has with thee." "Clothes!" cried the Bedouin; "what should the baggage want with clothes? The camel-cloth in which she is wrapped is ample for her." "With thy leave," said the merchant, "I will lift her veil and examine her as folk examine girls whom they think of buying." "Up and do what thou wilt," replied the other, "and God keep thy youth! Examine her, inside and out, and if thou wilt, take off her clothes and look at her naked." "God forbid!" said the merchant; "I will but look at her face." Then he went up to her, confounded at her beauty and grace, and seating himself by her side, said to her, "O my mistress, what is thy name?" "Dost thou ask

what is my name now," said she, "or what it was formerly?" "Hast thou then two names?" asked the merchant. "Yes," replied she, "my whilom name was Nuzhet ez Zeman; but my name at this present is Ghusset ez Zeman." When the merchant heard this, his eyes filled with tears, and he said to her, "Hast thou not a sick brother?" "Indeed, my lord, I have," answered she; "but fortune hath parted us, and he lies sick in Jerusalem." The merchant's heart was confounded at the sweetness of her speech, and he said to himself, "Verily, the Bedouin spoke the truth of her." Then she called to mind her brother and how he lay sick in a strange land, whilst she was parted from him and knew not what was become of him; and she thought of all that had befallen her with the Bedouin and of her severance from her father and mother and native land; and the tears ran down her cheeks and she repeated the following verses:

May God keep watch o'er thee, belov'd, where'er thou art,
Thou that, though far away, yet dwellest in my heart!
Where'er thy footsteps lead, may He be ever near,
To guard thee from time's shifts and evil fortune's dart!
Thou'rt absent, and my eyes long ever for thy sight,
And at thy thought the tears for aye unbidden start.
Would that I knew alas! what country holds thee now,
In what abode thou dwell'st, unfriended and apart!
If thou, in the green o the rose, still drink o' the water of life,
My drink is nought but tears, since that thou didst depart.
If sleep e'er visit thee, live coals of my unrest,
Strewn betwixt couch and side, for aye my slumbers thwart
All but thy loss to me were but a little thing,
But that and that alone is sore to me, sweetheart.

When the merchant heard her verses, he wept and put out his hand to wipe away her tears; but she let down her veil, saying, "God forbid, O my master!" The Bedouin, who was sitting at a little distance, watching them, saw her cover her face and concluded that she would have hindered him from handling her: so he rose and running to her, dealt her such a blow on the shoulders with a camel's halter he had in his hand, that she fell to the ground on her face. Her eyebrow smote against a stone, which cut it open, and the blood streamed down her face; whereupon she gave a loud scream and fainted away. The merchant was moved to tears for her and said in himself, "I must and will buy this damsel, though I pay down her weight in gold, and deliver her from this tyrant." And he began to reproach the Bedouin, whilst Nuzhet ez Zeman lay insensible. When she came to herself, she wiped away her tears and bound up her head: then, raising her eyes to heaven, she sought her Lord with a sorrowful heart and repeated the following verses:

Have ruth on one who once was rich and great,
Whom villainy hath brought to low estate.
She weeps with never-ceasing tears and says,
"There's no recourse against the laws of Fate."

Then she turned to the merchant and said to him, in a low voice, "By Allah, do not leave me with this tyrant, who knows not God the Most High! If I pass this night

with him, I shall kill myself with my own hand: save me from him, and God will save thee from hell-fire." So the merchant said to the Bedouin, "O chief of the Arabs, this girl is none of thine affair; so do thou sell her to me for what thou wilt." "Take her," said the Bedouin, "and pay me down her price, or I will carry her back to the camp and set her to feed the camels and gather their droppings." Quoth the merchant, "I will give thee fifty thousand dinars for her." "God will open," replied the Bedouin. "Seventy thousand," said the merchant. "God will open," repeated the other; "she hath cost me more than that, for she hath eaten barley-bread with me to the value of ninety thousand dinars." Quoth the merchant, "Thou and all thy people and thy whole tribe in all your lives have not eaten a thousand dinars' worth of barley: but I will make thee one offer, which if thou accept not, I will set the Viceroy of Damascus on thee, and he will take her from thee by force." "Say on," rejoined the Bedouin. "A hundred thousand," said the merchant. "I will sell her to thee at that price," answered the Bedouin; "I shall be able to buy salt with that." The merchant laughed and going to his house, returned with the money and gave it to the Bedouin, who took it and made off, saying, "I must go to Jerusalem: it may be I shall happen on her brother, and I will bring him here and sell him." So he mounted and journeyed to Jerusalem, where he went to the khan and enquired for Zoulmekan, but could not find him.

Meanwhile, the merchant threw his gaberdine over Nuzhet ez Zeman and carried her to his house, where he dressed her in the richest clothes he could buy. Then he carried her to the bazaar, where he bought her what jewellery she chose and put it in a bag of satin, which he laid before her, saying, "This is all for thee, and I ask nothing of thee in return but that, when thou comest to the Viceroy of Damascus, thou tell him what I gave for thee and that it was little compared with thy value: and if he buy thee, tell him how I have dealt with thee and ask of him for me a royal patent, with a recommendation to his father King Omar Ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad, to the intent that he may forbid the taking toll on my stuffs or other goods in which I traffic." When she heard his words, she wept and sobbed, and the merchant said to her, "O my mistress, I note that, every time I mention Baghdad, thine eyes fill with tears: is there any one there whom thou lovest? If it be a merchant or the like, tell me; for I know all the merchants and so forth there; and an thou wouldst send him a message, I will carry it for thee." "By Allah," replied she, "I have no acquaintance among merchants and the like! I know none there but King Omar ben Ennuman." When the merchant heard this, he laughed and was greatly rejoiced and said in himself, "By Allah, I have gotten my desire!" Then he said to her, "Hast thou then been shown to him?" "No," answered she; "but I was brought up with his daughter and he holds me dear and I have much credit with him; so if thou wouldst have him grant thee a patent of exemption, give me ink-horn and paper, and I will write thee a letter, which, when thou reachest Baghdad, do thou deliver into the King's own hand and say to him, 'Thy handmaid Nuzhet ez Zeman salutes thee and would have thee to know that the changing chances of the nights and days have smitten her, so that she has been sold from place to place and is now with the Viceroy of Damascus.'" The merchant wondered at her eloquence and his affection for her increased and he said to her, "I cannot think but that men have abused thine understanding and sold thee for money. Tell me, dost thou know the Koran?" "I do," answered she; "and I am also acquainted with philosophy and medicine and the Prolegomena and the commentaries of Galen

the physician on the Canons of Hippocrates, and I have commented him, as well as the Simples of Ibn Beltar, and have studied the works of Avicenna, according to the canon of Mecca, as well as other treatises. I can solve enigmas and establish parallels and discourse upon geometry and am skilled in anatomy. I have read the books of the Shafiyi sect and the Traditions of the Prophet, I am well read in grammar and can argue with the learned and discourse of all manner of sciences. Moreover I am skilled in logic and rhetoric and mathematics and the making of talismans and calendars and the Cabala, and I understand all these branches of knowledge thoroughly. But bring me ink-horn and paper, and I will write thee a letter that will profit thee at Baghdad and enable thee to dispense with passports." When the merchant heard this, he cried out, "Excellent! Excellent! Happy he in whose palace thou shalt be!" Then he brought her ink-horn and paper and a pen of brass and kissed the earth before her, to do her honour. She took the pen and wrote the following verses:

"What ails me that sleep hath forsaken my eyes and gone astray?
Have you then taught them to waken, after our parting day!
How comes it your memory maketh the fire in my heart to rage?
Is't thus with each lover remembers a dear one far away?
How sweet was the cloud of the summer, that watered our days of
yore! 'Tis flitted, before of its pleasance my longing I could stay.
I sue to the wind and beg it to favour the slave of love,
The wind that unto the lover doth news of you convey.
A lover to you complaineth, whose every helper fails.
Indeed, in parting are sorrows would rend the rock in sway.

"These words are from her whom melancholy destroys and whom watching hath wasted; in her darkness there are no lights found, and she knows not night from day. She tosses from side to side on the couch of separation and her eyes are blackened with the pencils of sleeplessness; she watches the stars and strains her sight into the darkness: verily, sadness and emaciation have consumed her and the setting forth of her case would be long. No helper hath she but tears and she reciteth the following verses:

"No turtle warbles on the branch, before the break of morn,
But stirs in me a killing grief, a sadness all forlorn.
No lover, longing for his loves, complaineth of desire,
But with a doubled stress of woe my heart is overborne.
Of passion I complain to one who hath no ruth on me.
How soul and body by desire are, one from other, torn!"

Then her eyes brimmed over with tears, and she wrote these verses also:

"Love-longing, the day of our parting, my body with mourning smote,
And severance from my eyelids hath made sleep far remote.
I am so wasted for yearning and worn for sickness and woe,
That, were it not for my speaking, thou'dst scarce my presence note."

Then she wept and wrote at the foot of the scroll, "This is from her who is far from her people and her native land, the sorrowful-hearted Nuzhet ez Zeman." She folded the letter and gave it to the merchant, who took it and reading what was written

in it, rejoiced and exclaimed, "Glory to Him who fashioned thee!" Then he redoubled in kindness and attention to her all that day; and at nightfall, he sallied out to the market and bought food, wherewith he fed her; after which he carried her to the bath and said to the tire-woman, "As soon as thou hast made an end of washing her head, clothe her and send and let me know.' Meanwhile he fetched food and fruit and wax candles and set them on the dais in the outer room of the bath; and when the tire-woman had done washing her, she sent to tell the merchant, and Nuzhet ez Zeman went out to the outer room, where she found the tray spread with food and fruit. So she ate, and the tire-woman with her, and gave what was left to the people and keeper of the bath. Then she slept till the morning, and the merchant lay the night in a place apart. When he awoke, he came to her and waking her, presented her with a shift of fine silk, a kerchief worth a thousand dinars, a suit of Turkish brocade and boots embroidered with red gold and set with pearls and jewels. Moreover, he hung in each of her ears a circlet of gold, with a fine pearl therein, worth a thousand dinars, and threw round her neck a collar of gold, with bosses of garnet and a chain of amber beads, that hung down between her breasts to her middle. Now this chain was garnished with ten balls and nine crescents and each crescent had in its midst a beazel of ruby and each ball a beazel of balass ruby. The worth of the chain was three thousand dinars and each of the balls was worth twenty thousand dirhems, so that her dress in all was worth a great sum of money. When she had put these on, the merchant bade her make her toilet, and she adorned herself to the utmost advantage. Then he bade her follow him and walked on before her through the streets, whilst the people wondered at her beauty and exclaimed, "Blessed be God, the most excellent Creator! O fortunate man to whom she shall belong!" till they reached the Sultan's palace; when he sought an audience of Sherkan and kissing the earth before him, said, "O august King, I have brought thee a rare gift, unmatched in this time and richly covered with beauty and good qualities." "Let me see it," said Sherkan. So the merchant went out and returning with Nuzhet ez Zeman, made her stand before Sherkan. When the latter beheld her, blood drew to blood, though he had never seen her, having only heard that he had a sister called Nuzhet ez Zeman and a brother called Zoulmekan and not having made acquaintance with them, in his jealousy of them, because of the succession. Then said the merchant, "O King, not only is she without peer in her time for perfection of beauty and grace, but she is versed to boot in all learning, sacred and profane, besides the art of government and the abstract sciences." Quoth Sherkan, "Take her price, according to what thou gavest for her, and go thy ways." "I hear and obey," replied the merchant; "but first I would have thee write me a patent, exempting me for ever from paying tithe on my merchandise." "I will do this," said Sherkan; "but first tell me what you paid for her." Quoth the merchant, "I bought her for a hundred thousand dinars, and her clothes cost me as much more." When the Sultan heard this, he said, "I will give thee more than this for her," and calling his treasurer, said to him, "Give this merchant three hundred and twenty thousand dinars; so will he have a hundred and twenty thousand dinars profit." Then he summoned the four Cadis and paid him the money in their presence; after which he said to them, "I call you to witness that I free this my slave-girl and purpose to marry her." So the Cadis drew up the act of enfranchisement, and the Sultan scattered much gold on the heads of those present, which was picked up by the pages and eunuchs. Then they drew up the contract of marriage between

Sherkan and Nuzhet ez Zeman, after which he bade write the merchant a perpetual patent, exempting him from tax and tithe upon his merchandise and forbidding all and several to do him let or hindrance in all his government, and bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour. Then all who were present retired, and there remained but the Cadis and the merchant; whereupon quoth Sherkan to the former, "I wish you to hear such discourse from this damsel as may prove her knowledge and accomplishment in all that this merchant avouches of her, that we may be certified of the truth of his pretensions." "Good," answered they; and he commanded the curtains to be drawn before Nuzhet ez Zeman and her attendants, who began to wish her joy and kiss her hands and feet, for that she was become the Viceroy's wife. Then they came round her and easing her of the weight of her clothes and ornaments, began to look upon her beauty and grace. Presently the wives of the Amirs and Viziers heard that King Sherkan had bought a damsel unmatched for beauty and accomplishments and versed in all branches of knowledge, at the price of three hundred and twenty thousand dinars, and that he had set her free and married her and summoned the four Cadis to examine her. So they asked leave of their husbands and repaired to the palace. When they came in to her, she rose and received them with courtesy, welcoming them and promising them all good. Moreover, she smiled in their faces and made them sit down in their proper stations, as if she had been brought up with them, so that their hearts were taken with her and they all wondered at her good sense and fine manners, as well as at her beauty and grace, and said to each other, "This damsel is none other than a queen, the daughter of a king." Then they sat down, magnifying her, and said to her, "O our lady, our city is illumined by thy presence, and our country and kingdom are honoured by thee. The kingdom indeed is thine and the palace is thy palace, and we all are thy handmaids; so do not thou shut us out from thy favours and the sight of thy beauty." And she thanked them for this. All this while the curtains were drawn between Nuzhet ez Zeman and the women with her, on the one side, and King Sherkan and the Cadis and merchant seated by him, on the other. Presently, Sherkan called to her and said, "O queen, the glory of thine age, this merchant describes thee as being learned and accomplished and asserts that thou art skilled in all branches of knowledge, even to astrology: so let us hear something of all this and give us a taste of thy quality."

"O King," replied she, "I hear and obey. The first subject of which I will treat is the art of government and the duties of kings and what behoves governors of lawful commandments and what is incumbent on them in respect of pleasing manners. Know then, O King, that all men's works tend either to religion or to worldly life, for none attains to religion save through this world, because it is indeed the road to the next world. Now the world is ordered by the doings of its people, and the doings of men are divided into four categories, government (or the exercise of authority), commerce, husbandry (or agriculture) and craftsmanship. To government are requisite perfect (knowledge of the science of) administration and just judgment; for government is the centre (or pivot) of the edifice of the world, which is the road to the future life since that God the Most High hath made the world to be to His servants even as victual to the traveller for the attainment of the goal: and it is needful that each man receive of it such measure as shall bring him to God, and that he follow not in this his own mind and desire. If the folk would take of the goods of the world with moderation and equity, there would be an end of contentions; but they take thereof with violence and

iniquity and persist in following their own inclinations; and their licentiousness and evil behaviour in this give birth to strife and contention. So they have need of the Sultan, that he may do justice between them and order their affairs prudently, and if he restrain not the folk from one another, the strong will get the mastery over the weak. Ardeshir says that religion and the kingship are twin; religion is a treasure and the king its keeper; and the divine ordinances and men's own judgment indicate that it behoves the folk to adopt a ruler to hold the oppressor back from the oppressed and do the weak justice against the strong and to restrain the violence of the proud and the unjust. For know, O King, that according to the measure of the ruler's good morals, even so will be the time; as says the apostle of God (on whom be peace and salvation), 'There are two classes, who if they be virtuous, the people will be virtuous, and if they be depraved, the people also will be depraved: even princes and men of learning.' And it is said by a certain sage, 'There are three kinds of kings, the king of the Faith, the king who watches over and protects those things that are entitled to respect and honour, and the king of his own inclinations. The king of the Faith constrains his subjects to follow the laws of their faith, and it behoves that he be the most pious of them all, for it is by him that they take pattern in the things of the Faith; and the folk shall do obedience to him in what he commands in accordance with the Divine ordinances; but he shall hold the discontented in the same esteem as the contented, because of submission to the Divine decrees. As for the king of the second order, he upholds the things of the Faith and of the world and compels the folk to follow the Law of God and to observe the precepts of humanity; and it behoves him to conjoin the sword and the pen; for whoso goeth astray from what the pen hath written, his feet slip, and the king shall rectify his error with the edge of the sword and pour forth his justice upon all men. As for the third kind of king, he hath no religion but the following his own lusts and fears not the wrath of his Lord, who set him on the throne; so his kingdom inclines to ruin, and the end of his arrogance is in the House of Perdition.' And another sage says, 'The king has need of many people, but the folk have need of but one king; wherefore it behoves that he be well acquainted with their natures, to the end that he may reduce their difference to concord, that he may encompass them one and all with his justice and overwhelm them with his bounties.' And know, O King, that Ardeshir, styled Jemr Shedid, third of the Kings of Persia, conquered the whole world and divided it into four parts and let make for himself four seal-rings, one for each division of his realm. The first seal was that of the sea and the police and of prohibition, and on it was written, 'Alternatives.' The second was the seal of revenue and of the receipt of monies, and on it was written, 'Culture.' The third was the seal of the commissariat, and on it was written, 'Plenty.' The fourth was the seal of (the Court of Enquiry into) abuses, and on it was written, 'Justice.' And these remained in use in Persia until the revelation of Islam. King Chosroes also, wrote to his son, who was with the army, 'Be not over-lavish to thy troops, or they will come to have no need of thee; neither be niggardly with them, or they will murmur against thee. Do thy giving soberly and confer thy favours advisedly; be liberal to them in time of affluence and stint them not in time of stress.' It is said that an Arab of the desert came once to the Khalif Mensour and said to him, 'Starve thy dog and he will follow thee.' When the Khalif heard his words, he was enraged, but Aboulabbas et Tousi said to him, 'I fear that, if some other than thou should show him a cake of bread, the dog would follow him and leave thee.'

Thereupon the Khalif's wrath subsided and he knew that the Bedouin had meant no offence and ordered him a present. And know, O King, that Abdulmelik ben Merwan wrote to his brother Abdulaziz, when he sent him to Egypt, as follows: 'Pay heed to thy secretaries and thy chamberlains, for the first will acquaint thee with necessary matters and the second with matters of etiquette and ceremonial observance, whilst the tribute that goes out from thee will make thy troops known to thee.' Omar ben el Khettab (whom God accept) was in the habit, when he engaged a servant, of laying four conditions on him, the first that he should not ride the baggage-beasts, the second that he should not wear fine clothes, the third that he should not eat of the spoil and the fourth that he should not delay to pray after the proper time. It is said that there is no wealth better than understanding and no understanding like common sense and prudence and no prudence like the fear of God; that there is no offering like good morals and no measure like good breeding and no profit like earning the Divine favour; that there is no piety like the observance of the limits of the Law and no science like that of meditation, no devotion like the performance of the Divine precepts, no safeguard like modesty, no calculation like humility and no nobility like knowledge. So guard the head and what it contains and the body and what it comprises and remember death and calamity. Says Ali, (whose face God honour!), 'Beware of the wickedness of women and be on thy guard against them. Consult them not in aught, but be not grudging of complaisance to them, lest they be tempted to have recourse to intrigue.' And also, 'He who leaves the path of moderation and sobriety, his wits become perplexed.' And Omar (whom God accept) says, 'There are three kinds of women, first, the true-believing, God-fearing woman, loving and fruitful, helping her husband against fate, not helping fate against her husband; secondly, she who loves and tenders her children, but no more; and thirdly, the woman who is as a shackle that God puts on the neck of whom He will. Men also are three: the first, who is wise, when he exercises his judgment; the second, wiser than he, who, when there falls on him somewhat of which he knows not the issue, seeks folk of good counsel and acts by their advice; and the third, who is addle-headed, knowing not the right way nor heeding those who would instruct him.' Justice is indispensable in all things; even slave-girls have need of justice; and highway robbers, who live by violence, bear witness of this, for did they not deal equitably among themselves and observe fairness in their divisions, their order would fall to pieces. For the rest, the chief of noble qualities is generosity and benevolence. How well says the poet:

'By largesse and mildness the youth chief of his tribe became, And it were easy for thee to follow and do the same.'

And quoth another:

'In mildness stability lies and clemency wins us respect,
And safety in soothfastness is for him who is soothfast and frank;
And he who would get himself praise and renown for his wealth from the folk,
In the racecourse of glory must be, for munificence, first in the rank.'"

And Nuzhet ez Zeman discoursed upon the policy and behaviour of kings, till the bystanders said, "Never heard we one reason of the duties of kings like this damsel! Mayhap she will favour us with discourse upon some subject other than this." When

she heard this, she said, "As for the chapter of good breeding, it is wide of scope, for it is a compend of perfections. There came in one day to the Khalif Muawiyeh one of his boon-companions, who spoke of the people of Irak and the goodness of their wit; and the Khalif's wife Meisoun, mother of Yezid, heard him. So, when he was gone, she said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, prithee let some of the people of Irak come in to thee and talk with them, that I may hear their discourse.' So the Khalif said to his attendants, 'Who is at the door?' And they answered, 'The Benou Temim.' 'Let them come in,' said he. So they came in and with them Ahnaf ben Cais. Now Muawiyeh had drawn a curtain between himself and Meisoun, that she might hear what they said without being seen herself; and he said to Ahnaf, 'O Abou Behr, pray, near and tell me what counsel thou hast for me.' Quoth Ahnaf, 'Part thy hair and trim thy moustache and clip thy nails and pluck out the hair of thine armpits and shave thy pubes and be constant in the use of the toothstick, for therein are two-and-seventy virtues, and make the Friday (complete) ablution as an expiation for what is between the two Fridays.' 'What is thy counsel to thyself?' asked Muawiyeh. 'To plant my feet firmly on the ground,' replied Ahnaf, 'to move them with deliberation and keep watch over them with my eyes.' 'How,' asked the Khalif, 'dost thou carry thyself, when thou goest in to the common folk of thy tribe?' 'I lower my eyes modestly,' replied Ahnaf, 'and salute them first, abstaining from what does not concern me and being sparing of words.' 'And how, when thou goest in to thine equals?' asked Muawiyeh. 'I give ear to them, when they speak,' answered the other, 'and do not assail them, when they err.' 'And how dost thou,' said the Khalif, 'when thou goest in to thy chiefs?' 'I salute without making any sign,' answered Ahnaf, 'and await the response: if they bid me draw near, I do so, and if they bid me stand aloof, I withdraw.' 'How dost thou with thy wife?' asked the Khalif. 'Excuse me from answering this, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied he; but Muawiyeh said, 'I conjure thee to answer.' Then said Ahnaf, 'I entreat her kindly and show her pleasant familiarity and am large in expenditure, for women were created of a crooked rib.' 'And how,' asked the Khalif, 'dost thou when thou hast a mind to lie with her?' 'I speak to her to perfume herself,' answered the other, 'and kiss her till she is moved to desire; then, if it be as thou knowest, I throw her on her back. If the seed abide in her womb, I say, "O my God, make it blessed and let it not be a castaway, but fashion it into a goodly shape!" Then I rise from her and betake myself to the ablution, first pouring water over my hands and then over my body and returning thanks to God for the delight He hath given me.' 'Thou hast answered excellently well,' said Muawiyeh; 'and now tell me what thou wouldst have.' Quoth Ahnaf, 'I would have thee rule thy subjects in the fear of God and do equal justice amongst them.' So saying, he withdrew from the Khalif's presence, and when he had gone, Meisoun said, 'Were there but this man in Irak, he would suffice to it.' This (continued Nuzhet ez Zeman) is a small fraction of the chapter of good breeding. Know O King, that Muyekib was intendant of the treasury during the Khalifate of Omar ben Khettab. 'One day (quoth he) the Khalif's son came to me and I gave him a dirhem from the treasury. Then I returned to my own house, and presently, as I was sitting, there came to me a messenger, bidding me to the Khalif. So I was afraid and went to him, and when I came into his presence, I saw in his hand the dirhem I had given his son. "Harkye, Muyekib," said he, "I have found somewhat concerning thy soul." "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful?" asked I; and he answered, "It is that

thou wilt have to render an account of this dirhem to the people of Mohammed (on whom be peace and salvation) on the Day of Resurrection."' This same Omar wrote a letter to Abou Mousa el Ashari, to the following purport, 'When these presents reach thee, give the people what is theirs and send the rest to me.' And he did so. When Othman succeeded to the Khalifate, he wrote a like letter to Abou Mousa, who did his bidding and sent him the tribute accordingly, and with it came Ziad When the latter laid the tribute before Othman, the Khalif's son came in and took a dirhem, whereupon Ziad fell a-weeping. 'Why dost thou weep?' asked Othman. Quoth Ziad, 'I once brought Omar ben Khettab the like of this, and his son took a dirhem, whereupon Omar bade snatch it from his hand. Now thy son hath taken of the tribute, yet have I seen none rebuke him nor take the money from him.' And Othman said, 'Where wilt thou find the like of Omar?' Again, Zeid ben Aslam relates of his father that he said, 'I went out one night with Omar, and we walked on till we espied a blazing fire in the distance. Quoth Omar, "This must be travellers, who are suffering from the cold: let us join them." So we made for the fire, and when we came to it, we found a woman who had lighted a fire under a cauldron, and by her side were two children, crying. "Peace on you, O folk of the light!" said Omar, for he misliked to say, "folk of the fire;" "what ails you?" Quoth she, "The cold and the night irk us." "What ails these children that they weep?" asked he. "They are hungry," replied she. "And what is in this cauldron?" asked Omar. "It is what I quiet them with," answered she, "and God will question Omar ben Khettab of them, on the Day of Resurrection." "And what," rejoined the Khalif, "should Omar know of their case?" "Why then," said she, "should he undertake the governance of the people's affairs and yet be unmindful of them?" Then Omar turned to me and said, "Come with me." So we both set off running till we reached the treasury, where he took out a sack of flour and a pot of fat and said to me, "Put these on my back." "O Commander of the Faithful," said I, "I will carry them for thee." "Wilt thou bear my burden for me on the Day of Resurrection?" replied he. So I put the things on his back, and we set off, running, till we came to the woman, when he threw down the sack. Then he took out some of the flour and put it in the cauldron and saying to the woman, "Leave it to me," fell to blowing the fire; Now he had a great beard and I saw the smoke issuing from the interstices thereof, till the flour was cooked, when he threw in some of the fat and said to the woman, "Do thou feed the boys whilst I cool the food for them." So they ate their fill and he left the rest with her. Then he turned to me and said, "O Aslam, I see it was indeed hunger made them weep; and I am glad I did not go away without finding out the reason of the light I saw."' It is said that Omar passed, one day, by a flock of sheep, kept by a slave, and asked the latter to sell him a sheep. 'They are not mine,' replied the shepherd. 'Thou art the man I sought,' said Omar and buying him of his master, set him free, whereupon the slave exclaimed, 'O my God, thou hast bestowed on me the lesser emancipation; vouchsafe me now the greater!' They say also, that Omar ben Khettab was wont to give his servants sweet milk and eat coarse fare himself and to clothe them softly and wear himself coarse garments. He gave all men their due and exceeded in his giving to them. He once gave a man four thousand dirhems and added thereto yet a thousand, wherefore it was said to him, 'Why dost thou not favour thy son as thou favourest this man?' He answered, 'This man's father stood firm in fight on the day of Uhud.' El Hassan relates that Omar once came (back

from an expedition) with much money and that Hefseh came to him and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, be mindful of the due of kinship!' 'O Hefseh,' replied he, 'God hath indeed enjoined us to satisfy the dues of kinship, but of our own monies, not those of the true believers. Indeed, thou pleasest thy family, but angerest thy father.' And she went away, dragging her skirts. Says Omar's son, 'I implored God one year (after Omar's death) to show me my father, till at last I saw him wiping the sweat from his brow and said to him, "How is it with thee, O my father?" "But for God's mercy," answered he, "thy father had perished." Then said Nuzhet ez Zeman, "Hear, O august King, the second division of the first chapter of the instances of the followers of the Prophet and other pious men. Says El Hassan of Bassora, 'Not a soul of the sons of Adam goes forth of the world, without grieving for three things, failure to enjoy what he has amassed, failure to compass what he hoped and failure to provide himself with sufficient provision for that to which he goes.' It was said to Sufyan, 'Can a man be devout and yet possess wealth?' 'Yes,' replied he, 'so he be patient under affliction and return thanks, when God giveth to him.' When Abdallah ben Sheddad was on his death-bed, he sent for his son Mohammed and admonished him, saying, 'O my son, I see the messenger of death calling me and so I charge thee to cherish the fear of God, both in public and private. Praise God and be true in thy speech, for the praise of God brings increase of prosperity, and piety in itself is the best of provision, even as says one of the poets:

I see not that bliss lies in filling one's chest;
The God-fearing man can alone be called blest.
For piety aye winneth increase of God;
So of all men's provision 'tis surely the best.

When Omar ben Abdulaziz succeeded to the Khalifate, he went to his own house and laying hands on all that his family and household possessed, put it into the public treasury. So the Ommiades betook themselves for aid to his father's sister, Fatimeh, daughter of Merwan, and she sent to Omar, saying, 'I must needs speak with thee.' So she came to him by night, and when he had made her alight from her beast and sit down, he said to her, 'O aunt, it is for thee to speak first, since it is at thine instance that we meet; tell me, therefore, what thou wouldst with me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'it is thine to speak first, for thy judgment perceives that which is hidden from the senses.' Then said the Khalif, 'Of a verity God sent Mohammed as a mercy to some and a punishment to others; and He chose out for him what was with him and withdrew him to Himself, leaving the people a river, whereof the thirsty of them might drink. After him he made Abou Bekr the Truth-teller Khalif and he left the river in its pristine state, doing what was pleasing to God. Then arose Omar and worked a work and furnished forth a strife, of which none might do the like When Othman came, he diverted a stream from the river, and Muawiyeh in his turn sundered several streams from it. In like manner, Yezid and the sons of Merwan, Abdulmelik and Welid and Suleiman, ceased not to take from the river and dry up the main stream, till the commandment devolved upon me, and now I am minded to restore the river to its normal condition.' When Fatimeh heard this, she said, 'I came, wishing only to speak and confer with thee, but if this be thy word, I have nothing to say to thee.' Then she returned to the Ommiades and said to them, 'See what you have

brought on you by allying yourselves with Omar ben Khettab.' When Omar was on his deathbed, he gathered his children round him, and Meslemeh ben Abdulmelik said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wilt thou leave thy children beggars and thou their protector? None can hinder thee from giving them in thy lifetime what will suffice them out of the treasury; and this indeed were better than leaving it to revert to him who shall come after thee.' Omar gave him a look of wrath and wonder and replied, 'O Meslemeh, I have defended them all the days of my life, and shall I make them miserable after my death? My sons are like other men, either obedient to God the Most High or disobedient: if the former, God will prosper them, and if the latter, I will not help them in their disobedience. Know, O Meslemeh, that I was present, even as thou, when such an one of the sons of Merwan was buried, and I fell asleep by him and saw him in a dream given over to one of the punishments of God, to whom belong might and majesty. This terrified me and made me tremble, and I vowed to God that, if ever I came to the throne, I would not do as the dead man had done. This vow I have striven to fulfil all the days of my life, and I hope to be received into the mercy of my Lord.' Quoth Meslemeh, 'A certain man died and I was present at his funeral. I fell asleep and meseemed I saw him, as in a dream, clad in white clothes and walking in a garden full of running waters. He came up to me and said, "O Meslemeh, it is for the like of this that governors (or men who bear rule) should work."' Many are the instances of this kind, and quoth one of the men of authority, 'I used to milk the ewes in the Khalifate of Omar ben Abdulaziz, and one day, I met a shepherd, among whose sheep were wolves. I thought them to be dogs, for I had never before seen wolves; so I said to the shepherd, "What dost thou with these dogs?" "They are not dogs, but wolves," replied he. Quoth I, "Can wolves be with sheep and not hurt them?" "When the head is whole," replied he, "the body is whole also."' Omar ben Abdulaziz preached once from a mud pulpit, and after praising and glorifying God the Most High, said three words and spoke as follows, 'O folk, make clean your hearts, that your outward lives may be clean to your brethren, and abstain from the things of the world. Know that from Adam to this present, there is no one man alive among the dead. Dead are Abdulmelik and those who forewent him, and Omar also will die, and those who come after him.' Quoth Meslemeh (to this same Omar, when he was dying), 'O Commander of the Faithful, shall we set a pillow behind thee, that thou mayest lean on it a little?' But Omar answered, 'I fear lest it be a fault about my neck on the Day of Resurrection.' Then he gasped for breath and fell back in a swoon; whereupon Fatimeh cried out, saying, 'Ho, Meryem! Ho, Muzahim! Ho, such an one! Look to this man!' And she began to pour water on him, weeping, till he revived, and seeing her in tears, said to her, 'O Fatimeh, why dost thou weep?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'I saw thee lying prostrate before us and thought of thy prostration before God the Most High in death and of thy departure from the world and separation from us. This is what made me weep.' 'Enough, O Fatimeh,' answered he; 'indeed thou exceedest.' Then he would have risen, but fell down, and Fatimeh strained him to her, saying, 'Thou art to me as my father and my mother, O Commander of the Faithful! We cannot speak to thee, all of us.' Again (continued Nuzhet ez Zeman), Omar ben Abdulaziz wrote to the people of the festival at Mecca, as follows, 'I call God to witness, in the Holy Month, in the Holy City and on the day of the Great Pilgrimage, that I am innocent of your oppression and of the wickedness of him that doth you

wrong, in that I have neither commanded this nor purposed it, neither hath any report of aught thereof reached me (till now) nor have I had knowledge of it; and I trust therefore that God will pardon it to me. None hath authority from me to do oppression, for I shall assuredly be questioned (at the Last Day) concerning every one who hath been wrongfully entreated. So if any one of my officers swerve from the right and act without law or authority, ye owe him no obedience, till he return to the right way.' He said also (may God accept of him), 'I do not wish to be relieved from death, for that it is the supreme thing for which the true believer is rewarded.' Quoth one of authority, 'I went one day to the Commander of the Faithful, Omar ben Abdulaziz, who was then Khalif, and saw before him twelve dirhems, which he bade take to the treasury. So I said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou impoverishest thy children and reducest them to beggary, leaving nothing for them. Thou wouldst do well to appoint somewhat by will to them and to those who are poor of the people of thy house." "Draw near to me," answered he. So I drew near to him and he said, "As for thy saying, 'Thou beggarest thy children; provide for them and for the poor of thy household,' it is without reason, for God will replace me to my children and to those who are poor of the people of my house, and He will be their guardian. Verily, they are like other men; he who fears God, God will provide him a happy issue, and he that is addicted to sin, I will not uphold him in his disobedience." Then he called his sons before him, and they were twelve in number. When he beheld them, his eyes filled with tears and he said to them, "Your father is between two things; either ye will be rich and he will enter the fire, or ye will be poor and he enter Paradise; and your father's entry into Paradise is liefer to him than that ye should be rich. So go, God be your helper, for to Him I commit your affair."' Quoth Khalid ben Sefwan, 'Yusuf ben Omar accompanied me to Hisham ben Abdulmelik, and I met him as he came forth with his kinsmen and attendants. He alighted and a tent was pitched for him. When the people had taken their seats, I came up to the side of the carpet (on which the Khalif was reclining) and waiting till my eyes met his, bespoke him thus, "May God fulfil His bounty to thee, O Commander of the Faithful, and direct into the right way the affairs He hath committed to thy charge, and may no harm mingle with thy cheer! O Commander of the Faithful, I have an admonition for thee, which I have gleaned from the history of the kings of time past!" At this, he sat up and said to me, "O son of Sefwan, say what is in thy mind." "O Commander of the Faithful," quoth I, "one of the kings before thee went forth, in a time before thy time, to this very country and said to his companions, 'Saw ye ever any in the like of my state or to whom hath been given even as it hath been given unto me?' Now there was with him one of those who survive to bear testimony to the Faith and are upholders of the Truth and walkers in its highway, and he said, 'O King, thou askest of a grave matter. Wilt thou give me leave to answer?' 'Yes,' replied the King, and the other said, 'Dost thou judge thy present state to be temporary or enduring?' 'It is a temporary thing,' replied the King. 'Why then,' asked the man, 'do I see thee exult in that which thou wilt enjoy but a little while and whereof thou wilt be questioned at length and for the rendering an account whereof thou wilt be as a pledge?' 'Whither shall I flee,' asked the King, 'and where is that I must seek?' 'Abide in thy kingship,' replied the other, 'and apply thyself to obey the commandments of God the Most High; or else don thy worn-out clothes and devote thyself to the service of thy Lord, till thine appointed hour come to thee.' Then he left

him, saying, 'I will come to thee again at daybreak.' So he knocked at his door at dawn and found that the King had put off his crown and resolved to become an anchorite, for the stress of his exhortation." When Hisham heard this, he wept till his beard was drenched and putting off his rich apparel, shut himself up in his palace. Then the grandees and courtiers came to me and said, "What is this thou hast done with the Commander of the Faithful? Thou hast marred his cheer and troubled his life!"' "But (continued Nuzhet ez Zeman, addressing herself to Sherkan) how many admonitory instances are there not that bear upon this branch of the subject! Indeed, it is beyond my power to report all that pertains to this head in one sitting; but, with length of days, O King of the age, all will be well."

Then said the Cadis, "O King, of a truth this damsel is the wonder of the time and the unique pearl of the age! Never in all our lives heard we the like." And they called down blessings on Sherkan and went away. Then said he to his attendants, "Prepare the wedding festivities and make ready food of all kinds." So they addressed themselves to do his bidding, and he bade the wives of the amirs and viziers and grandees depart not until the time of the wedding banquet and of the unveiling of the bride. Hardly was the time of afternoon-prayer come, when the tables were spread with roast meats and geese and fowls and all that the heart can desire or that can delight the eye; and all the people ate till they were satisfied. Moreover, the King had sent for all the singing-women of Damascus and they were present, together with all the slave-girls of the King and the notables who knew how to sing. When the evening came and it grew dark, they lighted flambeaux, right and left, from the gate of the citadel to that of the palace, and the amirs and viziers and grandees defiled before King Sherkan, whilst the singers and the tire-women took Nuzhet ez Zeman, to dress and adorn her, but found she needed no adorning. Meantime King Sherkan went to the bath and coming out, sat down on his bed of estate, whilst they unveiled the bride before him in seven different dresses; after which they eased her of the weight of her dresses and ornaments and gave such injunctions as are usually given to girls on their wedding-night. Then Sherkan went in to her and took her maidenhead; and she at once conceived by him, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and commanded the sages to record the date of her conception. On the morrow, he went forth and seated himself on his throne, and the grandees came in to him and gave him joy. Then he called his private secretary and bade him write to his father, King Omar ben Ennuman, a letter to the following effect: "Know that I have bought me a damsel, who excels in learning and accomplishment and is mistress of all kinds of knowledge. I have set her free and married her and she has conceived by me. And needs must I send her to Baghdad to visit my brother Zoulmekan and my sister Nuzhet ez Zeman." And he went on to praise her wit and salute his brother and sister, together with the Vizier Dendan and all the amirs. Then he sealed the letter and despatched it to his father by a courier, who was absent a whole month, after which time he returned with the old King's answer. Sherkan took it and read as follows, after the usual preamble, "In the name of God," etc., "This is from the afflicted and distraught, him who hath lost his children and is (as it were) an exile from his native land, King Omar ben Ennuman, to his son Sherkan. Know that, since thy departure from me, the place is become contracted upon me, so that I can no longer have patience nor keep my secret: and the reason of this is as follows. It chanced that Zoulmekan sought my leave to go on the pilgrimage, but I,

fearing for him the shifts of fortune, forbade him therefrom until the next year or the year after. Soon after this, I went out to hunt and was absent a whole month. When I returned, I found that thy brother and sister had taken somewhat of money and set out by stealth with the caravan of pilgrims. When I knew this, the wide world became strait on me, O my son; but I awaited the return of the caravan, hoping that they would return with it. Accordingly, when the caravan came back, I questioned the pilgrims of them, but they could give me no news of them; so I put on mourning apparel for them, being heavy at heart and sleepless and drowned in the tears of my eyes." Then followed these verses:

Their image is never absent a breathing-while from my breast,
I have made it within my bosom the place of the honoured guest,
But that I look for their coming, I would not live for an hour,
And but that I see them in dreams, I ne'er should lie down to rest.

The letter went on (after the usual salutations to Sherkan and those of his court), "Do not thou therefore neglect to seek news of them, for indeed this is a dishonour to us." When Sherkan read the letter, he mourned for his father, but rejoiced in the loss of his brother and sister. Now Nuzhet ez Zeman knew not that he was her brother nor he that she was his sister, although he paid her frequent visits, both by day and by night, till the months of her pregnancy were accomplished and she sat down on the stool of delivery. God made the delivery easy to her and she gave birth to a daughter, whereupon she sent for Sherkan and said to him, "This is thy daughter: name her as thou wilt." Quoth he, "Folk use to name their children on the seventh day." Then he bent down to kiss the child and saw, hung about her neck, a jewel, which he knew at once for one of those that the princess Abrizeh had brought from the land of the Greeks. At this sight, his senses fled, his eyes rolled and wrath seized on him, and he looked at Nuzhet ez Zeman and said to her, "O damsel, whence hadst thou this jewel?" When she heard this, she replied, "I am thy lady and the lady of all in thy palace. Art thou not ashamed to say to me, 'O damsel'? Indeed, I am a queen, the daughter of a king; and now concealment shall cease and the truth be made known. I am Nuzhet ez Zeman, daughter of King Omar ben Ennuman." When Sherkan heard this, he was seized with trembling and bowed his head towards the earth, whilst his heart throbbed and his colour paled, for he knew that she was his sister by the same father. Then he lost his senses; and when he revived, he abode in amazement, but did not discover himself to her and said to her, "O my lady, art thou indeed the daughter of King Omar ben Ennuman?" "Yes," replied she; and he said, "Tell me how thou camest to leave thy father and be sold for a slave." So she told him all that had befallen her, from first to last, how she had left her brother sick in Jerusalem and how the Bedouin had lured her away and sold her to the merchant. When Sherkan heard this all was certified that she was indeed his sister, he said to himself, "How can I have my sister to wife? By Allah, I must marry her to one of my chamberlains; and if the thing get wind, I will avouch that I divorced her before consummation and married her to my chief chamberlain." Then he raised his head and said, "O Nuzhet ez Zeman, thou art my very sister; for I am Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, and may God forgive us the sin into which we have fallen!" She looked at him and seeing that he spoke the truth, became as one bereft of reason and wept and buffeted her face, exclaiming, "There is no power

and no virtue but in God! Verily we have fallen into grievous sin! What shall I do and what answer shall I make my father and my mother, when they say to me, 'Whence hadst thou thy daughter'?" Quoth Sherkan, "I purpose to marry thee to my chief chamberlain and let thee bring up my daughter in his house, that none may know thee to be my sister. This that hath befallen us was ordained of God for a purpose of His own, and there is no way to cover ourselves but by thy marriage with the chamberlain, ere any know." Then he fell to comforting her and kissing her head, and she said to him, "What wilt thou call the child?" "Call her Kuzia Fekan," replied he. Then he gave her in marriage to the chief chamberlain, and they reared the child in his house, on the laps of the slave-girls, till, one day, there came to King Sherkan a courier from his father, with a letter to the following purport, "In the name of God, etc. Know, O puissant King, that I am sore afflicted for the loss of my children: sleep fails me and wakefulness is ever present with me. I send thee this letter that thou mayst make ready the tribute of Syria and send it to us, together with the damsel whom thou hast bought and taken to wife; for I long to see her and hear her discourse; because there has come to us from the land of the Greeks a devout old woman, with five damsels, high-bosomed maids, endowed with knowledge and accomplishments and all fashions of learning that befit mortals; and indeed the tongue fails to describe this old woman and her companions. As soon as I saw the damsels, I loved them and wished to have them in my palace and at my commandment, for none of the kings possesses the like of them; so I asked the old woman their price, and she replied, 'I will not sell them but for the tribute of Damascus.' And by Allah, this is but little for them, for each one of them is worth the whole price. So I agreed to this and took them into my palace, and they remain in my possession. Wherefore do thou expedite the tribute to us, that the old woman may return to her own country; and send us the damsel, that she may strive with them before the doctors; and if she overcome them, I will send her back to thee with the year's revenue of Baghdad." When Sherkan read this letter, he went in to his brother-in-law and said to him, "Call the damsel to whom I married thee." So she came, and he showed her the letter and said to her, "O my sister, what answer wouldst thou have me make to this letter?" "It is for thee to judge," replied she. Then she recalled her people and her native land and yearned after them; so she said to him, "Send me and my husband the Chamberlain to Baghdad, that I may tell my father how the Bedouin seized me and sold me to the merchant, and how thou boughtest me of him and gavest me in marriage to the Chamberlain, after setting me free." "Be it so," replied Sherkan. Then he made ready the tribute in haste and gave it to the Chamberlain, bidding him make ready for Baghdad, and furnished him with camels and mules and two travelling litters, one for himself and the other for the princess. Moreover, he wrote a letter to his father and committed it to the Chamberlain. Then he took leave of his sister, after he had taken the jewel from her and hung it round his daughter's neck by a chain of fine gold; and she and her husband set out for Baghdad the same night. Now their caravan was the very one to which Zoulmekan and his friend the stoker had joined themselves, as before related, having waited till the Chamberlain passed them, riding on a dromedary, with his footmen around him. Then Zoulmekan mounted the stoker's ass and said to the latter, "Do thou mount with me." But he said, "Not so: I will be thy servant." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Needs must thou ride awhile." "It is well," replied the stoker; "I will ride when I grow tired." Then said

Zoulmekan, "O my brother, thou shalt see how I will do with thee, when I come to my own people." So they journeyed on till the sun rose, and when it was the hour of the noonday rest, the Chamberlain called a halt, and they alighted and rested and watered their camels. Then he gave the signal for departure and they journeyed for five days, till they came to the city of Hemah, where they made a three days' halt; then set out again and fared on, till they reached the province of Diarbekir. Here there blew on them the breezes of Baghdad, and Zoulmekan bethought him of his father and mother and his native land and how he was returning to his father without his sister: so he wept and sighed and complained, and his regrets increased on him, and he repeated the following verses:

How long wilt thou delay from me, beloved one? I wait:
And yet there comes no messenger with tidings of thy fate.
Alack, the time of love-delight and peace was brief indeed!
Ah, that the days of parting thus would of their length abate!
Take thou my hand and put aside my mantle and thou'lt find
My body wasted sore; and yet I hide my sad estate.
And if thou bid me be consoled for thee, "By God," I say,
"I'll ne'er forget thee till the Day that calls up small and great!"

"Leave this weeping and lamenting," said the stoker, "for we are near the Chamberlain's tent." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Needs must I recite somewhat of verse, so haply it may allay the fire of my heart." "God on thee," cried the stoker, "leave this lamentation, till thou come to thine own country; then do what thou wilt, and I will be with thee, wherever thou art." "By Allah," replied Zoulmekan, "I cannot forbear from this!" Then he set his face towards Baghdad and began to repeat verses. Now the moon was shining brightly and shedding her light on the place, and Nuzhet ez Zeman could not sleep that night, but was wakeful and called to mind her brother and wept. Presently, she heard Zoulmekan weeping and repeating the following verses:

The southern lightning gleams in the air
And rouses in me the old despair,
The grief for a dear one, loved and lost,
Who filled me the cup of joy whilere.
It minds me of her who fled away
And left me friendless and sick and bare.
O soft-shining lightnings, tell me true,
Are the days of happiness past fore'er?
Chide not, O blamer of me, for God
Hath cursed me with two things hard to bear,
A friend who left me to pine alone,
And a fortune whose smile was but a snare.
The sweet of my life was gone for aye,
When fortune against me did declare;
She brimmed me a cup of grief unmixed,
And I must drink it and never spare.
Or ever our meeting 'tide, sweetheart,

Methinks I shall die of sheer despair,
I prithee, fortune, bring back the days
When we were a happy childish pair;
The days, when we from the shafts of fate,
That since have pierced us, in safety were!
Ah, who shall succour the exiled wretch,
Who passes the night in dread and care,
And the day in mourning for her whose name,
Delight of the Age, bespoke her fair?
The hands of the baseborn sons of shame
Have doomed us the wede of woe to wear.

Then he cried out and fell down in a swoon, and when Nuzhet ez Zeman heard his voice in the night, her heart was solaced and she rose and called the chief eunuch, who said to her, "What is thy will?" Quoth she, "Go and fetch me him who recited verses but now." "I did not hear him," replied he; "the people are all asleep." And she said, "Whomsoever thou findest awake, he is the man." So he went out and sought, but found none awake but the stoker; for Zoulmekan was still insensible, and, Nuzhet ez Zeman, going up to the former, said to him, "Art thou he who recited verses but now, and my lady heard him?" The stoker concluded that the lady was wroth and was afraid and replied, "By Allah, 'twas not I!" "Who then was it?" rejoined the eunuch. "Point him out to me. Thou must know who it was, seeing that thou art awake." The stoker feared for Zoulmekan and said in himself, "Maybe the eunuch will do him some hurt." So he answered, "I know not who it was." "By Allah," said the eunuch, "thou liest, for there is none awake here but thou! So needs must thou know him." "By Allah," replied the stoker, "I tell thee the truth! It must have been some passer-by who recited the verses and disturbed me and aroused me, may God requite him!" Quoth the eunuch, "If thou happen upon him, point him out to me and I will lay hands on him and bring him to the door of my lady's litter; or do thou take him with thine own hand." "Go back," said the stoker, "and I will bring him to thee." So the eunuch went back to his mistress and said to her, "None knows who it was; it must have been some passer-by." And she was silent. Meanwhile, Zoulmekan came to himself and saw that the moon had reached the zenith and felt the breath of the breeze that goes before the dawn; whereupon his heart was moved to longing and sadness, and he cleared his throat and was about to recite verses, when the stoker said to him, "What wilt thou do?" "I have a mind to repeat somewhat of verse," answered Zoulmekan, "that I may allay therewith the fire of my heart." Quoth the other, "Thou knowest not what befell me, whilst thou wert aswoon, and how I only escaped death by beguiling the eunuch." "Tell me what happened," said Zoulrnekan. "Whilst thou wert aswoon," replied the stoker, "there came up to me but now an eunuch, with a long staff of almond-tree wood in his hand, who looked in all the people's faces, as they lay asleep, and finding none awake but myself, asked me who it was recited the verses. I told him it was some passer-by; so he went away and God delivered me from him; else had he killed me. But first he said to me, 'If thou hear him again, bring him to us.'" When Zoulmekan heard this, he wept and said, "Who is it would forbid me to recite? I will surely do so, come what may; for I am near my own country and care for no one." "Dost thou wish to destroy

thyself?" asked the stoker; and Zoulmekan answered, "I cannot help reciting verses." "Verily," said the stoker, "I see this will bring about a parting between us here though I had promised myself not to leave thee, till I had brought thee to thy native city and re-united thee with thy mother and father. Thou hast now been with me a year and a half, and I have never baulked thee or harmed thee in aught. What ails thee then, that thou must needs recite, seeing that we are exceeding weary with travel and watching and all the folk are asleep, for they need sleep to rest them of their fatigue." But Zoulmekan answered, "I will not be turned from my purpose." Then grief moved him and he threw off disguise and began to repeat the following verses:

Halt by the camp and hail the ruined steads by the brake,
And call on her name aloud; mayhap she will answer make.
And if for her absence the night of sadness darken on thee,
Light in its gloom a fire with longings for her sake.
Though the snake of the sand-hills hiss, small matter is it to me
If it sting me, so I the fair with the lips of crimson take.
O Paradise, left perforce of the spirit, but that I hope
For ease in the mansions of bliss, my heart would surely break!

And these also:

Time was when fortune was to us even as a servant is,
And in the loveliest of lands our happy lives did kiss.
Ah, who shall give me back the abode of my belov'd, wherein
The Age's Joy and Place's Light erst dwelt in peace and bliss?

Then he cried out three times and fell down senseless, and the stoker rose and covered him. When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard the first verses, she called to mind her mother and father and brother; and when she heard the second, mentioning the names of herself and her brother and their sometime home, she wept and calling the eunuch, said to him, "Out on thee! But now I heard him who recited the first time do so again, and that hard by. So, by Allah, an thou fetch him not to me, I will rouse the Chamberlain on thee, and he shall beat thee and turn thee away. But take these hundred dinars and give them to him and do him no hurt, but bring him to me gently. If he refuse, give him this purse of a thousand dinars and leave him and return to me and tell me, after thou hast informed thyself of his place and condition and what countryman he is. Return quickly and do not linger, and beware lest thou come back and say, 'I could not find him.'" So the eunuch went out and fell to examining the people and treading amongst them, but found none awake, for the folk were all asleep for weariness, till he came to the stoker and saw him sitting up, with his head uncovered. So he drew near him and seizing him by the hand, said to him, "It was thou didst recite the verses!" The stoker was affrighted and replied, "No, by Allah, O chief of the people, it was not I!" But the eunuch said, "I will not leave thee till thou show me who it was; for I fear to return to my lady without him." Thereupon the stoker feared for Zoulmekan and wept sore and said to the eunuch, "By Allah, it was not I, nor do I know who it was. I only heard some passer-by recite verses: so do not thou commit sin on me, for I am a stranger and come from Jerusalem, and Abraham the Friend of God be with thee!" "Come thou with me," rejoined the eunuch, "and tell

my lady this with thine own mouth, for I see none awake but thee." Quoth the stoker, "Hast thou not seen me sitting here and dost thou not know my station? Thou knowest none can stir from his place, except the guards seize him. So go thou to thy mistress and if thou hear any one reciting again, whether it be near or far, it will be I or some one whom I shall know, and thou shalt not know of him but by me." Then he kissed the eunuch's head and spoke him fair, till he went away; but he made a circuit and returning secretly, came and hid himself behind the stoker, fearing to go back to his mistress empty-handed. As soon as he was gone, the stoker aroused Zoulmekan and said to him, "Awake and sit up, that I may tell thee what has happened." So Zoulmekan sat up, and the stoker told him what had passed, and he answered, "Let me alone; I will take no heed of this and I care for none, for I am near my own country." Quoth the stoker, "Why wilt thou obey thine own inclinations and the promptings of the devil? If thou fearest no one, I fear for thee and myself; so God on thee, recite no more verses, till thou come to thine own country! Indeed, I had not thought thee so self-willed. Dost thou not know that this lady is the wife of the Chamberlain and is minded to chide thee for disturbing her. Belike, she is ill or restless for fatigue, and this is the second time she hath sent the eunuch to look for thee." However, Zoulmekan paid no heed to him, but cried out a third time and repeated the following verses:

The carping tribe I needs must flee;
Their railing chafes my misery.
They blame and chide at me nor know
They do but fan the flame in me.
"She is consoled," they say.
And I, "Can one consoled for country be?"
Quoth they, "How beautiful she is!"
And I, "How dear-belov'd is she!"
"How high her rank!" say they;
And I, "How base is my humility!"
Now God forfend I leave to love,
Deep though I drink of agony!
Nor will I heed the railing race,
Who carp at me for loving thee.

Hardly had he made an end of these verses when the eunuch, who had heard him from his hiding, came up to him; whereupon the stoker fled and stood afar off, to see what passed between them. Then said the eunuch to Zoulmekan, "Peace be on thee, O my lord!" "And on thee be peace," replied Zoulmekan, "and the mercy of God and His blessing!" "O my lord," continued the eunuch, "this is the third time I have sought thee this night, for my mistress bids thee to her." Quoth Zoulmekan, "Whence comes this bitch that seeks for me? May God curse her and her husband too!" And he began to revile the eunuch, who could make him no answer, because his mistress had charged him to do Zoulmekan no violence nor bring him, save of his free will, and if he would not come, to give him the thousand dinars. So he began to speak him fair and say to him, "O my lord, take this (purse) and go with me. We will do thee no unright nor wrong thee in aught; but we would have thee bend thy gracious steps with me to my mistress, to speak with her and return in peace and safety; and thou shalt have a

handsome present." When Zoulmekan heard this, he arose and went with the eunuch, stepping over the sleeping folk, whilst the stoker followed them at a distance, saying to himself, "Alas, the pity of his youth! To-morrow they will hang him. How base it will be of him, if he say it was I who bade him recite the verses!" And he drew near to them and stood, watching them, without their knowledge, till they came to Nuzhet ez Zeman's tent, when the eunuch went in to her and said, "O my lady, I have brought thee him whom thou soughtest, and he is a youth, fair of face and bearing the marks of gentle breeding." When she heard this, her heart fluttered and she said, "Let him recite some verses, that I may hear him near at hand, and after ask him his name and extraction." So the eunuch went out to Zoulmekan and said to him, "Recite what verses thou knowest, for my lady is here hard by, listening to thee, and after I will ask thee of thy name and extraction and condition." "Willingly," replied he; "but as for my name, it is blotted out and my trace among men is passed away and my body wasted. I have a story, the beginning of which is not known nor can the end of it be described, and behold, I am even as one who hath exceeded in drinking wine, till he hath lost the mastery of himself and is afflicted with distempers and wanders from his right mind, being perplexed about his case and drowned in the sea of melancholy." When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard this, she broke out into loud weeping and sobbing and said to the eunuch, "Ask him if he have lost a beloved one, such as his father or mother." The eunuch did as she bade him, and Zoulmekan replied, "Yes, I have lost all whom I loved: but the dearest of all to me was my sister, from whom Fate hath parted me." When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard this, she exclaimed, "May God the Most High reunite him with those he loves!" Then said she to the eunuch, "Tell him to let me hear somewhat on the subject of his separation from his people and his country." The eunuch did so, and Zoulmekan sighed heavily and repeated the following verses:

Ah, would that I knew they were ware
Of the worth of the heart they have won!
Would I knew through what passes they fare,
From what quarter they look on the sun!
Are they living, I wonder, or dead?
Can it be that their life's race is run?
Ah, the lover is ever distraught
And his life for misgivings undone!

And also these:

I vow, if e'er the place shall bless my longing sight,
Wherein my sister dwells, the age's dear delight,
I'll take my fill of life and all the sweets of peace,
Midst trees and flowing streams: and maidens fair and bright
The lute's enchanting tones shall soothe me to repose,
What while I quaff full cups of wine like living light
And honeyed dews of love suck from the deep-red lips
Of lovelings sleepy-eyed, with tresses black as night.

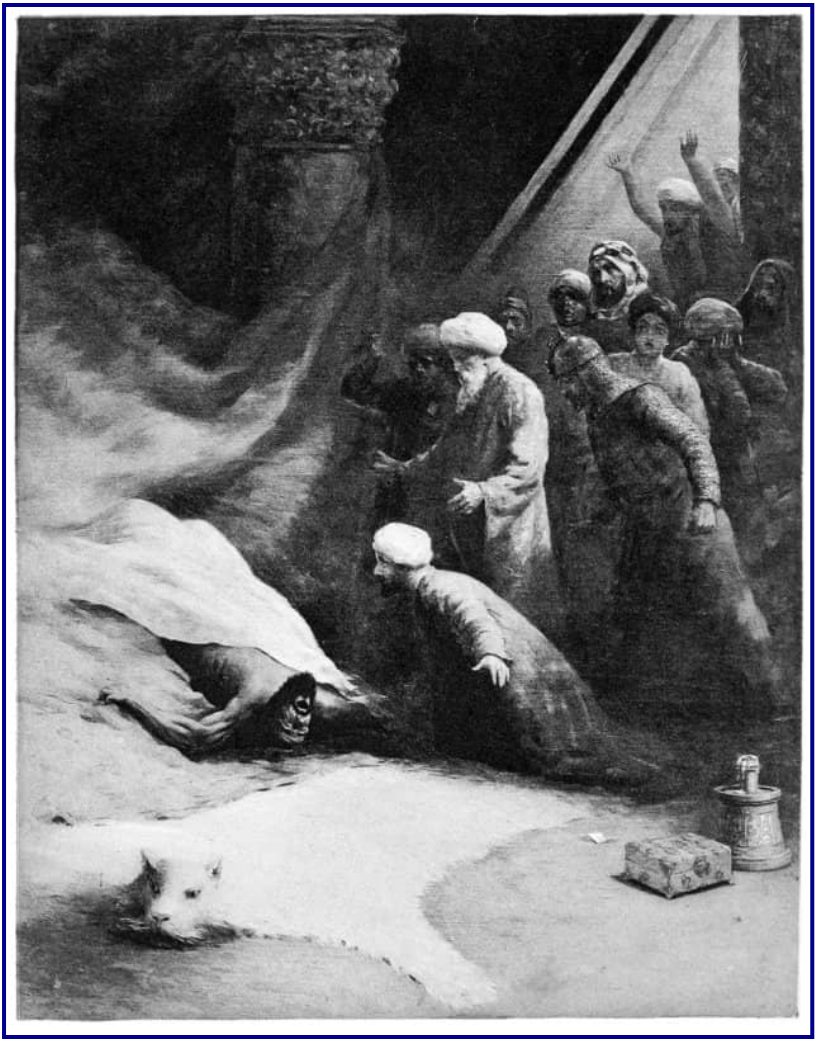
When he had finished, Nuzhet ez Zeman lifted up a corner of the curtain of the litter and looked at him. As soon as her eyes fell on him, she knew him for certain and

cried out, "O my brother! O Zoulmekan!" He looked at her and knew her and cried out, "O my sister! O Nuzhet ez Zeman!" Then she threw herself upon him, and he received her in his arms, and they both fell down in a swoon. When the eunuch saw this, he wondered and throwing over them somewhat to cover them, waited till they should recover. After awhile, they came to themselves, and Nuzhet ez Zeman rejoiced exceedingly. Grief and anxiety left her and joys flocked upon her and she repeated the following verses:

Fate swore 'twould never cease to plague my life and make me rue.
Thou hast not kept thine oath, O Fate; so look thou penance do.
Gladness is come and my belov'd is here to succour me;
So rise unto the summoner of joys, and quickly too.
I had no faith in Paradise of olden time, until
I won the nectar of its streams from lips of damask hue.

When Zoulmekan heard this, he pressed his sister to his breast, whilst, for the excess of his joy, the tears streamed from his eyes and he repeated the following verses:

Long time have I bewailed the severance of our loves,
With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain,
And vowed that, if the days should reunite us two,
My lips should never speak of severance again.
Joy hath o'erwhelmed me so, that, for the very stress
Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become to you a habit, O my eyes,
So that ye weep alike for gladness and for pain.



They sat awhile at the door of the litter, conversing, till she said to him, "Come with me into the litter and tell me all that has befallen thee, and I will do the like." So they entered and Zoulmekan said, "Do thou begin." Accordingly, she told him all that had happened to her since their separation and said, "Praised be God who hath vouchsafed thee to me and ordained that, even as we left our father together, so we shall return to him together! Now tell me how it has fared with thee since I left thee." So he told her all that had befallen him and how God had sent the stoker to him, and how he had journeyed with him and spent his money on him and tended him night and day. She praised the stoker for this, and Zoulmekan added, "Indeed, O my sister, the man hath dealt with me in such benevolent wise as would not a lover with his mistress or a father with his son, for that he fasted and gave me to eat, and went afoot, whilst he made me ride; and I owe my life to him." "God willing," said she, "we will requite him for all this, according to our power." Then she called the eunuch, who came and kissed Zoulmekan's hand, and she said, "Take thy reward for glad tidings, O face of good omen! It was thy hand reunited me with my brother; so the purse I gave thee and its contents are thine. But now go to thy master and bring him quickly to me." The eunuch rejoiced and going to the Chamberlain, summoned him to his mistress. Accordingly, he came in to his wife and finding Zoulmekan with her, asked who he was. So she told him all that had befallen them, first and last, and added, "Know, O Chamberlain, that thou hast gotten no slave-girl to wife: but the daughter of King Omar ben Ennuman: for I am Nuzhet ez Zeman, and this is my brother Zoulmekan." When the Chamberlain heard her story, he knew it for the manifest truth and was certified that he was become King Omar ben Ennuman's son-in-law and said to himself, "I shall surely be made governor of some province." Then he went up to Zoulmekan and gave him joy of his safety and re-union with his sister, and bade his servants forthwith make him ready a tent and one of the best of his own horses to ride. Then said Nuzhet ez Zeman, "We are now near my country and I would fain be alone with my brother, that we may enjoy one another's company and take our fill of each other, before we reach Baghdad; for we have been long parted." "Be it as thou wilt," replied the Chamberlain and going forth, sent them wax candles and various kinds of sweetmeats, together with three costly suits of clothes for Zoulmekan. Then he returned to the litter, and Nuzhet ez Zeman said to him, "Bid the eunuch find the stoker and give him a horse to ride and provide him a tray of food morning and evening, and let him be forbidden to leave us." The Chamberlain called the eunuch and charged him accordingly; so he took his pages with him and went out in search of the stoker, whom he found at the tail of the caravan, saddling his ass and preparing for flight. The tears were running down his cheeks, out of fear for himself and grief for his separation from Zoulmekan, and he was saying to himself, "Indeed, I warned him for the love of God, but he would not listen to me. O that I knew what is become of him!" Before he had done speaking, the eunuch came up and stood behind him, whilst the pages surrounded him. The stoker turned and seeing the eunuch and the pages round him, changed colour and trembled in every nerve for affright, exclaiming, "Verily, he knows not the value of the good offices I have done him! I believe he has denounced me to the eunuch and made me an accomplice in his offence." Then the eunuch cried out at him, saying, "Who was it recited the verses? Liar that thou art, why didst thou tell me that thou knewest not who it was, when it was thy companion? But now I will

not leave thee till we come to Baghdad, and what betides thy comrade shall betide thee." Quoth the stoker, "Verily, what I feared has fallen on me." And he repeated the following verse:

'Tis e'en as I feared it would be:
We are God's and to Him return we.

Then said the eunuch to the pages, "Take him off the ass." So they took him off the ass and setting him on a horse, carried him along with the caravan, surrounded by the pages, to whom said the eunuch, "If a hair of him be missing, it shall be the worse for you." But he bade them privily treat him with consideration and not humiliate him. When the stoker saw himself in this case, he gave himself up for lost and turning to the eunuch, said to him, "O chief, I am neither this youth's brother nor anywise akin to him; but I was a stoker in a bath and found him lying asleep on the fuel-heap." Then the caravan fared on and the stoker wept and imagined a thousand things in himself, whilst the eunuch walked by his side and told him nothing, but said to him, "You disturbed our mistress by reciting verses, thou and the lad: but have no fear for thyself." This he said, laughing at him the while in himself. When the caravan halted, they brought them food, and he and the eunuch ate from one dish. Then the eunuch let bring a gugglet of sherbet of sugar and after drinking himself, gave it to the stoker, who drank; but all the while his tears ceased not flowing, out of fear for himself and grief for his separation from Zoulmekan and for what had befallen them in their strangerhood. So they travelled on with the caravan, whilst the Chamberlain now rode by the door of his wife's litter, in attendance on Zoulmekan and the princess, and now gave an eye to the stoker, and Nuzhet ez Zeman and her brother occupied themselves with converse and mutual condolence; and so they did till they came within three days' journey of Baghdad. Here they alighted at eventide and rested till the morning, when they woke and were about to load the beasts, when behold, there appeared afar off a great cloud of dust, that obscured the air, till it became as dark as night. Thereupon the Chamberlain cried out to them to stay their preparations for departure, and mounting with his officers rode forward in the direction of the dust-cloud. When they drew near it, they perceived under it a numerous army, like the full flowing sea, with drums and flags and standards and horsemen and footmen. The Chamberlain marvelled at this: and when the troops saw him, there came forth from amongst them a troop of five hundred horse, who fell upon him and his suite and surrounded them, five for one; whereupon said he to them, "What is the matter and what are these troops, that ye use us thus?" "Who art thou?" asked they. "Whence comest thou and whither art thou bound?" And he answered, "I am the Chamberlain of the Viceroy of Damascus, King Sherkan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad and of the land of Khorassan, and I bring tribute and presents from him to his father in Baghdad." When the horsemen heard speak of King Omar, they let their kerchiefs fall over their faces and wept, saying, "Alas! King Omar is dead, and he died poisoned. But fare ye on, no harm shall befall you, and join his Grand Vizier Dendan." When the Chamberlain heard this, he wept sore and exclaimed, "Alas, our disappointment in this our journey!" Then he and his suite rode on, weeping, till they reached the main body of the army and sought access to the Vizier Dendan, who called a halt and causing his pavilion to be pitched, sat down on a couch therein and commanded to admit the Chamberlain. Then he bade him be seated and questioned him; and he replied that he was the Viceroy's Chamberlain of Damascus and was bound to King Omar with presents and the tribute of Syria. The Vizier wept at the mention of King Omar's name and said, "King Omar is dead by poison, and the folk fell out amongst themselves as to whom they should make king after him, so that they were like to come to blows on this account; but the notables and grandees interposed and restored peace, and the people

agreed to refer the matter to the decision of the four Cadis, who adjudged that we should go to Damascus and fetch thence the late king's son Sherkan and make him king over his father's realm. Some of them would have chosen his second son Zoulmekan, were it not that he and his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman set out five years ago for Mecca, and none knows what is become of them." When the Chamberlain heard this, he knew that his wife had told him the truth and grieved sore for the death of King Omar, what while he was greatly rejoiced, especially at the arrival of Zoulmekan, for that he would now become King of Baghdad in his father's room. So he turned to the Vizier and said to him, "Verily, your affair is a wonder of wonders! Know, O chief Vizier, that here, where you have encountered me, God giveth you rest from fatigue and bringeth you that you desire after the easiest of fashions, in that He restoreth to you Zoulmekan and his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman, whereby the matter is settled and made easy." When the Vizier heard this, he rejoiced greatly and said, "O Chamberlain, tell me their story and the reason of their having been so long absent." So he repeated to him the whole story and told him that Nuzhet ez Zeman was his wife. As soon as he had made an end of his tale, the Vizier sent for the amirs and viziers and grandees and acquainted them with the matter; whereat they rejoiced greatly and wondered at the happy chance. Then they went in to the Chamberlain and did their service to him, kissing the earth before him; and the Vizier Dendan also rose and stood before him, in token of respect. After this the Chamberlain held a great council, and he and the Vizier sat upon a throne, whilst all the amirs and officers of state took their places before them, according to their several ranks. Then they dissolved sugar in rose-water and drank, after which the amirs sat down to hold council and bade the rest mount and ride forward leisurely, till they should make an end of their deliberations and overtake them. So the officers kissed the earth before them and mounting, rode onward, preceded by the standards of war. When the amirs had finished their conference, they mounted and rejoined the troops; and the Chamberlain said to the Vizier Dendan, "I think it well to ride on before you, that I may notify Zoulmekan of your coming and choice of him as Sultan over the head of his brother Sherkan, and that I may make him ready a place befitting his dignity." "It is well thought," answered the Vizier. Then the Chamberlain rose and Dendan also rose, to do him honour, and brought him presents, which he conjured him to accept. On like wise did all the amirs and officers of state, calling down blessings on him and saying to him, "Mayhap thou will make mention of our case to King Zoulmekan and speak to him to continue us in our dignities." The Chamberlain promised what they asked and the Vizier Dendan sent with him tents and bade the tent-pitchers set them up at a days journey from the city. Then the Chamberlain mounted and rode forward, full of joy and saying in himself, "How blessed is this journey!" And indeed his wife was exalted in his eyes, she and her brother Zoulmekan. They made all haste, till they reached a place distant a day's journey from Baghdad, where he called a halt and bade his men alight and make ready a sitting place for the Sultan Zoulmekan, whilst he rode forward with his pages and alighting at a distance from Nuzhet ez Zeman's litter, commanded the eunuchs to ask the princess's leave to admit him. They did so and she gave leave; whereupon he went in to her and her brother and told them of the death of their father, King Omar ben Ennuman, and how the heads of the people had made Zoulmekan king over them in his stead; and he gave them joy of the kingdom. When they heard this, they both wept

for their father and asked the manner of his death. "The news rests with the Vizier Dendan," replied the Chamberlain, "who will be here to-morrow with all the troops; and it only remains for thee, O prince, to do what they counsel, since they have chosen thee King; for if thou do not this, they will crown another, and thou canst not be sure of thyself with another king. Haply he will kill thee, or discord may befall between you and the kingdom pass out of your hands." Zoulmekan bowed his head awhile, then raised it and said, "I accept;" for indeed he saw that the Chamberlain had counselled him rightly and that there was no refusing; "but, O uncle, how shall I do with my brother Sherkan?" "O my son," replied the Chamberlain, "thy brother will be Sultan of Damascus, and thou Sultan of Baghdad; so gird up thy resolution and prepare to do what befits thy case." Then he presented him with a suit of royal raiment and a dagger of state, that the Vizier Dendan had brought with him, and leaving him, returned to the tent-pitchers and bade them choose out a spot of rising ground and pitch thereon a spacious and splendid pavilion, wherein the Sultan might sit to receive the amirs and grandees. Then he ordered the cooks to make ready rich food and serve it up and the water-carriers to set up the water-troughs. They did as he bade them and presently there arose a cloud of dust and spread till it obscured the horizon. After awhile, the breeze dispersed it, and there appeared under it the army of Baghdad and Khorassan, led by the Vizier Dendan, all rejoicing in the accession of Zoulmekan. Now Zoulmekan had donned the royal robes and girt himself with the sword of state: so the Chamberlain brought him a steed and he mounted, surrounded by the rest of the company on foot, and rode between the tents, till he came to the royal pavilion, where he entered and sat down, with the royal dagger across his thighs, whilst the Chamberlain stood in attendance on him and his servants stationed themselves in the vestibule of the pavilion, with drawn swords in their hands. Presently, up came the troops and sought admission to the King's presence; so the Chamberlain went in to Zoulmekan and asked his leave, whereupon he bade admit them, ten by ten. Accordingly, the Chamberlain went out to them and acquainted them with the King's orders, to which they replied, "We hear and obey." Then he took ten of them and carried them, through the vestibule, into the presence of the Sultan, whom when they saw, they were awed; but he received them with the utmost kindness and promised them all good. So they gave him joy of his safe return and invoked God's blessing upon him, after which they took the oath of fealty to him, and kissing the earth before him, withdrew. Then other ten entered and he received them in the same manner; and they ceased not to enter, ten by ten, till none was left but the Vizier Dendan. So he went in and kissed the earth before Zoulmekan, who rose to meet him, saying, "Welcome, O noble Vizier and father! Verily, thine acts are those of a precious counsellor, and judgment and foresight are in the hands of the Subtle, the All Wise." Then he commanded the Chamberlain to go out and cause the tables to be spread at once and bid the troops thereto. So they came and ate and drank. Moreover, he bade Dendan call a ten days' halt of the army, that he might be private with him and learn from him the manner of his father's death. Accordingly, the Vizier went forth and transmitted the King's wishes to the troops, who received his commands with submission and wished him eternity of glory. Moreover, he gave them leave to divert themselves and ordered that none of the lords in waiting should go in to the King for his service for the space of three days. Then Zoulmekan waited till nightfall, when he went in to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman and

said to her, "Dost thou know the fashion of my father's death or not?" "I have no knowledge of it," replied she, and drew a silken curtain before herself, whilst Zoulmekan seated himself without the curtain and sending for the Vizier, bade him relate to him in detail the manner of King Omar's death. "Know then, O King," replied Dendan, "that King Omar ben Ennuman, when he returned to Baghdad from his hunting excursion, enquired for thee and thy sister, but could not find you and knew that you had gone on the pilgrimage, whereat he was greatly concerned and angered, and his breast was contracted. He abode thus a whole year, seeking news of you from all who came and went, but none could give him any tidings of you. At the end of this time, as we were one day in attendance upon him, there came to us an old woman, as she were a devotee, accompanied by five damsels, high-bosomed maids, like moons, endowed with such beauty and grace as the tongue fails to describe; and to crown their perfections, they knew the Koran by heart and were versed in various kinds of learning and in the histories of bygone peoples. The old woman sought an audience of the King, and he bade admit her; whereupon she entered and kissed the ground before him. Now I was then sitting by his side, and he, seeing in her the signs of devoutness and asceticism, made her draw near and sit down by him. So she sat down and said to him, 'Know, O King, that with me are five damsels, whose like no king possesses, for they are endowed with beauty and grace and wit. They know the Koran and the traditions and are skilled in all manner of learning and in the history of bygone peoples. They are here before thee, at thy disposal; for it is by proof that folk are prized or disdained.' Thy late father looked at the damsels and their favour pleased him; so he said to them, 'Let each of you tell me something of what she knows of the history of bygone folk and peoples of times past.' Thereupon one of them came forward and kissing the earth before him, spoke as follows, 'Know, O King, that it behoves the man of good breeding to eschew impertinence and adorn himself with excellencies, observing the Divine precepts and shunning mortal sins; and to this he should apply himself with the assiduity of one who, if he stray therefrom, is lost; for the foundation of good breeding is virtuous behaviour. Know that the chief reason of existence is the endeavour after life everlasting and the right way thereto is the service of God: so it behoves thee to deal righteously with the people; and swerve not from this rubrick, for the mightier folk are in dignity, the more need they have of prudence and foresight; and indeed kings need this more than common folk, for the general cast themselves into affairs, without taking thought to the issue of them. Be thou prodigal both of thyself and thy treasure in the way of God and know that, if an enemy dispute with thee, thou mayst litigate with him and refute him with proof and ward thyself against him; but as for thy friend, there is none can judge between thee and him but righteousness and fair-dealing. Wherefore, choose thy friend for thyself, after thou hast proved him. If he be a man of religion, let him be zealous in observing the external letter of the Law and versed in its inner meaning, as far as may be: and if he be a man of the world, let him be free-born, sincere, neither ignorant nor perverse, for the ignorant man is such that even his parents might well flee from him, and a liar cannot be a true friend, for the word "friend" is derived from "truth," that emanates from the bottom of the heart; and how can this be the case, when falsehood is manifest upon the tongue? Know, therefore, that the observance of the Law profits him who practices it: so love thy brother, if he be after this fashion, and do not cast him off, even if thou

see in him that which thou mislikest; for a friend is not like a wife whom one can divorce and take again; but his heart is like glass; once broken, it cannot be mended. And God bless him who says:

Be careful not to hurt men's hearts nor work them aught of dole,
For hard it is to bring again a once estranged soul;
And hearts, indeed, whose loves in twain by discord have been rent
Are like a broken glass, whose breach may never be made whole.

The wise say (continued she), "The best of friends is he who is the most assiduous in good counsel, the best of actions is that which is fairest in its result, and the best of praise is (not) that which is in the mouths of men." It is said also, "It behoves not the believer to neglect to thank God, especially for two favours, health and reason." Again, "He who honoureth himself, his lust is a light matter to him, and he who makes much of small troubles, God afflicts him with great ones: he who obeys his own inclination neglects his duties and he who listens to the slanderer loses the true friend. He who thinks well of thee, do thou fulfil his thought of thee. He who exceeds in contention sins, and he who does not beware of upright is not safe from the sword."

Now will I tell thee somewhat of the duties of judges. Know, O King, that no judgment serves the cause of justice except it be given after deliberation, and it behoves the judge to treat all people alike, to the intent that the rich and noble may not be encouraged to oppression nor the poor and weak despair of justice. He should extract proof from him who complains and impose an oath upon him who denies; and compromise is lawful between Muslims, except it be a compromise sanctioning an unlawful or forbidding a lawful thing. If he have done aught during the day, of which he is doubtful, the judge should reconsider it and apply his discernment to elucidating it, that (if he have erred) he may revert to the right, for to do justice is a religious obligation and to return to that which is right is better than perseverance in error. Then he should study the precedents and the law of the case and do equal justice between the suitors, fixing his eye upon the truth and committing his affair to God, to whom belong might and majesty. Let him require proof of the complainant, and if he adduce it, let him put the defendant to his oath; for this is the ordinance of God. He should receive the testimony of competent Muslim witnesses, one against another, for God the Most High hath commanded judges to judge by externals, He Himself taking charge of the secret things. It behoves the judge also to avoid giving judgment, whilst suffering from stress of pain or hunger, and that in his decisions between the folk he seek to please God, for he whose intent is pure and who is at peace with his conscience, God shall guarantee him against what is between him and the people. Quoth Ez Zuhri, "There are three things, which if they be found in a Cadi, he should be deposed; namely, if he honour the base, love praise and fear dismissal." It is related that Omar ben Abdulaziz once deposed a Cadi, who asked him why he had done so. "It has come to my knowledge," replied Omar, "that thy speech is greater than thy condition." It is said also that Iskender said to his Cadi, "I have invested thee with this function and committed to thee in it my soul and my honour and manhood; so do thou guard it with thy soul and thine understanding." To his cook he said, "Thou art the governor of my body; so look thou tender it." To his secretary he said, "Thou art the controller of my wit: so do thou watch over me in what thou writest for me."'

With this the first damsel retired and a second one came forward and kissing the earth seven times before the King thy father, spoke as follows: 'The sage Lucman said to his son, "There are three men whom thou shalt not know, but in three several cases; thou shalt not know the merciful man but in time of anger, nor the brave man but in time of war nor thy friend but when thou hast need of him." It is said that the oppressor shall repent, though the people praise him, and that the oppressed is safe, though the people blame him. Quoth God the Most High, " Think not that those who rejoice in their deeds and love to be praised for that which they have not done, shall escape punishment; indeed there is reserved for them a grievous punishment." Quoth Mohammed (on whom be peace and salvation), "Works are according to intentions, and to each man is attributed that which he intends." He saith also, "There is a part of the human body, which being whole, all the rest is whole, and which being corrupt, the whole body is corrupt; it is the heart. And indeed the heart is the most marvellous part of man, since it is that which ordereth his whole affair; if covetise stir in it, desire destroys him, and if affliction master it, anguish slays him: if anger rage in it, danger is sore upon him, and if it be blest with contentment, he is safe from discontent; if fear overtake it, he is filled with mourning, and if calamity smite it, affliction betideth him. If a man gain wealth, his heart is peradventure diverted thereby from the remembrance of his Lord, and if poverty afflict him, his heart is distracted by care, or if disquietude waste his heart, weakness reduces him to impotence. So, in any case, there is nothing will profit him but that he be mindful of God and occupy himself with gaining his living and securing his place in Paradise." It was asked of a certain wise man, "Who is the most ill-conditioned of men?" "He," replied the sage, "whose lusts master his manhood and whose mind exceeds in the pursuit of objects of high emprise, so that his knowledge increases and his excuse diminishes; and how excellent is what the poet says:

The freest of all men from need of the arrogant meddler am I,
The fool who's unguided of God and judges the folk all awry;
For wealth and good gifts are a loan and each man at last shall be clad
As it were in a mantle, with that which hid in his bosom doth lie.
If thou enter on aught by a door that is other than right, thou wilt err;
But the right door will dead thee aright, for sure, if thou enter there by."

As for anecdotes of devotees (continued the maiden), quoth Hisham ben Besher, "I said to Omar ben Ubeid, 'What is true devoutness?' and he answered, 'The Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) hath expounded it, when he says, "The devout is he who takes thought to death and calamity and prefers that which is eternal to that which passes away, who counts not the morrow as of his days, but reckons himself among the dead."'" And it is related that Abou Dherr used to say, "Poverty is dearer to me than riches and sickness than health." Quoth one of the listeners, "May God have mercy on Abou Dherr! For my part, I say, 'He who puts his trust in the goodness of the election of God the Most High should be content with that condition of which the Almighty hath made choice for him.'" Quoth one of the Companions (of the Prophet), "Ibn Ali Aqfa prayed with us the morning-prayer one day. When he had done, he read the seventy-fourth chapter (of the Koran), beginning, 'O thou that coverest thyself!' till he came to where God says, 'When the trumpet is blown,' and fell down dead." It is

said that Thabit el Benani wept till he well nigh lost his eyes. They brought him a man to tend him, who said to him, "I will cure thee, provided thou do my bidding." "In what respect?" asked Thabit. "In that thou leave weeping," replied the physician. "What is the use of my eyes," rejoined Thabit, "if they do not weep?" Said a man to Mohammed ibn Abdallah, "Exhort me." "I exhort thee," replied he, "to be an abstinent possessor in this world and a greedy slave in the next." "How so?" asked the other; and Mohammed said, "The abstinent man in this world possesses both this world and the world to come." Quoth Ghauth ben Abdallah, "There were two brothers among the people of Israel, one of whom said to the other, 'What is the worst thing thou hast done?' 'One day,' answered the other, 'I came upon a nest of young birds; so I took out one and threw it back into the nest; but the others drew apart from it. This is the worst thing I ever did; so now tell me what is the worst thing thou hast ever done.' 'When I betake myself to prayer,' rejoined the first, 'I am fearful to have done so only for the sake of the reward. This is the worst thing I have done.' Now their father heard what they said and exclaimed, 'O my God, if they speak the truth, take them to Thyself!' Quoth one of the wise men, 'Verily these were of the most virtuous of children.'" Quoth Said ben Jubeir, "I was once in company with Fuzaleh ibn Ubeid and said to him, 'Give me some good counsel.' 'Bear in mind these two things,' replied he. 'Attribute no partner to God, and do no hurt to any of His creatures.' And he repeated the following verses:

Be as thou wilt and banish dread and care,
For God is bountiful and debonair;
So of two things, the doing hurt to men
And giving God a partner, thou beware."

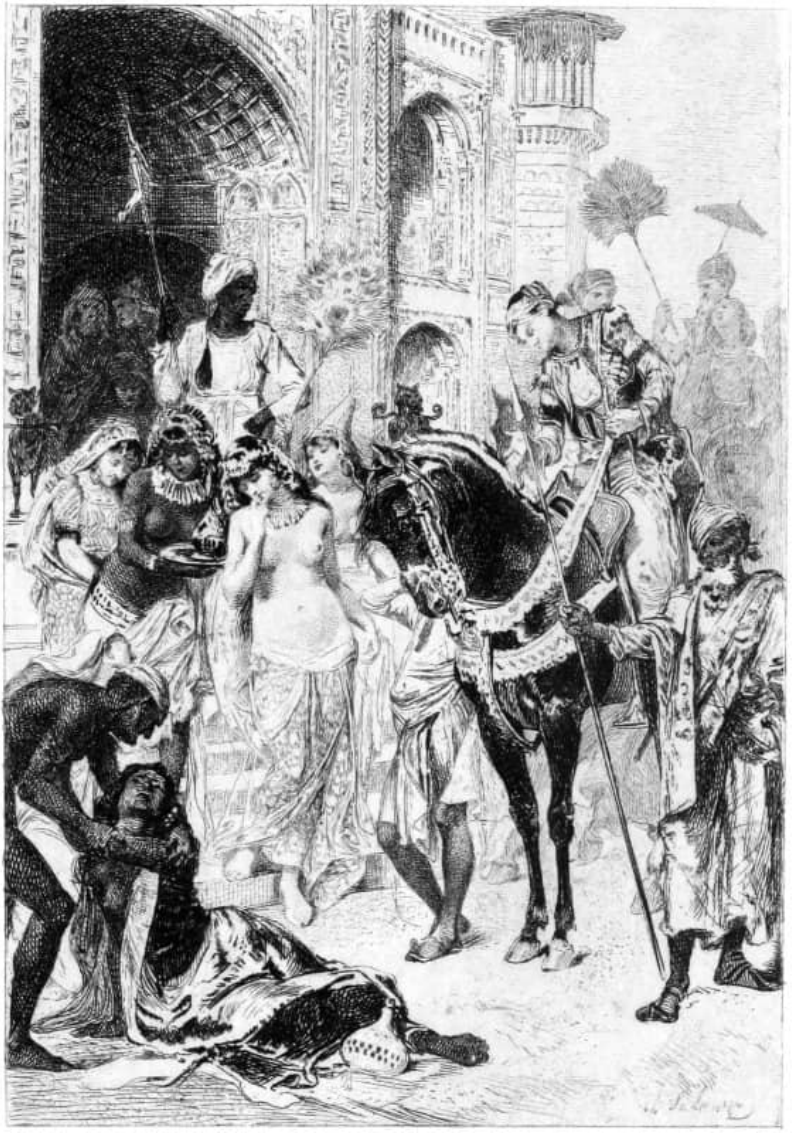
And how well saith the poet:

If thou neglect with pious works for death to furnish thee
And after meet with one equipped with store of piety,
Thou wilt, when all too late, repent that thou wert not like him
And didst not for the other world make ready as did he.'

Then the second damsel withdrew and a third came forward and spoke as follows. 'Indeed, the chapter of piety is a very wide one; but I will mention what occurs to me thereof, concerning pious men of old time. Quoth a certain holy man, "I rejoice in death, though I am not assured of ease therein, save that I know death interposes between a man and his works; so I hope for multiplication of good works and cessation of evil ones." Itaa es Selemi, when he had made an end of an exhortation, was wont to tremble and weep sore. It was asked him why he did this and he replied, "I purpose (or am about) to enter upon a grave matter, and it is the standing up before God the Most High, to do in accordance with my exhortation." In like manner Zein el Aabidin was wont to tremble when he rose to pray. Being asked the reason of this, he replied, "Do ye not know before whom I stand and to whom I address myself?" It is said that there lived near Sufyan eth Thauri a blind man who, when the month of Ramazan came, went out with the folk to pray, but remained silent and hung back (in repeating the prayers). Said Sufyan, "On the Day of Resurrection, he shall come with the people of the Koran and they will be distinguished from their fellows by excess of honour."

Quoth Sufyan, "Were the soul stablished in the heart as it befits, it would fly away, for joy and longing for Paradise and grief and fear of hell-fire." It is related also of Sufyan that he said, "To look upon the face of a tyrant is a sin."'

Then the third damsel retired and a fourth came forward, who said, 'I will treat of sundry traditions of pious men. It is related that Bishr el Hafi said, "I once heard Khalid say, 'Beware of secret hypocrisy.' Quoth I, 'What is secret hypocrisy?' He answered, 'When one of you, in praying, prolongs his inclinations and prostrations till a cause of impurity come upon him.'" Quoth one of the sages, "The doing of good works expiates evil deeds." Quoth Ibrahim ben Adhem, "I sought assiduously of Bishr el Hafi that he should acquaint me with some of the theological mysteries; but he said, 'O my son, it behoves us not to teach this knowledge to every one; of every hundred, five, even as the poor-rate upon money.' I thought his answer excellent, and when I went to pray, I saw Bishr praying: so I stood behind him, inclining myself in prayer, till the Muezzin made his call. Then rose a man of poor appearance and said, 'O folk, beware of truth, when it is hurtful, for there is no harm in beneficial falsehood, and in compulsion is no choice: speech profits not in the absence of good qualities nor is there any hurt in silence, when they exist.' Presently I saw Bishr drop a danic so I picked it up and exchanged it for a dirhem, which I gave him. 'I will not take it,' said he. Quoth I, 'It is a fair exchange;' but he answered, 'I cannot barter the riches of the world to come for those of this world.'" It is reported also that Bishr's sister once went to Ahmed ben Hembel and said to him, "O Imam of the Faith, we are a family that work for our living by day and spin thread by night; and oftentimes, the cressets of the watch of Baghdad pass by and we on the roof spinning by their light. Is this forbidden to us?" "Who art thou?" asked Ahmed. "I am the sister of Bishr el Hafi," replied she. "O household of Bishr," rejoined the Imam, "I shall never cease to quafl full draughts of piety and continence from your hearts." Quoth one of the learned, "When God wills well to any man, he opens upon him the gate of action." Malik ibn Dinar, when he passed through the bazaar and saw aught that he wished for, was wont to say, "O soul, take patience, for I will not accord to thee what thou desirest." He said also (may God accept of him), "The salvation of the soul lies in resistance to its desires and its ruin in submission to them." Quoth Mensour ben Ammar, "I set out one year on the pilgrimage and was making for Mecca by way of Cufa, when, one overcast night, I heard a voice crying out from the womb of the night and saying, 'O my God, by Thy power and Thy glory, I meant not by my disobedience to transgress against Thee, for indeed I am not ignorant of Thee; but my fault is one Thou didst foreordain to me from all eternity; so do Thou pardon me my sin, for indeed I disobeyed Thee of my ignorance!' When he had made an end of his prayer, he recited aloud the verse, 'O ye who believe, keep yourselves and your households from the fire whose fuel is men and stones!" Then I heard a fall, but knew not what it was and passed on. On the morrow, as we went our way, we fell in with a funeral train, followed by an old woman, whose strength had left her. I questioned her of the dead, and she replied, 'This is the funeral of a man who passed by us yesterday, whilst my son was standing at prayer. The latter recited a verse from the Book of God the Most High, when behold the man's gall-bladder burst and he fell dead.'"



Therewith the fourth damsel retired and the fifth, coming forward, spoke as follows: 'I also will repeat what occurs to me in the way of devotional anecdotes. Meslemeh ben Dinar used to say, "The making sound the secret thoughts covers sins, both great and small, and when the believer is resolved to leave sinning, help comes to him." Also, "Every piece of good fortune, that does not draw one nearer to God, is a calamity, for a little of this world distracts from a great deal of the world to come and a great deal of the first makes thee forget the whole of the latter." It was asked of Abou Hazim, "Who is the most fortunate of men?" "He who spends his life in the service of God," replied he. "And who is the most foolish of mankind?" asked the other. "He who sells his part in the world to come for the worldly goods of others," answered Abou Hazim. It is reported that Moses (on whom be peace), when he came to the waters of Midian, exclaimed, "O my Lord, indeed I am in need of that which Thou sendest down to me of good!" And he asked of his Lord and not of his folk. There came two damsels and he drew water for them and gave not precedence to the shepherds. When they returned to their father Jethro (on whom be peace!) they told him, and he said to one of them, "Haply, he is hungry: go back to him and bid him hither." So she covered her face and returning to Moses, said to him, "My father bids thee to him, that he may reward thee for having drawn water for us." Moses was averse to this and unwilling to follow her. Now she was a woman large in the buttocks, and the wind blowing upon her gown, discovered this; which when Moses saw, he lowered his eyes and said to her, "Do thou walk behind me." So she followed him, till he came to Jethro's house, where the evening meal was ready. "O Moses," said Jethro, "I desire to reward thee for having drawn water for them." But he answered, "I am of a people who sell nothing of the fashion of the next world for earthly gold and silver." "O youth," rejoined Jethro, "nevertheless thou art my guest, and it is my wont and that of my fathers to do honour to the guest by setting food before him." So Moses sat down and ate. Then Jethro hired Moses for eight pilgrimages, that is to say, eight years, and appointed to him for hire the hand of his daughter, and Moses' service to him was to stand for her dowry. As says the Holy Writ of him (quoth Jethro), "I am minded to marry thee to one of these my daughters, on condition that thou serve me eight years, and if thou serve out the ten, it will be of thine own will, for I do not wish to press hardly on thee." A certain man once said to one of his friends, "Thou hast made me desolate, for that I have not seen thee this long while." Quoth the other, "I have been distracted from thee by Ibn Shihab; dost thou know him?" "Yes," replied the first; "he hath been my neighbour these thirty years, but I have never spoken to him." "Indeed," rejoined his friend, "thou forgettest God in forgetting thy neighbour! If thou lovedst God, thou wouldst love thy neighbour. Knowst thou not that a neighbour has a claim upon his neighbour, even as the right of kindred?" Quoth Hudheifeh, "We entered Mecca with Ibrahim ben Adhem, and whilst making the prescribed circuits about the Kaabeh, we met with Shekic the Balkhi. Quoth Ibrahim to Shekic, 'What is your fashion in your country?' 'When we are vouchsafed [food],' replied he, 'we eat, and when we suffer hunger, we take patience.' 'This is the fashion of the dogs of Balkh,' rejoined Ibrahim. 'But we, when we are blest with plenty, we do honour to God, and when we suffer famine, we praise Him.' And Shekic seated himself before Ibrahim and said to him, 'Thou art my master.'" Quoth Mohammed ben Amran, "A man once asked of Hatim el Asemm, 'What maketh thee to trust in God?' 'Two things,' replied

he, 'I know that what God has appointed for my daily bread shall be eaten by none but myself; so my heart is at rest as to that; and I know that I was not created without God's knowledge and am abashed before Him.'"

Then the fifth damsel retired and the old woman came forward and kissing the earth before thy father nine times, spoke as follows: 'Thou hast heard, O King, what these all have said on the subject of piety; and I will follow their example in relating what I have heard of the famous men of times past. It is said that the Imam es Shafi divided the night into three portions, the first for study, the second for sleep and the third for prayer. The Imam Abou Henifeh was wont also to pass half the night in prayer. One day a man pointed him out to another, as he passed, and said, "Yonder man watches the whole night." Quoth Abou Henifeh, "When I heard this, I was abashed before God, to hear myself praised for what was not in me; so, after this, I used to watch the whole night." Er Rebya relates that Es Shafi used to recite the whole Koran seventy times over during the month of Ramazan, and that in prayer. Quoth Es Shafi (may God accept of him!), "For ten years I never ate my fill of barley-bread, for satiety hardens the heart and deadens the wit and induces sleep and enfeebles one from standing up (to pray)." It is reported of Abdallah ben Mohammed es Sekra that he said, "I was once talking with Omar, and he said to me, 'Never saw I a more God-fearing or eloquent man than Mohammed ben Idris es Shafi. I went out one day with El Harith ben Lebib es Suffar, who was a disciple of El Muzeni and had a fine voice, and he read the saying or the Most High, 'On that day, they shall not speak nor shall it be permitted to them to excuse themselves.' I saw Es Shafi's colour change; his skin shuddered, and he was violently moved and fell down senseless. When he revived, he said, 'I seek refuge with God from the stead of the liars and the fate of the negligent! O my God, the hearts of the wise abase themselves before Thee. O my God, of Thy goodness, accord to me the remission of my sins, adorn me with Thy protection and pardon me my shortcomings, by the magnanimity of Thine essence!' Then I rose and went away." Quoth one of the pious, "When I entered Baghdad, Es Shafi was there. I sat down on the river-bank, to make the ablution before prayer; and as I was thus occupied, there came up one who said to me, 'O youth, make thine ablution well and God will make it well for thee in this world and the world to come.' I turned and saw a man, with a company of people after him. So I hastened to finish my ablutions and followed him. Presently, he turned and said to me, 'Dost thou want aught?' 'Yes,' answered I; 'I desire that thou teach me somewhat of that which God the Most High hath taught thee.' 'Know, then,' said he, 'that he who believes in God the Most High shall be saved and he who is jealous of his faith shall be delivered from destruction, and he who practices abstinence in this world, his eyes shall be solaced on the morrow (of death). Shall I tell thee any more?' 'Assuredly,' replied I. 'Abstain from the things of this world,' continued he, 'and be greedy of the good of the world to come. Be sincere and faithful in all thy dealings, and thou shalt be saved with the elect.' Then he went on and I asked about him and was told that he was the Imam es Shafi. Es Shafi was wont to say, "I would have the folk profit by this wisdom (of mine), on condition that none of it be attributed to me." Also, "I never disputed with any one, but I would that God the Most High should give him the knowledge of the Truth and aid him to expound it; nor did I ever dispute with any, but for the showing forth of the Truth, and I recked not whether God should manifest it by my lips or his." He said also (may

God accept of him!), "If thou fear to grow conceited of thy learning, bethink thee Whose grace thou seekest and what good it is thou yearnest after and what punishment thou dreadest." It was told to Abou Henifeh that the Commander of the Faithful Abou Jaafer el Mensour had named him Cadi and ordered him a present of ten thousand dirhems; but he would not accept of this; and when the day came on which the money was to be paid, he prayed the morning-prayer, then covered his head with his cloak and spoke not. When the Khalif's messenger came with the money, he went in to the Imam and accosted him, but he would not speak to him. Quoth the messenger, "This money is lawfully thine." "I know that it is lawfully mine," replied the Imam; "but I abhor that the love of tyrants should take hold upon my heart." "Canst thou not go in to them and guard thyself from loving them?" asked the other. "Can I look to enter the sea, without wetting my clothes?" answered Abou Henifeh. Another of Es Shafi's sayings is as follows:

O soul, if thou be fain to do as I shall say,
Thou shalt be free from need and great of grace for aye.
Put far away from thee ambitions and desires,
For lo, how oft a wish to death hath led the way!

Among the sayings of Sufyan eth Thauri, with which he admonished Ali ben el Hassan es Selemi was the following, "Look that thou practice sincerity and beware of falsehood and treachery and hypocrisy and presumption for God annuls good works with either of these things. Borrow not but of Him who is merciful to His debtors and let thy comrade be one who will cause thee to abstain from the world. Let the thought of death be ever present with thee and be constant in asking pardon of God and beseeching of Him peace for what remains of thy life. Give loyal counsel to every true-believer, when he asks thee concerning the things of his faith, and beware of betraying a believer, for he who betrays a believer betrays God and His apostle. Avoid dissension and litigation and leave that which awakens doubt in thee, betaking;, thyself rather to those things that will not disquiet thee; so shalt thou be at peace. Enjoin that which is just and forbid that which is evil, so shalt thou be beloved of God. Make fair thine inner man, and God shall make fair thine outer man. Accept the excuse of him who excuses himself to thee and hate none of the true-believers. Draw near unto those that reject thee and forgive those that oppress thee; so shalt thou be the companion of the prophets. Commit thine affair to God, both in public and in private, and fear Him with the fear of one who knows that he must die and be raised again to stand before the Almighty, remembering that thou art destined for one of two dwellings, either Paradise the glorious or the flaming fire."' Having spoken thus, the old woman sat down beside the damsels.

When the late King thy father heard their discourse, he knew that they were the most accomplished of the people of their time and seeing their beauty and grace and the greatness of their learning, he showed them all favour. Moreover, he turned to the old woman and entreated her with honour, setting apart for her and her damsels the palace that had been the lodging of the princess Abrizeh, to which he let carry all that they needed of the best. Here they abode ten days, and whenever the King visited them, he found the old woman absorbed in prayer, watching by night and fasting by day; wherefore love of her took hold upon his heart and he said to me, 'O Vizier, verily this

old woman is a pious soul, and reverence for her is strong in my heart.' On the eleventh day, the King visited her, that he might pay her the price of the five damsels; but she said to him, 'O King, know that the price of these passes the competence of men, for I seek for them neither gold nor silver nor jewels, be it little or much.' The King wondered at this and said, 'O my lady, what is their price?' 'I will not sell them to thee,' replied she, 'save on condition that thou fast a whole month, watching by night and fasting by day for the love of God the Most High: but if thou wilt do this, they are thine, to use as thou pleasest.' The King wondered at the perfectness of her piety and devotion and abnegation and she was magnified in his eyes, and he said, 'May God make this pious old woman to profit us!' So he agreed to her proposal, and she said to him, 'I will help thee with my prayers.' Then she called for a gugglet of water and muttered over it words in an unknown language and abode awhile, speaking over it things that we understood not. Then she covered it with a cloth and sealing it up, gave it to the King, saying, 'When thou has fasted ten days, break thy fast on the eleventh night with what is in this cup, for it will root out the love of the world from thy heart and fill it with light and faith. As for me, I purpose to go out to-morrow to visit my brethren of the invisible world, for I yearn after them, and I will return to thee when the ten days are past.' So the King took the gugglet and setting it apart in a closet of his palace, locked the door and put the key in his pocket. Next day, the old woman departed and the King entered upon his fast. When he had accomplished the first ten days thereof, he opened the gugglet and drank what was therein and found it cordial to his stomach. Within the next ten days, the old woman returned, bringing sweetmeats wrapped in a green leaf, like no leaf of a tree. She went in to the King and saluted him; and when he saw her he rose to meet her, saying, 'Welcome, O pious lady!' 'O King,' said she, 'the spirits salute thee, for I told them of thee, and they rejoiced in thee and have sent thee this cake, which is of the sweetmeats of the other world. Do thou break thy fast on it at the end of the day.' The King rejoiced greatly at this and exclaimed, 'Praised be God who hath given me brethren of the invisible world!' And he thanked the old woman and kissed her hands and entreated her and the damsels with exceeding honour. Then he fasted till twenty days were past, at the end of which time the old woman came to him and said, 'Know, O King, that I told the spirits of the love that is between thee and me and how I had left the damsels with thee, and they were glad that the damsels should belong to a King like thee; for they were wont, when they saw them, to be strenuous in offering up effectual prayer on their behalf. So I would fain carry them to the spirits, that they may benefit by their favours, and they shall surely not return to thee without some treasure of the treasures of the earth, that thou, after the completion of thy fast, mayst occupy thyself with their dress and help thyself to the fulfilment of thy wishes with that which they shall bring thee.' The King thanked her and said, 'But that I fear to cross thee, I would not accept the treasure or aught else: but when wilt thou set out with them?' 'On the seven-and-twentieth night,' replied she; 'and I will bring them back to thee at the end of the month, by which time thou wilt have accomplished thy fast and they will have had their courses and be free from impurity. Then they shall become thine and be at thy disposal. By Allah, each one of them is worth many times thy kingdom!' 'I know it, O pious lady,' replied the King. Then said the old woman, 'If there be any one in thy palace who is dear to thee, thou wouldst do well to send her with me, that she may find solace and seek a blessing of the

spirits.' Quoth the King, 'I have a Greek slave called Sufiyeh, by whom God hath vouchsafed me two children, a son and a daughter: but they were lost years ago. Take her with thee, that she may get the spirits' blessing: it may be they will pray God for her, that her children may be restored to her.' 'It is well,' replied the old woman; for indeed this was what she most desired. The King gave not over fasting till the seven-and-twentieth night, when the old woman said to him, 'O my son, I am about to go to the spirits; so bring me Sufiyeh.' Accordingly, he sent for her and delivered her to the old woman, who placed her with the other damsels. Then she went in to her chamber and bringing out a sealed cup, presented it to the King, saying, 'On the thirtieth day, do thou go to the bath and when thou comest out, enter one of the closets in thy palace and drink the liquor that is in this cup. Then sleep, and thou shalt attain what thou seekest, and peace be on thee!' The King was glad and thanked her and kissed her hands. Quoth she, 'I commend thee to God;' and he said, 'When shall I see thee again, O pious lady? Indeed I love not to part with thee.' Then she called down blessings on him and departed with the five damsels and the Princess Sufiyeh; whilst the King fasted other three days, till the end of the month, when he went to the bath and coming out, shut himself up in a closet, commanding that none should go in to him. Then he drank what was in the cup and lay down to sleep. We sat awaiting him till the end of the day, but he did not come out and we said, 'Belike he is tired with the bath and with watching by night and fasting by day, and sleepeth.' So we waited till next day; but still he did not come out. Then we stood at the closet-door and cried aloud, so haply he might awake and ask what was the matter. But nothing came of this: so at last we lifted the door off its hinges and going in, found the King dead, with his flesh torn into strips and his bones broken in pieces. When we saw him in this case, it was grievous to us, and we took up the cup and found in its cover a piece of paper, on which was written the following, 'He who does evil leaves no regrets behind him. This is the reward of him who plays the traitor with kings' daughters and debauches them: and we make known to all who happen upon this scroll that Sherkan, when he came to our country, debauched our Princess Abrizeh; nor did this suffice him, but he must take her from us and bring her to you. Then he (Omar ben Ennuman) (debauched her and) sent her away, in company of a black slave, who slew her and we found her lying dead in the desert. This is none of kings' fashion, and he who did this is requited with nought but his deserts. So do ye suspect none of having killed him, for none slew him but the cunning witch, whose name is Dhat ed Dewahi. And behold, I have taken the King's wife Sufiyeh and have carried her to her father King Afridoun of Constantinople. Moreover, we will assuredly make war upon you and kill you and take your land from you, and ye shall be cut off even to the last man, nor shall there be left of you a living soul, no, nor a blower of the fire, except he serve the Cross and the Girdle.' When we read this, we knew that the old woman had cheated us and carried out her plot against us: so we cried out and buffeted our faces and wept sore. However, weeping availed us nothing and the troops fell out as to whom they should make Sultan. Some would have thee and others thy brother Sherkan; and we ceased not to wrangle about this for the space of a month, at the end of which time certain of us drew together and agreed to repair to thy brother Sherkan. So we set out and journeyed on till we fell in with thee: and this is the manner of the death of King Omar ben Ennuman.'

When the Vizier had made an end of his story, Zoulmekan and his sister wept, and the Chamberlain wept also. Then said the latter to Zoulmekan, "O King, weeping will profit thee nothing; nor will aught avail thee but that thou fortify thy heart and strengthen thy resolution and stablish thy power; for verily he is not dead who leaves the like of thee behind him." So Zoulmekan gave over weeping and causing his throne to be set up without the pavilion, commanded the army to pass in review before him. Then he sat down on the throne, with the Chamberlain by his side and all the arm-bearers behind him, whilst the Vizier Dendan and the rest of the amirs and grandees stood before him, each in his several room. Then said Zoulmekan to Dendan, "Acquaint me with the particulars of my father's treasures." Dendan answered, "I hear and obey," and gave him to know the amount and nature of the late King's treasure and what was in the treasury of money and jewels and other precious things. So Zoulmekan gave largesse to the army and bestowed a sumptuous dress of honour on the Vizier Dendan, saying, "I confirm thee in thine office." Whereupon Dendan kissed the earth before him and wished him long life. Then he bestowed dresses of honour on the amirs, after which he turned to the Chamberlain and said, "Bring out before us the tribute of Damascus, that is with thee." So he laid before him the chests of money and jewels and rarities, and he took them and divided them all amongst the troops, till there was nothing left. And the amirs kissed the ground before him and wished him long life, saying, "Never saw we a king, who gave the like of these gifts." Then they all went away to their own tents, and when it was morning, Zoulmekan gave orders for departure. So they set out and journeyed for three days, till on the fourth day they drew near to Baghdad. When they entered the city, they found it decorated, and King Zoulmekan went up to his father's palace and sat down on the throne, whilst the amirs of the army and the Vizier Dendan and the Chamberlain of Damascus stood before him. Then he bade his private secretary write a letter to his brother Sherkan, acquainting him with all that had passed and adding, "As soon as thou hast read this letter, make ready thine affair and join us with thine army, that we may make war upon the infidels and take vengeance on them for our father and wipe out the stain upon our honour." Then he folded the letter and sealed it and said to Dendan, "None shall carry this letter but thou; and I would have thee speak my brother fair and say to him, 'If thou have a mind to thy father's kingdom, it is thine, and thy brother shall be Viceroy for thee in Damascus; for to this effect am I instructed by him."' So the Vizier went out from before him and proceeded to make ready for his journey. Then Zoulmekan set apart a magnificent house for the stoker and furnished it with sumptuous furniture and lodged him therein. One day, he went out a-hunting and as he was returning to Baghdad, one of the amirs presented him with horses of fine breeds and damsels whose beauty beggars description. One of the damsels pleased him: so he went in to her and lay with her, and she conceived by him forthright. After awhile, the Vizier Dendan returned from Damascus, bringing him news of his brother Sherkan and that he was then on his way to him, and said to him, "Thou wouldst do well to go out to meet him." Zoulmekan replied, "I hear and obey;" and riding forth with his grandees a day's journey from Baghdad, pitched his tents and halted to await the coming of his brother. Next morning, the army of Syria appeared, with King Sherkan in its midst, a bold cavalier, a fierce lion and a warrior against whom none might make head. As the squadrons drew nigh and the dust-clouds neared and the

troops came up with banners flying, Zoulmekan and his attendants rode forward to meet Sherkan; and when the King saw his brother, he would have dismounted, but Sherkan conjured him not to do so and himself set foot to the ground and walked towards him. As soon as he reached Zoulmekan, the latter threw himself upon him, and they embraced and wept and condoled with one another. Then they mounted and rode onward, they and their troops, till they reached Baghdad, where they alighted and went up to the royal palace and passed the night there. Next morning, Zoulmekan went forth and bade proclaim a holy war and summon the troops from all parts. They abode a whole month, awaiting the coming of the levies, whilst the folk poured in from all parts of the kingdom, and every one who came they entreated with honour and munificence and promised him all manner of good. Then Sherkan said to Zoulmekan, "O my brother, tell me thy history." So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, including the benevolent dealing of the stoker with him. "Hast thou requited him his kindness to thee?" asked Sherkan. "Not yet," replied Zoulmekan, "but, God willing, I will surely do so, as soon as I return from this expedition and am at leisure to attend to him." Therewith, Sherkan was certified that his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman had told him the truth; but he concealed what had passed between them and contented himself with sending his salutation to her by her husband the Chamberlain. She returned his greeting in the same fashion, calling down blessings on him and enquiring after her daughter Kuzia Fekan, to which he replied that the child was well and in all health and safety. Then he went to his brother to take counsel with him for departure; and Zoulmekan said, "O my brother, we will set out as soon as the army is complete and the Arabs have come in from all parts." So he bade make ready the wheat and other provisions and munitions of war and went in to his wife, who was now five months gone with child; and he put under her hand mathematicians and astrologers, to whom he appointed stipends and allowances. Then, three months after the arrival of the army of Syria, as soon as the troops were all assembled and the Arabs had come in, he set out, at the head of his troops, with his brother Sherkan on his right and his brother-in-law the Chamberlain on his left hand. The name of the general of the army of the Medes was Rustem and that of the general of the army of the Turks Behram. So the squadrons broke up and marched forward and the companies and battalions filed past in battle array, till the whole army was in motion. They ceased not to fare on for the space of a month; halting three days a week to rest, by reason of the greatness of the host, till they came to the country of the Greeks; and as they drew near, the people of the villages and hamlets took fright at them and fled to Constantinople.

To return to Dhat ed Dewahi. As soon as she reached her own country and felt herself in safety, she said to her son, King Herdoub, "Be consoled; for I have avenged thy daughter Abrizeh and killed King Omar ben Ennuman and brought back the Princess Sufiyeh. So now let us go to the King of Constantinople and carry him back his daughter and tell him what has happened, that he may be on his guard and prepare his forces and that we may do the like; for I know that the Muslims will not delay to attack us." "Let us wait till they draw near our country," replied Herdoub, "that we may make us ready meantime and assemble our power." Accordingly they fell to levying their forces and preparing for war, so that by the time the news of the Muslims' advance reached them, they were ready for defence. Then King Herdoub and his mother set out for Constantinople, and King Afridoun, hearing of the arrival of the

King of the Greeks, came forth to meet him and asked how it was with him and the cause of his visit. So Herdoub acquainted him with the doing; of his mother Dhat ed Dewahi, how she had slain the Muslim king and recovered the Princess Sufiyeh and that the Muslims had assembled their forces and were on their way to attack them, wherefore it behoved that they two should join powers and meet them. King Afridoun rejoiced in the recovery of his daughter and the death of King Omar and sent to all countries, to seek succour and acquaint the folk with the reason of the slaying of King Omar. So the Christian troops flocked to him from all quarters, and before three months were past, the army of the Greeks was complete, besides which there joined themselves to him the French and Germans and Ragusans and Genoese and Venetians and all the hosts of the Pale Faces and warriors from all the lands of the Franks, and the earth was straitened on them by reason of their multitude. Then Afridoun the Great King commanded to depart; so they set out from Constantinople and ceased not to defile through the city for the space of ten days. They fared on till they reached a spacious valley, hard by the salt sea, where they halted three days; and on the fourth day, they were about to set out again, when news came to them of the approach of the army of Islam and the defenders of the faith of the Best of Men. So they halted other three days, and on the seventh day, they espied a great cloud of dust which spread till it covered the whole country; nor was an hour of the day past before the dust lifted and melted away into the air, and its darkness was pierced and dispersed by the starry sheen of lance-points and spear-heads and the flashing of sword-blades. Presently, there appeared the banners of Islam and the Mohammedan ensigns and the mailed horsemen surged forward, like the letting loose of the billows of the sea, clad in cuirasses as they were clouds girdled about moons. Thereupon the Christian horsemen rode forward and the two hosts met, like two seas clashing together, and eyes fell upon eyes. The first to spur into the fight was the Vizier Dendan, with the army of Syria, thirty thousand cavaliers, followed by Rustem, the general of the Medes, and Behram, the general of the Turks, with other twenty thousand horse, behind whom came the men of the sea-coast, sheathed in glittering mail as they were full moons passing through a night of clouds. Then the Christian host called upon Jesus and Mary and the defiled Cross, and fell upon the Vizier Dendan and the army of Syria. Now this was in pursuance of a stratagem devised by Dhat ed Dewahi; for, before his departure, King Afridoun had gone in to her and said, "It is thou hast brought this great stress on us; so do thou advise me how I shall do and what plan I shall follow." "O great King and mighty priest," replied she, "I will teach thee a shift, which would baffle Iblis himself, though he should call to his aid against it all his grisly hosts. It is that you send fifty thousand men in ships to the Mountain of Smoke and there let them land and stir not till the standards of Islam come upon you, when do you up and at them. Then let the troops from the seaward sally out upon the Muslims and take them in rear, whilst you confront them from the landward. So not one of them shall escape, and our stress shall cease and abiding peace enure to us." Her counsel commended itself to King Afridoun and he replied, "It is well; thy counsel shall be followed, O princess of cunning old women and recourse of kings warring for their blood-revenge!" So when the army of Islam came upon them in that valley, of a sudden the flames began to run among the tents and the swords to play upon men's bodies. Then came up the army of Baghdad and Khorassan, six score thousand horse, with Zoulmekan at

their head. When the host of the infidels that lay by the sea saw them, they came out and followed in their steps, and Zoulmekan, seeing this, cried out to his men, saying, "Turn back to the infidels, O people of the Chosen Prophet, and fall upon those who deny and transgress the authority of the Compassionate, the Merciful!" So they turned and fought with the Christians, and Sherkan came up with another wing of the Muslim army, near six score thousand men, whilst the infidels numbered nigh upon sixteen hundred thousand. When the Muslims mingled in the mellay, their hearts were strengthened and they cried out, saying, "God hath promised to succour us and abandon the infidels!" And they clashed together with swords and spears. As for Sherkan, he made himself a passage through the ranks and raged among the masses of the foe, fighting so fierce a battle that it would have made children grow grey for fear; nor did he leave to tourney among the infidels and work havoc upon them with the keen-edged scimitar, shouting, "God is most great!" till he drove them back to the brink of the sea. Then the strength of the foe failed and God gave the victory to the faith of Submission, and they fought, drunken without wine, till they slew of the infidels forty and five thousand in that encounter, whilst of the Muslims but three thousand and five hundred fell. Moreover, the Lion of the Faith, King Sherkan, and his brother Zoulmekan slept not that night, but occupied themselves with looking to the wounded and heartening their men with assurance of victory and salvation and promise of a recompense in the world to come.

Meanwhile King Afridoun assembled the captains of his host and said to them, "Verily, we had accomplished our intent and had solaced our hearts, but for our over-confidence in our numbers: it was that which undid us." But Dhat ed Dewahi said to them, "Assuredly nought shall profit you, except ye seek the favour of the Messiah and put your trust in the True Faith; for by the virtue of the Messiah, the whole strength of the Muslims lies in that devil, King Sherkan!" "To-morrow," said Afridoun, "I will draw out in battle array and send out against them the famous cavalier, Luca ben Shemlout; for if King Sherkan come out to joust with him, he will slay him and the other champions of the Muslims, till not one is left; and I purpose this night to sacre you all by fumigation with the Holy Incense." When the amirs heard this, they kissed the earth before him. Now the incense in question was the excrement of the Chief Patriarch, which was sought for with such instance and so highly valued, that the high priests of the Greeks used to mix it with musk and ambergris and send it to all the countries of the Christians in silken sachets; and kings would pay a thousand dinars for every drachm of it, for they sought it to perfume brides withal and the chief of them were wont to use a little of it in ointment for the eyes and as a remedy in sickness and colic. But the priests used to mix their own excrement with it, for that the excrement of the Chief Patriarch could not suffice for half a score countries. So, as soon as the day broke and the morning appeared with its lights and shone, the horsemen ran to arms, and King Afridoun summoned the chief of his knights and nobles and invested them with dresses of honour. Then he made the sign of the cross on their foreheads and incensed them with the incense aforesaid; after which he called for Luca ben Shemlout, surnamed the Sword of the Messiah, and after incensing him and rubbing his palate with the holy excrement, daubed and smeared his cheeks and anointed his moustaches with the remainder. Now there was no stouter champion in the land of the Greeks than this accursed Luca, nor any doughtier at bowshot or

smiting with swords or thrusting with spears in the mellay; but he was foul of favour, for his face was as the face of a jackass, his shape that of an ape and his look as the look of a malignant serpent, and the being near unto him was more grievous than parting from the beloved. Moreover, he was black as night and his breath was fetid as that of the lion; he was crooked as a bow and grim-visaged as the pard, and he was branded with the mark of the infidels. He kissed Afridoun's feet and the King said to him, "It is my wish that thou go out against Sherkan, King of Damascus, and hasten to deliver us from this affliction." Quoth Luca, "I hear and obey." And the King made the sign of the cross on his forehead and felt assured of speedy help from heaven, whilst Luca went out and mounted a sorrel horse. Now he was clad in a red tunic and a hauberk of gold set with jewels and bore a three-barbed spear, as he were Iblis the accursed on the day of marshalling his hosts to battle. Then he rode forward, he and his troop of infidels, as they were driving to the Fire, preceded by a herald, crying aloud in the Arabic tongue and saying, "Ho, followers of Mohammed, let none of you come out to-day but your champion Sherkan, the Sword of Islam, lord of Damascus of Syria!" Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when there arose a mighty tumult in the plain, all the people heard its voice, that called to mind the Day of Weeping. The cowards trembled and all necks turned towards the sound, and behold, it was King Sherkan. For, when Zoulmekan saw that accursed infidel spur out into the plain, he turned to Sherkan and said to him, "Of a surety they seek for thee." "Should it be so," replied Sherkan, "it were pleasing to me." So when they heard the herald, they knew Luca to be the champion of the Greeks. Now he was one of the greatest of villains, one who made hearts to ache, and had sworn to clear the land of the Muslims; and indeed the Medes and Turks and Kurds feared his mischief. So Sherkan drove at him like an angry lion, mounted on a courser like a wild gazelle, and coming nigh to him, shook his javelin in his hand, as it were a darting viper, and recited the following verses:

I have a sorrel horse, right swift and eath to guide,
Shall give thee of its might what thou mayst ill abide.
Ay, and a limber spear I have, full keen of point,
As 'twere the dam of deaths upon its shaft did ride;
And eke a trenchant sword of Ind, which when I draw,
Thou'dst deem that levins flashed and darted far and wide,

Luca understood not what he said nor did he apprehend the vehemence of the verse; but he smote his forehead with his hand, in honour of the cross drawn thereon, and kissed it, then ran at Sherkan with lance pointed at him. When he came within spear-shot, he threw the javelin into the air, till it was lost to sight, and catching it with the other hand, as do the jugglers, hurled it at Sherkan. It sped from his hand, like a shooting star, and the people clamoured and feared for Sherkan: but as it drew near him, he put out his hand and caught it in full flight, to the amazement of the beholders. Then he shook it, till it was well-nigh broken, and hurled it up into the air, till it disappeared from sight. As it descended, he caught it again, in less than the twinkling of an eye, and cried out from the bottom of his heart, saying, "By the virtue of Him who created the seven heavens, I will make this accursed fellow the byword of the world!" Then he hurled the javelin at Luca ben Shemlout, who thought to do as Sherkan had done and catch it in mid-flight; but Sherkan made haste and sped another

dart at him, which smote him on the forehead amiddleward the sign of the cross, and God hurried his soul to the Fire and the Ill Stead. When the infidels saw Luca fall dead, they buffeted their faces, crying, "Alas!" and "Woe worth the day!" and called for aid upon the priests of the monasteries, saying, "Where are the crosses?" So the monks offered up prayers and the Christians all drew together against Sherkan and brandishing their swords and lances, rushed forward to the attack. Army met army and men's breasts fell under the hoofs of the horses, whilst the sword and the spear ruled and arms and wrists grew weak and it was as if the horses had been made without legs; nor did the herald of war cease to call to battle, till all arms were weary and the day departed and the night came with the darkness. So the two hosts drew apart whilst every warrior staggered like a drunken man, for stress of war and much thrusting and smiting, and the ground was hidden with the slain; sore were the wounds and the hurt knew not by whom he died. Then Sherkan joined his brother and the Chamberlain and the Vizier Dendan and said to them, "Verily God hath opened a door for the destruction of the infidels, praised be the Lord of the Two Worlds!" "Let us never cease to praise God," replied Zoulmekan, "for that He hath dispelled trouble from the Arabs and the Persians. Indeed the folk, generation after generation, shall tell of thy prowess against the accursed Luca, the falsifier of the Evangel, of thy catching the javelin in mid-flight and smiting the enemy of God among men; and thy report shall endure until the end of time." Then said Sherkan, "Harkye, O grand Chamberlain and doughty captain!" "At thy service," answered he. Quoth Sherkan, "Take the Vizier Dendan and twenty thousand men and lead them, by a forced march, seven parasangs towards the sea, till ye come near the shore, at two parasangs' distance from the foe. Then hide in the hollows of the ground, till ye hear the tumult of the infidels disembarking from the ships; and when the swords have begun to play between us and them and ye see our troops falling back, as if defeated, and all the infidels following them, as well those in front as those from the sea-ward and the tents, do ye lie in wait for them: and as soon as ye see the standard with the words, 'There is no god but God, and Mohammed is His Apostle!' up with the green banner and fall on their rear, shouting, 'God is most great!' and do your endeavour, that they may not interpose between the retreating army and the sea." The Chamberlain agreed to this, and he and the Vizier Dendan took twenty thousand men and set out at once, even as Sherkan had commanded. As soon as it was morning the troops donned their armour and drawing their swords, set their spears in rest and sprang to horse. Then the Christians drew out in battle array upon the hills and plains and the priests cried out and all heads were uncovered. Moreover, those who were in the ships hoisted the cross at their mast-heads and making from all sides towards the shore, landed their horses and addressed them to the fray, whilst the swords glittered and the javelins glanced like levies against the cuirasses. So they all joined battle and the mill-wheels of death rushed round over footmen and horsemen: heads flew from bodies and tongues grew mute and eyes dim; gall-bladders burst and skulls were cloven in sunder and wrists shorn in twain; whilst the horses plashed in pools of blood and men gripped each other by the beards. The host of Islam called out, "Peace and blessing on the Prince of Mankind and glory and praise in the highest to the Compassionate One!" whilst the infidels shouted, "Glory to the Cross and the Girdle and the Vine-juice and the Presser and the Priests and the Monks and the Festival of Palms and the Metropolitan!" Presently, Zoulmekan and

Sherkan held back and their troops gave way and feigned to retreat before the infidels, who pursued them, deeming them routed, and made ready to cut and thrust. Then the host of the Muslims began to chant the first verses of the Chapter of the Cow, whilst the slain were trampled under the hoofs of the horses and the heralds of the Greeks cried out, "Ho, servants of the Messiah! Ho, people of the True Faith! Ho, followers of the Pope! Verily the divine grace shines upon you, for see, the hosts of Islam incline to tree! So turn ye not your backs to them, but let your swords bite on their necks and hold not your hands from them, else are ye outcasts from the Messiah, son of Mary, who spoke even in the cradle!" Thereupon Afridoun thought that the infidels were victorious, knowing not that this was but a stratagem of the Muslims, and sent to King Herdoub, to give him the glad tidings of success, adding, "It was nought but the excrement of the Arch-Patriarch that availed us, in that the fragrance of it exhaled from the beards and moustaches of the servants of the Cross near and far; and I swear, by the Miracles of the Messiah and by the Waters of Baptism, that I will not leave upon the earth a single defender of Islam!" So the messenger betook himself to King Herdoub whilst the infidels called to each other saying, "Let us take our wreak for Luca!" and King Herdoub cried out, "Vengeance for Abrizeh!" With this, King Zoulmekan cried out to his men, saying, "Ho, servants of the Requiting King. up and smite the children of blasphemy and disobedience with the white of the sword and the brown of the spear!" So the Muslims turned upon the infidels and plied them with the keen-edged scimitar, whilst their herald cried aloud, "Up, ye lovers of the chosen prophet and at the enemies of the Faith! Now is the time for those, who hope for salvation on the Day of Fear, to win the favour of the Bountiful, the Forgiving One, for verily Paradise is under the shadow of swords!" So Sherkan and his men fell upon the infidels and cut off their retreat and tourneyed among the ranks, when lo, a cavalier of goodly presence opened a passage through the army of the Greeks and circled hither and thither amongst them, cutting and thrusting and covering the ground with heads and bodies, so that the infidels feared him and their necks bent under his blows. He was girt with two swords, that of his glances and a scimitar, and armed with two lances, one of cane and the other the straightness of his shape; over his shoulders flowed down his hair, whose beauty might have stood him in stead of many warriors, even as says the poet:

Flowing hair, as I deem, is not fair to the sight,
Except it be spread, on the day of the fight,
O'er a youth with a spear that he giveth to drink
Of the blood of full many a beard-bearing knight.

Or as says another:

I turned to him, what while he girt his faulchion on, and said,
"Surely, the sabres of thy looks should stand thee in sword's stead."
Quoth he, "The sabres of my looks I keep for those who love,
My sword for those who have no wit of passion's goodlihead."

When Sherkan. saw him, he said to him, "Ho, champion of the champions! I conjure thee, by the Koran and the attributes of the Compassionate One, tell me who thou art: for verily by thy deeds this day thou hast pleased the Requiting King, whom

one thing distracts not from another, in that thou hast discomfited the children of impiety and disbelief." Quoth the horseman, "Thou art he who sworest brotherhood to me but yesterday: how quickly thou hast forgotten me!" Then he uncovered his face, so that what was hidden of his beauty was disclosed, and lo, it was none other than Zoulmekan! When Sherkan knew his brother, he rejoiced in him, except that he feared for him from the throng of adversaries and the onslaught of the champions; and this for two reasons, the first, his tender age and exposure to the evil eye, and the second, that his life was the mainstay of the empire. So he said to him, "O King, thou adventurest thy life, and indeed I am in fear for thee from the foe; so join thy horse to mine, and thou wouldst do well not to hazard thyself forth of these squadrons, that we may shoot at the enemy with thine unerring shaft." Quoth Zoulmekan, "I wish to equal thee in battle and I will not spare myself before thee in fight." Then the host of Islam rushed upon the infidels and encompassing them on all sides, waged a right holy war on them and broke the power of the children of impiety and pride and corruption. King Herdoub sighed when he saw the evil case that had fallen on the Greeks, and they turned their backs and addressed themselves to flight, making for the ships, when lo, there came out upon them from the sea shore a new army, led by the Vizier Dendan, him who was wont to make the champions bite the dust, and the Chamberlain of Syria, with twenty thousand doughty cavaliers, and fell upon their rear with sword and spear, whilst the army of Islam pressed them in front and flank. Then some of the Muslims turned against those that were in the ships and rained perditions on them, till they threw themselves into the sea, and they slew of them much people, more than a hundred thousand knights, nor did one of their champions escape, great or small. Moreover, they took their ships, with all the baggage and treasure therein, and the Muslims got that day booty, the like of which was never gotten of time past; nor did ever ear hear of such a battle. But twenty of the ships escaped, and amongst the booty were fifty thousand horses, besides treasure and spoil past count or reckoning, whereat the Muslims rejoiced with an exceeding joy and thanked God for the aid and protection He had vouchsafed them.

Meanwhile, the news reached Constantinople that King Afridoun had gotten the victory over the Muslims, and Dhat ed Dewahi said, "I know that my son King Herdoub is no runagate and that he has nought to fear from the hosts of Islam, but will bring the whole world to the Nazarene faith." Then she commanded the city to be decorated, and the people held high festival and drank wines, knowing not what God had decreed to them. Whilst they were in the midst of their rejoicings, behold, the raven of affliction croaked against them and up came the twenty ships of fugitives, amongst them the King of Caesarea. King Afridoun met them on the sea-shore, and they told him all that had befallen them, weeping sore and lamenting, whereupon rejoicing was turned into dismay, and King Afridoun was filled with consternation and knew that there was no repairing their mischance. The women gathered together to make moan and lament: and the city was filled with mourning; all hearts failed, whilst the hired mourners cried aloud and weeping and wailing arose on all sides. When King Herdoub met King Afridoun, he told him the truth of the case and how the flight of the Muslims was but a stratagem and said to him, "Look not to see any of the troops, save those that have already reached thee." When Afridoun heard this, he fell down in a swoon with his nose under his feet; and as soon as he revived he exclaimed, "Surely

the Messiah was wroth with the army, that he delivered them thus into the hands of the Muslims!" Then came the Arch-Patriarch sadly to King Afridoun who said to him, "O our father, destruction hath overtaken our army and the Messiah hath punished us." "Grieve not nor be concerned," replied the Patriarch; "for it cannot be but that one of you has sinned against the Messiah, and all have been punished for his sin; but now we will read prayers for you in the churches, that the Mohammedan hosts may be repelled from you." After this, Dhat ed Dewahi came to Afridoun and said to him, "O King, verily the Muslims are many, and we shall never prevail against them, save by wile: wherefore I purpose to work upon them by stratagem and repair to the army of Islam; haply I may be able to carry out my intent against their leader and slay their champion, even as I slew his father. If I succeed, not one of them shall return to his native land, for all their strength lies in him; but I wish to have some Christians of Syria, such as go out from time to time to sell their goods, to help me in carrying out my plan." "Be it so, whenas thou wilt," replied the King. So she bade fetch a hundred men, natives of Nejran in Syria, and said to them, "Ye have heard what has befallen the Christians with the Muslims?" "Yes," replied they; and the King said, "This woman has devoted herself to the Messiah and purposes to go forth with you, disguised as Mohammedans, to work out a device, which shall profit us and hinder the Muslim host from us: so if ye also are willing to devote yourselves to Christ, I will give you a quintal of gold. Those of you who escape shall have the money, and those of you who are slain Christ will reward." "O King," replied they, "we devote ourselves to the Messiah, and we will be thy sacrifice." Then the old woman took drugs and simples and boiled them in water, till the black essence of them was extracted. She waited till it was cold, then dipped the end of a handkerchief therein and coloured her face therewith.. Moreover she put on, over her clothes, a long gaberdine with an embroidered border and taking in her hand a rosary, went in to King Afridoun, who knew her not nor did any of his companions know her, till she discovered herself to them, when they all praised her for her cunning and her son rejoiced and said, "May the Messiah never fail thee!" Then she took with her the Syrian Christians, and set out for the army of Baghdad. Now this accursed old woman was a witch of the witches, past mistress in sorcery and deception, knavish, crafty, debauched and perfidious, with foul breath, red eyelids, sallow cheeks, pale face, bleared eyes, mangy body, grizzled hair, humped back, withered complexion and running nostrils. She had studied the scriptures of Islam and made the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God, to come to the knowledge of the Mohammedan ordinances and the doctrines of the Koran; and she had professed Judaism in Jerusalem two years' space, that she might perfect herself in the magical arts of men and Jinn; so that she was a plague of plagues and a calamity of calamities, utterly depraved and having no religion. Now the chief reason of her sojourn with her son, King Herdoub, was on account of the maidens at his court: for she was given to tribadism and could not exist without it: so if any damsel pleased her, she was wont to teach her the art and rub saffron on her, till she fainted away for excess of pleasure. Whoso obeyed her, she used to favour and spake interest for her with her son; and whoso repelled her, she would contrive to destroy. This was known to Merjaneh and Rihaneh and Utriyeh, the handmaids of Abrizeh, and the princess loathed the old woman and abhorred to lie with her because of the ill smell from her armpits and the stench of her wind, more fetid than carrion, and the roughness of her

body, coarser than palm fibre. She was wont to bribe those who served her desires with jewels and instruction; but Abrizeh held aloof from her and sought refuge with the All-Wise, the Omniscient; for well does the poet say:

O thou that abasest thyself to those that are rich and great
And lordest it with disdain o'er those of low estate,
Thou that thinkest to gild thy baseness by gathering gold,
The scenting of aught that's foul skills not its stench to abate!

To continue. As soon as Dhat ed Dewahi had departed, her son went in to Afridoun and said to him, "O King, we have no need of the Chief Patriarch nor of his prayers, but will act according to my mother's counsel and await what she will do of her craft without end with the Muslim host, for they are on the march hither with all their strength and will quickly be with us." When King Afridoun heard this, terror took hold upon his heart and he wrote letters forthright to all the countries of the Christians, saying, "It behoves none of the followers of the Messiah or soldiers of the Cross to hold back, especially the folk of the citadels and strong places: but let them all come to us foot and horse and women and children, for the Muslim hosts already tread our soil. So hasten, hasten, ere what we fear come to pass."

Now Dhat ed Dewahi had clad her companions in the habit of Muslim merchants and had provided herself with a hundred mules laden with stuffs of Antioch, such as gold woven satin and royal brocade and so forth, and with a letter from King Afridoun to the following effect: "These are merchants from the land of Syria, who have been with us: so it behoves none to do them let or hindrance nor take tithe of them, till they reach their own country and the place of their security, for by merchants a country flourishes and grows rich, and these are no men of war nor evil-doers." So, as soon as she came without the city, she said to them, "O folk, I wish to work out a plot for the destruction of the Muslims." "O princess," replied they, "command us what thou wilt; we are at thy disposal, and may the Messiah prosper thy dealing!" Then she donned a gown of fine white wool and rubbing her forehead, till she made a great mark (as of a scar), anointed it with an ointment of her own fashion, so that it shone greatly. Now she was lean-bodied and hollow-eyed, and she bound her legs tightly round with cords just above her feet, till she drew near the Muslim camp, when she unwound them, leaving the marks of the cords deeply embedded in the flesh. Then she anointed the weals with dragon's blood and bade her companions beat her severely and lay her in a chest. "How can we beat thee," replied they, "who art our sovereign lady and mother of the supreme King?" Quoth she, "We blame not nor reproach him who goeth to the jakes, and in time of necessity, forbidden things become lawful. When ye have laid me in the chest, set it on the back of one of the mules and pass on with it and the other goods through the Muslim camp, crying aloud the profession of the Faith of Unity. If any hinder you, give up the mules and their lading and betake yourself to their king Zoulmekan and cast yourselves on his protection, saying, 'We were in the country of the infidels and they took nothing from us, but wrote us a passport, that none should hinder us: so why do ye seize upon our goods? See, here is the letter of the King of the Greeks, commanding that none shall do us let or hindrance.' If he say to you, 'What profit had ye of your commerce in the land of the Greeks?' answer him, 'We profited in that it was given us to accomplish the

deliverance of a pious man, who had lain nigh fifteen years in a dungeon under the earth, crying out for help, yet none helped him. On the contrary, the infidels tortured him night and day. We knew not of this: but after we had sojourned awhile in Constantinople, having sold our goods and bought others in their stead, we made ready to set out and return to our native land. We spent the night before our departure, conversing about our journey, and when the day broke, we saw a figure painted upon the wall; and behold, as we drew nigh it, it moved and said, "O Muslims, is there amongst you one who is minded to gain the favour of the Lord of the two worlds?" "How so?" asked we. "Know," replied the figure, "that God hath made me speak to you, to the intent that your belief may be fortified and that your faith may inspire you and that you may go forth of the country of the infidels and repair to the camp of the Muslims. where ye shall find the Sword of the Compassionate One, the Champion of the Age, King Sherkan, him by whom He shall conquer Constantinople and destroy the followers of the Christian heresy. On the third day of your journey, you will come to [a town, in which stands] a hermitage known as the hermitage of Metronhena. Make for it with a pure intent and do your utmost endeavour to come into the hermitage, for therein is a true believer from Jerusalem, by name Abdallah, one of the holiest of men, whom God hath blessed with supernatural powers, such as dispel doubts and obscurity. Him certain of the monks seized by fraud and shut in an underground dungeon, where he has lain many a year. So, if ye desire to gain the favour of the Lord of the Faithful, ye cannot accomplish a more acceptable work than the deliverance of this holy man." When we heard what the figure said, we knew that this holy man was indeed of the chiefest of the devotees and heart-whole servants of God; so we set out and after three days' journey, came in sight of the town, and making for it, passed the day in buying and selling, as is the wont of merchants. As soon as the day had departed and the night was come with the darkness, we repaired to the hermitage, wherein was the dungeon, and presently heard the holy man chant some verses of the Koran and repeat the following lines:

I strive with my heart, for anguish that's well-nigh cleft in twain,
And there ebbs and flows in my bosom a flooding sea of pain.
Indeed, there is no deliverance, and death is near at hand;
Yet death than long affliction were kinder and more fain.
O lightning, if thou visit my native land and folk,
If for the fair ones' lustre thine own red brilliance wane
Carry my salutation to those I love and say,
I lie in a far Greek dungeon and cry for help in vain.
How can I win to join them, since that the ways with wars
Are blocked and the gate of succour is barred with many a chain?'

When once ye have brought me into the Muslim camp," added the old woman, "I know how I will make shift to beguile them and slay them all, even to the last man." When the Christians heard what she said, they kissed her hands and laid her in a chest, after they had beaten her grievously, in obedience to her commands, seeing it to be incumbent on them to do her bidding in this, then made for the Muslim camp.

Meanwhile, the Muslims sat down to converse with each other, after they had made an end of the battle and the pillage, and Zoulmekan said to his brother, "Verily,

God hath given us the victory, because of our just dealing and concord amongst ourselves; wherefore, O Sherkan, do thou continue to obey my commandment, in submission to God (to whom belong might and majesty), for I mean to slay ten kings and fifty thousand of the Greeks, in revenge for my father, and enter Constantinople." "My life be thy ransom against death!" replied Sherkan. "Needs must I follow forth the Holy War, though I tarry many a year in the infidels' country. But, O my brother, I have in Damascus a daughter called Kuzia Fekan, who is one of the marvels of the time, and I love her heartily." "And I also," said Zoulmekan, "have left my wife with child and near her time, nor do I know what God will vouchsafe me by her. But, O my brother, promise me that, if she bring me a son, thou wilt grant me thy daughter for my son and pledge me thy faith thereon." "With all my heart," replied Sherkan and put out his hand to his brother, saying, "If thou be blessed with a son, I will give him my daughter Kuzia Fekan to wife." At this Zoulmekan rejoiced, and they fell to giving each other joy of the victory, whilst the Vizier Dendan also congratulated them and said to them "Know, O Kings, that God hath given us the victory, for that we have devoted ourselves to Him (to whom belong might and majesty) and have left our homes and families: and it is my counsel that we follow up the foe and press upon them and harass them; it may be God shall bring us to our desire and we shall destroy our enemies. If it please you, do ye embark in the ships and sail upon the sea, whilst we fare forward by land and bear the brunt of the battle." And he ceased not to urge them to action, repeating the following verses:

The goodliest of delights it is one's foes to slay
And on the backs of steeds the spoil to bear away.
Oft comes a messenger with promise of a friend,
And the friend comes himself without a trysting-day.

And these also:

As I live, I will make of war my mother and the spear
My brother and the sword my father, and for fere
I will take each shag-haired warrior that meets death with a smile,
As if to die in battle were e'en his wish most dear!

"Glory be to God," continued he, "Who hath vouchsafed us His almighty aid and hath given us spoil of silver and fine gold!" Then Zoulmekan commanded to depart; and the army set out and fared on, by forced marches, toward Constantinople, till they came to a wide and blooming champaign, full of all things fair, with wild cattle frisking and gazelles passing to and fro. Now they had traversed great deserts and had been six days cut off from water, when they drew near this meadow and saw therein waters welling and trees laden with ripe fruits and the land as it were Paradise; it had donned its adornments and decked itself. The branches of its trees swayed gently to and fro, drunken with the new wine of the dew, and therein were conjoined the fresh sweetness of the fountains of Paradise and the soft breathings of the zephyr. Mind and eye were confounded with its beauty, even as says the poet:

Look on the verdant smiling mead, with flowers and herbs beseen,
As 'twere the Spring thereon had spread a mantle all of green.
If thou behold it with the eye of sense alone, thou'lt see

Nought but as 'twere a lake wherein the water waves, I ween:
But with thy mind's eye look; thou'lt see a glory in the trees
And lo' amidst the boughs above, the waving banners' sheen!

Or as another says:

The river's a cheek that the sun has rosy made;
For ringlets it borrows the cassia's creeping shade.
The water makes anklets of silver about the legs
Of the boughs, and the flowers for crowns o'er all are laid.

When Zoulmekan saw this champaign, with its thick-leaved trees and its blooming flowers and warbling birds, he turned to his brother Sherkan and said to him, "O my brother, verily Damascus hath not in it the like of this place. We will abide here three days, that we may rest ourselves and that the troops may regain strength and their souls be fortified to encounter the accursed infidels." So they halted and pitched their camp there. Presently, they heard a noise of voices afar, and Zoulmekan enquiring the cause thereof, was told that a caravan of Syrian merchants had halted there to rest and that the Muslim troops had come on them and had haply seized some of their goods, that they had brought from the country of the infidels. After awhile, up came the merchants, crying out and appealing to the King for redress. So Zoulmekan bade bring them before him, and they said to him, "O King, we have been in the country of the infidels and they spoiled us of nothing: why then do our brothers the Muslims despoil us of our goods, and that in their own country? When we saw your troops, we went up to them, thinking no evil, and they robbed us of what we had with us." Then they brought out to him the letter of the King of Constantinople, and Sherkan took it and reading it, said to them, "We will restore you what has been taken from you; but it behoved you not to carry merchandise to the country of the infidels." "O our lord," replied they, "of a truth, God moved us to go thither, that we might win what never champion won the like of, no, not even thou in ail thy battles." "What was it that ye won?" asked Sherkan. "O King," replied they, "we will not tell thee, except in private; for if this thing be noised among the folk, it may come to the ears of the King of Constantinople, and this will be the cause of our ruin and of the ruin of all Muslims that resort to the land of the Greeks." (Now they had hidden the chest wherein was Dhat ed Dewahi.) So Zoulmekan and his brother brought them to a private place, where they repeated to him the story of the devotee, even as the old woman had lessoned them, and wept till they made the two kings weep. There withal Sherkan's heart yearned to the devotee and he was moved to pity for him and zeal for the service of God the Most High. So he said to the Syrians, "Did ye rescue the holy man or is he still in the hermitage?" Quoth they, "We delivered him and slew the hermit, fearing for ourselves; after which we made haste to fly, for fear of death; but a trusty man told us that in this hermitage are quintals of gold and silver and jewels." Then they fetched the chest and brought out the accursed old woman, as she were a cassia pod, for excess of blackness and leanness, and laden with fetters and shackles. When Zoulmekan and the bystanders saw her, they took her for a man of the dower of God's servants and the most excellent of devotees, more by token of the shining of her forehead for the ointment with which she had anointed it. So Zoulmekan and Sherkan wept sore and kissed her hands and feet, sobbing aloud: but she signed to them and said, "Give over

weeping and hear my words." So they left weeping, in obedience to her, and she said, "Know that I was content to accept what my Lord did unto me, knowing that the affliction that befell me was a trial from Him (to whom belong might and majesty); since that for him who is not patient under trial and affliction there is no coming to the delights of Paradise. I had indeed besought Him that I might return to my native land, yet not for impatience of the sufferings decreed to me, but that I might die under the hoofs of the horses of the warriors of the Faith, who, being slain in battle, live again without suffering death,"; and she repeated the following couplets:

The fortress is Sinai's self and the fire of war burns free,
And thou art Moses and this the time appointed to thee.
Throw down thy rod, for lo, it shall swallow up all they make!
And fear not; I trow the ropes of the folk no serpents be.
Read thou the lines of the foe for chapters, the day of the fight,
And let thy sword mark on their necks the verses, what while they flee.

Then her eyes ran over with tears and her forehead shone like gleaming light, and Sherkan rose and kissed her hand and caused food to be set before her: but she refused it, saying, "I have not broken my fast (till sunset) for fifteen years; and how should I do so now, whenas my Lord hath been bountiful to me in delivering me from the captivity of the infidels and doing away from me that which was more grievous than the fiery torment? I will wait till sun down." So at nightfall Sherkan and Zoulmekan came to her with food and said, "Eat, O pious man." But she said, "This is no time for eating; it is the hour for doing my service to the Requiting King." Then she took up her station in the prayer-niche and stood praying till the night was spent; and she ceased not to do thus for three days and nights, sitting not but at the time of salutation. When Zoulmekan saw this her behaviour, belief in her took firm hold upon his heart and he said to Sherkan, "Cause a tent of perfumed leather to be pitched for this holy man and appoint a servant to wait upon him." On the fourth day, she called for food; so they brought her all kinds of meats that could allure the sense or delight the eye; but of all this she ate but one cake of bread with salt. Then she turned again to her fast, and when the night came, she rose anew to pray: and Sherkan said to Zoulmekan, "Verily, this man carries renunciation of the world to the utmost extreme, and were it not for this holy war, I would join myself to him and worship God in his service, till I came before His presence. And now I would fain enter his tent and talk with him awhile." "And I also," said Zoulmekan. "To-morrow we sally forth against Constantinople, and we shall find no time like the present." "And I also," said the Vizier Dendan, "desire to see this holy man; haply he will pray for me that I may find my death in this holy war and come to the presence of my Lord, for I am weary of the world." So as soon as night had darkened on them, they repaired to the tent of the witch Dhat et Dewahi and finding her standing praying, fell a-weeping, for pity of her: but she paid no heed to them till the night was half spent, when she ended her devotions by pronouncing the salutation (to the guardian angels). Then she turned to them and greeted them, saying, "Wherefore come ye?" "O holy man," said they, "didst thou not hear us weeping round thee?" "To him who stands before God," replied she, "there remains nor sight nor hearing for the things of this world." Quoth they, "We would have thee tell us the manner of thy captivity and offer up prayer for us this

night, for that will profit us more than the possession of Constantinople." "By Allah," answered she, "were ye not the leaders of the Muslims, I would not tell you aught of this; for I complain not but to God alone. However, to you I will relate the circumstance of my captivity. Know, then, that I was in Jerusalem with certain saints and ecstatics, and did not magnify myself among them, for that God had endowed me with humility and abnegation, till one night I chanced to go down to the lake and walked upon the water. There withal there entered into me pride, whence I know not, and I said to myself, 'Who can walk upon the water, like unto me?' And from that time my heart became hardened and God afflicted me with the love of travel. So I journeyed to the land of the Greeks and visited it in every part during a whole year, leaving no place but I worshipped God therein. When I came to the place (where the Syrians found me) I ascended the mountain and saw there a hermitage, inhabited by a monk called Metrouhena. When he saw me, he came out to me and kissed my hands and feet, saying, 'Verily, I have seen thee, since thou camest into the land of the Greeks, and thou hast filled me with longing for the land of Islam.' Then he took my hand and carrying me into the hermitage, brought me to a dark place, where he took me unawares and locking the door on me, left me there forty days, without meat or drink; for it was his intent to kill me by starvation. One day it chanced that a knight called Decianus came to the hermitage, accompanied by ten squires and his daughter Temathil, a girl of incomparable beauty. The monk told them of me, and Decianus said, 'Bring him out, for surely there is not a bird's meal of flesh left on him.' So they opened the door of the dungeon and found me standing erect in the niche, praying and reciting the Koran and glorifying God and humbling myself to Him. When they saw this, the monk exclaimed, 'This man is indeed a sorcerer of the sorcerers!' Then they all came in on me, and Decianus and his company beat me grievously, till I desired death and reproached myself, saying, 'This is the reward of him who glorifies himself and takes credit for that which God hath bestowed upon him, beyond his own competence! For, indeed, my soul, pride and arrogance have crept into thee. Dost thou not know that pride angers the Lord and hardens the heart and brings men to the fire?' Then they laid me in fetters and returned me to my place, which was a dungeon under the earth. Every three days, they threw me down a cake of barley-bread and a draught of water; and every month or two, came Decianus to the hermitage, with his daughter Temathil, who is now grown up, for when I first saw her, she was nine years old, and I abode fifteen years in the dungeon, so that she must be now four-and twenty years of age. There is not in our land nor in the land of the Greeks a fairer than she, and her father feared lest the King (of Constantinople) should take her from him; for she had vowed herself to the service of the Messiah and rode with Decianus in the habit of a cavalier, so that none who saw her knew her for a woman. In this hermitage her father had laid up his treasures, for all who had aught of price were wont to deposit it there, and I saw there all manner of gold and silver and jewels and precious vessels and rarities, none may keep count of them save God the Most High. Ye are more worthy of these riches than the infidels; so do ye lay hands on that which is in the hermitage and divide it among the Muslims, and especially among those who wage the holy war. When these merchants came to Constantinople and sold their merchandise, the image on the wall spoke to them, by God's special grace to me; so they made for the hermitage and tortured Metrouhena, after the most grievous fashion, and dragged him

by the beard, till he showed them where I was, when they took me and fled for fear of death. To-morrow, Temathil will visit the hermitage as of wont, and her father and his squires will come after her, to protect her: so, an ye would be witness of these things, take me with you and I will deliver to you the treasure and the riches of the knight Decianus, that are stored up in that mountain; for I saw them bring out vessels of gold and silver to drink in and heard a damsel of their company sing to them in Arabic. Alas, that so sweet a voice should not be busied in reciting the Koran! So, an ye will, I will bring you to the hermitage and ye shall hide there, against the coming of Decianus and his daughter. Then take her, for she is only fit for the king of the age, Sherkan, or for King Zoulmekan." When they heard her words, they all rejoiced, with the exception of the Vizier Dendan, who put no faith in her story, for her words took no hold on his reason and he was confounded at her discourse and signs of doubt and disbelief appeared in his face; but he feared to speak with her, for awe of the King. Then she said, "I fear lest Decianus come and seeing the troops encamped here, be afraid to enter the hermitage." So Zoulmekan resolved to despatch the army towards Constantinople and said, "I mean to take a hundred horse and many mules and make for the mountain, where we will load the mules with the treasure." Then he sent for the Chamberlain and for the captains of the Turks and Medes and said to them, 'As soon as it is day, do ye strike camp and set out for Constantinople. Thou, O Chamberlain, shall fill my place in council and command, and thou, O Rustem, shalt be my brother's deputy in battle. Let none know that we are not with you, and after three days we will rejoin you." Then he chose out a hundred of the stoutest cavaliers, and he and Sherkan and Dendan set out for the hermitage, with mules and chests for the transport of the treasure. As soon as it was morning, the Chamberlain gave the signal for departure, and the troops set out, thinking that the two Kings and the Vizier were with them. Now the Syrians that were with Dhat ed Dewahi had taken their departure privily, after they had gone in to her and kissed her hands and feet and gotten her leave and taken her orders. Then she waited till it was dark night and going in to Zoulmekan and his companions, said to them, "Come, let us set out for the mountain, and take with you a few men." They obeyed her and left five horsemen at the foot of the mountain, whilst the rest rode on before Dhat ed Dewahi, to whom new strength seemed given for excess of joy, so that Zoulmekan said to his companions, "Glory be to God who sustains this holy man, whose like we never saw!" Now she had written a letter to the King of Constantinople and despatched it by a carrier-pigeon, acquainting him with what had passed and adding, "Do thou send me ten thousand horsemen of the stoutest of the Greeks and let them come stealthily along the foot of the mountains, lest the Muslim host get sight of them, to the hermitage and hide themselves there, till I come to them with the Muslim King and his brother, for I have inveigled them and will bring them thither, together with the Vizier Dendan and a hundred horse, no more, that I may deliver to them the crosses that are in the hermitage. I am resolved to slay the monk Metrouhena, since my scheme cannot be carried out but at the cost of his life. If my plot work well, not one of the Muslims shall return to his own country, no, not a living soul nor a blower of the fire; and Metrouhena shall be a sacrifice for the followers of the Christian faith and the servants of the Cross, and praise be to the Messiah, first and last!" When this letter reached Constantinople, the keeper of the pigeons carried it to King Afridoun, who read it and

forthwith equipped ten thousand cavaliers with horses and dromedaries and mules and victual and bade them repair to the hermitage and hide there; and they did as he commanded them. Meanwhile. when Zoulmekan and his companions reached the hermitage, they entered and met the monk Metrouhena, who came out to see who they were; whereupon quoth Dhat ed Dewahi, "Slay this accursed fellow.' So they fell on him with their swords and made him drink the cup of death. Then the accursed old woman carried them to the place of offerings and brought out to them treasures and precious things, more than she had promised them, which they laid in chests and loaded the mules therewith. As for Temathil and her father, they came not, for fear of the Muslims, and Zoulmekan tarried there, awaiting her, the whole of that day and two more, till Sherkan said to him, "By Allah, I am troubled at heart for the army of Islam, for I know not what is come of them." "And I also am concerned for them," replied Zoulmekan. "We have come by a great treasure and I do not believe that Temathil or any one else will come to the hermitage, after that which has befallen the host of the Christians. So we should do well to content ourselves with what God has given us and depart; and haply He will help us break open Constantinople." So they came down from the mountain, for Dhat ed Dewahi dared not gainsay them, for fear of betraying herself, and rode on till they reached the head of a defile, in which the old woman had laid an ambush for them with the ten thousand horse. As soon as the latter saw them, they made at them from all sides, couching their lances and baring their sabres, whilst they shouted the watchword of their infidel faith and set the arrows of their mischief to the strings.

When Zoulmekan saw them, he was ware that they were a mighty host and said, "Who can have given these troops advice of us?" "O my brother," replied Sherkan, "this is no time for talking, but for smiting with swords and shooting with arrows; so gird up your courage and strengthen your hearts, for this pass is like a street with two gates: though, by the virtue of the Lord of the Arabs and the Persians, were not the place so strait, I would bring them to nought, though they were a hundred thousand men!"

"Had we known this," said Zoulmekan, "we would have brought with us five thousand horse." "If we had ten thousand," rejoined the Vizier, "they would avail ail us nothing in this narrow place: but God will succour us against them. I know this defile and its straitness, and there are many places of refuge in it; for I have been here on an expedition with King Omar ben Ennuman, what while we laid siege to Constantinople. We camped in this place, and there is here water colder than snow. So come, let us win? out of this pass ere the infidels increase on us and get the start of us to the mountain-top, that they may hurl down rocks upon us and we be powerless to come at them." So they hurried on, to get out of the defile: but Dhat ed Dewahi looked at them and said, "What is it ye fear, ye who have vowed yourselves to God the Most High, to work His will? By Allah, I was imprisoned underground for fifteen years, yet never gainsaid I God in aught He did with me! Fight ye in the way of God; whoso of ye is killed, Paradise shall be his abode, and whoso kills, his endeavour shall be for his glory." When they heard her words, their concern and anxiety ceased from them and they stood firm, awaiting the onset of the infidels, who fell on them from all sides,

whilst the swords played upon their necks and the cup of death went round amongst them.

The Muslims fought right valiantly for the service of God and wrought upon His enemies with stroke of sword and push of pike; whilst Zoulmekan smote upon the men and made the champions bite the dust and their heads fly from their bodies, five by five and ten by ten, till he had done to death a number of them past count. Presently, he looked at the old woman and saw her waving her sword and heartening them, and all who feared fled to her for shelter; but (in secret) she was beckoning to the infidels to kill Sherkan. So troop after troop rushed on him to slay him: but each troop he charged and drove back, with the sword in their loins; and indeed he thought it was the holy man's blessing that gave him the victory over them and said in himself, "Verily God looks on this holy man with eyes of favour and strengthens my prowess against the infidels with the purity of his intent: for I see that they fear me and cannot stand against me, but every one who attacks me turns tail and flees." So they battled the rest of the day, and when the night fell, the Muslims took refuge in a cave, being hard pressed and weary with stress of battle; and five-and-forty of them were slain that day by rocks that the infidels rolled down on them. When they were gathered together, they sought the devotee, but could find no trace of him. This was grievous to them and they said, "Belike, he hath died a martyr." Quoth Sherkan "I saw him heartening the men with divine instances and sacring them with verses of the Koran." Whilst they were talking, behold, the accursed old woman stood before them, with the head of the captain of the ten thousand horse, a noble knight, a fierce champion and an obstinate devil, in her hand. Now one of the Turks had slain him with an arrow, and God hurried his soul to the fire: and when the infidels saw what the Muslim had done with their leader, they all fell on him and hewed him in pieces with their swords, and God hastened with his soul to Paradise. Then the old woman cut off the knight's head and carrying it to Sherkan and Zoulmekan and the Vizier, threw it at their feet; whereupon Sherkan exclaimed, "Praised be God that we see thee in safety, O holy man and devout champion of the Faith!" "O my son," replied she, "I have sought a martyr's death this day, throwing myself midmost the host of the infidels, but they feared me. When ye separated, a holy jealousy seized me for you; so I rushed on the knight their captain, though he was reckoned a match for a thousand horse, and smote him and severed his head from his body. Not one of the infidels could come near me, so I took his head and have brought it to you, that you may be heartened in the holy strife and work out the will of the Lord of the Faithful with your swords. And now I will leave you to strive against the infidels, whilst I go to your army, though they be at the gates of Constantinople, and return with twenty thousand horse to destroy these unbelievers." Quoth Sherkan, "How wilt thou win to them, O holy man, seeing that the valley is blocked up by the infidels on all sides?" "God will veil me from their eyes," replied she, "and they shall not see me; nor if any saw me, would he dare to attack me, for I shall be absorbed in God and He will fend off His enemies from me." "Thou sayst sooth, O holy man," rejoined Sherkan, "for indeed I have been witness of this; so, if thou canst set out at the first of the night, it will be the better for us." "I will set out forthright," replied she; "and, an thou wilt, thou shalt go with me, and none shall see thee. If thy brother also have a mind to go, we will take him, but none else; for the shadow of a saint can cover but two." "As for me," said Sherkan, "I will not leave my comrades; but,

if my brother please, he will do well to go with thee and win free of this strait; for he is the stronghold of the Muslims and the sword of the Lord of the two worlds; and if it be his pleasure, let him take with him the Vizier Dendan, or whom else he may choose, and send us ten thousand horse to succour us against these villains." So they agreed to this and Dhat ed Dewahi said, "Wait till I go on before you and look if the infidels be asleep or awake." Quoth they, "We will go with thee and trust our affair to God." "If I do your bidding," replied she, "do not blame me, but blame yourselves; for it is my counsel that you wait till I have spied you out the state of the case." Then said Sherkan, "Go and return quickly, for we shall be awaiting thee." So she went out and Sherkan turned to his brother and said, "Were not this holy man a miracle-worker, he had never slain yonder doughty knight. This is a sufficient measure of his power, and indeed the strength of the infidels is broken by the slaying of their leader, for he was a fierce warrior and a stubborn devil." Whilst they were thus devising of the power of the devotee, behold, the cursed old woman returned and promised them victory over the unbelievers; whereupon they thanked her, and she said, "Where is the king of the age Zoulmekan?" "Here am I," replied he. "Take thy Vizier," said she, "and follow me, that we may win out to Constantinople." Now she had acquainted the infidels with the cheat she had put on the Muslims, and they rejoiced mightily and said, "We shall not be content till we have slain their king in return for the death of our general; for we had no stouter cavalier than he; but when thou bringest him to us, we will carry him to King Afridoun." Then she went out with Zoulmekan and Dendan and walked on before them, saying, "Fare on with the blessing of the Most High God!" They did as she bade them, for the arrow of fate and destiny had fallen on them, and she led them on, through the midst of the Christian camp, till they came to the narrow pass aforesaid. Whilst the enemy watched them, but did them no hindrance; for the old woman had enjoined this on them. When Zoulmekan and Dendan saw that the infidels did them no hindrance, the Vizier exclaimed, "By Allah, this is one of the holy man's miracles! Without doubt he is of the elect." "By Allah," said Zoulmekan, "I think the infidels must be blind, for we see them, and they see us not." Whilst they were thus praising the holy man and recounting his virtues, behold, the infidels fell upon them from all sides and seized them, saying, "Is there any one else with you, that we may seize upon him?" Quoth Dendan, "See ye not yon other man that is before us?" "By the Messiah and the Monks and the Primate and the Metropolitan," replied they, "we see none but you!" And Zoulmekan said, "By Allah, this is a chastisement decreed to us by God!" Then the Christians laid shackles on their feet and set men to guard them during the night, whilst Dhat ed Dewahi fared on and disappeared from their sight. So they fell to lamenting and said, "Verily, the gainsaying of pious men leads to greater stress than this, and we are punished by the strait into which we have fallen."

Meanwhile, Sherkan passed the night in the cavern with his companions, and when the day broke, he arose and prayed the morning-prayer. Then he and his men made ready to do battle with the infidels, and he encouraged them and promised them all good. Then they sallied out against the Christians, who cried out to them from afar as soon as they saw them, saying, "O Muslims, we have taken your Sultan and your Vizier that has the ordering of your affairs; and except ye leave fighting us, we will slay you to the last man, but if ye yield to us, we will take you to our king, who will make

peace with you, on condition that you leave our country and return to your own land and do us no harm, and we will do you no harm. If you accept, it will be well for you; but if you refuse, you have nothing to hope for but death. So now we have told you, and this is our last word to you." When Sherkan heard this and was certified of the captivity of his brother and the Vizier Dendan, he was greatly troubled and wept; his strength failed him and he made sure of death, saying inwardly, "I wonder what was the cause of their capture? Did they fail of respect to the holy man or disobey him, or what?" Then they rushed upon the unbelievers and slew great plenty of them. The valiant, that day, was known from the faint-hearted, and the swords and spears were dyed with blood; for the infidels flocked on them from all sides, as flies flock to wine; but Sherkan and his men ceased not to wage the fight of those who fear not death nor let it hinder them from the pursuit of victory, till the valley ran with blood and the earth was full of the slain. So fought they on till nightfall, when the two parties separated, each to his own place, and the Muslims returned to the grotto, where both victory and loss were manifest to them, and there was no dependence for them but on God and the sword. That day there had been slain of them five-and-thirty men of the chief amirs, and they had put to the sword thousands of the infidels, both horse and foot. When Sherkan saw this, the case was grievous to him, and he said to his comrades, "What shall we do?" "That which God wills," replied they. On the morning of the second day, Sherkan said to the remnant of his troop, "If ye go forth to fight, not one of you will remain alive and we have but little food and water left; so meseems ye would do better to draw your swords and stand at the door of the cavern, to hinder any from entering. Peradventure the holy man may have traversed the Christian host, without being seen of the unbelievers, and may win to Constantinople and return with ten thousand horse, to succour us against the infidels." "This is the better course," replied they, "and there is no doubt of its expediency." So they went out and held the opening of the grotto, standing in its sides; and every one of the infidels who sought to come in, they slew. Thus did they fend off the enemy from the door of the cavern and make head against all their assaults, till the day departed and the night came with the shadows, by which time King Sherkan had but five-and-twenty men left. Then said the Christians to each other, "When shall these battles have an end? We are weary of fighting the Muslims." And one of them said, "Up and let us fall on them, for there be but five-and-twenty and of them left. If we cannot prevail on them to fight, let us light a fire upon them; and if they submit and yield themselves up, we will take them prisoners: else we will leave them to serve as fuel to the fire, so that they shall become a warning to men of understanding. May the Messiah not have mercy on their fathers and may the sojourn of the Christians be no abiding-place for them!" So they repaired to the cavern and heaping up faggots in the door-way, set fire to them. Thereupon, Sherkan and his companions made sure of death and yielded themselves up. The unbelievers thought to kill them, but the knight their captain said to those who counselled this, "It is for none but King Afridoun to kill them, that he may quench thereby his thirst for vengeance; wherefore it behoves us to keep them prisoners till the morrow, when we will journey with them to Constantinople and deliver them to King Afridoun, who shall deal with them as he pleases." "This is the right course," replied they; and he commanded to pinion the prisoners and set guards over them. Then, as soon as it was dark, the infidels gave themselves up to feasting and merry-making and

called for wine and drank, till they all fell backward. Presently, Sherkan turned to his brother Zoulmekan and said to him "My brother, how shall we get free?" "By Allah," replied Zoulmekan, "I know not; for we are here like birds in a cage." At this Sherkan was angry and sighed for excess of wrath and stretched himself, till his bonds broke; whereupon he went up to the captain of the guard and taking from his bosom the keys of the fetters, freed Zoulmekan and Dendan and the rest of the prisoners. Then said he, "Let us slay three of these infidels and don their clothes, we three; so shall we be disguised as Greeks and pass through them without their knowing us, and win out to our army." "This is no safe counsel," replied Zoulmekan "for if we kill them, I fear some of their comrades may hear their groans and the enemy he roused upon us and kill us. It were better to make our way out of the pass." So they agreed upon this and set out. When they had left the head of the defile a little way behind, they saw horses picketed and their riders sleeping by them: and Sherkan said to his brother, "Let us each take one of these steeds." So they took five-and-twenty horses, one for each man, and mounted and rode on till they were out of reach, whilst God sent sleep upon the infidels for a secret purpose of His own. Meanwhile, Sherkan gathered as many swords and spears as he could from the sleepers and faring on after his comrades, found them awaiting him, on coals of fire on his account, and said to them, "Have no fear, since God protects us. I have that to propose, which meseems will advantage us." "What is it?" asked they, and he said, "It is that we all climb to the mountain-top and cry out with one voice, 'God is most great! The army of Islam is upon you! God is most great!' If we do this, their company will surely be dissolved, for they are too drunken to find out the trick, but will think that the Muslim troops have encompassed them on all sides and have become mingled with them; so they will fall on one another with their swords, in the confusion of drunkenness and sleep, and we will cleave them asunder with their own brands and the sword will go round amongst them till the morning." "This plan is not good," replied Zoulmekan. "We should do better to make our way to our army and keep silence; for, if we cry out, 'God is most great!' they will wake and fall on us, and not one of us will escape." "By Allah," rejoined Sherkan, "though they be roused on us, I desire urgently that ye fall in with my plan, for nothing but good can come of it." So they agreed and ascending the mountain, shouted out, "God is most great!" And the hills and trees and stones cried out with them, "God is most great!" for the fear of the Almighty. When the unbelievers heard this, they started up from sleep and did on their armour, crying out to one another and saying, "By the Messiah, the enemy is upon us." Then they fell on each other and slew of their own men more than any knows save God the Most High. As soon as it was day, they sought for the captives, but found them not, and their captains said, "It was the prisoners who did this; so up and hasten after them, till ye overtake them, when we will make them quaff the cup of punishment; and let not trouble nor panic possess you." So they sprang to horse and rode after the fugitives, nor was it long before they overtook them and surrounded them. Wheu Zoulmekan saw this, he was seized with terror and said to his brother, "What I feared is come upon us, and now it only remains for us to fight for the faith." But Sherkan held his peace. Then Zoulmekan and his companions rushed down from the hill-top, crying out, "God is most great!" and addressed themselves to fight and sell their lives in the service of the Lord of the Faithful, when, behold, they heard many voices crying out, "There is no god but God! God is most

great! Peace and salvation upon the Bringer of Glad Tidings, the Admonisher of Mankind!" So they turned towards the sound and saw a company of Muslims pricking towards them, whereupon their courage revived and Sherkan ran at the Christians, crying out, "There is no god but God! God is most great!" so that the earth shook as with an earthquake and the unbelievers broke asunder and fled into the mountains, whither the Muslims followed them with sword and spear and made their heads fly from their bodies, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness. Then the Muslims drew together and passed the night rejoicing; and when the day broke and the morning arose with its light and shone, they saw Behram, the captain of the Medes, and Rustem, the captain of the Turks, advancing to join them, with twenty thousand cavaliers, as they were fierce lions. As soon as they saw Zoulmekan, the chiefs dismounted and saluting him, kissed the earth before him; and he said to them, "Rejoice ye in the glad news of the victory of the Muslims and the discomfiture of the unbelievers!" Then they gave each other joy of their deliverance and of the greatness of the reward that awaited them in the world to come.

Now the manner of the coming of the succours was as follows. When Behram and Rustem and the Chamberlain came in sight of Constantinople, with the Muslim army, they saw that the Christians had manned the walls and towers and set all their strengths in order of defence, for that they knew of the approach of the host of Islam, through the craft and perfidy of the old woman Dhat ed Dewahi. So, when they heard the clash of arms and tramp of horse-hoofs and saw the Mohammedan standards and the ensigns of the Faith of the Unity of God emerging from the dust-clouds and heard the voices of the Muslims chanting the Koran aloud and glorifying the Compassionate One, and the army of Islam drew near, as it were the swollen sea, for the multitude of footmen and horsemen and women and children, they poured forth like a flight of locusts or the streaming of water from the rain-clouds; and the captain of the Turks said to the captain of the Medes, "O Amir, of a truth, we are in jeopardy from the multitude of the foe on the walls. Look at yonder forts and at the folk like the tempestuous sea with its clashing billows. Indeed the infidels out-number us a hundred times and we cannot be sure but that some spy may inform them that we are without a leader. Verily, we are in peril from these enemies, whose number may not be told and whose extent is limitless, especially in the absence of King Zoulmekan and his brother Sherkan and the illustrious Vizier Dendan. If they know of this, they will be emboldened to attack us in their absence and will cut off us to the last man; not one of us will escape alive. So it is my counsel that we each take ten thousand horse and repair to the hermitage of Metrouhena and the Meadow of Meloukhna in quest of our brothers and our chiefs. If thou follow my counsel, it may be we shall be the cause of their deliverance, in case they be hard pressed by the infidels; and if not, no blame will rest on me. But, if we go, it were well that we return quickly, for suspicion is part of prudence." The other fell in with his counsel; so they chose twenty thousand horse and set out for the hermitage by cross roads.

To return to Dhat ed Dewahi. As soon as she had delivered Zoulmekan and his companions into the hands of the infidels, she mounted a swift horse, saying to the Christians, "I mean to rejoin the Muslim army before Constantinople and contrive for their destruction; for I will tell them that their chiefs are dead, and when they hear

this, their alliance will be dissolved and their confederation broken up and their host dispersed. Then will I go to King Afridoun and my son King Herdoub, and they will sally forth on them with their troops and destroy them, nor leave one of them alive." So she mounted and fared on across country all that night, and at daybreak, she sighted the army of Behram and Rustem advancing towards her. So she turned aside into a wayside copse and alighting there, hid her horse among the trees, saying to herself, "Belike they are returning, routed, from the assault of Constantinople." However, as she drew near, she saw that their standards were not reversed and knew that they were not retreating because of defeat, but that they feared for their king and their chiefs. When she was assured of this, she hastened up to them, running at the top of her speed, like a stubborn Satan as she was, and cried out, "Hasten, O soldiers of the Merciful One, hasten to the holy war against the hosts of Satan!" When Behram saw her, he dismounted and kissing the earth before her, said, "What is behind thee, O friend of God?" "Do not ask of evil case and sore disasters," answered she. "Know that, when our comrades had taken the treasure from the hermitage and were on their way back to Constantinople, there came out on them a great host and a fierce of unbelievers." And she repeated to them the story, in such wise as to fill them with trouble and terror, and added, "The most of them are dead, and there are but five-and-twenty left." "O holy man," said Behram, "when didst thou leave them?" "But last night," replied she. "Glory be to God," exclaimed he, "Who hath rolled up the distance for thee like a carpet, so that thou hast sped thus, walking upon thy feet and leant upon a palm-tree staff! But thou art one of the friends of God, that fly like birds, when possessed by the stress of His commandment!" Then he mounted his horse, perplexed and confounded for that which he had heard from the lying old beldam and saying, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High! Verily our labour is lost and our hearts are heavy within us, for our king is a prisoner and those who are with him!" Then they fared on in haste and stayed not the whole of that day and night, till at daybreak they reached the head of the pass and heard Zoulmekan and Sherkan shouting, "There is no god but God! God is most great!" Whereupon they drove at the unbelievers and overwhelmed them, as the torrent overwhelms the plains, shouting out their war-cries, till the stoutest champions were affrighted and the mountains were cloven by the noise. On the morrow, they foregathered with Zoulmekan, and each recognised the other as has been before set out. Then they kissed the earth before the King and his brother Sherkan, and the latter told them all that had befallen him and his men in the grotto, whereat they marvelled and said, "Hasten back with us to Constantinople, for we left our companions there, and our hearts are with them." So they made haste to depart, commending themselves to the Subtle, the All-wise; and Zoulmekan exhorted the Muslims to steadfastness, reciting the following verses:

To thee be the praise, O Thou that meritest thanks and praise!
And mayest Thou never cease to succour me all my days!
I grew up in exile, but Thou, my God, wast ever my friend. 'Twas
Thou didst decree me success and broughtest me forth of the maze.
Thou hast given me lordship and wealth and fortune and girded my midst
With the falchion of valour and wreathed my forehead with victory's bays.
Thou hast shadowed me under Thy wings and made me to prosper amain

And hast graced me with favours untold, of Thy bounties abounding always:
Thou hast saved me from all that I feared, by the counsel of him whom
I trust, The Vizier and chief of the chiefs, the hero and pride of our days.
By Thy favour we fell on the Greeks and smote them with sword and with spear;
But again to the fight they returned, in garments blood-red for affrays.
So I feigned to be routed and flee and give back from the fight;
Then I turned On the toe, as the fierce lion turns on the hunters, that find him at gaze.
I left them laid low on the plain, as 'twere they were drunken with wine,
Not the wine that is pressed from the grape, but that of death's cup of amaze;
Whilst their ships all fell under our hand and ours was the empery grown:
From the East to the West, sea and shore, we were lords of the lands and the ways.
Then there came to our camp the recluse, the saint, whose miraculous power
Is blazoned in desert and town, wherever the sun sheds its rays.
He joined us, his vengeance to wreak on all that believe not in God.
Indeed, it is known to the folk what came of our strife and our frays.
They slew of us some, but they woke on the morrow in Paradise,
Each lodged in a palace on high, whereunder a river strays.

When Zoulmekan had made an end of reciting these verses, his brother Sherkan gave him joy of his safety and praise for that he had done; after which they set out by forced marches to rejoin their army.

Meanwhile, Dhat ed Dewahi, after she had spoken with Rustem and Behram, returned to the coppice, where she took her horse and mounting, sped on, till she drew near the host of the Muslims that lay leaguer before Constantinople, when she lighted down from her steed and led it to the Chamberlain's pavilion. When he saw her, he signed to her with his hand and said, "Welcome, O pious recluse!" Then he questioned her of what had befallen, and she repeated to him her disquieting and deluding report, saying, "Indeed I fear for the Amirs Rustem and Behram, for that I met them on the way and sent them and their following to the King and his companions. They are but twenty thousand horse, and the unbelievers are more in number than they; so I would now have thee send of the rest of thy troops in haste to their succour, lest they be slain to the last man." And she said to them "Hasten! Hasten!" When the Chamberlain and the Muslims heard these her words, their hearts sank within them and they wept; but she said to them, "Ask aid of God and be patient under this affliction, taking example by those that have been before you of the people of Islam, for God hath prepared Paradise, with its palaces, for those who die martyrs; and needs must all die, but death is most praiseworthy, when it comes in fighting for the Faith." When the Chamberlain heard this speech of the accursed old woman, he called for the Amir Behram's brother, a cavalier named Terkash, and choosing out for him ten thousand intrepid veterans, bade him set out at once. So he departed forthright and marched all that day and the next night, till he neared the Muslims. When the day dawned, Sherkan saw the dust of them and feared for his companions, saying, "If these troops that are nearing us be Muslims, our victory is assured; but if they be Christians, there is no gainsaying the decrees of Fate." Then he turned to his brother Zoulmekan and said to him, "Fear not, for I will ransom thee with my life from destruction. If these be Muslim troops then were it an increase of God's favours; but if they be our foes, there is nothing for it but

to fight them. Yet do I long to see the holy man once again before I die, so he may pray for me that I may not die except a martyr." Whilst he was thus speaking, behold, there appeared the banners with the words, "There is no god but God and Mohammed is His Apostle" inscribed on them, and he cried out to the new-comers, saying, "How is it with the Muslims?" "They are in weal and safety," replied they; "and we come not hither but out of concern for you." Then the chief of the succours dismounted and kissing the earth before Sherkan, said, "O my lord, the Sultan and the Vizier Dendan and Rustem and my brother Behram, are they all in safety?" "They are all well," answered the prince; "but who brought thee tidings of us?" "It was the holy man," said Terkash. "He told us that he had met my brother Behram and Rustem and had sent them to you and also that the infidels had encompassed you and were more in number than you; yet meseems the case is the contrary of this and that you are victorious." "And how did the holy man reach you?" asked Sherkan. "Walking on his feet," replied the Amir; "and he had compassed, in the space of a single day and night, ten days' journey for a diligent horseman." "Verily, he is a friend of God," said Sherkan; "but where is he now?" Quoth Terkash, "We left him with our troops, the people of Faith, encouraging them to do battle with the infidels and rebels." Therewith Sherkan was glad and thanked God for their own deliverance and that of the holy man and commended the dead to the mercy of God saying, "This was written in the Book of Fate." Then they set out for Constantinople by forced marches, and whilst they were on the road thither, behold, a cloud of dust arose before them and spread till the prospect was hidden and the day darkened by it. Sherkan looked at it and said, "Verily, I fear lest this be the infidels who have routed the army of Islam, for that this dust covers the country and blots out the two horizons." Presently there appeared midmost the dust a pillar of darkness and came towards them, blacker than the blackness of (evil) fortune and more dreadful than the terrors of the Day of Judgment.

Horse and foot hastened up to look at it and know its meaning, when, behold, they saw it to be the recluse aforesaid; so they crowded round him to kiss his hands, and he cried out, "O people of the best of men, the lamp of the darkness, the infidels have overcome the Muslims by craft, for they fell upon them in their tents, whilst they deemed themselves in safety, and made a sore slaughter of them; so hasten to the aid of the believers in the unity of God and deliver them from those that deny Him!" When Sherkan heard this, his heart was sore troubled and he alighted from his horse, in amazement, and kissed the recluse's hands and feet. In like wise did his brother Zoulmekan and the rest of the troops, except the Vizier Dendan, who dismounted not, but said, "By Allah, my heart revolts from this devotee, for I never knew aught but evil come of these that make a show of devotion to religion. Leave him and hasten to rejoin your comrades for this fellow is of those that are outcast from the gate of mercy of the Lord of the Two Worlds! How often have I come out to war with King Omar ben Ennuman and trodden the earth of these lands!" "Put away from thee this foul thought," said Sherkan. "Hast thou not seen this holy man excite the faithful to battle, recking nought of spears and swords? Wherefore, slander him not, for slander is blameworthy and the flesh of pious folk is poisoned. Look how he encourages us to battle, and did not God love him, He had not rolled up the distance for him (like a carpet), after He had aforetime cast him into grievous torment?" Then Sherkan let bring a Nubian mule for her riding and said to her, "Mount, pious man, God-fearing

and holy!" But she refused, feigning self-denial, that she might attain her end: and they knew not that the pretended devotee was such an one as he of whom the poet says:

He prayeth and fasteth amain for an end that he hath in view.
When once he has gained his end, fasting and prayer, adieu!

So she walked among the horsemen and the footmen, like a crafty fox meditating an assault, and began to uplift her voice, chanting the Koran aloud and celebrating the praises of the Compassionate One. Then they pressed forward till they reached the Mohammedan camp, where Sherkan found the Muslims in a state of confusion and the Chamberlain upon the brink of retreat, whilst the sword wrought havoc among the faithful, good and bad. Now the cause of this weakness among the Muslims was that the accursed old woman Dhat ed Dewahi, when she saw that Behram and Rustem had set forward with their troops to join Sherkan and Zoulmekan, repaired to the camp or the Muslims before Constantinople and wrought upon the Chamberlain to despatch the Amir Terkash, as hath been before set out, to the further succour of the princes, purposing in this to divide the Muslim forces and weaken them. Then she left them and going to the walls of Constantinople, called with a loud voice on the knights of the Greeks, saying, "Throw me down a cord that I may tie thereto this letter, which do ye carry to King Afridoun and my son King Herdoub, that they may read it and do as is written therein." So they let down a string and she tied thereto a letter, to the following purport, "From the chiefest of calamities and the greatest of afflictions, Dhat ed Dewahi, to King Afridoun. Know that I have contrived a device for the destruction of the Muslims, so rest you quiet. I made their Sultan and the Vizier Dendan prisoners and returned to their camp and acquainted them therewith, whereupon their power was broken and their strength weakened. Moreover, I have wrought on them to send ten thousand men under the Amir Terkash to the succour of the captives, and there be now but few men left with the besiegers. Wherefore, it is my counsel that ye sally forth, with all your power, whilst it is yet day, and fall on them in their tents and slay them to the last man for the Messiah looks down upon you and the Virgin favours you; and I hope that the Messiah will not forget this that I have done." When this letter came to King Afridoun, he rejoiced greatly and sending at once for King Herdoub, read the letter to him, whereat he was exceeding glad and said, "See the craft of my mother; verily it dispenses with swords, and her aspect stands in stead of the terrors of the Day of Fear." "May the Messiah not bereave us of her," rejoined Afridoun, "nor deprive her of her craft and knavery." Then he gave orders for the sally, and the news was noised abroad in the city. So the Christian troops and soldiers of the Cross drew their keen sabres and sallied forth of the city, shouting out their impious war-cries and blaspheming the Lord of all creatures. When the Chamberlain saw them, he said, "Behold, the Christians are upon us, whilst the most part of our troops are gone to the succour of King Zoulmekan! They surely know of the absence of our Sultan and most like they will attack us." Therewith he waxed angry and cried out, "Ho, soldiers of Islam and defenders of the True Faith, if you flee, you are lost, and if you stand fast, you will conquer! Know that courage lies in endurance and that no case is so desperate but that God is able to bring about its relief. May He bless you and look upon you with eyes of compassion! "Then the Muslims cried out, "God is most great!" and the believers in the Divine Unity shouted the profession of the Faith and the two hosts

joined battle. The mill-wheels of war whirled round, with cutting and thrusting; the swords and spears played and the plains and valleys were filled with blood. The priests and monks prayed aloud, girding on their girdles and uplifting the crosses, whilst the Muslims shouted out the praises of the Requiting King and chanted verses of the Koran. The hosts of the Compassionate God fought against the legions of Satan and heads flew from bodies, what while the good angels hovered above the people of the Chosen Prophet, nor did the sword cease to play, till the day departed and the night came with the shadows. Now the unbelievers had encompassed the Muslims and made sure of overcoming the host of the True Faith with the dawn, deeming not that they could escape destruction. As soon as it was light, the Chamberlain mounted, he and his men, trusting that God would help them, and the two armies came together and joined battle. The fight raged all along the line and heads flew from bodies, whilst the brave stood fast and the faint-hearted turned their backs and fled; and the Judge of death judged and gave sentence, so that the champions fell from their saddles and the meadows were heaped with the slain. Then the Muslims began to give back and the Greeks took possession of some of their tents; whereupon the Muslims were about to break and retreat, when behold, up came Sherkan, with the rest of their troops and the standards of the believers in the Unity of God, and fell upon the infidels, followed by Zoulmekan and the Vizier Dendan and the Amirs Behram and Rustem and Terkash. When the Christians saw this, they lost their senses and their reason fled, and the dust clouds rose till they covered the country, whilst the true believers joined their pious comrades. Then Sherkan accosted the Chamberlain and praised him for his steadfastness, and he in turn gave him joy of his timely succour. Therewith the Muslims rejoiced and their hearts were fortified; so they rushed upon the foe and devoted themselves to God, in the battle for the Faith. When the infidels saw the Mohammedan standards and read thereon the words proclaiming the Unity of God, they shrieked aloud and said, "Woe!" and "Ruin!" and besought succour of the priests and monks. Moreover they fell to calling upon Jesus and Mary and the abhorrent Cross and stayed their hands from the battle, whilst King Afridoun went up to King Herdoub (to consult with him), for the two kings stood one at the head of each wing. Now there was with them also a famous cavalier named Lawiya, who was in command of the centre, and the infidels drew out in battle-array; but indeed they were full of alarm and disquiet. Meanwhile, the Muslims arrayed their forces and Sherkan came to his brother Zoulmekan and said to him, "O king of the age, doubtless they mean to joust? and that is also what we desire; but it is my wish to set in our van-ward battle the stoutest-hearted of our men: for wise ordering is the half of life." "As thou wilt, O man of good counsel," replied the Sultan. "It is my wish," added Sherkan, "to be myself in the centre of the line, with the Vizier Dendan on my left and thee on my right, whilst Behram and Rustem command the right and left wing; and thou, O mighty King, shalt be under the standards and the ensigns, for that thou art our stay and upon thee, after God, is our dependence, and we will all be thy ransom from aught that can harm thee." Zoulmekan thanked him and the battle-cries arose and the sabres were drawn, when, behold, there came forth a cavalier from the Grecian ranks; and as he drew near, they saw that he was mounted on a slow-paced mule, fleeing with her master from the shock of swords. Her housings were of white silk, surmounted by a carpet of Cashmere stuff, and on her back sat a gray-bearded old man of comely and reverend aspect, clad in a

gown of white wool. He spurred her on till he came to the Muslims, to whom said he, "I am an ambassador to you, and all an ambassador has to do is to deliver his message; so give me a safe conduct and the right of speech, that I may do my errand to you." "Thou art in safety," replied Sherkan; "fear neither stroke of sword nor thrust of lance." Thereupon the old man dismounted and taking the cross from his neck, (laid it) before the Sultan and carried himself humbly to him, after the fashion of one who hopes for fair treatment. Then said the Muslims to him, "What is thy news?" He answered, "I am an ambassador from King Afridoun, whom I counselled to avert the destruction of all these manly bodies and images of the Compassionate; and it seemed good to him to stop the shedding of blood and limit the strife to the encounter of two horsemen in battle; so he agreed to this and says to you, 'Verily, I will ransom my troops with my life; so let the Muslim king do likewise and ransom his army with his life. If he kill me, there will be no stability left in the army of the Greeks, and if I kill him, it will be the like with the Muslims.'" When Sherkan heard this, he said, "O monk, we agree to this, for it is just; and behold I will joust: with him, for I am champion of the Muslims, even as he of the Christians; and if he slay me, he will have gained the victory and there will remain for the Muslim army nothing but flight. So return to him, O monk, and tell him that the combat shall be for to-morrow, seeing that to-day we are weary with our journey; but after rest there shall be neither reproach nor blame." So the monk returned, rejoicing, to King Afridoun and King Herdoub and told them what Sherkan had said, whereat Afridoun was exceeding glad and lightened of anxiety and trouble and said in himself, "No doubt but this Sherkan is the hardest hitter of them with the sword and the dourest at push of pike; and when I have slain him, their hearts will fail them and their strength will be broken." Now Dhat ed Dewahi had written to King Afridoun of this and told him that Sherkan was a cavalier of cavaliers and a champion of champions and had warned him against him; but Afridoun was a stalwart cavalier, who fought in many a fashion; he could hurl stones and javelins and smite with the iron mace and feared not the doughtiest of prowess in the dint of war. So when he heard from the monk that Sherkan agreed to joust, he well-nigh lost his reason for stress of joy, for that he had confidence in himself and deemed that none could stand against him. Then the infidels passed the night in joy and merry-making and wine-drinking, and as soon as it was day, the two armies drew out in battle array, with their brown spears and white swords. Presently, they saw a cavalier prick out into the plain, mounted on a stout and swift charger equipped for war: he was of great stature and was clad in a cuirass of steel made for stress of battle. On his breast he wore a jewelled mirror and in his hand he bore a keen scimitar and a lance of khelenj wood of curious Frankish workmanship. He uncovered his face and cried out, saying, "Whoso knoweth me hath enough of me, and whoso knoweth me not shall see who I am. I am Afridoun he who is overborne by the blessing of Shewahi Dhat ed Dewahi." Before he had made an end of speaking, Sherkan, the champion of the Muslims, spurred out to meet him, mounted on a sorrel horse worth a thousand [dinars] of red gold, with housings embroidered in pearls and jewels, and girt with a sword of watered Indian steel, that shore through necks and made hard ventures easy. He drove his charger between the two armies, whilst the horsemen all gazed on him, and cried out to Afridoun, saying, "Out on thee, O accursed one, dost thou think me as one of the horsemen thou hast met, that cannot stand against thee in the mellay?" Then they

rushed upon one another and came together like two mountains crashing or two seas breaking each against each. So they advanced and retreated and drew together and parted and ceased not to joust and battle with stroke of sword and thrust of spear, whilst the two armies looked on. Some said, "Afridoun will conquer," and other some, "Sherkan;" and they stayed not their hands from the battle, till the clamour of the bystanders subsided and the dust-clouds rose and the day waned and the sun began to grow pale. Then King Afridoun cried out to Sherkan, saying, "By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, thou art a doughty horseman and a stalwart fighting man, but thou art guileful and thy nature is not that of the freeborn and meseemeth thy fashion is other than praiseworthy nor is thy fighting that of a prince; for see, thy people even thee with slaves and bring thee out a charger other than thine, that thou mayst (mount him and) return to the battle. But by the virtue of the Messiah, thy fighting fatigues me and I am weary of cutting and thrusting with thee; and if thou wert purposed to do battle with me tonight thou wouldst not change aught of thy harness nor thy horse till thou hadst shown the cavaliers thy valour and skill in fight." When Sherkan heard him say that his own folk evened him with slaves, he was angry and turned towards his men, meaning to sign to them and bid them not prepare him change of armour or horse, when, behold, Afridoun shook his javelin in the air and hurled it at Sherkan. Now, when the latter turned, he found none behind him and knew that this was a trick of the accursed infidel; so he wheeled round in haste and seeing the javelin coming at him, swerved from it, till his head was level with the pommel of his saddle. The javelin grazed his breast and pierced the skin, for Sherkan was high-bosomed: so he gave one cry and swooned away. Then the accursed Afridoun was glad, thinking that he had slain him, and called to the Christians to rejoice, whereat the infidels were encouraged and the true believers wept. When Zoulmekan saw his brother reeling from side to side in his saddle, so that he had well-nigh fallen, he sent cavaliers to his succour; whereupon the infidels drove at the Muslims and the two hosts joined battle, whilst the keen Yemen blades played among them. The first to reach Sherkan were Dendan and Rustem and Behram, who found him on the point of falling off his horse; so they stayed him in his saddle and carried him to Zoulmekan; then giving him in charge to his servants, returned to the battle. Then the strife redoubled and the weapons clashed, and there was nought to be heard but the roar of the battle nor to be seen but blood flowing and necks bending beneath the blows; nor did the swords cease to play on men's necks nor the strife to rage more and more, till the most part of the night was past and the two hosts were weary of battle. So they called a truce and each army returned to its tents, whilst all the infidels repaired to King Afridoun and kissed the earth before him, and the priests and monks wished him joy of his victory over Sherkan. Then he went up into Constantinople and sat down upon his throne; and King Herdoub came to him and said, "May the Messiah strengthen thine arm and cease never to be thy helper and hearken to the prayers of my pious mother on thy behalf! Know that the Muslims can make no stand, now they have lost Sherkan." "To-morrow," replied Afridoun, "shall end the war, for I will seek out Zoulmekan and slay him, and their army shall turn tail and take to flight."

Meanwhile, Zoulmekan returned to his tent thinking of nothing but his brother, and going in to the latter's pavilion, found him in evil plight; whereat he was sore troubled and sent for the Vizier Dendan and the Amirs Behram and Rustem, that he

might take counsel with them. When they entered, they were all of accord to summon the physicians to treat Sherkan, and they wept and said, "The age will not lightly afford his like!" They watched by him all that night, and towards morning there came to them the pretended recluse, weeping. When Zoulmekan saw her, he rose to receive her; and she stroked Sherkan's wound with her hand, chanting somewhat of the Koran and repeating some of the signs of the Compassionate One. Then she kept watch over him till the day, when he came to himself and opening his eyes, moved his tongue in his mouth and spoke. At this Zoulmekan rejoiced, saying, "Verily the blessing of the holy man hath taken effect on him!" And Sherkan said, "Praised be God for recovery; indeed, I am well now. Yonder accursed one played me false, and but that I swerved aside quicklier than lightning, the javelin had pierced me through and through. So praised be God for my safety! How is it with the Muslims?" "They weep for thee," answered Zoulmekan. Quoth Sherkan, "I am well and in good case; but where is the holy man?" Now she was sitting by him and said, "At thy head." So he turned to her and kissed her hand; and she said, "O my son, it behoves thee to arm thyself with patience, and God shall make great thy reward; for the guerdon is measured by that which has been endured." Quoth Sherkan, "Pray for me," and she did so. As soon as it was morning and the day arose and shone, the Muslims sallied out into the field, and the Christians made ready to cut and thrust. Then the host of the Muslims advanced and offered battle; and Zoulmekan and Afridoun made ready to tilt at one another. But when Zoulmekan sallied out into the field, there came with him Dendan and Behram and the Chamberlain, saying, "We will be thy sacrifice." "By the Holy House and the Well Zemzem and the Stead of Abraham," exclaimed he, "I will not be hindered from going forth against these barbarians!" So he rode out into the field and played with sword and spear, till both armies wondered; then he rushed upon the right wing of the Greek army and slew two knights and in like manner dealt he with the left wing. Then he stayed his steed in the midst of the field and cried out, "Where is Afridoun, that I may make him drink the cup of humiliation?" But King Herdoub conjured Afridoun not to budge from the field, saying, "O King, it was thy turn yesterday: to-day it is mine. I reck not of his prowess." So he pricked out towards Zoulmekan, with a sabre in his hand and under him a jet black horse, swift as he were Abjer, he that was Antar's horse, even as says the poet:

He vies with the glance of the eye on a swift-footed steed,
That fares as it had a mind to outstrip Fate.
The hue of his hide is the blackest of all things black,
Like night, when the shadows shroud it in sable state.
The sound of his neighing troubles the hearts of men,
As it were thunder that echoes in heaven's gate.
If he run a race with the wind, he leads the way,
Nor can the lightning outstrip him, early or late.

Then each rushed upon the other, guarding himself from his blows and showing the rare qualities that were in him and the wonders of his prowess; and they fell to advancing and retreating and ceased not to flee and return to the attack and wheel hither and thither, till the breasts of the bystanders were straitened (for anxiety) and they were weary of waiting for the event. At last, Zoulmekan cried out and rushing

upon Herdoub, King of Caesarea, dealt him such a blow that he shore his head from his body and made an end of him. When the infidels saw this, they all rushed at Zoulmekan, who met them in mid-field, and they fell to cutting and thrusting, till the blood ran in streams. Then the Muslims cried out, "God is most great;" and "There is no god but God;" and invoked blessings on the Giver of Good Tidings, the Admonisher of Mankind, and there befell a great battle. But God sent help to the faithful and confusion to the infidels. The Vizier Dendan shouted, "Avenge King Omar ben Ennuman and his son Sherkan!" and baring his head, cried out to the Turks. Now there were beside him more than twenty thousand horse, who all charged with him as one man, and the unbelievers found nothing for it but flight. So they turned their backs to flee, whilst the keen sabres wrought havoc amongst them and the Muslims slew of them that day more than fifty thousand cavaliers and took more than that: and much people also were slain at the going in of the gates by reason of the greatness of the crowd, whilst the Christians mounted the walls, fearing an assault. Then the Muslims returned to their tents, fortified and victorious, and King Zoulmekan went in to his brother, whom he found in the most joyous case. So he returned thanks to the Bountiful, the Exalted One and gave Sherkan joy of his deliverance. "Verily," answered he, "we are all under the benediction of this holy and God-fearing man, nor would you have been victorious, but for his effectual prayers; for all day he hath never ceased to invoke victory on the Muslims. I found strength return to me, when I heard you cry, 'God is most great!' for then I knew you had gotten the better of your enemies. But now tell me, O my brother, what befell thee." So he told him all that had passed, how he had slain the accursed Herdoub and he had gone to the malediction of God; and Sherkan praised his prowess. When Dhat ed Dewahi heard tell of her son's death, the blood fled from her face and her eyes ran over with streaming tears; however, she kept her counsel and feigned to the Muslims that she was glad and wept for excess of joy: but she said in herself, "By the virtue of the Messiah, there remains no profit of my life, if I make not his heart bleed for his brother Sherkan, even as he has made mine bleed for King Herdoub, the mainstay of the Christian faith and the hosts of the Cross!"

The Vizier Dendan and Zoulmekan and the Chamberlain abode with Sherkan, till they had dressed his wound and anointed it; after which they gave him medicines and he began to recover his strength; whereat they were exceeding glad and told the troops, who rejoiced greatly, saying, "To-morrow he will ride with us and take part in the siege." Then said Sherkan to them, "You have fought all day and are weary, and it behoves that you return to your tents and sleep and not watch." So they went away all to their tents and there remained none with Sherkan but Dhat ed Dewahi and a few servants. He talked with her awhile, then lay down to rest, he and his servants, and soon sleep overcame them all and they were as dead men. But the old woman abode awake and looking at Sherkan, saw that he was drowned in sleep. So she sprang to her feet, as she were a bald she-bear or a speckled snake, and drew from her girdle a poisoned knife, that would have melted a rock if laid thereon; then going up to Sherkan, she drew the knife across his throat and cut off his head. After this, she went up to the sleeping servants and cut off their heads also, lest they should awake. Then she left the tent and made for the Sultan's pavilion, but finding the guards awake, turned to that of the Vizier. He was reading the Koran and seeing her, said, "Welcome,

O holy man!" When she heard this, her heart trembled and she said, "The reason of my coming hither at this time is that I heard the voice of a friend of God and am going to him." Then she went away, but the Vizier said to himself, "By Allah, I will follow the holy man to-night!" So he rose and went after her: but the accursed old woman heard his footsteps and knew that he was following her: wherefore she feared discovery and said in herself, "Except I put him off with some trick, he will discover me." So she turned and said to him from afar, "Harkye, Vizier, I am going after this saint, that I may know who he is; and after I will ask his leave for thee to join him. Then I will come back and tell thee; for I fear to let thee accompany me, without his leave, lest he take umbrage at seeing thee with me." When the Vizier heard this, he was abashed and knew not what to answer; so he left her and returning to his tent, would have slept; but sleep was not favourable to him and the world was straitened upon him. So he rose and went out, saying in himself, "I will go talk with Sherkan till the morning." But when he came to Sherkan's tent, he found the blood running like a rivulet and saw the servants lying dead. At this he gave a cry that aroused all who were asleep, and they hastened to him and seeing the blood streaming, set up a clamour of weeping and lamentation. The noise awoke the Sultan, who enquired what was the matter, and they said to him, "Sherkan and his servants are murdered." So he rose in haste and entering the tent, saw his brother's headless trunk and the Vizier by it shrieking aloud. At this sight, he swooned away and all the troops stood round him, weeping and crying aloud, till he came to himself, when he looked at Sherkan and wept sore, whilst all who were present did the like. Then said Zoulmekan, "Know ye who did this, and how is it I see not the recluse, him who hath put away the things of the world?" Quoth the Vizier, "And who should have been the cause of this our affliction, save that devotee of Satan? By Allah, my heart shrank from him from the first, because I know that all who profess to be absorbed in the things of the faith are corrupt and treacherous!" And he told the King how he would have followed the devotee, but he forbade him; whereupon the folk broke out into weeping and lamentation and besought Him who is ever near at hand, Him who answereth prayer, to cause the false recluse, who denied His evidences, to fall into their hands. Then they laid Sherkan out and buried him in the mountain aforesaid, mourning over his renowned virtues, after which they looked for the opening of the city-gate; but it opened not and none appeared to them on the walls; whereat they wondered exceedingly, and King Zoulmekan said, "By Allah, I will not turn back from them, though I tarry here years and years, till I take my wreak of my brother Sherkan and lay Constantinople in ruins and slay the King of the Nazarenes, even if death overcome me and I be at rest from this sorry world!" Then he brought out the treasure he had taken from the hermitage of Metrouhena and mustering the troops, divided it amongst them, nor was there one of them but he gave him what contented him. Moreover, he called together three hundred horse of every division and said to them, "Do ye send succours to your family, for I am resolved to camp here, till I have taken my revenge for my brother Sherkan, even if I die in this place." Then he summoned couriers and gave them letters and charged them to do the soldiers' errands to their families and let them know that they were safe and in good heart, but that they were encamped before Constantinople, resolved either to destroy it or perish, and that, though they should abide there months and years, they would not depart thence till they had taken the city. Moreover, he bade Dendan write

to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman, acquainting her with what had befallen them and with their situation and commending his child to her care, since that, when he went out to war, his wife was near her delivery and must needs by that time have been brought to bed; and if she had given birth to a son, he charged the messengers to hasten their return and bring him the news. Then he gave them money and they set out at once, and all the people came out to take leave of them and entrust them with the money and the messages they wished to send to their families. After they had departed, Zoulmekan turned to the Vizier and commanded him to push forward with the army against the city walls. So the troops advanced, but found none on the walls, whereat they marvelled and Zoulmekan was troubled.

To return to Dhat ed Dewahi. As soon as she had slain Sherkan, she hastened to the walls of Constantinople and called out in the Greek tongue to the guards, to throw her down a rope. Quoth they, "Who art thou?" and she said, "I am the princess Dhat ed Dewahi." They knew her and threw her down a rope, to which she tied herself, and they drew her up into the city. Then she went in to King Afridoun and said to him, "What is this I hear from the Muslims? They say that my son King Herdoub is slain." He answered, "It is true;" and when she heard this, she shrieked out and wept so grievously, that she made Afridoun and all who were present weep also. Then she told the King how she had slain Sherkan and thirty of his servants, whereat he rejoiced and thanked her and kissed her hands and exhorted her to resignation for the loss of her son. "By the Messiah," said she, "I will not rest content with killing one of the Muslim dogs in revenge for my son, a king of the kings of the age! But I will assuredly make shift to kill the Sultan Zoulmekan and the Vizier Dendan and the Chamberlain and Rustem and Behram and ten thousand cavaliers of the army of Islam to boot; for it shall never be that my son's head be paid with the blood-wit of Sherkan's head only." Then said she to Afridoun, "It is my wish that mourning be made for my son Herdoub and that the girdle be cut and the crosses broken." "Do what thou wilt," replied Afridoun; "I will not gainsay thee in aught. And if thou prolong thy mourning, it were a little thing; for though the Muslims beleaguer us years and years, they will never compass their will of us nor get aught of us but trouble and weariness." Then she took ink-horn and paper and wrote the following letter: "Shewaha Dhat ed Dewahi to the host of the Muslims. Know that I entered your country and duped your nobles and slew your king Omar ben Ennuman in the midst of his palace. Moreover, I slew, in the battle of the mountain pass and of the grotto, many of your men, and the last I killed were Sherkan and his servants. And if fortune favour me and Satan obey me, I will assuredly kill your Sultan and the Vizier Dendan, for I am she who came to you in the disguise of a recluse and ye were the dupes of my tricks and devices. Wherefore, if you be minded to be in safety, depart at once; and if you covet your own destruction, abide where you are; for though ye abide here years and years, ye shall not come by your desire of us; and so peace be on you." Then she devoted three days to mourning for her son King Herdoub, and on the fourth day, she called a knight and bade him make the letter fast to an arrow and shoot it into the Muslim camp; after which she entered the church and gave herself up to weeping and lamentation for the loss of her son, saying to him who took the kingship after him, "Nothing will serve me but I must kill Zoulmekan and all the princes of Islam."

Meanwhile, the Muslims passed three days in concern and anxiety, and on the fourth day, they saw a knight on the wall, holding a bow and about to shoot an arrow to which was fastened a letter. So they waited till he had shot, and the King bade the Vizier Dendan take the letter and read it. He did so, and when Zoulmekan heard its purport, his eyes filled with tears and he shrieked for anguish at the old woman's perfidy, and Dendan said, "By Allah, my heart shrank from her!" "How could this traitress impose upon us twice?" exclaimed Zoulmekan. "By Allah, I will not depart hence till I fill her kaze with molten lead and set her in a cage, as men do birds, then bind her with her hair and crucify her at the gate of Constantinople." Then he addressed himself again to the leaguer of the city, promising his men that, if it should be taken, he would divide its treasures equally among them. After this, he bethought him of his brother and wept sore; and his tears ceased not to flow, till his body was wasted with grief, as it were a bodkin. But the Vizier Dendan came in to him and said, "Take comfort and be consoled; thy brother died not but because his hour was come, and there is no profit in this mourning. How well says the poet:

That which is not to be shall by no means be brought
To pass, and that which is to be shall come, unsought,
Even at the time ordained: but he that knoweth not
The truth is still deceived and finds his hopes grown nought.

Wherefore do thou leave this weeping and lamentation and strengthen thy heart to bear arms." "O Vizier," replied Zoulmekan, "my heart is heavy for the death of my brother and father and our absence from our native land, and my mind is concerned for my subjects." Thereupon the Vizier and the bystanders wept; but they ceased not from the leaguer of Constantinople, till, after awhile, news arrived from Baghdad, by one of the Amirs, that the Sultan's wife had given birth to a son and that the princess Nuzhet ez Zeman had named him Kanmakan. Moreover, his sister wrote to him that the boy bid fair to be a prodigy and that she had commanded the priests and preachers to pray for them from the pulpits; also, that they were all well and had been blessed with abundant rains and that his comrade the stoker was in the enjoyment of all prosperity, with slaves and servants to attend upon him; but that he was still ignorant of what had befallen him. Zoulmekan rejoiced greatly at this news and said to the Vizier Dendan, "Now is my hope fulfilled and my back strengthened, in that I have been vouchsafed a son. Wherefore I am minded to leave mourning and let make recitations of the Koran over my brother's tomb and do almsdeeds on his account." Quoth the Vizier, "It is well." Then he caused tents to be pitched over his brother's tomb and they gathered together such of the troops as could repeat the Koran. Some fell to reciting the Koran, whilst others chanted the litanies of the praise of God, and thus they did till the morning, when Zoulmekan went up to the tomb of his brother Sherkan and shedding copious tears, repeated the following verses:

They bore him forth, whilst all who went behind him wept and cried
Such cries as Moses gave, when God broke down the mountain side,
Till to a tomb they came, whose grave seemed dug in all men's hearts
By whom the unity of God is held and glorified.
I had not thought, or ere they bore thee forth upon the bier,
To see my joy upon the hands of men uplifted ride;

Nor, till they laid thee in the grave, could I have ever deemed
That stars could leave their place in heaven and in the dark earth hide.
Is the indweller of the tomb the hostage of a pit,
In which, for that his face is there, splendour and light abide?
Lo, praise has ta'en upon itself to bring him back to life;
Now that his body's hid, his fame's shown forth and magnified.

When he had made an end of reciting these verses, he wept and all the troops wept with him; then he threw himself on the tomb, wild with grief, and the Vizier repeated the words of the poet:

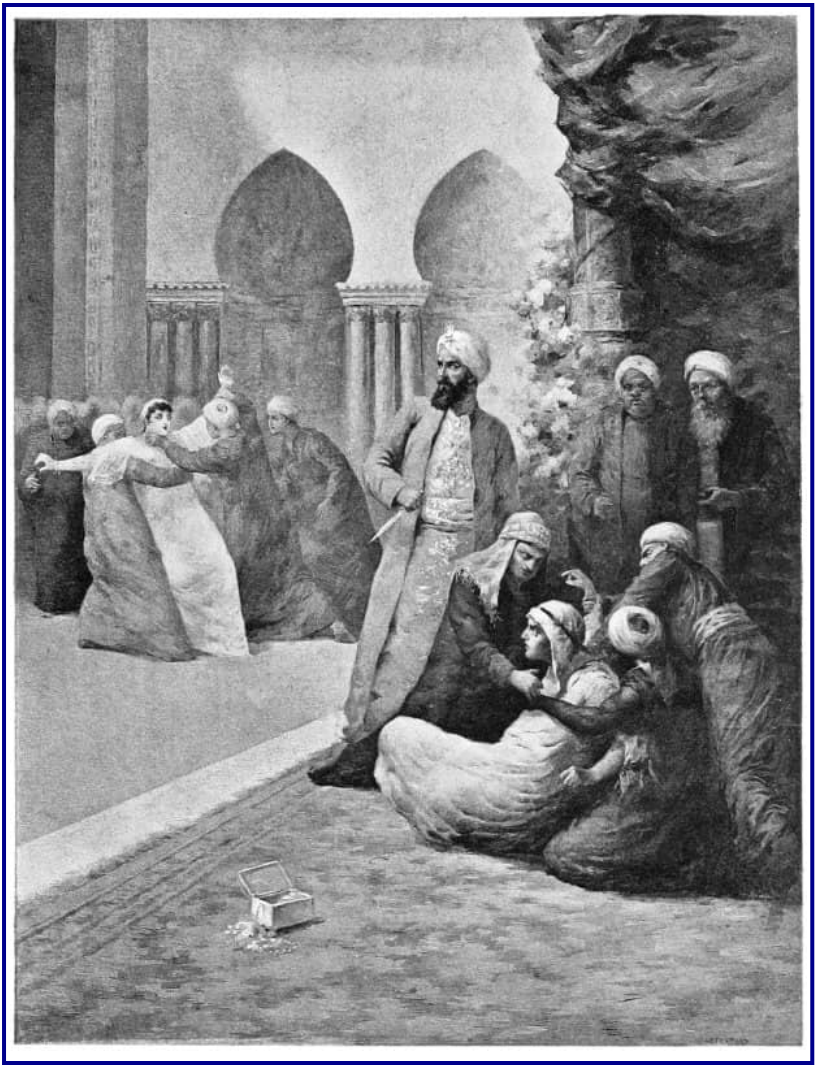
That which fleets past thou hast left and won what endureth for aye,
And even as thou are the folk, that were and have passed away;
And yet it was not of thy will that thou quittedst this house of the world;
For here hadst thou joy and delight of all that befell in thy day.
How oft hast thou proven thyself a succour and shield from the foe,
When the arrows and javelins of war flew thick in the midst of the fray!
I see that this world's but a cheat and a vanity after all,
And ever to seek out the Truth all creatures desire and essay!
The Lord of the Empyrean vouchsafe thee in heaven to dwell
And the Guide assign thee therein a goodly sojourn, I pray!
I bid thee adieu with a sigh and I see, for the loss of thee,
The East and the West o'ershadowed with mourning and dismay.

When the Vizier had finished, he wept sore, and the tears fell from his eyes, like a network of pearls. Then came forward one of Sherkan's boon-companions, weeping till his eyes resembled rivers, and recalled the dead man's noble qualities, reciting the following cinquains:

Where be thy giving, alas! and the hand of thy bounty fled?
They lie in the earth, and my body is wasted for drearihead.
O guide of the camel-litters, (may God still gladden thy stead!)
My tears on my cheeks have written, in characters of red,
That which would both rejoice thee and fill thee with pain and dread!
By Allah, 'twixt me and my heart, not a word of thee is said
Nor doth the thought of thy grace and thy glory pass through my head,
But that mine eyes are wounded by dint of the tears I shed!
Yea, if to rest on another my glance be ever led,
May my lids be drawn in slumber by longing for the dead!

Then Zoulmekan and Dendan wept sore and the whole army lamented aloud; after which they all withdrew to their tents, and Zoulmekan turned to Dendan and took counsel with him concerning the conduct of the war. On this wise they passed days and nights, what while Zoulmekan was weighed down with grief and concern, till at last he said to the Vizier, "I have a mind to hear stories of adventures and chronicles of kings and tales of folk oppressed of love, so haply God may make this to solace the heavy anxiety that is on my heart and do away from me weeping and lamentation." "O King," replied Dendan, "if nought but hearing pleasant tales of bygone kings and

peoples and stories of folk oppressed of love and so forth can dispel thy trouble, the thing is easy, for I had no other business, in the lifetime of thy late father, than to tell him stories and repeat verses to him; so, this very night, I will tell thee a story of a lover and his beloved, which shall lighten thy heart." When Zoulmekan heard this, his heart yearned after that which the Vizier promised him and he did nothing but watch for the coming of the night, that he might hear what he had to tell. So, no sooner had the night closed in, than he bade light the lamps and the candles and bring all that was needful of meat and drink and perfumes and what not and sending for Dendan, Rustem, Behram, Terkash and the Grand Chamberlain, turned to the Vizier and said, "O Vizier, behold, the night is come and hath let down its veils over us, and we desire that thou tell us that which thou didst promise us." "With all my heart," replied the Vizier "Know, O august King, that I have heard tell a story of a lover and a loved one and of the discourse between them and of the rare and pleasant things that befell them, a story such as does away care from the heart and dispels sorrow like unto that of the patriarch Jacob: and it is as follows:



Story of Taj El Mulouk and the Princess Dunya.

THERE stood once, behind the mountains of Ispahan, a town called the Green City, in which dwelt a king named Suleiman Shah, a man of virtue and beneficence, just, generous and loyal, to whom travellers resorted from all parts, for his renown was noised abroad in all cities and countries; and he reigned over the country for many years, in all honour and prosperity, save that he had neither wife nor child. Now he had a vizier who was akin to him in goodness and generosity, and one day, he sent for him and said to him, 'O my Vizier, my heart is heavy and my patience at end and my strength fails me, for that I have neither wife nor child. This is not of the fashion of kings that rule over all, princes and beggars; for they rejoice in leaving behind them children, who shall succeed them and by whom both their number and strength are multiplied. Quoth the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), "Marry and engender and multiply, that I may boast myself of you over the peoples on the Day of Resurrection." So what is thy counsel, O Vizier? Advise me what is fitting to be done.' When the Vizier heard this, the tears streamed from his eyes and he replied, 'God forbid, O king of the age, that I should speak on that which is of the pertinence of the Compassionate One! Wilt thou have me cast into the fire by the wrath of the All-powerful King? Buy a concubine.' 'Know, O Vizier,' rejoined the King, 'that when a prince buys a female slave, he knows neither her condition nor her lineage and thus cannot tell if she be of mean extraction, that he may abstain from her, or of gentle blood, that he may be intimate with her. So if he have commerce with her, belike she will conceive by him and her son be a hypocrite, a tyrant and a shedder of blood. Indeed such a woman may be likened to a salt soil, which, if one till it, yields only worthless crops; for it may be the son in question will be obnoxious to the wrath of his Lord, doing not that which He commandeth him neither abstaining from that which He forbiddeth him. Wherefore I will never risk being the cause of this, through the purchase of a concubine; and it is my will, therefore, that thou demand for me in marriage the daughter of some one of the kings, whose lineage is known and whose beauty is renowned. If thou canst direct me to some king's daughter of the Muslims, who is a woman of good birth and piety, I will seek her hand and marry her before witnesses, that the favour of the Lord of all creatures may accrue to me thereby.' 'O King,' said the Vizier, 'God hath fulfilled thy need and hath brought thee to thy desire; for it hath come to my knowledge that King Zehr Shah, Lord of the White Country, hath a daughter of surpassing beauty, whom report fails to describe; she hath not her equal in this age, being perfect in beauty and symmetry, with melting black eyes and long hair, slender-waisted and heavy-hipped. When she draws nigh, she seduces, and when she turns her back, she slays, ravishing heart and sight, even as says of her the poet:

A slender one, her shape confounds the branch of the cassia tree;
Nor sun nor moon can with her face for brightness evened be.
Meseems, the water of her mouth is honey blent with wine;
Ay, and her teeth are finer pearls than any in the sea.
The purest white and deepest black meet in her glittering glance

And shapelier than the black-eyed maids of Paradise is she.
How many a man her eyes have slain, who perished in despair;
The love of her's a way wherein are fear and misery.
If I would live, behold, she's death! I may not think of her,
Lest I should die; for, lacking her, life's nothing worth to me.

So it is my counsel, O King, that thou despatch to her father a sagacious and experienced ambassador, versed in the conduct of affairs, who shall with courteous and persuasive speech demand her in marriage for thee; for she hath not her equal in the world, far or near. So shalt thou enjoy her beauty in the way of right and the Lord of Glory be content with thee; for it is reported of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) that he said, "There is no monkery in Islam." At this the King was transported to the perfection of delight; his heart was lightened and his breast dilated and care and anxiety ceased from him; and he said to the Vizier, 'None shall go about this business but thou, by reason of thy consummate wit and good breeding; wherefore do thou make ready by the morrow and depart and demand me this girl in marriage, with whom thou hast made my heart to be engrossed; nor do thou return to me but with her.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the Vizier, and withdrawing to his own house, made ready a present such as befits kings, of jewels and other precious things, light of carriage but heavy of worth, besides Arabian horses and coats of mail, fine-wrought as those which David made, and chests of treasure, such as speech &fails to describe. These all he loaded upon camels and mules and set out, with flags and banners flying before him and attended by a hundred white slaves and the like number of black and a hundred slave-girls. The King charged him to return to him speedily; so he set out, leaving Suleiman Shah on coals of fire, engrossed night and day with desire for the princess, and fared on, without ceasing, night and day, across plains and deserts, till there remained but a day's journey between him and the city to which he was bound. Here he halted on the banks of a river, and calling one of his chief officers, bade him hasten forward to King Zehr Shah and announce his approach. Accordingly, the messenger rode on in haste to the city and was about to enter it, when the King, who chanced to be seated in one of his pleasaunces before the gate, espied him and knowing him for a stranger, bade bring him before him. So when the messenger came into his presence, he informed him of the approach of the Vizier of the mighty King Suleiman Shah, Lord of the Green Country and of the mountains of Ispahan; whereat King Zehr Shah rejoiced and bade him welcome. Then he carried him to his palace and said to him, 'Where didst thou leave the Vizier?' 'I left him,' replied the messenger, 'at the first of the day, on the banks of such a river, and he will be with thee to-morrow, may God continue His favours to thee and have mercy upon thy parents!' Whereupon the King commanded one of his Viziers to take the better part of his nobles and chamberlains and officers and grandees and go out to meet the ambassador, in honour of King Suleiman Shah, for that his dominion extended over the country.

Meanwhile, King Suleiman's Vizier abode in his stead, till the night was half spent, when he set out for the city; but hardly had the day appeared and the sun risen upon the hills and plains, when he saw King Zehr Shah's Vizier approaching with his retinue and the two parties joined company at some parasangs' distance from the city. At this the Vizier made sure of the success of his errand and saluted the new-comers,

who escorted him to the King's palace and forewent him to the seventh vestibule, where none might enter on horseback, for it was near the presence chamber of the King. So the Vizier alighted and walked on till he came to a lofty hall, at the upper end whereof stood a couch of alabaster, set with pearls end jewels and having four elephants' tusks for feet. It was covered with a mattress of green satin, embroidered with red gold, and surmounted by a canopy adorned with pearls and jewels, and on it sat King Zehr Shah, whilst his officers of state stood in attendance on him. When the Vizier stood before him, he composed himself and loosing his tongue, displayed such skill of speech as befits viziers and saluted the King in eloquent and complimentary language, reciting the following verses in his honour:

He cometh, bending gracefully in his robes and shedding dew
Of bounty over the thirsting land and the folk to him that sue.
Indeed, he charmeth; nor amulets nor spells nor magic may
Avail to ward off the faithful glance of those his eyes from you.
Say to the censurers, "Blame me not: whilst life abide in me,
I'll never swerve from the love of him nor turn to love anew."
Lo, slumber surely is tired of me and fallen in love with him,
And even my heart hath played me false and but to him is true!
O heart, thou art not the only one that loves and tenders him,
So get thee gone and bide with him and leave me here to rue!
Except the praise of the King Zehr Shah it be that folk acclaim,
There's nought rejoices mine ears, in sooth, to hearken thereunto.
A King, the sight of whose glorious face would well thy pains repay;
Though thou shouldst lavish thy heart's best blood, so great a grace to woo.
If thou be minded to offer up a pious prayer for him,
Thou'lt find but true believer, and sharers the whole world through.
O folk of this realm, if any forswear his governance
And look for another, I hold him none of the faithful few.

When the Vizier had made an end of his speech, the King bade him draw near and showed him the utmost honour then seating him by his own side, he smiled in his face and made him a gracious reply. They conversed till the time of the morning-meal, when the attendants brought in the tables of food and they all ate till they were satisfied, after which the tables were removed and all who were present withdrew, with the exception of the chief officers; which when the Vizier saw, he rose to his feet, and after complimenting the King a second time and kissing the earth before him, spoke as follows: 'O mighty king and august prince, I have travelled hither and am come to thee upon an errand, wherein is profit and good and prosperity for thee; and it is that I come as ambassador to thee, seeking the hand of thy noble and illustrious daughter, from the most just, loyal and excellent King Suleiman Shah, Lord of the Green Country and of the mountains of Ispahan, who sends thee many and rare presents and gifts of price, ardently desiring thine alliance. Art thou, then, minded to him as he to thee?' And he was silent, awaiting a reply. When the King heard his words he sprang to his feet and kissed the earth respectfully before the Vizier, to the amazement of the bystanders, whose minds were confounded at his condescension to the ambassador. Then he praised Him who is the Lord of glory and honour and replied, still standing,

'O mighty Vizier and illustrious lord, hear what I say. Verily we are of the subjects of King Suleiman Shah and are ennobled by his alliance and aspire ardently thereto. My daughter is one of his handmaids, and it is my dearest wish that he may become my stay and my support in time of need.' Then he summoned the Cadis and the witnesses, who took act that King Suleiman had deputed his Vizier his proxy to conclude the marriage, and King Zehr Shah joyfully consented on behalf of his daughter. So the Cadis drew up the marriage contract and offered up prayers for the happiness and prosperity of the contracting parties; after which the Vizier arose and fetching the gifts and rarities and precious things that he had brought with him, laid them all before the King, who betook himself to the equipment of his daughter, honourably entreating the Vizier and feasting great and small; and they held high festival for two months, omitting nought that could gladden heart and eye. When all was ready that was needful for the bride, the King caused the tents to be pitched without the city and they packed the bride's clothes and jewels in chests and loaded them on mules and camels. Now he had provided his daughter with Greek handmaids and Turkish slave-girls and great store of jewels and precious things, and had let make for her a litter of red gold inlaid with pearls and jewels, which within was as one of the chambers of a palace and without as one of the pavilions of Paradise, whilst its mistress seemed as she were of the lovely hours. Moreover, he furnished her also with twenty mules for the journey and brought her three parasangs forward on her road, after which he bade her and the Vizier farewell and returned to his own city in peace and gladness. Meanwhile, the Vizier and his company fared on by forced marches, traversing plains and deserts and staying not day or night, till they came within three days' journey of King Suleiman's capital, when the Vizier despatched a messenger to acquaint the King with their arrival. The messenger hastened forward till he reached the King's presence and announced to him the coming of the bride, whereat he rejoiced and bestowed on him a dress of honour. Then he bade his troops don their richest apparel and sally forth in grand procession, with banners flying, to meet the princess and her company and do them honour, and let cry throughout the city that neither cloistered damsel nor honoured lady nor infirm old woman should fail to go forth to meet the bride. So they all went out to meet her and the chiefest of them vied in doing her service, meaning to bring her to the King's palace by night. Moreover, the grandees agreed to decorate the road and stand on either side, whilst the bride should pass by, clad in the robes her father had given her and preceded by her eunuchs and serving-women. So at the appointed time, she made her appearance, surrounded by the troops, these on her right hand and those on her left, and the litter ceased not going with her, till they drew near the palace; nor was there any one but came forth to gaze upon the show. The drums beat and the lances were brandished, the trumpets blared and the banners fluttered and the horses pranced, whilst fragrant odours breathed around, till they reached the gate of the palace and the pages entered with the litter through the private gate. The place shone with its splendours and the walls glittered for the lustre of its ornaments. When the night came, the eunuchs threw open the doors of the bride-chamber and stood on either hand; whereupon the bride entered, among her damsels, like the moon among stars or a pearl of matchless beauty in a string of lesser pearls, and seated herself upon a couch of alabaster inlaid with pearls and jewels, that had been set for her there. Then came the King in to her and God filled his heart with love of her; so he did away her

maidenhead, and his trouble and disquiet ceased from him. She conceived by him the first night, and he abode with her well-nigh a month, at the end of which time he went forth and seating himself on his throne of state, dispensed justice to his subjects, till the months of her pregnancy were accomplished. Towards daybreak on the last night of the ninth month, the queen was seized with the pangs of labour; so she sat down on the stool of delivery and God made the travail easy to her, so that she gave birth to a male child, on whom appeared the signs of happy fortune. When the King heard of this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and rewarded the bearer of the good tidings with much treasure. Then, of his gladness, he went in to the child and kissed him between the eyes, wondering at his brilliant beauty; for in him was the saying of the poet made truth:

God hath a lion given in him unto the forts of fame
And in the heaven of high estate hath set another star.
Lo, at his birth, the spears shake all and all the wild deer start
And all the chieftains of the folk and all the men of war!
So mount him not upon the breasts, for he shall surely deem
That horses' backs for such as he the softer sitting are;
And wean ye him from sucking milk, for he eftsoon shall find
The blood of foemen in the field the sweeter drink by far.

The midwives took the new-born child and cut the cord of his navel, after which they anointed his eyes with kohl and named him Taj el Mulouk Kharan. He was suckled at the breast of delight and reared in the lap of favouring fortune, and the days ran on and the years passed by, till he reached the age of seven. Then the King his father summoned the doctors and learned men and bade them teach his son writing and science and polite letters. This they did for some years, till he had learnt all that was needful, when the King took him out of the professors' hands and committed him to a master, who taught him horsemanship and the use of arms, till the boy attained the age of fourteen and became proficient in martial exercises. Moreover, he outshone all the people of his time for the excess of his beauty; so that, whenever he went abroad on any occasion, all who saw him were ravished with him and made verses in his honour, and even the virtuous were seduced by his brilliant loveliness. Quoth the poet of him:

A tender branch, that from the breeze hath ta'en its nourishment!
I clipped him and straightway became drunk with his sweetest scent;
Not drunken with the drunkenness of one who drinketh wine,
But with the honey of his mouth fulfilled of languishment.
All loveliness comprised is within his perfect form,
So that o'er all the hearts of men he reigns omnipotent.
By God, forgetfulness of him shall never cross my mind.
What while I wear the chains of life, nor even when they're rent!
Lo, if I live, in love of him I'll live; and, if
I die Of love-longing for him, I'll say, "O rare! O excellent!"

When he reached his eighteenth year, the tender down began to invade the table of his rosy cheeks, which were adorned by a black mole like a grain of ambergris, and

he captivated the minds and eyes of all who looked on him, even as says of him the poet in the following verses:

He is become the Khalif of beauty in Joseph's place;
The hearts of all lovers dread him, whenas they see his grace.
Pause thou with me and fasten thy gaze on him! thou'lt see
The sign of the Khalifate set in sable on his face.

And as says another:

Thine eyes have never looked upon a fairer sight,
Of all the things that are to see beneath the sky,
Than yonder mole of brown, that nestles on his face,
Midmost the rosy cheek, beneath the coal-black eye.

And a third:

I marvel at yon mole that serves the fire eternal,
Upon his cheek, yet is not burned, all Kafir though it be;
And eke I marvel that he's sent or God, with every glance
To work true miracles; and yet a sorcerer is he!
The many gall-bladders that burst for him it is that make
The shining fringes of his cheek so black and bright to see.

And yet a fourth:

I wonder to hear the folk ask of the water of life
And question in which of the lands its magical fountain flows
Whenas I see it well from the damask lips of a fawn,
Under his tender moustache and his cheek's perennial rose.
And eke 'tis a wonder of wonders that Moses, finding it there
Flowing, yet took no patience nor laid him down to repose.

When he came to man's estate, his beauty increased and he had many comrades and friends; and every one who drew near to him hoped that he would become Sultan after his father's death and that he himself might be one of his officers. He had a passion for hunting and would hardly leave the chase a single hour. His father would have restrained him, fearing for him the perils of the desert: and the wild beasts; but he paid no heed to him. One day, he bade his attendants take ten days' provender and setting out for the chase, rode on into the desert four days long, at the end of which time he came to a verdant champaign, full of wild beasts pasturing and trees laden with ripe fruit and springs welling forth. Then he said to his followers, 'Set up the nets in a wide circle and let our general rendezvous be at the mouth of the ring, in such a spot.' So they staked out a wide circle with the nets; and there gathered together a multitude of all kinds of wild beasts and gazelles, which cried out for fear of them and threw themselves in terror right in the face of the horses. Then they loosed the dogs and sakers and hunting lynxes on them and smote them with arrows in the vitals; so, by the time they came to the closed end of the ring of nets, they took a great number of the wild beasts, and the rest fled. Then the prince sat down by the water-side and letting spread the game before himself, apportioned it among his men, after he had set apart

the choicest thereof for his father King Suleiman and despatched it to him; and other part he divided among the officers of his court. He passed the night in that place, and when it was morning, there came up a caravan of merchants, with their slaves and servants, and halted by the water and the verdure. When Taj el Mulouk saw this, he said to one of his companions, 'Go, bring me news of yonder folk and ask them why they have halted here.' So the man went up to them and said, 'Tell me who ye are, and answer quickly.' 'We are merchants,' replied they, 'and have halted here to rest, for that the next station is distant and we have confidence in King Suleiman Shah and his son Taj el Mulouk, knowing that all who alight in their dominions are in peace and safety; and we have with us precious stuffs, that we have brought for the prince.' The messenger returned with this news to the prince, who said, I will not depart hence till I see what they have brought for me. Then he mounted and rode to the caravan, followed by his servants. The merchants rose to receive him and invoked on him the aid and favour of God, with continuance of glory and virtues; after which they pitched him a pavilion of red satin, emblazoned with pearls and jewels, in which they spread him a royal divan, upon a silken carpet embroidered at the upper end with emeralds. The prince seated himself on the divan, whilst his servants stood in attendance upon him, and bade the merchants bring out all that they had with them. Accordingly, they produced all their merchandise, and he viewed it and took of it what liked him, paying them the price. Then he remounted and was about to ride onward, when his eyes fell on a handsome young man, well dressed and elegantly made, with flower-white forehead and face brilliant as the moon, save that his beauty was wasted and that pallor had invaded his cheeks by reason of separation from those he loved: sighing and lamentation were grievous upon him and the tears streamed from his eyelids, as he repeated the following verses:

Absence is long and care and fear are heavy on my soul,
Whilst from mine eyes the tears, O friend, without cessation roll.
Alas, I left my heart behind upon the parting day,
And now sans heart, sans hope, abide all lonely in my dole.
Pause with me, O my friend, what while I take my leave of one
By whose sweet speech diseases all and sorrows are made whole.

Having said this, he wept awhile and fell down in a swoon, whilst Taj el Mulouk looked at him wonderingly then coming to himself, he stared fixedly before him, with distracted air, and repeated these other verses:

I rede thee beware of her glance, for, lo, 'tis a wizard, I ween!
None 'scapeth unscathed of the shafts of her eyes, that has gazed on their sheen.
For, trust me, black eyes, that are armed with the grace of a languorous look,
Are swifter and sharper to wound than scimitars, tempered and keen.
And let not thy mind be beguiled by the sweet and the soft of her words;
For the fever that springs from her speech o'ermasters the senses, demesne.
Soft-sided, were silk but to press on her skin, it would cause it to bleed,
So delicate-bodied she is and so nesh, as forsooth thou hast seen.
Right chary she is of the charms 'twixt her neck and her anklets that lie,
And what is the sweetest of scents to the fragrance that breathes from my queen!

Then he gave a sob and swooned away a second time. When Taj el Mulouk saw him thus, he was perplexed about his case and went up to him. So when he came to himself and saw the prince standing by him, he sprang to his feet and kissed the earth before him; and Taj el Mulouk said to him, 'Why didst thou not show us thy merchandise?' 'O my lord,' answered the young merchant, 'there is nought among my stock worthy of thine august highness.' 'It matters not,' said the prince, 'thou must show me what thou hast and acquaint me with thy case; for I see thee weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted. If thou hast been wronged, we will do away thine oppression, and if thou be in debt, we will discharge thy debt; for my heart aches for thee, since I first set eyes on thee.' Then he called for seats and they set him a chair of ebony and ivory, netted with gold and silk, and spread him a silken carpet. So he sat down on the chair and bidding the young merchant seat himself on the carpet, again commanded him to show him his merchandise. 'O my lord,' said he, 'do not name this to me; for I have nought worthy of thee.' 'I will have it so,' rejoined Taj el Mulouk and bade some of the servants fetch the goods. So they brought them in spite of the merchant; and when he saw this, the tears streamed from his eyes and he wept and sighed and lamented; sobs rose from his bosom and he repeated the following verses:

By the witching amorous sweetness and the blackness of thine eyes,
By the tender flexile softness in thy slender waist that lies,
By the graces and the languor of thy body and thy shape,
By the fount of wine and honey from thy coral lips that rise,
O my hope, to see thine image in my dreams were sweeter far
Than were safety to the fearful, languishing in woful wise!

Then he opened his bales and displayed their contents to Taj el Mulouk, piece by piece, till he came to a mantle of satin brocaded with gold, worth two thousand dinars from which, when he opened it, there fell a piece of linen. As soon as he saw this, he caught up the piece of linen in haste and hid it under his thigh; and indeed he seemed as though he had lost his reason, and he repeated the following verses:

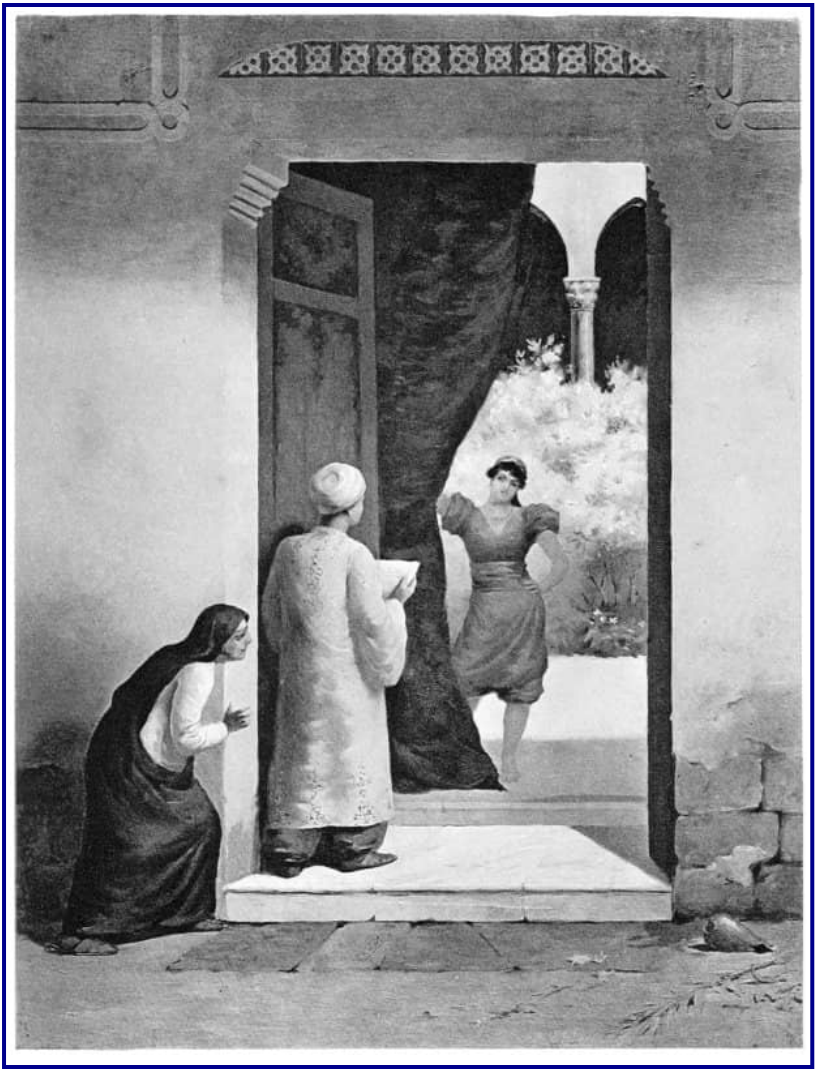
When shall my sad tormented heart be healed, alas, of thee?
The Pleiades were nearer far than is thy grace to me.
Distance estrangement, longing pain and fire of love laid waste,
Procrastination and delay, in these my life doth flee.
For no attainment bids me live nor exile slays me quite,
Travel no nigher doth me bring, nor wilt thou nearer be.
There is no justice to be had of thee nor any truth
In thee; no winning to thy grace and yet no breaking free.
Alack, for love of thee, the ways are straitened all on me;
So that I know not where I go nor any issue see!

The prince wondered greatly at his behaviour, and said to him, 'What is that piece of linen?' 'O my lord,' replied the merchant, 'thou hast no concern with it.' 'Show it me,' said the prince; and the merchant answered, 'O my lord, it was on account of this piece of linen that I refused to show thee my goods; for I cannot let thee look on it.' But Taj el Mulouk rejoined, 'I must and will see it;' and insisted and became angry. So

he drew it out from under his thigh, weeping and lamenting and redoubling his sighs and groans, and repeated the following verses:

Blame ye the lover not, for blame but irketh him to hear;
Indeed, I spoke him truth, but he to me would lend no ear.
God have her in His care, my moon that rises far away,
Down in the valley, midst the camp, from out the collars' sphere!
I left her; would to God my love had left me peace of life!
So had I never parted been from her that held me dear.
O how she pleaded for my sake upon our parting day,
What while adown her cheeks and mine tear followed upon tear!
May God belie me not! The wede of my excuse from me
Was all to rent for loss of her; but I will mend my cheer.
No bed is easy to my side, nor is her resting-place
Ayemore reposeful unto her, now I'm no longer near.
For Fate with an ill-omened hand hath wrought upon our loves
And hindered me from my delight and her from hers, yfere.
Indeed, what time it filled the cup, whereof she drank what I
E'en made her drink, it poured us out grief, all unmixed and sheer.

Quoth Taj el Mulouk, 'Thy conduct perplexes me; tell me why thou weepest at the sight of this piece of linen.' When the young merchant heard speak of the piece of linen, he sighed and answered, 'O my lord, my story is a strange and eventful one, with regard to this piece of linen and her from whom I had it and her who wrought the figures and emblems that be thereon.' So saying, he unfolded the piece of linen, and behold, thereon were the figures of two gazelles, facing one another, one wrought in silk and gold and the other in silver with a ring of red gold and three bugles of chrysolite about its neck. When Taj el Mulouk saw the figures and the beauty of their fashion, he exclaimed, 'Glory be to God who teacheth man that which he knoweth not!' And his heart was filled with longing to hear the merchant's story; so he said to him, 'Tell me thy story with her who gave thee these gazelles.' 'Know, O my lord,' replied the young man, 'that



Story of Aziz and Azizeh.

MY father was one of the chief merchants (of my native town) and God had vouchsafed him no other child than myself; but I had a cousin, the daughter of my father's brother, who was brought up with me in our house; for her father was dead and before his death, he had agreed with my father that I should marry her. So when I reached man's estate and she became a woman, they did not separate us, and we ceased not to sleep on the same couch, knowing no evil, albeit she was more thoughtful, more intelligent and quicker-witted than I, till at last, my father spoke to my mother and said, "This very year we will draw up the contract of marriage between Aziz and Azizeh." So they agreed upon this, and he betook himself to preparing victual for the marriage festivities. When he had made an end of his preparations and there remained nought but to draw up the contract and consummate the marriage, he appointed the wedding for a certain Friday, after the congregational prayers, and going round to his friends among the merchants and others, acquainted them with this, whilst my mother invited her female friends and kindred. When the day came, they cleaned the guest-chamber and washed the marble floor, then spread carpets about the house and set out thereon what was needful, after they had hung the walls with cloth of gold. Now the folk had agreed to come to our house after the Friday-prayers; so my father went and let make cates and dishes of sweetmeats, and there remained nothing to do but to draw up the contract. Then my mother sent me to the bath and sent after me a suit of new clothes of the richest kind which I put on, when I came out. The clothes were perfumed, and as I went along, there exhaled from them a delicious fragrance, that scented the way. I was about to repair to the mosque, when I bethought me of one of my friends and was minded to go in quest of him that he might be present at the drawing up of the contract, saying in myself, "This will occupy me till near the time of prayer." So I turned back and came to a by-street, that I had never before entered. Now I was in a profuse perspiration, from the effects of the bath and the new clothes on my body, and the sweat streamed from me, whilst the perfume of my clothes was wafted abroad: so I sat down to rest on a stone bench at the upper end of the street, spreading under me an embroidered handkerchief I had with me. The heat redoubled on me, so that my forehead sweated and the drops ran down on to my cheeks; but I could not wipe my face with my handkerchief, because I lay upon it. So I was about to take the skirt of my gaberdine and wipe my cheeks with it, when suddenly there fell on me from above a white handkerchief, softer to the feel than the zephyr and pleasanter to the sight than recovery to the sick. I seized on it and looking up to see whence it came, my eyes met those of the lady who gave me these gazelles. She was looking out of a wicket in a lattice of brass and never saw my eyes a fairer than she; my tongue fails to picture her beauty. When she saw me looking at her, she put her forefinger to her mouth, then joined her middle and index fingers and laid them on her bosom, between her breasts; after which she drew in her head and shut the wicket. With this, fire broke out and raged in my heart; the glance I had of her cost me a thousand sighs and I abode perplexed, having heard no word from her and understanding not the meaning of her signs. I looked again at the window, but found it shut and waited till sundown but heard no sound and saw no one. When I despaired of

seeing her again, I rose and taking up the handkerchief, opened it, whereupon there exhaled from it a scent of musk, which caused me such ease that meseemed I was in Paradise. Then I spread it out before me and there dropped from it a little scroll of paper. I opened the scroll, which was scented with a delicious perfume, and found written therein the following verses:

I sent my love a scroll, complaining of desire
Writ in a fine, small hand; for writings vary still.
"Why is thy writing thus," my lover said to me,
"Attenuate and small, uneath to read and ill?"
Quoth I, "Because I too am wasted, ay, and thin.
Thus should their writing be, who weary at Love's will."

Then, casting my eyes on the beauty of the handkerchief, I saw embroidered on one of its borders the following verses:

The down of his whiskers writes (good luck to it for A scribe!)
Two lines, in the basil hand, on the table of his face.
O the wilderment of the moon at him, when he appears!
And O the shame of the branch at sight of his flexile grace!

And on the opposite border were the following verses:

The whiskers write upon his cheeks, with ambergris on pearl,
Two lines, as 'twere with jet upon an apple, line for line.
Death harbours in his languid eyes and slays with every glance;
And in his cheeks is drunkenness, and not in any wine.

When I read what was written on the handkerchief, the flames of love raged in my heart, and longing and trouble redoubled on me. So I took the handkerchief and the scroll and went home, knowing no means to compass my desire, for that I was inexperienced in love affairs and unskilled in the interpretation of the language of signs used therein. The night was far spent before I reached my house, and when I entered, I found my cousin sitting weeping. As soon as she saw me, she wiped away her tears and coming up to me, took off my (outer) clothes and asked me the reason of my absence, saying, "All the folk, amirs and notables and merchants and others, assembled here, and the Cadi and the witnesses came also at the appointed time. They ate and sat awhile, awaiting thy coming for the drawing up of the contract, till they despaired of thee, when they dispersed and went their ways. And indeed," added she, "thy father was exceeding wroth, by reason of this, and swore that he would not celebrate our marriage till next year, for that he hath spent much money on this occasion. What hath befallen thee to make thee tarry till now?" "O my cousin," replied I, "do not ask me what hath befallen me." Then I told her all that had passed and showed her the handkerchief and the scroll. She took them and read what was written therein; whereupon the tears ran down her cheeks and she repeated the following verses:

Who says to thee, the first of love is free,
Tell him, not so; but, on the contrary,
'Tis all constraint, wherein no blame can be.
History indeed attests this verity;

It does not style the good coin falsified.
Say, if thou wilt, the taste of pain is sweet,
Or to be spurned by Fortune's flying feet;
Of need or vengeance, fortune or defeat,
With joy or dole it makes the heart to beat:
'Twixt phrase and counterphrase I'm stupefied.
But as for him whose happy days are light,
Fair maids, whose lips with smiles are ever bright,
Borne on the fragrant gales of their delight,
Who hath his will, unhindered of despite,
'Tis not with him A craven heart may bide.

Then she asked me what she said and what signs she made to me. "She spoke not," answered I; "but put her index finger to her mouth, then joining it to her middle finger, laid them both on her bosom and pointed in the ground, after which she drew in her head and shut the wicket and I saw her no more. She took my heart with her and I sat till sundown, expecting her to appear again at the window; but she came not: so, when I despaired of her, I rose and went home. This is my story, and I beg thee to help me in this my affliction." With this, she raised her face to me and said, "O my cousin, if thou soughtest my eye, I would tear it from its socket for thee, and I cannot choose but help thee to thy desire and her also to hers; for she is passionately enamoured of thee, even as thou of her." "And what is the meaning of her signs?" asked I. "As for the putting her finger to her mouth," replied Azizeh, "it meant that thou art to her as her soul to her body and that she would bite upon union with thee with her wisdom-teeth. The handkerchief is the token of greeting from lover to beloved and the scroll is a sign that her heart is bound up in thee. As for the laying her two fingers between her breasts, it is as if she said to thee, 'Return hither after two days, that the sight of thy countenance may dispel my anguish.' For know, O my cousin, that she loves thee and trusts in thee. This is my reading of her signs, and could I come and go at will, I would quickly bring you and her together and cover you both with my skirt." I thanked her and said to myself, "I will wait two days." So I abode two days in the house, without going out, and ate not nor drank, but lay with my head in my cousin's lap, whilst she comforted me and bade me take heart and be of good cheer. When the two days were past, she said to me, "Take courage and dress thyself and go to her, according to the tryst." Then she rose and changed my clothes and perfumed me with incense. So I took heart and went out and walked on till I came to the by-street, where I sat down on the bench. After awhile, the wicket opened and I looked up and seeing the lady, fell down in a swoon. When I revived, I took courage to look again at her and again became insensible. Then I came to myself and looking at her, saw that she had a mirror and a red handkerchief in her hand. When she saw me, she bared her forearms and smote her breast with her palm and five fingers; after which she raised her hands and holding the mirror forth of the wicket, took the red handkerchief and retired with it, but immediately returned and putting out her hand with the handkerchief, lowered it towards the ground and raised it again three several times. Then she wrung it out and folded it in her hands, bowing her head the while; after which she drew in her head and shutting the window, went away, without saying a word, leaving me confounded

and knowing not what she meant. I sat there till the evening and did not return home till near midnight, when I found my cousin sitting, weeping bitterly and repeating the following verses:

Ah me, what ails the censurer, that he at thee should flite?
How shall I be consoled for thee, and thou a sapling slight?
O thou, the splendour of whose sight has ta'en my heart by storm,
Whose supple bending grace compels to passion's utmost height,
Whose eyes, with Turkish languor caught, work havoc in the breast
And leave such wounds as ne'er were made by falchion in the fight!
Thou layst on me a heavy load of passion and desire,
On me that am too weak to bear a shift upon me dight.
Ay, tears of blood I weep, for that my censors say to me,
"A sudden sword, from out his lids thou lovest, shall thee smite."
Ah, would my heart were like to thine, even as my body is
Like to thy waist, all thin and frail and dwindled for despite!
Thou, that my prince in beauty art, a steward hast, whose rule
Aggrieves me and a chamberlain that doth me foul upright.
He lies who says, "All loveliness in Joseph was comprised."
How many Josephs are there not within thy beauty bright!
I force myself to turn from thee, for fear of spying eyes,
Though sore it irks me to forswear the solace of thy sight.

At this, trouble and grief redoubled on me and I fell down in a corner; whereupon she sprang up and coming to me, lifted me up and took off my outer clothes and wiped my face with her sleeve. Then she asked me how I had fared, and I told her all that had happened. "O my cousin," said she, "as for her sign to thee with her palm and five fingers, it meant, 'Return after five days;' and her gestures with the mirror and the putting forth of her head and the lowering and raising of the red handkerchief meant, 'Sit in the dyer's shop, till my messenger come to thee.'" When I heard this, fire flamed up in my heart and I exclaimed, "O my cousin, by Allah, thou sayst sooth in this thine interpretation; for I saw the shop of a Jewish dyer in the street." Then I wept, and she said, "O my cousin, summon up resolution and be steadfast of heart: others are occupied with love for years and are constant to endure the ardour of passion, whilst thou hast but a week to wait; so why art thou thus impatient?" Then she went on to cheer me with comfortable talk and brought me food: so I took a mouthful, but could not eat and abstained from meat and drink and knew not the solace of sleep, till my colour paled and I lost my good looks; for I had never before been in love nor tasted the ardour of passion. So I fell sick and my cousin also sickened on my account; but every night she would divert me with stories of love and lovers, till I fell asleep; and whenever I awoke, I used to find her wakeful for my sake, with the tears running down her cheeks. Thus we did till the five days were past, when she rose and heating water, bathed me with it. Then she dressed me and said to me, "Go to her and may God fulfil your wish and bring thee to thy desire of thy beloved!" So I went out and walked on, till I came to the by-street. I found the dyer's shop shut, for it was Saturday, and sat before it, till I heard the call to afternoon-prayer. Then the sun turned pale, the Muezzins chanted the call to the prayer of sunset and the night came; but I saw no sign

nor heard aught of her. With this, I feared for myself, sitting there alone; so I rose and went home, staggering like a drunken man. When I reached the house, I found my cousin Azizeh standing, with one hand grasping a peg driven into the wall and the other on her breast; and she was sighing heavily and repeating the following verses:

The longing of a Bedouin maid, whose folk are far away,
Who yearns after the willow of the Hejaz and the hay,
Whose tears, when she on travellers lights, might for their water serve
And eke her passion, with its heat, their bivouac-fire purvey,
Is not more fierce nor ardent than my longing for my love,
Who deems that I commit a crime in loving him alway.

When she had finished, she turned and seeing me, wiped away her tears and mine with her sleeve. Then she smiled in my face and said, "O my cousin, God grant thee joy of that which He hath given thee! Why didst thou not pass the night with thy beloved and why hast thou not fulfilled thy desire of her?" When I heard what she said, I gave her a kick in the breast and she fell over on to the edge of the estrade and struck her forehead against a peg there. I looked at her and saw that her forehead was cut open and the blood running; but she was silent and did not utter a syllable. She made some tinder of rags and staunching the wound with it, bound her forehead with a bandage; after which she wiped up the blood that had fallen on the carpet, and it was as if nothing had happened. Then she came up to me and smiling in my face, said, with gentle speech, "By Allah, O my cousin, I had it not in my thought to mock at thee or at her! I was troubled with a pain in my head and thought to be let blood, but now thou hast eased my head and brow; so tell me what has befallen thee to-day." So I told her what had passed and she wept and said, "O my cousin, rejoice in the near fulfilment of thy desire and the attainment of thy hopes. Verily, this is a sign of acceptance; she only stayed away, because she wished to try thee and know if thou wert patient and sincere in thy love for her or not. To-morrow, do thou go to her at the old place and note what signs she makes to thee; for indeed thy gladness is near and the end of thy grief is at hand." And she went on to comfort me; but my trouble and affliction ceased not to increase on me. Presently, she brought me food, but I kicked the dishes away, so that their contents were scattered in all directions, and said, "Every lover is a madman; he inclines not to food neither enjoys sleep." "By Allah, O my cousin," answered she, "these are indeed the signs of love!" And the tears streamed down her cheeks, whilst she gathered the fragments of the dishes and wiped up the food; then she sat down by me and talked to me, whilst I prayed God to hasten the coming of the day. When, at last, the morning arose with its light and shone, I went out and hastening to the by-street in question, sat down on the bench, when behold, the wicket opened and she put out her head, laughing. Then she went in and returned with a mirror, a bag, a pot of flowering plants and a lamp. First, she took the mirror and putting it into the bag, tied it up and threw it back into the room; after which she let down her hair over her face and set the lamp an instant on the pot of flowers; then took up all the things and shutting the window, went away, without saying a word. My heart was tortured by her obscure signs and mysterious gestures, and passion and distraction redoubled on me. So I retraced my steps, tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, and returning home, found Azizeh sitting, with her face to the wall; for her

heart was on fire for grief and anxiety and jealousy; albeit the love she bore me forbade her to acquaint me with what she suffered, by reason of what she saw of the excess of my passion and distraction (for another). I looked at her and saw that she had two bandages on her head, one on account of the wound on her forehead, and the other over her eye, which pained her for excess of weeping; and she was in very sorry plight, weeping and repeating the following verses:

I count the nights, night after night, the weary nights and slow;
Yet would I, once upon a time, unreckoned let them go.
I have no knowledge, O my friend, of that which God ordains Of
Leila or what He decrees to me, but this I know
He to another her adjudged and cursed me with her love: So hath
He not afflicted me with other than her woe.

When she had finished, she looked round and seeing me through her tears, wiped them away and came up to me, but could not speak for excess of emotion. So she was silent awhile, then said to me, "O my cousin, tell me what befell thee with her this time." So I told her all that had passed, and she said, "Be patient, for the time of thy delight is come, and thou hast won to the attainment of thy hopes. As for her sign with the mirror and the bag, it was as if she said to thee, 'When the sun is set;' and the letting down of her hair over her face signified, When the night is come and hath let fall the blackness of the dark and overmastered the daylight, come hither.' As for her gesture with the flower-pot and the lamp, it meant, 'When thou comest, enter the garden behind the street, and where as thou seest the lamp burning, go thither and seat thyself beneath it and wait for me; for the love of thee is killing me.'" When I heard this, I cried out for excess of passion and said, "How long wilt thou deceive me with promises and I go to her, but get not my will nor find any truth in thine interpreting?" At this, she laughed and replied, "Thou needest but have patience for the rest of the day, till the light depart and the night come with the darkness, and thou shalt enjoy fruition and accomplish thy hopes. And indeed this is true without leasing." And she repeated the following verses:

Let the days pass, as they list, and fare,
And enter thou not the house of despair.
Full oft when the quest of a thing is hard,
The next hour brings us the end of our care.

Then she came to me and began to comfort me with soothing words, but dared not offer me food, fearing my wrath and seeking to make me incline to her: so she only took off my upper garment and said to me, "Sit, O my cousin, that I may entertain thee with talk, till the end of the day; and God willing, thou shalt be with thy beloved as soon as it is night." But I paid no heed to her and gave not over looking for the coming of the night, saying, "O Lord, hasten the coming of the night!" till the hour of the evening-prayer, when she wept sore and giving me a grain of pure musk, said to me, "O my cousin, put this in thy mouth, and when thou foregatherest with thy beloved and hast taken thy will of her and she hath granted thee thy desire, repeat to her this verse:

Tell me, O lovers, for God's sake, I do entreat of you, When love is sore upon a maid, alack! what shall she do?"

And she kissed me and made me swear not to repeat this to my mistress, till I should be about to leave her. Then I went out and walked on till I came to the garden. I found the door open; so I entered, and seeing a light in the distance, made towards it and came to a great pavilion, vaulted over with a dome of ivory and ebony, from the midst of which hung the lamp. The floor was spread with silken carpets, embroidered in gold and silver, and under the lamp stood a great candle, burning in a stand of gold. Midmost the pavilion was a fountain, adorned with all manner of figures; and by it stood a table of food, covered with a silken napkin, and a great porcelain vase full of wine, with a goblet of crystal, sprayed with gold. Near these was a great covered dish of silver, which I uncovered and found therein fruits of all kinds, figs and pomegranates and grapes and oranges and citrons and shaddocks, together with all manner sweet-scented flowers, such as roses and jasmine and myrtle and eglantine and narcissus and all kinds of sweet-smelling herbs; but I saw there not a living soul, no, not even a slave, male or female, to guard these things. I was transported with delight at what I saw, and my grief and anxiety ceased from me. So I sat down to await the coming of the beloved of my heart: but the first hour of the night passed by, and the second and the third, and still she came not. Then I grew sore an hungred, for that it was long since I had tasted food by reason of the violence of my passion: but when I found the garden even as my cousin had told me and saw the truth of her interpretation of my mistress's signs, my mind was set at rest and I made sure of attaining my desire, so that nature resumed its sway and I felt the pangs of hunger. Moreover the odour of the viands on the table excited in me a longing to eat: so I went up to the table, and lifting the cover, found in the middle a porcelain dish, containing four fricasseed fowls, seasoned with spices, round which were four smaller dishes, one containing sweetmeats, another conserve of pomegranate-seeds, a third almond patties and a fourth honey fritters, and the contents of these dishes were part sweet and part acid. So I ate of the fritters and a piece of meat, then went on to the almond patties and ate what I would of them; after which I attacked the sweetmeats, of which I ate a spoonful or two or three or four, ending with part of a fowl and a mouthful of bread. With this my stomach became full and my limbs heavy and I grew drowsy; so I laid my head on a cushion, after having washed my hands, and sleep overcame me; and I knew not what happened to me after this nor did I awake till the sun's heat burnt me, for that I had not tasted sleep for days. When I awoke, I found myself lying on the naked marble, with a piece of salt and another of charcoal on my stomach; so I stood up and shook my clothes and turned right and left, but could see no one. At this I was perplexed and afflicted; the tears ran down my cheeks and I mourned grievously for myself. Then I returned home, and when I entered, I found my cousin beating her bosom and weeping like the rain-clouds, as she repeated the following verses:

From out my loved one's land a breeze blows cool and sweet:
The fragrance of its wafts stirs up the ancient heat.
Blow, zephyr of the East! Each lover hath his lot,
His heaven-appointed doom of fortune or defeat.
Lo, if we might, we would embrace thee for desire,

Even as a lover clips his mistress, when they meet.
Whenas my cousin's face is absent,
God forbids All pleasance[unto me] and all life has of sweet.
Ah, would I knew his heart was even as is mine,
All wasted and consumed by passion's flaming feet!

When she saw me, she rose in haste and wiping away her tears, accosted me with her soft speech, saying, "O my cousin, verily God hath been gracious to thee in thy love, in that she whom thou lovest loves thee, whilst I pass my time in weeping and lamenting my separation from thee that blamest and chidest me; but may God not reproach thee for my sake!" Then she smiled in my face, a sad smile, and caressed me; then taking off my outer clothes, she spread them out and said, "By Allah, this is not the scent of one who hath enjoyed his mistress! Tell me what has befallen thee, O my cousin." So I told her all that had passed, and she smiled again, a sad smile, and said, "Verily, my heart is full of pain; but may he not live who would hurt thy heart! Indeed, this woman makes herself extravagantly difficult to thee, and by Allah, I fear for thee from her. Know that the meaning of the salt is that thou wert drowned in sleep and she likens thee to insipid food, at which the soul sickens; and it is as if she said to thee, 'It behoves that thou be salted, lest nature reject thee. Thou professest to be of the true lovers, but sleep is forbidden to a lover; therefore, thy love is false.' But it is her love for thee that is false; for she saw thee asleep, yet awoke thee not, and were her love for thee sincere, she had aroused thee. As for the charcoal, it means, 'God blacken thy face, for that thou makest a lying presence of love, whereas thou art but a child and hast no concern but to eat and drink and sleep!' This is the interpretation of her signs, and may God the Most High deliver thee from her!" When I heard my cousin's words, I beat my breast with my hand and cried out, "By Allah, this is the truth, for I slept and lovers sleep not! Indeed, I have sinned against myself, for nought could have done me more hurt than eating and sleeping. What shall I do!" Then I wept sore and said to her, "Have compassion on me and tell me what to do, so may God have compassion on thee: else I shall die." Now my cousin loved me very dearly; so she replied, "On my head and eyes. But, O my cousin, as I have told thee often, could I go in and out at will, I would very soon bring you together and cover you both with my skirt: nor would I do this but hoping to win thy favour. God willing, I will do my utmost endeavour to bring about your union; but hearken thou to me and do as I bid thee. Go to the garden at nightfall and sit down in the same place and look thou eat not, for eating induces sleep; and beware of sleeping, for she will not come to thee, till a fourth part of the night be passed. And may God save thee from her mischief!" When I heard this, I rejoiced and besought God to hasten the night. As soon as it was dark, I rose to go, and my cousin said to me, "If thou foregather with her, repeat to her the verse I taught thee, at the time of leave-taking." "On my head and eyes," replied I, and going out, repaired to the garden, where I found all as on the previous night, with meat and drink spread ready, and dessert and flowers and so forth. I went up into the pavilion and smelt the odour of the viands and my soul lusted after them; but I forbore awhile, till at last I could no longer restrain my appetite. So I went up to the table, and raising the cover, found a dish of fowls, surrounded by four smaller dishes, containing various meats. I ate a mouthful of each dish and a piece of meat and as much as I would of the sweetmeat: then I tasted a dish of rice dressed with honey and saffron and liking it,

supped of it by the spoonful, till I was satisfied and my belly was full. With this, my eyelids became heavy; so I took a cushion and put it under my head, saying, "Surely I can recline upon it, without going to sleep." Then I closed my eyes and slept, nor did I wake till the sun had risen, when I found myself lying on the bare marble, with a die of bone, a play-stick, a green date-stone and a carob-bean on my stomach. There was no furniture nor aught else in the place, and it was as if there had been nothing there yesterday. So I rose and shaking all these things off me, went out in a rage, and going home, found my cousin sighing and repeating the following verses:

Wasted body and heart a-bleeding for despair
And tears that down my cheeks stream on and on for e'er,
And a beloved one persistent in disdain;
Yet all a fair one does must needs be right and fair.
O cousin mine, thou'st filled my heart with longing pain
And wounded are mine eyes with tears that never spare.

I chid her and reviled her, at which she wept; then wiping away her tears, she came up to me and kissed me and pressed me to her bosom, whilst I held back from her and blamed myself. Then she said to me, "O my cousin, meseems thou didst sleep again last night?" "Yes," replied I; "and when I awoke, I found on my stomach a die of bone, a play-stick, a green date-stone and a carob-bean, and I know not why she did this." Then I wept and said to her, "Expound to me her meaning in this and tell me what I shall do and help me in this my strait." "On my head and eyes," answered she. "Know then that, by the figure of the die and the play-stick, she says to thee, 'Thy body is present, but thy heart absent. Love is not thus: so do not reckon thyself among lovers.' As for the date-stone, it is as if she said to thee, 'If thou wert in love, thy heart would be on fire with passion and thou wouldst not taste the delight of sleep; for the sweet of love is like a green date and kindles a fire in the entrails.' As for the carob-bean, it signifies, 'The lover's heart is wearied; so be thou patient under our separation, even as Job was patient.'" When I heard this, fires raged in my entrails and grief redoubled upon my heart and I cried out, saying, "God ordained sleep to me, of my ill-fortune!" Then I said to her, "O my cousin, I conjure thee by my life, contrive me some device whereby I may win to her!" She wept and answered, "O Aziz, O my cousin, verily my heart is full of melancholy thought and I cannot speak: but go thou again to-night to the same place and look that thou sleep not, and thou shalt surely attain thy desire. This is my counsel and peace be on thee." "God willing," said I, "I will not sleep, but will do as thou biddest me." Then she rose and set food before me, saying, "Eat now what may suffice thee, that thy heart may be free." So I ate my fill, and when the night came, my cousin rose and bringing me a sumptuous suit of clothes, clad me therein. Then she made me promise to repeat the verse aforesaid to my mistress and bade me beware of sleeping. So I left her and repairing to the garden, went up into the pavilion, where I occupied myself with gazing on the garden, holding my eyes open with my fingers and wagging my head from side to side, as the night darkened on me. Presently I grew hungry with watching, and the smell of the meats, being wafted towards me, increased my hunger: so I went up to the table and taking off the cover, ate a piece of meat and a mouthful of every dish; after which I turned to the vessel of wine, saying in myself, "I will drink one cup." So I drank one cup and a second and a third, till I had

drunk full half a score, when the air smote me and I fell to the earth like a dead man. I lay thus till day, when I awoke and found myself without the garden, with a large sharp knife and an iron dirhem on my stomach. I arose trembling and taking the knife and the dirhem, went home where I found my cousin saying, "Verily, I am in this house wretched and sorrowful, having no helper but weeping." When I entered, I fell down at full length and fainted, throwing the knife and the dirhem from my hand. As soon as I came to myself, I told her what had passed and said, "Indeed, I shall never enjoy my desire." The sight of my tears and my passion redoubled her distress on my account, and she said, "Verily, I can no more. I warned thee against sleeping; but thou wouldst not listen to my counsel, and my words profited thee nothing." "By Allah," cried I, "I conjure thee to explain to me the meaning of the knife and the dirhem." "By the dirhem," replied she, "she alludes to her right eye, and it is as if she said to thee, 'I swear, by the Lord of all creatures and by my right eye, that, if thou come here again and sleep, I will slay thee with this knife!' And indeed, O my cousin, I fear for thee from her malice; my heart is full of anguish for thee and I cannot speak. Nevertheless, if thou canst be sure of thyself not to sleep, return to her and thou shalt attain thy desire; but if thou sleep, according to thy wont, she will surely slay thee." "O my cousin," said I, "what shall I do? I conjure thee, by Allah, to help me in this my affliction!" "On my head and eyes," replied she. "If thou wilt hearken to me and do as I say, thou shalt have thy will." Quoth I, "I will indeed hearken to thee and do thy bidding." And she said, "When it is time for thee to go, I will tell thee." Then she pressed me to her bosom and laying me on the bed, rubbed my feet, till drowsiness overcame me and I was drowned in sleep; when she took a fan and seating herself at my head, ceased not to fan my face till the end of the day. Then she awoke me, and I found her sitting at my head weeping, with the fan in her hand and her clothes wet with tears. When she saw that I was awake, she wiped away her tears and fetching food, set it before me. I refused it, but she said to me, "Didst thou not promise to do my bidding? Eat." So I ate and did not cross her, and she proceeded to put the food into my mouth and I to eat, till I was full. Then she made me drink sherbet of jujube-fruit and sugar and washed my hands and dried them with a napkin; after which she sprinkled me with rose-water, and I sat with her awhile, restored to health and spirits. When the night had closed in, she dressed me and said to me, "O my cousin, watch all night and sleep not; for she will not come to thee this time till the last of the night, and God willing, thou shalt foregather with her this night: but do not forget my charge." Then she wept, and my heart was sore for her by reason of her much weeping, and I said to her, "What is the charge thou gavest me?" "When thou art about to take leave of her," replied she, "repeat to her the verse I taught thee." So I left her, full of gladness, and repairing to the garden, entered the pavilion, where I sat down satiated with food, and watched till a fourth part of the night was past. The night was tedious to me as it were a year: but I remained awake, till it was three quarters spent and the cocks cried out and I became sore an hungred for long watching. So I went up to the table and ate my fill, whereupon my head grew heavy and I was on the point of falling asleep, when I espied a light making towards me from afar. So I sprang up and washed my hands and mouth and roused myself; and before long, up came the lady, accompanied by ten damsels, in whose midst she shone, like the full moon among the stars. She was clad in a dress of green satin, embroidered with red gold, and she was as says the poet:

She lords it over her lovers in garments all of green,
With open vest and collars and flowing hair beseen.
"What is thy name?" I asked her, and she replied,
"I'm she Who burns the hearts of lovers on coals of love and teen."
I made my moan unto her of passion and desire;
"Upon a rock," she answered, "thy plaints are wasted clean."
"Even if thy heart," I told her, "be rock in very deed,
Yet hath God made fair water well from the rock, I ween."

When she saw me, she laughed and said, "How is it that thou art awake and that sleep hath not overcome thee. Now that thou hast passed the night without sleep, I know that thou art in love, for it is the mark of a lover to watch the night for stress of longing." Then she signed to her women and they went away, whereupon she came up to me and strained me to her bosom and kissed me and sucked my upper lip, whilst I kissed her and sucked her lower lip. I put my hand to her waist and pressed it and we came to the ground at the same moment. Then she undid her trousers and they fell down to her anklets and we fell to clipping and toying and cricketing and speaking softly and biting and intertwining of legs and going round about the House and the corners thereof, till her senses failed her for delight and she swooned away. And indeed that night was heart-gladdening and eye-refreshing, even as says the poet:

The sweetest of all the nights that ever the world can show!
The cup in it stinted never from hand to hand to go.
Therein I did dissever mine eyes from sleep and made
The ear-drop and the anklet foregather evermo'.

We lay together till the morning, when I would have gone away, but she stopped me, saying, "Stay, till I tell thee somewhat and give thee a charge." So I waited, whilst she undid a handkerchief and taking out this piece of linen, spread it out before me. I saw worked on it these two figures of gazelles and admired it exceedingly; and she said to me, "Keep this carefully, for it is my sister's work." "What is thy sister's name?" asked I, and she answered, "Nour el Huda." Then I took the piece of linen and went away, joyful, after we had agreed that I should visit her every night in the garden; but in my joy I forgot to repeat to her the verse my cousin had taught me. When I reached home, I found Azizeh lying down; but, as soon as she saw me, she rose, with the tears running from her eyes, and coming up to me, kissed me on the breast and said, "Didst thou repeat the verse to her, as I enjoined thee?" "I forgot it," answered I; "and here is what made me forget it." And I threw the piece of linen down before her. She rose and sat down again, but was unable to contain herself and her eyes ran over with tears, whilst she repeated the following verses:

O thou that seekest severance, forbear;
Let not the fair delude thee with their sleight.
Softly, for fortune's nature is deceit
And parting is the end of love-delight.

Then she said, "O my cousin, give me this piece of linen." So I gave it to her, and she took it and unfolding it, saw what was therein. When the time came for my going

to my mistress, she said to me, "Go and peace be with thee; and when thou art about to leave her, repeat to her the verse I taught thee and which thou forgottest." Quoth I, "Repeat it to me." So she repeated it. Then I went to the garden and entered the pavilion, where I found the lady awaiting me. When she saw me, she rose and kissed me and made me sit in her lap; and we ate and drank and did our desire as on the previous night. In the morning, I repeated to her my cousin's verse:

Tell me, O lovers, for God's sake I do entreat of you,
When love is sore upon a maid, alack! what shall she do?

When she heard this, her eyes filled with tears and she answered with the following verse:

Against her passion she must strive and hide her case from view
And humble and submissive be, whatever may ensue.

This I committed to memory and returned home, rejoiced at having done my cousin's errand. When I entered the house, I found Azizeh lying on the bed and my mother at her head, weeping over her condition. When the latter saw me, she said to me, "Out on thee for a cousin! How couldst thou leave the daughter of thine uncle in ill case and not ask what ailed her?" Azizeh, seeing me, raised her head and sat up and said, "O Aziz, didst thou repeat the verse to her?" "Yes," replied I; "and she wept and recited, in answer, another verse, which I remember." "Tell it me," said Azizeh. I did so; and she wept and repeated the following verses:

How shall she temper her desire, It doth her fire undo,
And still with each recurring day her heart is cleft in two.
Indeed, she strives for patience fair, but findeth nought in her
Except a heart too weak to bear the love that makes her rue.

"When thou goest to thy mistress as of wont," added she, "repeat to her these verses also." "I hear and obey," answered I and betook myself, at the wonted time, to the garden, where there passed between my mistress and myself what the tongue fails to describe. As I was about to leave her, I repeated to her my cousin's verses; whereupon the tears streamed from her eyes and she replied:

If she her secret cannot hide and lack of patience due, I see no help for her but death, of all things old and new.

Then I returned home, where I found Azizeh fallen of a swoon and my mother sitting at her head. When she heard my voice, she opened her eyes and said, "O Aziz, didst thou repeat the verses to her?" "Yes," answered I; "and she replied with this verse." And I repeated it; whereupon my cousin swooned again, and when she came to herself, she recited the following verses:

"I hearken, I obey, I die; yet bear to one who slew
My hopes of union and delight, my greeting and adieu.
Fair fall the happy of their joy, alack! and fair befall
The wretched lover of the cup that's set her lips unto."

When it was night, I repaired, as of wont, to the garden, where I found my mistress awaiting me. We sat down and ate and drank, after which we did our need and

slept till the morning; and as I was going away, I repeated to her Azizeh's verses. When she heard them, she gave a loud cry and was greatly moved and exclaimed, "Alas! Alas! She who said these words is dead!" Then she wept and said to me, "Out on thee! What kin is she, who spoke thus, to thee?" "She is the daughter of my father's brother," replied I. "Thou liest," rejoined she. "By Allah, were she thy cousin, thou wouldst have loved her even as she loved thee! It is thou who hast killed her, and may God in like manner kill thee! By Allah, hadst thou told me thou hadst a cousin, I would not have admitted thee to my favours!" Quoth I, "Indeed, she is my cousin, and it was she who interpreted to me thy signs and taught me how to come at thee and how I should deal with thee; and but for her, I had never won to thee." "Did she then know of us?" asked she. "Yes," answered I; and she exclaimed, "God give thee sorrow of thy youth, even as thou hast wasted hers!" Then she said to me, "Go and see after her." So I went away, troubled at heart, and when I reached our street, I heard a sound of wailing, and asking about it, was answered, "We found Azizeh dead behind the door." I entered the house, and when my mother saw me, she said to me, "Her death lies at thy door, and may God not acquit thee of her blood! Out on thee for a cousin!" Then came my father, and we laid her out and did her the last offices and buried her. Moreover, we let make recitations of the Koran over her tomb and abode there three days, after which we returned home, grieving for her. When I entered the house, my mother came to me and said, "I would fain know what thou didst to her, to break her heart, for, O my son, I questioned her many times of the cause of her malady, but she would tell me nothing. So, God on thee, tell me what thou didst to her, that she died." Quoth I, "I did nothing." "May God avenge her on thee!" rejoined my mother. "She told me nothing, but kept her secret till she died, of her affection for thee. But when she died, I was with her, and she opened her eyes and said to me, 'O wife of my uncle, may God hold thy son guiltless of my blood and punish him not for that he hath done with me! And now He transporteth me from this transitory house of the world to the other and eternal dwelling-place.' 'O my daughter,' said I, 'God preserve thee and preserve thy youth!' And I questioned her of the cause of her illness; but she made me no answer. Then she smiled and said, 'O wife of my uncle, when my cousin is about to repair to the place whither he goes every day, bid him repeat these two words at his going away: "Faith is fair and perfidy foul." For this is of my tenderness over him, that I am solicitous for him in my lifetime and after my death.' Then she gave me somewhat for thee and made me swear that I would not give it to thee, till I should see thee weeping for her and lamenting her death. The thing is with me, and when I see thee as I have said, I will give it to thee." "Show it me," quoth I: but she would not. Then I gave myself up to my pleasures and thought no more of my cousin's death; for I was light-witted and would fain have been with my beloved day and night. So hardly had the night fallen, when I betook myself to the garden, where I found the lady sitting on coals of fire, for much waiting. As soon as she saw me, she ran to me and throwing her arms about my neck, enquired of my cousin. "She is dead," replied I; "and we have caused litanies and recitations of the Koran to be performed for her; and it is now four nights since she died." When she heard this, she shrieked aloud and wept, saying, "Did I not tell thee that thou hadst slain her? Hadst thou let me know of her before her death, I would have requited her the kindness she did me, in that she served me and brought thee to me; for but for her, we had never come together; and I fear lest some

calamity befall thee by reason of thy sin against her." Quoth I, "She acquitted me before she died." And I repeated to her what my mother had told me. "God on thee," rejoined she, "when thou returnest to thy mother, learn what it is she hath for thee." Quoth I, "My mother also said to me, 'Before thy cousin died, she laid a charge upon me, saying, "When thy son is about to go whither of wont, teach him these two words, 'Faith is fair and perfidy foul.'" When my mistress heard this, she exclaimed, "The mercy of God the Most High be upon her! Indeed, she hath delivered thee from me, for I had it in mind to do thee a mischief, but now I will not hurt thee nor trouble thee." I wondered at this and said to her, "What then didst thou purpose to do with me, and we lovers?" Quoth she, "Thou art infatuated with me; for thou art young and witless; thy heart is free from guile and thou knowest not our perfidy and malice. Were she yet alive, she would protect thee, for she is the cause of thy preservation and hath delivered thee from destruction. And now I charge thee that thou speak not with neither accost any of our sex, young or old, for thou art young and simple and knowest not the wiles of women and their malice, and she who explained the signs to thee is dead. And indeed I fear for thee, lest thou fall into some calamity and find none to deliver thee from it, now that thy cousin is dead. Alas, the pity of her! Would God I had known her before her death, that I might have visited her and requited her the fair service she did me! The mercy of the Most High be upon her, for she kept her secret and revealed not what she suffered, and but for her, thou hadst never won to me! But there is one thing I desire of thee." "What is it?" said I. "It is," answered she, "that thou bring me to her grave, that I may visit her in the tomb wherein she is and write some verses thereon." "To-morrow," replied I, "if it be the will of God." Then I lay with her that night, and she ceased not, from time to time, to say, "Would thou hadst told me of thy cousin, before her death!" And I said to her, "What is the meaning of the two words she taught me?" But she made me no answer. As soon as it was day, she rose and taking a purse of dinars, said to me, "Come, show me her tomb, that I may visit it and grave some verses thereon and build a dome over it and commend her to the mercy of God and bestow these dinars in alms for her soul." "I hear and obey," replied I and went on before her, whilst she followed me, giving alms by the way and saying to all to whom she gave, "This is an alms for the soul of Azizeh, who kept her counsel, till she drank the cup of death, and discovered not the secret of her passion." And she stinted not thus to give alms and say, "For Azizeh's soul," till the purse was empty and we came to the burial-place. When she saw the tomb, she wept and threw herself upon it; then pulling out a graver of steel and a light mallet, she graved the following verses, in fine characters, upon the stone at the head of the tomb:

I passed by a ruined tomb, in the midst of a garden-way,
Upon whose letterless stone seven blood-red anemones lay.
"Who sleeps in this unmarked grave?" I said; and the earth,
"Bend low; For a lover lies here and waits for the Resurrection Day."
"God help thee, O victim of love," I cried, "and bring thee to dwell
In the highest of all the heavens of Paradise, I pray!
How wretched are lovers all, even in the sepulchre,
When their very graves are covered with ruin and decay!

Lo, if I might, I would plant thee a garden round about
And with my streaming tears the thirst of its flowers allay!"

Then she returned to the garden, weeping, and I with her, and she said to me, "By Allah, thou shalt never leave me!" "I hear and obey," answered I. Then I devoted myself wholly to her and paid her frequent visits, and she was good and generous to me. As often as I passed the night with her, she would make much of me and ask me of the two words my cousin told my mother, and I would repeat them to her.

I abode thus a whole year, till, what with eating and drinking and dalliance and wearing change of rich raiment, I waxed stout and fat, so that I lost all thought of sorrow and anxiety and forgot my cousin Azizeh. At the end of this time, I went one day to the bath, where I refreshed myself and put on a rich suit of clothes, scented with various perfumes; then, coming out I drank a cup of wine and smelt the fragrance of my new clothes, whereupon my breast dilated, for I knew not the perfidy of fortune nor the calamities of events. When the hour of evening-prayer came, I thought to repair to my mistress; but being heated with wine, I knew not where I went, so that, on the way, my drunkenness turned me into a by-street called En Nekib, where, as I was going along, I met an old woman with a lighted flambeau in one hand and a folded letter in the other; and she was weeping and repeating the following verses:

O welcome, bearer of glad news, thrice welcome to my sight;
How sweet and solaceful to me thy tidings of delight!
Thou that the loved one's greeting bringst unto my longing soul,
God's peace, what while the zephyr blows, dwell with thee day and night!

When she saw me, she said to me, "O my son, canst thou read?" And I, of my officiousness, answered, "Yes, O old aunt." "Then, take this letter," rejoined she, "and read it to me." So I took the letter, and unfolding it, read it to her. Now it contained the greetings of an absent man to his friends; and when she heard its purport, she rejoiced and was glad and called down blessings on me, saying, "May God dispel thine anxiety, as thou hast dispelled mine!" Then she took the letter and walked on. Meanwhile, I was seized with a pressing need and squatted down on my heels to make water. When I had finished, I stood up and cleansed myself with pebbles, then shaking down my clothes, was about to go my way, when the old woman came up to me again and bending down to kiss my hand, said, "O my lord, God give thee joy of thy youth! I entreat thee to go with me to yonder door, for I told them what thou readest to me of the letter, and they believe me not: so come with me two steps and read them the letter from behind the door and accept my devout prayers." "What is the history of this letter?" asked I; and she answered, "O my son, it is from my son, who hath been absent from us these ten years. He set out with merchandise and tarried long in foreign parts, till we lost hope of him, supposing him to be dead. Now comes this letter from him, and he has a sister, who weeps for him day and night; so I said to her, 'He is in good health and case.' But she will not believe and says, 'Thou must needs bring me one who will read the letter in my presence, that my heart may be set at rest and my mind eased.' Thou knowest, O my son, that those who love are prone to imagine evil: so do me the favour to go with me and read the letter, standing without the door, whilst I call his sister to listen behind the curtain, so shalt thou dispel our anxiety and fulfil

our need. Quoth the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), 'He who eases an afflicted one of one of the troubles of this world, God will ease him of a hundred troubles;' and according to another tradition, 'Whoso relieves his brother of one of the troubles of this world, God will relieve him of two-and-seventy troubles of the Day of Resurrection.' And I have betaken myself to thee; so do not disappoint me." "I hear and obey," replied I. "Do thou go before me." So she went on and I followed her a little way, till she came to the gate of a large handsome house, whose door was plated with copper. I stood without the door, whilst the old woman cried out in Persian, and before I could think, a damsel ran up, with a nimble and agile step. She had tucked up her trousers to her knees, so that I saw a pair of legs that confounded mind and eye, for they were like columns of alabaster, adorned with anklets of gold, set with jewels. As says the poet, describing her:

O thou who barest thy leg for lovers to look upon,
That by the sight of the leg the rest they may infer,
Who passest the cup around midst thy gallants, brisk and free,
Nought seduces the folk but the cup and the cup-bearer.

She had seemingly been engaged in work of some kind, for she had tucked the end of her shift within the ribbon of her trousers and thrown the skirt of her robe over her arm. Her sleeves were rolled up to the elbows, so that I could see her white wrists and forearms, on which were two pairs of bracelets, with clasps of great pearls and round her neck was a collar of precious stones. Her ears were adorned with pendants of pearls and on her head she wore a kerchief of brocade, embroidered with jewels of price. When I saw her I was confounded at her beauty, for she was like the shining sun. Then she said, with clear and dulcet speech, never heard I sweeter, "O my mother, is this he who cometh to read the letter?" "It is," replied the old woman; and she put out her hand to me with the letter. Now she was standing about half a rod within the door; so I stretched out my hand and put my head and shoulders within the door, thinking to draw near her and read the letter, when behold, before I knew what she would be at, the old woman thrust her head into my back and pushed me forward, with the letter in my hand, so that before I could think, I found myself in the vestibule. Then she entered, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, and had but to shut the door. When the damsel saw me in the vestibule, she came up to me and straining me to her bosom, threw me to the floor, then knelt upon my breast and kneaded my belly with her hands, till I lost my senses. Then she took me by the hand and led me unable to resist, for the violence of her pressure, through seven vestibules, whilst the old woman went before us with the lighted candle, till we came to a great saloon, with four daises, in which a horseman might play at ball. Here she released me, saying, "Open thine eyes." So I opened them, still giddy for the excess of her pressing and pummelling, and saw that the whole place was built of the finest alabaster and hung and carpeted with stuffs of silk and brocade, with cushions and divans of the same. Therein also were two benches of brass and a couch of red gold set with pearls and jewels, befitting none save kings like unto thee. Then said she, "O Aziz, which wouldst thou rather, life or death?" "Life," answered I; and she said, "If life be liefer to thee, thou must marry me." Quoth I, "It were odious to me to marry the like of thee." "If thou marry me," rejoined she, "thou wilt at least be safe from the daughter of Delileh the crafty." "And who is she?"

asked I. She laughed and replied, "How comes it that thou knowest her not, seeing that to-day thou hast companied with her a year and four months, may God the Most High destroy her and afflict her with one worse than herself! By Allah, there lives not a more perfidious than she! How many hath she not slain before thee and what deeds hath she not done! Nor can I understand how thou hast been so long in her company, yet hath she not killed thee nor done thee any hurt." When I heard this, I marvelled exceedingly and said, "Who made thee to know of her, O my lady?" "I know of her," said she, "as the age knows of its calamities: but now I would fain have thee tell me all that has passed between you, that I may know the cause of thy deliverance from her." So I told her all that had happened, including the story of my cousin Azizeh. When she heard of the latter's death, her eyes ran over with tears and she smote hand upon hand and cried out, "God have mercy on her, for she lost her youth in His service, and may He replace her to thee! By Allah, O Aziz, it was she who was the cause of thy preservation from the daughter of Delileh and but for her, thou hadst been lost! Now she is dead and I fear for thee from the other's perfidy and mischief; but my heart is full and I cannot speak." "By Allah," quoth I, "all this happened, even as thou sayest!" And she shook her head and said, "There lives not this day the like of Azizeh." "And when she was dying," continued I, "she bade me repeat to my mistress these two words, 'Faith is fair and perfidy foul.'" When she heard this, she exclaimed, "By Allah, O Aziz, it was this that saved thee from dying by her hand: and now my heart is at ease for thee from her for she will never slay thee and thy cousin preserved thee, both in her lifetime and after her death. By Allah, I have desired thee this many a day, but could not get at thee till now and except by a trick, which succeeded with thee for thou art inexperienced and knowest not the malice of women nor the wiles of old women." "No, by Allah!" rejoined I. Then said she to me, "Be of good cheer and take comfort; the dead is in the mercy of God and the living shall be fairly entreated. Thou art a handsome youth, and I do not desire thee but according to the ordinance of God and of His prophet, on whom be peace and salvation! Whatever thou desirest of money and stuff, thou shalt have without stint, and I will not impose any toil on thee, for there is with me always bread baked and water in the pitcher. All I ask of thee is that thou do with me even as the cock does." "And what is it the cock does?" asked I. At this she laughed and clapped her hands and fell over on her back for excess of laughter: then she sat up and said, "O light of my eyes, dost thou not know what the cock's business is?" "No, by Allah!" replied I; and she said, "The cock's business is to eat and drink and tread." I was abashed at her words and said, "Is that the cock's business?" "Yes," answered she; "and all I ask of thee now is to gird thy loins and strengthen thy resolution and swive thy best." Then she clapped her hands and cried out, saying, "O my mother, bring hither those who are with thee." Whereupon in came the old woman, carrying a veil of silk and accompanied by four lawful witnesses, who saluted me and sat down. Then she lighted four candles, whilst the young lady covered herself with the veil and deputed one of the witnesses to execute the contract on her behalf. So they drew up the marriage contract and she acknowledged to have received the whole of her dowry, both precedent and contingent, and to be indebted to me in the sum of ten thousand dirhems. Then he gave the witnesses their fee and they withdrew whence they came; whereupon she put off her clothes and abode in a shift of fine silk, laced with gold, after which she took me by the hand and carried me up to the couch, saying, "There is

no blame in what is lawful." She lay down on her back and drawing me on to her breast, heaved a sigh and followed it up with an amorous gesture. Then she pulled up the shift above her breasts, and when I saw her thus, I could not choose but thrust into her, after I had sucked her lips, whilst she moaned and made a show of bashfulness and wept without tears. And indeed the case reminded me of the saying of the poet:

When I drew up her shift and discovered the terrace-roof of her kaze,
I found it as strait as my humour or eke my worldly ways.
So I drove it incontinent in, halfway; and she heaved a sigh.
"For what dost thou sigh?" quoth I. "For the rest of it, sure," she says.

Then said she, "O my beloved, to it and do thy best, for I am thine handmaid. My life on thee, give it me, all of it, that I may take it in my hand and thrust it into my entrails!" And she ceased not to excite me with sobs and sighs and amorous gestures, in the intervals of kissing and clipping, till we attained the supreme felicity and the term of our desires. We lay together till the morning, when I would have gone out; but she came up to me, laughing, and said, "Thinkest thou that going out of the bath is the same as going in? Verily, I believe thou deemest me to be the like of the daughter of Delileh. Beware of such a thought, for thou art my husband by contract and according to law. If thou be drunken, return to thy right mind and know that this house is opened but one day in every year. Go down and look at the great door." So I went down and found the door locked and nailed up and returned and told her so. "Know, O Aziz," said she, "that we have in this house flour and grain and fruits and pomegranates and sugar and meat and sheep and fowls and so forth, enough to serve us for many years; and henceforth, the door will not be opened till after the lapse of a whole year, nor shalt thou find thyself without till then." Quoth I, "There is no power and no virtue but in God!" "And what can this irk thee," rejoined she, "seeing thou knowest the cock's craft, of which I told thee?" Then she laughed and I laughed too, and I conformed to what she said and abode with her, plying the cock's craft, eating and drinking and cricketing, twelve whole months, during which time she conceived by me and brought me a son. At the end of the year, I heard the door opened and men came in with manchets and flour and sugar. Thereupon, I would have gone out, but my wife said, "Wait till nightfall and go out as thou camest in." So I waited till the hour of evening-prayer, and was about to go forth in fear and trembling, when she stopped me, saying, "By Allah, I will not let thee go, except thou swear to return this night before the closing of the door." I agreed to this, and she made me take a solemn oath by sword and Koran and the oath of divorce to boot that I would return to her. Then I left her and going straight to the garden, found the door open as usual; whereat I was angry and said to myself, "I have been absent a whole year and come here at unawares and find the place open as of wont! I wonder, is the damsel still in her old case? Algates I must enter and see, before I go to my mother, more by token that it is now nightfall." So I entered and making for the pavilion, found the daughter of Delileh sitting there with her head on her knee and her hand to her cheek. Her colour was changed and her eyes sunken; but when she saw me, she exclaimed, "Praised be God for thy safety!" and would have risen, but fell down for joy. I was abashed before her and hung my head; but presently went up to her, and kissing her, said, "How knewest thou that I should come to thee to-night?" "I knew it not," replied she. "By Allah, this whole year past I

have not tasted sleep, but have watched every night, expecting thee, from the day thou wentest out from me and I gave thee the new suit of clothes, and thou didst promise me to go to the bath and come back! So I abode awaiting thee that night and a second and a third; but thou camest not till now, and I ever expecting thy coming, for this is the way of lovers. And now I would have thee tell me what has been the cause of thine absence this year long." So I told her all that had happened: and when she knew that I was married, her colour paled. "I have come to thee to-night," added I; "but I must leave thee before day." Quoth she, "Doth it not suffice her to have tricked thee into marrying her and kept thee prisoner with her a whole year, but she must make thee take the oath of divorce to return to her before morning and not allow thee to divert thyself with thy mother or me nor suffer thee to pass one night with either of us, away from her? How, then, must it be with one from whom thou hast been absent a whole year, and I knew thee before she did? But may God have compassion on thy cousin Azizeh, for there befell her what never befell any and she endured what never any endured else and died, oppressed and rejected of thee; yet was it she protected thee against me. Indeed, I thought thou didst love me, so let thee take thine own way; else had I not let thee go safe and sound, when I had it in my power to hold thee in duresse and destroy thee." Then she wept and waxed wroth and shuddered in my face and looked at me with angry eyes. When I saw this, I was terrified at her and trembled in every nerve, for she was like a dreadful ghoul and I like a bean over the fire. Then said she, "Thou art of no use to me, now thou art married and hast a child, nor art thou any longer fit for my company. I care only for bachelors and not for married men; for they profit us nothing. Thou hast sold me for yonder stinking nosegay; but by Allah, I will make the baggage's heart ache for thee, for thou shalt not live either for me or for her!" Then she gave a loud cry, and ere I could think, up came ten damsels and threw me on the ground; whereupon she rose and taking a knife, said, "I will slaughter thee like a he-goat; and that will be less than thy desert, for thy behaviour to me and to thy cousin before me." When I found myself at the mercy of her women, with my cheeks stained with dust, and saw her sharpen the knife, I made sure of death and cried out to her for mercy. But she only redoubled in inhumanity and ordered the maids to bind my hands behind me, which they did, and throwing me on my back, sat down on my stomach and held my head. Then two of them sat on my shins, whilst other two held my hands, and she bade a third pair beat me. So they beat me till I lost my senses and my voice failed. When I revived, I said to myself, "It were easier and better for me to have my throat cut than to be beaten thus!" And I remembered how my cousin used to say to me, "God keep thee from her mischief!" and cried out and wept, till my voice failed and I remained without breath or motion. Then she sharpened the knife and said to the girls, "Uncover him." With this God inspired me to repeat to her the two words my cousin had bequeathed me, and I said, "O my lady, dost thou not know that faith is fair and perfidy foul?" When she heard this, she cried out and said, "God pity thee, Azizeh, and give thee Paradise in exchange for thy wasted youth! Verily, she served thee in her lifetime and after her death, and now she has saved thee alive out of my hands with these two words. Nevertheless, I cannot leave thee thus, but I must e'en set my mark on thee, to spite yonder shameless baggage, who has kept thee from me." Then she called out to the damsels and bade them bind my feet with cords and sit on me. They did her bidding, whilst I lay insensible, and she fetched a pan of copper and

setting it on a brazier, poured into it oil of sesame, in which she fried cheese. Then she came up to me and unfastening my trousers, tied a cord round my cullions and giving it to two of her women, bade them pull at it. They did so, and I swooned away and was for excess of pain in a world other than this. Then she came with a steel scalpel and cut off my yard, so that I remained like a woman: after which she seared the wound with the boiling oil and rubbed it with a powder, and I the while unconscious. When I came to myself, the blood had ceased to flow; so she bade the damsels unbind me and gave me a cup of wine to drink. Then said she to me, "Go now to her whom thou hast married and who grudged me a single night, and the mercy of God be on thy cousin Azizeh, who discovered not her secret! Indeed she was the cause of thy preservation, for hadst thou not repeated those words to me, I had surely slain thee. Rise and go to whom thou wilt, for thou hadst nothing of mine, save what I have cut off, and now I have no part in thee, nor have I any further care or occasion for thee: so begone about thy business and bless thy cousin's memory!" With that, she gave me a push with her foot, and I rose, hardly able to walk, and went little by little, till I came to the door of my wife's house I found it open, so I threw myself within it and fell down in a swoon; whereupon my wife came out and lifting me up, carried me into the saloon and found that I was like unto a woman. Then I fell into a deep sleep; but when I awoke, I found myself thrown down at the gate of the garden. I rose, groaning for pain and misery, and made my way to my mother's house, where I found her weeping for me and saying, "O my son, would I knew where thou art!" So I drew near and threw myself upon her, and when she saw me, she knew that I was ill, for my face was at once pale and livid. Then I called to mind my cousin and all the kind offices she had been wont to do me and knew that she had indeed loved me; so I wept for her and my mother wept also. Presently, she said to me, "O my son, thy father is dead." At this my anguish redoubled, and I wept till I lost my senses. When I came to myself, I looked at the place where Azizeh had been used to sit and wept anew, till I all but fainted for excess of grief; and I ceased not to weep and lament thus till midnight, when my mother said to me, "Thy father has been dead these ten days." "I shall never think of any one but my cousin Azizeh," answered I; "and indeed I deserve all that hath befallen me, in that I abandoned her who loved me so dear." "What hath befallen thee?" asked my mother. So I told her all that had happened, and she wept awhile, then rose and set meat and drink before me. I ate a little and drank, after which I repeated my story to her, and she exclaimed, "Praised be God that she did but this to thee and forbore to slay thee!" Then she tended me and medicined me till I regained my health: and when my recovery was complete, she said to me, "O my son, I will now bring out to thee that which thy cousin committed to me in trust for thee; for it is thine. She made me swear not to give it thee, till I should see thee recalling her to mind and weeping over her and thine affections severed from other than her; and now I see these conditions fulfilled in thee." So she arose and opening a chest, took out the piece of linen, with the figures of gazelles worked thereon, which I had given Azizeh; and I opened it and found written therein the following verses:

Who moved thee, fairest one, to use this rigour of disdain
And slay, with stress of love, the souls that sigh for thee in vain?
If thou recall me not to mind beyond our parting-day,
God knows the thought of thee with me for ever shall remain!

Thou smitest me with cruel words, that yet are sweet to me:
Wilt thou one day, though but in dreams, to look upon me deign?
I had not thought the ways of Love were languishment and woe
And stress of soul until, alas! to love thee I was fain.
I knew not weariness till I the captive of thine eyes
Became and all my soul was bound in passion's fatal chain.
Even my foes have ruth on me and pity my distress:
But thou, O heart of steel, wilt ne'er have mercy on my pain.
By God, although I die, I'll ne'er forget thee, O my hope,
Nor comfort take, though life itself for love should waste and wane!

When I read these verses, I wept sore and buffeted my face; then I unfolded the scroll, and there fell from it another. I opened it and found these words written therein: "Know, O my cousin, that I acquit thee of my blood and I beseech God to make accord between thee and her whom thou lovest: but if aught befall thee through the daughter of Delileh the crafty, return thou not to her neither resort to any other woman and bear thine affliction patiently, for were not the ordained term of thy life a long one, thou hadst perished long ago: but praised be God, who hath appointed my last day before thine! My peace be upon thee; preserve the cloth with the gazelles figured thereon and let it not leave thee, for it used to keep me company, whenas thou wert absent from me; but I conjure thee, by Allah, if thou chance to fall in with her who wrought these gazelles and it be in thy power to foregather with her, hold aloof from her and do not let her approach thee nor marry her; and if thou happen not on her and find no way to her, look thou company not with any other of her sex. Know that she who wrought these gazelles is the daughter of the King of the Camphor Islands and every year she works a like cloth and despatches it to far countries, that her report and the beauty of her broidery, which none in the world can match, may be bruited abroad, As for thy beloved, the daughter of Delileh, this cloth came to her hand, and she used to ensnare folk with it, showing it to them and saying, 'I have a sister who wrought this.' But she lied in this saying, may God bring her to shame! This, then, is my parting counsel to thee, and I have not charged thee thus, but because I know that, after my death, the world will be straitened on thee and belike, by reason of this, thou wilt leave thy native land and wander in foreign countries, and hearing of her who wrought these figures, be minded to foregather with her. Then wilt thou remember me and it shall not avail thee nor wilt thou know my value till after my death."

When I had read the scroll and understood what was written therein, I fell again to weeping, and my mother wept because I did; and I ceased not to gaze upon it and weep till nightfall. I abode thus a whole year, at the end of which time the merchants, with whom I am in this caravan, prepared to set out from my native town, and my mother counselled me to equip myself and journey with them, so haply I might find forgetfulness and my sorrow cease from me, saying, "Take comfort and put away from thee this mourning and travel for a year or two or three, till the caravan returns, when peradventure thy breast may be dilated and thy heart lightened." She ceased not to persuade me thus, till I provided myself with merchandise and set out with the caravan. But all the time of my journey, my tears have never ceased flowing; and at

every station where we halt, I open this piece of linen and look on these gazelles and call to mind my cousin Azizeh and weep for her as thou hast seen, for indeed she loved me very dearly and died, oppressed and rejected of me; I did her nought but ill and she did me nought but good. When these merchants return from their journey, I shall return with them, by which time I shall have been a whole year absent; yet is my sorrow greater than ever and my grief and affliction were but increased by my visit to the Islands of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal. The islands in question are seven in number and are ruled by a king, Shehriman by name, who hath a daughter called Dunya; and I was told that it was she who wrought these gazelles and that this thou seest was of her broidery. When I knew this, yearning redoubled on me and I became a prey to consuming languor and drowned in the sea of melancholy thought; and I wept over myself, for that I was become even as a woman, without manly gear like other men, and that there was no recourse for me. From the day of my departure from the Camphor Islands, I have been tearful-eyed and sorrowful-hearted, and I know not whether it will be given me to return to my native land and die by my mother or not, for I am weary of the world.'

When the young merchant had made an end of telling his story, he wept and groaned and complained and gazed upon the figures wrought on the piece of linen, whilst the tears streamed down his cheeks and he repeated the following verses:

'Needs must thy sorrow have an end,' quoth many an one 'and cease
And I, Needs must your chiding end and let me be at peace.'
'After awhile,' say they; and I, 'Who will ensure me life,
O fools, until the hands of grief their grip of me release?'

And also these:

God knows that, since my severance from thee, full sore I've wept,
So sore that needs my eyes must run for very tears in debt!
'Have patience,' quoth my censurers, 'and thou shalt win them yet.'
And I, 'O thou that blamest me, whence should I patience get?'

Then said he, 'This, O prince, is my story: hast thou ever heard a stranger one?' Taj el Mulouk marvelled greatly at the young merchant's tale and said to him, 'By Allah, thou hast suffered that which never befell any but thyself, but thou hast life appointed to thee, which thou must needs fulfil; and now I would fain have thee tell me how thou sawest the lady who wrought these gazelles.' 'O my lord,' answered Aziz, 'I got me access to her by a stratagem, and it was this. When I entered her city with the caravan, I went forth and wandered about the gardens [till I came to one walled in and] abounding in trees, whose keeper was a venerable old man of advanced age. I asked him to whom the garden belonged, and he replied, "To the lady Dunya, the king's daughter. We are now beneath her palace," added he; "and when she is minded to divert herself, she opens the private door and walks in the garden and breathes the fragrance of the flowers." So I said to him, "Favour me by allowing me to sit in the garden till she comes; haply I may be fortunate enough to catch a sight of her as she passes." "There can be no harm in that," answered he. So I gave him money and said to him, "Buy us something to eat." He took the money joyfully and opening the door, admitted me into the garden and carried me to a pleasant spot, where he bade me sit down and await

his return. Then he brought me fruit and leaving me, returned after awhile with a roasted lamb, of which we ate till we had enough, my heart yearning the while for a sight of the princess. Presently, as we sat, the postern opened and the keeper said to me, "Rise and hide thyself." I did so; and behold a black eunuch put out his head through the wicket and said, "O elder, is there any one with thee?" "No," answered he; and the eunuch said, "Shut the garden gate." So the keeper shut the gate, and the lady Dunya came in by the private door. When I saw her, methought the moon had risen above the horizon and was shining; so I looked at her a long while and longed for her, as a man athirst longs for water. After a time she withdrew and shut the door; whereupon I left the garden and sought my lodging, knowing that I could not win to her and that I was no mate for her, more by token that I was become like unto a woman, having no manly gear, and she was a king's daughter and I but a merchant; so how could I have access to the like of her or to any other woman? Accordingly, when my companions made ready for departure, I too made ready and set out with them, and we journeyed till we arrived at this place, where we met with thee. This then is my story, and peace be on thee!'

When Taj el Mulouk heard the young merchant's account of the princess Dunya and her beauty, fires raged in his bosom and his heart and thought were occupied with love for her; passion and longing were sore upon him and he knew not what to do. Then he mounted his horse and taking Aziz with him, returned to his father's capital, where he assigned the merchant a house and supplied him with all that he needed in the way of meat and drink and clothing. Then he left him and returned to his palace, with the tears running down his cheeks, for report [whiles] stands in stead of sight and very knowledge. He abode thus till his father came in to him and finding him pale-faced, lean of body and tearful eyed, knew that some chagrin had betided him and said to him, 'O my son, acquaint me with thy case and tell me what hath befallen thee, that thy colour is changed and thy body wasted.' So he told him all that had passed and how he had heard from Aziz of the princess Dunya and had fallen in love with her on hearsay, without having set eyes on her. 'O my son,' said the King, 'she is the daughter of a king whose country is far distant from ours: so put away this thought from thee and go into thy mother's palace. There are five hundred damsels like moons, and whichsoever of them pleaseth thee, take her; or else we will seek thee in marriage some one of the kings' daughters, fairer than the lady Dunya.' 'O my father,' answered Taj el Mulouk, 'I desire none other, for she it is who wrought the gazelles that I saw, and I must have her; else I will flee into the deserts and waste places and slay myself for her sake.' Then said his father, 'O my son, have patience with me, till I send to her father and demand her hand in marriage, as I did with thy mother. It may be that God will bring thee to thy desire; and if her father will not consent, I will shake his kingdom under him with an army, whose van shall be upon him, whilst the rear is yet with me.' Then he sent for Aziz and said to him, 'O my son, dost thou know the way to the Camphor Islands?' 'Yes,' answered he; and the King said, 'It is my wish that thou accompany my Vizier thither.' 'I hear and obey, O King of the age,' replied Aziz; whereupon the King summoned his Vizier and said to him, 'Devise me some plan, whereby my son's affair may be rightly managed, and go to the King of the Camphor Islands and demand his daughter in marriage for Tej el Mulouk.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier. Then Taj el Mulouk returned to his dwelling place and his longing redoubled and impatience and unease were sore upon him; and when the night

darkened upon him, he wept and sighed and complained and repeated the following verses:

The shadows darken and my tears flow aye without avail,
Whilst in my heart the fires of love rage on and never fail.
Question the nights of me, and they will testify to thee
That I in all their endless hours do nought but weep and wait.
Wakeful for love-longing and grief, I lie and watch the stars
All night, what while upon my cheeks the tears fall down like hail.
Lowly and helpless I abide, for such as lovers be
Have, as it were, nor kith nor kin to help them in their bale.

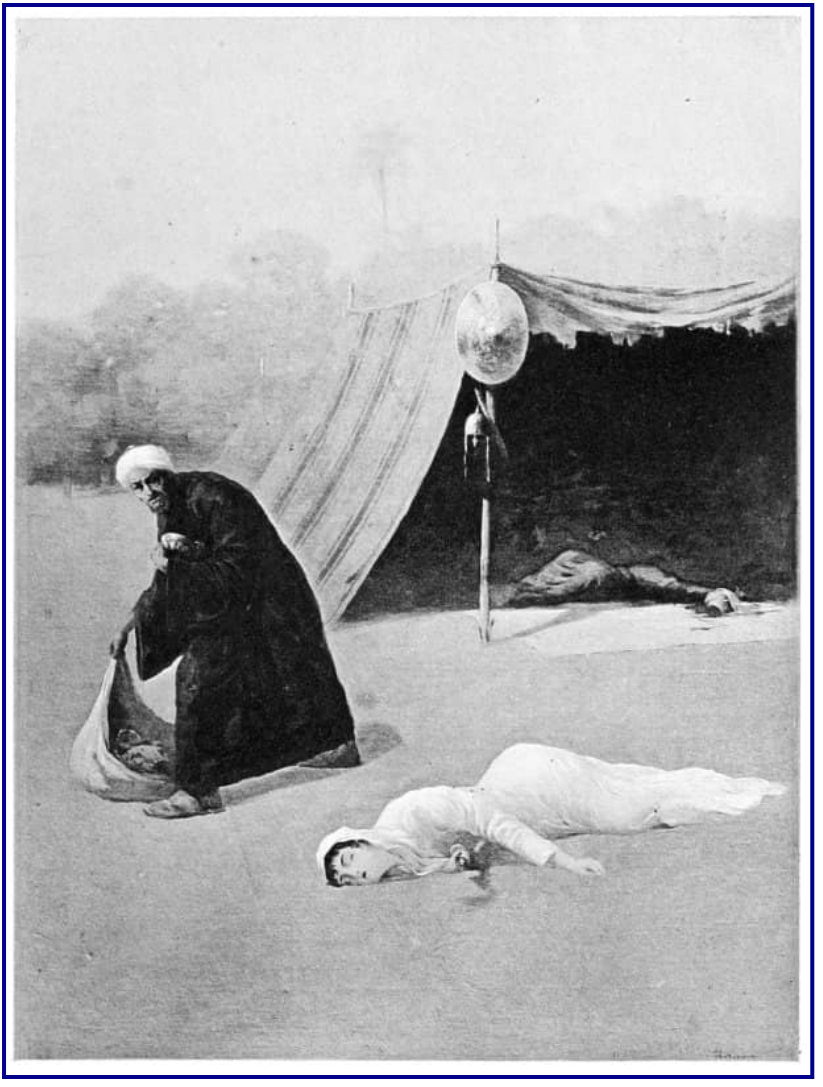
Then he swooned away and did not recover his senses till the morning, when there came to him one of his father's servants and standing at his head, summoned him to the King's presence. So he went with him, and his father seeing that his pallor had increased, exhorted him to patience and promised him union with her he loved. Then he equipped Aziz and the Vizier for the journey and gave them presents for the princess's father; and they set out and fared on night and day, till they drew near the Camphor Islands, when the Vizier called a halt on the banks of a stream and despatched a messenger to acquaint the King of his arrival. The messenger had not long been gone, when they saw, advancing towards them, the King's chamberlains and amirs, who met them at a parasang's distance from the city and escorted them to the royal presence. They laid before the King the gifts with which they were charged and enjoyed his hospitality three days. On the fourth day the Vizier rose and going in to the King, stood before him and acquainted him with the object of his visit; whereat he was perplexed and knew not what answer to make him, for that his daughter was averse from men and did not desire to marry. So he bowed his head awhile, then raised it and calling one of his eunuchs, said to him, 'Go to thy mistress, the princess Dunya, and repeat to her what thou hast heard and tell her this Vizier's errand.' So the eunuch went out and returning after a while, said to the King, 'O King of the age, when I went to the lady Dunya and told her what I had heard, she was exceeding wroth and made at me with a staff, meaning to break my head; whereupon I fled from her, and she said to me, 'If my father force me to marry, him whom I wed I will kill.' Then said the King to the Vizier and Aziz, 'Salute the King your master and tell him what ye have heard and that my daughter is averse from men and hath no mind to marry.' So they returned, without having accomplished the object of their journey, and fared on till they rejoined the King and told him what had passed; whereupon he commanded the chief to summon the troops for war. But the Vizier said to him, 'O King, do not this, for the King is not at fault, seeing that, when his daughter learnt our business, she sent to say that, if her father forced her to marry, she would kill her husband and herself after him: so the refusal comes from her.' When the King heard this, he feared for Taj el Mulouk and said, 'If I make war on the King of the Camphor Islands and carry off his daughter, she will kill herself and it will profit me nothing.' So he told his son how the case stood, and he said, 'O my father, I cannot live without her; so I will go to her and cast about to get me access to her, though I die in the attempt.' 'How wilt thou go to her?' asked his father; and he answered, 'In the disguise of a merchant.' Then said the King, 'If thou must go and there is no help for it, take with thee Aziz and the Vizier.'

He agreed to this, and the King took money from his treasuries and made ready for him merchandise, to the value of a hundred thousand dinars; and when the night came Taj el Mulouk went to Aziz's lodging and passed the night there, heart-smitten and taking no delight in food nor sleep; for melancholy was heavy upon him and he was agitated with longing for his beloved. So he besought the Creator to unite him with her and wept and groaned and complained, repeating the following verses:

Shall union after estrangement betide us, perchance, some day?
Shall I ever make moan of my passion to thee, I wonder, and say,
'How oft have I called thee to mind, whilst the night in its trances slept!
Thou hast made me waken, whilst all but I in oblivion lay.

Then he wept sore and Aziz wept with him, for that he remembered his cousin; and they both ceased not to do thus till the morning, when Taj el Mulouk rose and went in to his mother in his travelling dress. She asked him of his case, and he told her what was to do; so she gave him fifty thousand dinars and bade him farewell, offering up prayers for his safety and for his union with his beloved. Then he left her and betaking himself to his father, asked his leave to depart. The King granted him leave and presenting him with other fifty thousand dinars, let pitch a tent for him without the city, in which they abode two days, then set out on their journey. And Taj el Mulouk delighted in Aziz's company and said to him, 'O my brother, I can never bear to be parted from thee.' 'Nor I from thee,' replied Aziz; 'and fain would I die at thy feet: but, O my brother, my heart is concerned for my mother.' 'When we have attained our wish,' said the prince, 'all will be well.' As for the Vizier, he exhorted Taj el Mulouk to patience, whilst Aziz entertained him with talk and recited verses to him and diverted him with stories and anecdotes; and so they fared on day and night for two whole months, till the way became tedious to the prince and the fires of passion redoubled on him. So he repeated the following verses:

Long is the road and restlessness and grief redouble aye,
Whilst in my breast the fires of love rage ever night and day
O thou, the goal of all my hopes, sole object of my wish,
I swear by Him, the Most High God, who moulded man from clay,
For love of thee I bear a load of longing and desire,
Such as the mountains of Es Shumm might ne'er withal away!
Indeed, O lady of my world, love slayeth me outright;
No breath of life in me is left, my fainting spright to stay
But for the hope of union with thee, that lures me on,
My weary body had no strength to furnish forth the way.



When he had finished, he wept and Aziz wept with him, from a lacerated heart, till the Vizier was moved to pity by their weeping and said to the prince, 'O my lord, take courage and be of good cheer; all will yet be well.' 'O Vizier,' said Taj el Mulouk, 'indeed I am weary of the length of the way. Tell me how far we are distant yet from the city.' 'But a little way,' replied Aziz. Then they continued their journey, traversing valleys and plains and hills and stony wastes, till one night, as Taj el Mulouk was asleep, he dreamt that his beloved was with him and that he embraced her and pressed her to his bosom; and he awoke, trembling and delirious with emotion, and repeated the following verses:

My heart is maddened for love and my tears for ever flow,
And longing is ever upon me and unrelenting woe.
My plaint is, for tears, as the mourning of women bereft of young,
And I moan, when the darkness gathers, as the turtles, sad and low.
Yet, if the breezes flutter from the land where thou dost dwell,
Their wafts o'er the earth, sun-weaned, a grateful coolness throw.
Peace be on thee, my beloved, as long as the cushat flies,
As long as the turtles warble, as long as the zephyrs blow!

When he had finished, the Vizier came to him and said, 'Rejoice; this is a good sign: so comfort thyself and be of good cheer, for thou shalt surely compass thy desire.' And Aziz also came to him and exhorted him to patience and applied himself to divert him, talking with him and telling him stories. So they pressed on, night and day, other two months, till, one day, at sunrise, there appeared to them some white thing in the distance and Taj el Mulouk said to Aziz, 'What is yonder whiteness?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'that is the Fortress of Crystal and the city that thou seekest.' At this the prince rejoiced, and they fared forward till they drew near the city, to the exceeding joy of Taj el Mulouk, whose grief and anxiety ceased from him. They entered, in the guise of merchants, the King's son being habited as a merchant of importance, and repaired to a great khan, known as the Merchants' Lodging. Quoth Taj el Mulouk to Aziz, 'Is this the resort of the merchants?' 'Yes,' replied he; 'it is the khan in which I lodged when I was here before.' So they alighted there and making their beasts kneel down, unloaded them and laid up their goods in the warehouses. They abode four days, resting; at the end of which time, the Vizier proposed that they should hire a large house. To this they assented and hired a spacious house, fitted up for festivities, where they took up their abode, and the Vizier and Aziz studied to devise some plan of conduct for Taj el Mulouk, whilst the latter remained in a state of perplexity, knowing not what to do. The Vizier could think of nothing but that he should set up as a merchant in the stuff-market; so he turned to the prince and Aziz and said to them, 'If we tarry thus, we shall not compass our desire nor attain our aim; but I have bethought me of somewhat, in which, if it please God, we shall find our advantage.' 'Do what seemeth good to thee,' replied Taj el Mulouk; 'indeed there is a blessing on the aged, more by token that thou art versed in the conduct of affairs: so tell me what is in thy mind.' 'It is my counsel,' rejoined the Vizier, 'that we hire thee a shop in the stuff-bazaar, where thou mayst sit to sell and buy. Every one, great and small, hath need of silken and other stuffs; so if thou be patient and abide in thy shop, thine affairs will prosper, if it please God, especially as thou art comely of aspect. Moreover, I would

have thee make Aziz thy factor and set him within the shop, to hand thee the pieces of stuffs and silks.' When Taj el Mulouk heard this, he said, 'This is a good counsel.' So he took out a handsome suit of merchant's clothes, and putting it on, set out for the bazaar, followed by his servants, to one of whom he had given a thousand dinars, wherewith to fit up the shop. When they came to the stuff-market and the merchants saw Taj el Mulouk's beauty and grace, they were confounded and some said, 'Sure Rizwan hath opened the gates of Paradise and left them unguarded, so that this passing lovely youth hath come out.' And others, 'Belike this is one of the angels.' They asked for the shop of the overseer of the market, and the merchants directed them to it. So they repaired thither and saluted him, and he and those who were with him rose to them and seated them and made much of them because of the Vizier, whom they saw to be a man of age and reverend aspect; and seeing Aziz and Taj el Mulouk in his company, they said to one another, 'Doubtless this old man is the father of these two youths.' Then said the Vizier, 'Which of you is the overseer of the market?' 'This is he,' answered they; whereupon he came forward and the Vizier, observing him, saw him to be an old man of grave and dignified carriage, with slaves and servants, white and black. He greeted them in the friendliest manner and was lavish in his attentions to them: then he made them sit by his side and said to them, 'Have you any business which we may have the pleasure of transacting?' 'Yes,' answered the Vizier. 'I am an old man, stricken in years, and have with me these two youths, with whom I have travelled through many towns and countries, tarrying a whole year in every city (of importance) on our way, that they might take their pleasure in viewing it and come to know its people. Now I have chosen to make a stay in this your town; so I would fain have thee allot me a handsome shop in the best situation, wherein I may establish them, that they may traffic and learn to buy and sell and give and take, whilst they divert themselves with the sight of the place and acquire the uses of its people.' 'Good,' said the overseer, and looking at the two youths, rejoiced in them and conceived a great affection for them. Now he was a great lover of bewitching glances, preferring the commerce of boys to that of girls and inclining to their love. So he said in himself, 'These be fine purchase; glory to Him who created and fashioned them out of vile water!' and rising, stood before them like a servant, to do them honour. Then he went out and made ready for them a shop in the midst of the market, than which there was no larger nor better in the bazaar, for it was spacious and handsomely decorated and fitted with shelves of ebony and ivory; after which he delivered the keys to the Vizier, who was dressed as an old merchant, saying, 'Take them, O my lord, and may God make it a blessed abiding-place to thy sons!' The Vizier took the keys, and they returned to the khan and caused their servants to transport to the shop all their goods and stuffs and valuables, of which they had great plenty, worth treasures of money. Next morning, the Vizier carried the two young men to the bath, where they washed and put on rich clothes and perfumed themselves to the utmost therein. Now each of them was passing fair to look upon, and the bath enhanced their charms to the utmost, even as says the poet:

Good luck to him who in the bath doth serve him as his squire,
Handling a body 'gotten sure 'twixt water and the fire!
With skilful hands he showeth forth the marvels of his craft,
In that he gathers very musk from what is like camphire.

When the overseer heard that they had gone to the bath, he sat down to await them, and presently they came up to him, like two gazelles, with red cheeks and black eyes and shining faces, as they were two lustrous moons or two fruit-laden saplings. When he saw them, he rose and said to them, 'May your bath profit you ever!' Whereupon Taj el Mulouk replied, with the sweetest of speech, 'May God be bountiful to thee, O my father! Why didst thou not come with us and bathe in our company?' Then they both bent over his hands and kissing them, walked before him to the shop, to do him honour and show their respect for him, for that he was chief of the merchants and the market, as well as their sense of his kindness in giving them the shop. When he saw their hips quivering, emotion and longing redoubled on him and he could not contain himself, but puffed and snorted and devoured them with his eyes, repeating the following verses:

The heart in them studies the chapter of worship unshared sheer
No proofs of more gods to worship than one it readeth here.
No wonder it is they tremble by reason of their weight;
How much is there not of motion in that revolving sphere!

And also these:

Two fair ones walking on the earth mine eyes did late espy; Two that I needs must love although they walked upon mine eye.

When they heard this, they begged him to enter the bath with them a second time. He could hardly believe his ears and hastening thither, went in with them. The Vizier had not yet left the bath; so when he heard of the overseer's coming, he came out and meeting him in the outer room of the bath, invited him to enter. He refused, but Taj el Mulouk took him by one hand and Aziz by the other and carried him into a cabinet, the impure old man submitting to them, whilst his emotion increased on him. Then Taj el Mulouk swore that none but he should wash him and Aziz that none but he should pour water on him. He would have refused, albeit this was what he desired; but the Vizier said to him, 'They are thy sons; let them wash thee and bathe thee.' 'God preserve them to thee!' exclaimed the overseer. 'By Allah, thy coming and theirs hath brought blessing and fortune upon our city!' and he repeated the following verses:

Thou cam'st, and the mountains about us grew green
And glittered, with flowers for the bridegroom beseen;
Whilst earth and her creatures cried, 'Welcome to thee,
Thrice welcome, that comest in glory and sheen!'

They thanked him for this, and Taj el Mulouk proceeded to wash him, whilst Aziz poured water over him and he thought himself in Paradise. When they had made an end of his service, he called down blessings on them and sat talking with the Vizier, gazing the while on the youths. Presently, the servants brought them towels, and they dried themselves and donned their clothes. Then they went out, and the Vizier said to the overseer, 'O my lord, verily the bath is the Paradise of this world.' 'May God vouchsafe it to thee,' replied the overseer, 'and health to thy sons and guard them from the evil eye! Do you remember aught that the poets have said in praise of the bath?' 'Yes,' said Taj el Mulouk and repeated the following verses:

The life of the bath is the pleasantest part of life,
Except that the time of our sojourn there is slight.
A heaven, wherein 'tis irksome to us to bide:
A hell, into which we enter with delight.

'And I also,' said Aziz, 'remember some verses in praise of the bath.' Quoth the overseer, 'Let us hear them.' So he repeated the following:

I know a house, wherein flowers from the sheer stone blow;
Most goodly, when the flames about it rage and glow.
Thou deem'st it hell, and yet, in truth, 'tis
Paradise And most that be therein are sun and moons, I trow.

His verses pleased the overseer and he wondered at their grace and eloquence and said, 'By Allah, ye possess both beauty and eloquence! But now listen to me.' And he chanted the following verses:

O pleasaunce of hell-fire and paradise of pain!
Bodies and souls therein indeed are born again.
I marvel at a house, whose pleasantness for aye
Doth flourish, though the flames beneath it rage amain.
A sojourn of delight to those who visit it
It is; the pools on them their tears in torrents rain.

Then he fed his eyes on the gardens of their beauty and repeated the following verses:

I went to the bath-keeper's house and entered his dwelling-place
And found no door-keeper there but met me with smiling face.
I sojourned awhile in his heaven and visited eke his hell
And thanked both Malik and Rizwan for solace and kindly grace.

They were charmed with these verses, and the overseer invited them to his house; but they declined and resumed to their own lodging, to rest from the great heat of the bath. They took their ease there and ate and drank and passed the night in the greatest comfort and delight, till morning, when they arose from sleep and making their ablutions, prayed the morning-prayer and drank the morning-draught. As soon as the sun had risen and the markets and shops were open, they went out to the bazaar and opened their shop, which their servants had already furnished, after the handsomest fashion, with prayer-rugs and silken carpets and a pair of divans, each worth a hundred dinars. On each divan they had spread a rug, garded with gold and fit for a king, and in the midst of the shop stood a third seat of still greater elegance, even as the case required. Taj el Mulouk sat down on one couch and Aziz on another, whilst the Vizier seated himself on that in the centre, and the servants stood before them. The people of the city heard of them and crowded to them, so that they sold some of their goods and the report of Taj el Mulouk's beauty and grace spread throughout the place. Some days passed thus, and every day the people flocked to them more and more, till the Vizier, after exhorting the prince to keep his secret, commended him to Aziz's care and went home, that he might be alone and cast about for some device that might profit them.

Meanwhile, the two young men sat talking and the prince said to Aziz, 'It may be some one will come from the Princess Dunya.' So he abode in expectation of this days and nights, whilst his heart was troubled and he knew neither sleep nor rest: for desire had gotten the mastery of him and passion and longing were sore upon him, so that he forewent the solace of sleep and abstained from meat and drink; yet ceased he not to be like the full moon. One day, as he sat in the shop, there came up an old woman, followed by two slave-girls. She stopped before Taj el Mulouk and observing his grace and elegance and symmetry, marvelled at his beauty and sweated in her clothes, exclaiming, 'Glory to Him who created thee out of vile water and made thee a ravishment to all who look upon thee!' And she fixed her eyes on him and said, 'This is sure no mortal, but a noble angel.' Then she drew near and saluted him, whereupon he returned her salute and (being prompted thereto by Aziz) rose to his feet to receive her and smiled in her face after which he made her sit down by his side and fanned her, till she was rested and refreshed, when she turned to him and said, 'O my son, O thou that art perfect in graces and charms, art thou of this country?' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered he in the sweetest and pleasantest of voices, 'I was never in this country in my life till now, nor do I sojourn here save for my diversion.' 'May all honour and prosperity attend thee!' rejoined she. 'What stuffs has thou brought with thee? Show me something handsome; for the fair should bring nothing but what is fair.' When he heard her words, his heart fluttered and he knew not what she meant; but Aziz made a sign to him, and he replied, 'I have everything thou canst desire, and amongst the rest goods that befit none but kings and kings' daughters; so tell me for whom thou seekest the stuff, that I may show thee what will befit her.' This he said, that he might learn the meaning of her words; and she rejoined, 'I want a stuff fit for the Princess Dunya, daughter of King Shehriman.' When the prince heard the name of his beloved, he rejoiced greatly and said to Aziz, 'Give me such a bale.' So Aziz brought it and opened it before Taj el Mulouk, who said to the old woman, 'Choose what will suit her; for these are goods only to be found with me.' So she chose goods worth a thousand dinars and said, 'How much is this?' And ceased not the while to talk with him and rub the inside of her thighs with the palm of her hand. 'Shall I haggle with the like of thee about this paltry price?' answered he. 'Praised be God who hath brought me acquainted with thee!' 'The name of God be upon thee!' exclaimed she. 'I commend thy fair face to the protection of the Lord of the Daybreak! Fair face and pleasant speech! Happy the woman who lies in thy bosom and clasps thy waist in her arms and enjoys thy youth, especially if she be fair and graceful like unto thee!' At this, Taj el Mulouk laughed till he fell backward and said (in himself), 'O Thou who fulfillest desires by means of dissolute old women! They are indeed the accomplishers of desires!' Then said she, 'O my son, what is thy name?' And he answered, 'My name is Taj el Mulouk.' 'This is a name of kings and kings' sons,' rejoined she; 'and thou art clad in a merchant's habit.' Quoth Aziz, 'For the love his parents and family bore him and the value they set on him, they named him thus.' 'Thou sayst sooth,' replied the old woman. 'May God guard you both from the evil eye and the malice of the enemy and the envious, though hearts be broken by your charms!' Then she took the stuff and went away, amazed at the prince's beauty and grace and symmetry, and going in to the Princess Dunya, said to her, 'O my lady, I have brought thee some handsome stuff.' 'Show it me,' said the princess. 'Here it is,' answered the old woman; 'turn it over, O

my treasure, and examine it.' So the princess looked at the stuff and was amazed at its beauty and said, 'O my nurse, this is indeed handsome stuff! I have never seen its like in our city.' 'O my lady,' replied the nurse, 'he who sold it me is handsomer still. It would seem as if Rizwan had left the gates of Paradise open and this youth had come out. I would he might sleep this night with thee and lie between thy breasts! He hath come hither with these stuffs for amusement's sake, and he is a ravishment to all who set eyes on him.' The princess laughed at her words and said, 'Allah afflict thee, O pernicious old woman! Thou dotest and there is no sense left in thee. Give me the stuff, that I may look at it anew.' So she gave it her, and she examined it again and seeing that though small, it was of great value, was moved to admiration, for she had never in her life seen its like, and exclaimed, 'By Allah, this is a handsome stuff.' 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'if thou sawest him who sold it to me, thou wouldst know him for the handsomest of all that be upon the face of the earth.' Quoth the princess, 'Didst thou ask him if he had any need, that we might satisfy it?' The nurse shook her head and answered, 'God keep thy sagacity! Assuredly he has a want, may thy skill not fail thee. What man is free from wants?' 'Go back to him,' rejoined the princess; 'salute him for me, and say to him, "Our land and town are honoured by thy visit, and if thou hast any need, we will fulfil it to thee, on our head and eyes."' So the old woman returned to Taj el Mulouk, and when he saw her, his heart leapt for joy and he rose to his feet and taking her hand, seated her by his side. As soon as she was rested she told him what the princess had said, whereat he rejoiced exceedingly; his breast dilated and gladness entered his heart, and he said in himself, 'Verily, I have gotten my desire.' Then said he to the old woman, 'Belike thou wilt take her a message from me and bring me her answer.' 'I hear and obey,' replied she. So he said to Aziz, 'Bring me inkhorn and paper and a pen of brass.' Aziz brought him what he sought, and he took the pen and wrote the following verses: I send thee, O my hope, a letter, to complain
Of all my soul endures for parting and its pain.

Six lines it hath; the first, 'A fire is in my heart;'
The next line setteth forth my passion all in vain;
The third, 'My patience fails and eke my life doth waste;'
The fourth, 'All love with me for ever shall remain.'
The fifth, 'When shall mine eyes behold thee? And the sixth,
'When shall the day betide of meeting for us twain?

And by way of subscription he wrote these words, 'This letter is from the captive of desire, prisoned in the hold of longing, from which there is no deliverance but in union and intercourse with her whom he loveth, after absence and separation: for he suffereth grievous torment by reason of his severance from his beloved.' Then his tears rushed out and he wrote the following verses:

I write to thee, my love, and the tears run down as I write;
For the tears of my eyes, alack I cease never day or night.
Yet do I not despair; mayhap, of God His grace,
The day shall dawn for us of union and delight.

Then he folded the letter and sealed it and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'Carry it to the lady Dunya.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she; whereupon he gave her a

thousand dinars and said to her, 'O my mother, accept this, as a token of my affection.' She took the letter and the money, calling down blessings on him, and returned to the princess. When the latter saw her, she said to her, 'O my nurse, what is it he asks, that we may fulfil his wish to him?' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'he sends thee this letter by me, and I know not what is in it.' The princess took the letter and reading it, exclaimed, 'Who and what is this merchant that he should dare to write to me thus?' And she buffeted her face, saying, 'What have we done that we should come in converse with shopkeepers? Alas! Alas! By Allah, but that I fear God the Most High, I would put him to death and crucify him before his shop!' 'What is in the letter,' asked the old woman, 'to trouble thy heart and move thine anger thus? Doth it contain a complaint of oppression or demand for the price of the stuff?' 'Out on thee!' answered the princess. 'There is none of this in it, nought but words of love and gallantry. This is all through thee: else how should this devil know me?' 'O my lady,' rejoined the old woman, 'thou sittest in thy high palace and none may win to thee, no, not even the birds of the air. God keep thee and keep thy youth from blame and reproach! Thou art a princess, the daughter of a king, and needest not reck of the barking of dogs. Blame me not that I brought thee this letter, knowing not what was in it; but it is my counsel that thou send him an answer, threatening him with death and forbidding him from this idle talk. Surely he will abstain and return not to the like of this.' 'I fear,' said the princess, 'that, if I write to him, he will conceive hopes of me.' Quoth the old woman, 'When he reads thy threats and menace of punishment, he will desist.' So the princess called for inkhorn and paper and pen of brass and wrote the following verses:

O thou who feignest thee the prey of love and wakefulness
And plainst of that thou dost endure for passion and distress
Thinkst thou, deluded one, to win thy wishes of the moon?
Did ever any of a moon get union and liesse?
I rede thee put away the thought of this thou seekst from thee,
For that therein but peril is for thee and weariness.
If thou to this thy speech return, a grievous punishmen
Shall surely fall on thee from me and ruin past redress.
By Him, the Almighty God, I swear, who moulded man from clay,
Him who gave fire unto the sun and lit the moon no less
If thou offend anew, for sure, upon a cross of tree
I'll have thee crucified for all thy wealth and goodliness!

Then she folded the letter and giving it to the old woman, said, 'Carry this to him and bid him desist from this talk.' 'I hear and obey,' replied she, and taking the letter, returned, rejoicing, to her own house, where she passed the night and in the morning betook herself to the shop of Taj el Mulouk, whom she found expecting her. At sight of her, he well-nigh lost his reason for delight, and when she came up to him, he rose to his feet and seated her by his side. Then she brought out the letter and gave it to him, saying, 'Read this. When the princess read thy letter, she was angry; but I coaxed her and jested with her till I made her laugh, and she had pity on thee and has returned thee an answer.' He thanked her and bade Aziz give her a thousand dinars: then he read her letter and fell to weeping sore, so that the old woman's heart was moved to pity for him and his tears and complaints grieved her. So she said to him, 'O my son,

what is there in this scroll, that makes thee weep?' 'She threatens me with death and crucifixion,' replied he, 'and forbids me to write to her: but if I write not, my death were better than my life. So take thou my answer to her letter and let her do what she will.' 'By the life of thy youth,' rejoined the old woman, 'needs must I venture my life for thee, that I may bring thee to thy desire and help thee to win that thou hast at heart!' And he said, 'Whatever thou dost, I will requite thee therefor, and do thou determine of it; for thou art versed in affairs and skilled in all fashions of intrigue: difficult matters are easy to thee: and God can do all things.' Then he took a scroll and wrote therein the following verses:

My love with slaughter threatens me, woe's me for my distress!
But death is foreordained; to me, indeed, 'twere happiness;
Better death end a lover's woes than that a weary life
He live, rejected and forlorn, forbidden from liesse.
Visit a lover, for God's sake, whose every helper fails,
And with thy sight thy captive slave and bondman deign to bless!
Have ruth upon me, lady mine, for loving thee; for all,
Who love the noble, stand excused for very passion's stress.

Then he sighed heavily and wept, till the old woman wept also and taking the letter, said to him, 'Take heart and be of good cheer, for it shall go hard but I bring thee to thy desire.' Then she rose and leaving him on coals of fire, returned to the princess, whom she found still pale with rage at Taj el Mulouk's first letter. The nurse gave her his second letter, whereupon her anger redoubled and she said, 'Did I not say he would conceive hopes of us?' 'What is this dog,' replied the old woman, 'that he should conceive hopes of thee?' Quoth the princess, 'Go back to him and tell him that, if he write to me again, I will have his head cut off.' 'Write this in a letter,' answered the nurse, 'and I will take it to him, that his fear may be the greater.' So she took a scroll and wrote thereon the following verses:

Harkye thou that letst the lessons of the past unheeded lie,
Thou that lookst aloft, yet lackest power to win thy goal on high,
Thinkest thou to reach Es Suha, O deluded one, although
Even the moon's too far to come at, shining in the middle sky?
How then dar'st thou hope my favours and aspire to twinned delight
And my spear-straight shape and slender in thine arms to girdle sigh?
Leave this purpose, lest mine anger fall on thee some day of wrath,
Such as e'en the parting-places shall with white for terror dye.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, who took it and returned to Taj el Mulouk. When he saw her, he rose to his feet and exclaimed, 'May God not bereave me of the blessing of thy coming!' Quoth she, 'Take the answer to thy letter.' He took it and reading it, wept sore and said, 'Would some one would slay me now, for indeed death were easier to me than this my state!' Then he took pen and inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

O my hope, have done with rigour; lay disdain and anger by,
Visit one who, drowned in passion, doth for love and longing sigh.

Think not, under thine estrangement, that my life I will endure.
Lo, my soul, for very severance from thy sight, is like to die.

Then he folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'Grudge it not to me, though I have wearied thee to no purpose.' And he bade Aziz give her other thousand dinars, saying, 'O my mother, needs must this letter result in perfect union or complete separation.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'by Allah, I desire nought but thy weal; and it is my wish that she be thine, for indeed thou art the resplendent moon and she the rising sun. If I do not bring you together, there is no profit in my life: these ninety years have I lived in the practice of wile and intrigue; so how should I fail to unite two lovers, though in defiance of law?' Then she took leave of him, after comforting his heart, and returned to the palace. Now she had hidden the letter in her hair: so she sat down by the princess and rubbing her head, said, 'O my lady, maybe thou wilt comb out my hair: for it is long since I went to the bath.' The princess bared her arms to the elbow and letting down the old woman's hair, began to comb it, when out dropped the letter and Dunya seeing it, asked what it was. Quoth the nurse, 'This paper must have stuck to me, as I sat in the merchant's shop: give it me, that I may return it to him; belike it contains some reckoning of which he hath need.' But the princess opened it, and reading it, cried out, 'This is one of thy tricks, and hadst thou not reared me, I would lay violent hands on thee forthright! Verily God hath afflicted me with this merchant: but all that hath befallen me with him is of thy contrivance. I know not whence this fellow can have come: none but he would venture to affront me thus, and I fear lest this my case get wind, the more that it concerns one who is neither of my rank nor of my peers.' 'None would dare speak of this,' rejoined the old woman, 'for fear of thine anger and awe of thy father; so there can be no harm in sending him an answer.' 'O my nurse,' said the princess, 'verily this fellow is a devil. How can he dare to use such language to me and not dread the Sultan's wrath? Indeed, I am perplexed about his case: if I order him to be put to death, it were unjust; and if I leave him, his presumption will increase.' 'Write him a letter,' rejoined the old woman; 'it may be he will desist.' So she called for pen and ink and paper and wrote the following verses:

Again and again I chide thee, yet folly ever again Lures thee:
How long, with my writing, in verse shall I bid thee refrain,
Whilst thou but growest in boldness for all forbidding?
But I No grace save to keep thy secret, unto thy prayers may deign.
Conceal thy passion nor ever reveal it; for, an thou speak,
I will surely show thee no mercy nor yet my wrath contain.
If to thy foolish daring thou turn thee anew, for sure,
The raven of evil omen shall croak for thee death and bane;
And slaughter shall come upon thee ere long, and under the earth
To seek for a place of abiding, God wot, thou shalt be fain.
Thy people, O self-deluder, thou'lt leave in mourning for thee;
Ay, all their lives they shall sorrow for thee, fordone and slain.

Then she folded the letter and committed it to the old woman, who took it and returning to Taj el Mulouk, gave it to him. When he read it, he knew that the princess

was hard-hearted and that he should not win to her; so he complained to the Vizier and besought his advice. Quoth he, 'Nothing will profit thee save that thou write to her and invoke the wrath of God upon her.' And he said to Aziz, 'O my brother, do thou write to her in my name, according to thy knowledge.' So Aziz took a scroll and wrote the following verses:

O Lord, by the Five Elders, deliver me, I pray,
And her, for whom I suffer, in like affliction lay!
Thou knowest that I weary in raging flames of love;
Whilst she I love is cruel and saith me ever nay.
How long shall I be tender to her, despite my pain?
How long shall she ride roughshod o'er my weakness night and day?
In agonies I wander of never-ceasing death
And find nor friend nor helper, O Lord, to be my stay.
Full fain would I forget her; but how can I forget,
When for desire my patience is wasted all away?
Thou that forbidst my passion the sweets of happy love,
Art thou then safe from fortune, that shifts and changes aye?
Art thou not glad and easeful and blest with happy life,
Whilst I, for thee, an exile from folk and country stray?

Then he folded the letter and gave it to Taj el Mulouk, who read the verses and was pleased with them. So he handed the letter to the old woman, who took it and carried it to the princess. When she read it, she was greatly enraged and said, 'All that has befallen me comes from this pernicious old woman!' Then she cried out to the damsels and eunuchs, saying, 'Seize this accursed old trickstress and beat her with your slippers!' So they beat her till she swooned away; and when she revived, the princess said to her, 'By Allah, O wicked old woman, did I not fear God the Most High, I would kill thee!' Then she bade them beat her again, and they did so, till she fainted a second time, whereupon the princess ordered them to drag her forth and throw her without the palace. So they dragged her along on her face and threw her down before the gate. When she came to herself, she rose and made the best of her way home, walking and resting by turns. She passed the night in her own house and in the morning, she went to Taj el Mulouk and told him what had passed, at which he was distressed and said, 'O my mother, this that has befallen thee is grievous to us; but all things are according to fate and destiny.' 'Take comfort and be of good cheer,' replied she; 'for I will not give over striving, till I have brought thee and her together and made thee to enjoy the vile baggage who hath tortured me with beating.' Quoth the prince, 'Tell me the reason of her aversion to men.' 'It arose from what she saw in a dream,' answered the old woman. 'And what was this dream?' asked the prince. 'One night,' replied she, 'as she lay asleep, she saw a fowler spread his net upon the ground and scatter grain round it. Then he sat down hard by, and all the birds in the neighbourhood flocked to the net. Amongst the rest she saw a pair of pigeons, male and female; and whilst she was watching the net, the male bird's foot caught in it and he began to struggle, whereupon all the other birds took fright and flew away. But presently his mate came back and hovered over him, then alighted on the net, unobserved by the fowler, and fell to picking and pulling at the mesh in which the

male bird's foot was entangled with her beak, till she released him and they flew away together. Then the fowler came up and mended his net and seated himself afar off. After awhile, the birds came back and the female pigeon was caught in the net, whereupon all the other birds took fright and flew away; and the male pigeon flew away with the rest and did not return to his mate. Then came the fowler and took the female pigeon and killed her. So the princess awoke, troubled by her dream, and said, "All males are worthless, like this pigeon: and men in general are wanting in goodness to women."' When the old woman had made an end of her story, the prince said to her, 'O my mother, I desire to have one look at her, though it be my death; so do thou contrive me some means of seeing her.' 'Know then,' answered she, 'that she hath under her palace windows a pleasure-garden, to which she resorts once in every month by the private door. In ten days, the time of her thus going forth will arrive; so when she is about to visit the garden, I will come and tell thee, that thou mayst go thither and meet her. And look thou quit not the garden, for haply, if she sees thy beauty and grace, her heart will be taken with love of thee, and love is the most potent means of union.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Taj el Mulouk. Then he and Aziz left the shop, and taking the old woman with them, showed her where they lodged. Then said the prince to Aziz, 'I have no further need of the shop, having fulfilled my purpose of it; so I give it to thee with all that is in it; for that thou hast come abroad with me and hast left thy country for my sake.' Aziz accepted his gift and they sat conversing awhile, the prince questioning the young merchant of the strange passages of his life and the latter acquainting him with the particulars thereof. Presently, they went to the Vizier and acquainting him with Taj el Mulouk's purpose, asked him what they should do. 'Let us go to the garden,' answered he. So they donned their richest clothes and went forth, followed by three white slaves, to the garden, which they found thick with trees and abounding in rills. At the gate, they saw the keeper sitting; so they saluted him and he returned their salute. Then the Vizier gave him a hundred dinars, saying, 'Prithee, take this spending-money and fetch us something to eat; for we are strangers and I have with me these two lads, whom I wish to divert.' The gardener took the money and said to them, 'Enter and take your pleasure in the garden, for it is all yours; and sit down till I bring you what you require.' So he went to the market, and the Vizier and his companions entered the garden. In a little while, the gardener returned with a roasted lamb and bread as white as cotton, which he placed before them, and they ate and drank; after which he set on sweetmeats, and they ate of them, then washed their hands and sat talking. Presently the Vizier said to the gardener, 'Tell me about this garden: is it thine or dost thou rent it?' 'It does not belong to me,' replied he, 'but to the Princess Dunya, the King's daughter.' 'What is thy wage?' asked the Vizier, and the gardener answered, 'One dinar every month and no more.' Then the Vizier looked round about the garden and seeing in its midst a pavilion, lofty but old and dilapidated, said to the keeper, 'O elder, I am minded to do here a good work, by which thou shalt remember me.' 'O my lord,' rejoined the other, 'what is that?' 'Take these three hundred dinars,' answered the Vizier. When the keeper heard speak of the dinars, he said, 'O my lord, do what thou wilt.' So the Vizier gave him the money, saying, 'God willing, we will work a good work in this place.' Then they left the garden and returned to their lodging, where they passed the night. Next day, the Vizier sent for a plasterer and a painter and a skilful goldsmith, and furnishing them with all the tools and materials

that they required, carried them to the garden, where he bade them plaster the walls of the pavilion and decorate it with various kinds of paintings. Then he sent for gold and ultramarine and said to the painter, 'Paint me on the wall, at the upper end of the saloon, a fowler, with his nets spread and birds lighted round them and a female pigeon fallen into the net and entangled therein by the bill. Let this fill one compartment of the wall, and on the other paint the fowler seizing the pigeon and setting the knife to her throat, whilst the third compartment of the picture must show a great hawk seizing the male pigeon, her mate, and digging his talons into him.' The painter did as the Vizier bade him, and when he and the other workmen had finished, they took their hire and went away. Then the Vizier and his companions took leave of the gardener and returned to their lodging, where they sat down to converse. And Taj el Mulouk said to Aziz, 'O my brother, recite me some verses: haply it may dilate my breast and dispel my sad thoughts and assuage the fire of my heart.' So Aziz chanted the following verses:

All that they fable lovers feel of anguish and despite,
I in myself comprise, and so my strength is crushed outright;
And if thou seekst a watering-place, see, from my streaming eyes,
Rivers of tears for those who thirst run ever day and night.
Or, if thou fain wouldst look upon the ruin passion's hands
Can wreak on lovers, let thy gaze upon my body light.

And his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated these verses also:

Who loves not the necks and the eyes of the fair and pretends, forsooth,
To know the delight of the world, God wot, he speaks not the truth
For in love is a secret meaning that none may win to know
Save he who has loved indeed and known its wrath and ruth.
May God not lighten my heart of passion for her I love
Nor ease my eyelids, for love, of wakefulness in my youth!

Then he sang the following:

Avicenna pretends, in his writings renowned,
That the lover's best medicine is song and sweet sound
And dalliance with one of his sex like his love
And drinking, with waters and fruits all around.
I took me another, to heal me for thee,
And fate was propitious and grace did abound
Yet I knew love a mortal disease, against which
Avicenna his remedy idle I found.

Taj el Mulouk was pleased with his verses and wondered at his eloquence and the excellence of his recitation, saying, 'Indeed thou hast done away from me somewhat of my concern.' Then said the Vizier, 'Of a truth there occurred to those of times past what astounds those who hear it.' 'If thou canst recall any fine verse of this kind,' quoth the prince, 'I prithee let us hear it and keep the talk in vogue.' So the Vizier chanted the following verses:

Methought thy favours might be bought and thou to give consent
To union won by gifts of gold and grace and blandishment:
And eke, for ignorance, I deemed thy love an easy thing,
Thy love in which the noblest souls for languor are forspent;
Until I saw thee choose one out and gratify that one
With sweet and subtle favours. Then, to me 'twas evident
Thy graces never might be won by any artifice;
So underneath my wing my head I hid incontinent
And in the nest of passion made my heart's abiding-place,
Wherein my morning and my night for evermore are pent.

Meanwhile the old woman remained shut up in her house till it befell that the princess was taken with a desire to divert herself in the garden. Now this she had been wont to do only in company with her nurse; so she sent for her and spoke her fair and made her peace with her, saying, 'I wish to go forth to the garden, that I may divert myself with the sight of its trees and fruits and gladden my heart with its flowers.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the old woman; 'but let me first go to my house and change my dress, and I will be with thee anon.' 'Go,' said the princess; 'but be not long absent from me.' So the old woman left her and repairing to Taj el Mulouk, said to him, 'Don thy richest clothes and go to the gardener and salute him and make shift to hide thyself in the garden.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; and she agreed with him upon a signal to be made by her to him and returned to the princess. As soon as she was gone, the Vizier and Aziz rose and dressed Taj el Mulouk in a right costly suit of kings' raiment, worth five thousand dinars, and girt his middle with a girdle of gold set with jewels. Then he repaired to the garden and found the keeper seated at the gate. As soon as the latter saw him, he sprang to his feet and received him with all respect and consideration and opening the gate, said, 'Enter and take thy pleasure in the garden.' Now the gardener knew not that the princess was to visit the garden that day: but Taj el Mulouk had been there but a little while, when he heard a noise and ere he could think, out came the eunuchs and damsels by the private door. When the gardener saw this, he came up to the prince and said to him, 'O my lord, what is to be done? The Princess Dunya, the King's daughter, is here.' 'Fear not,' replied the prince; 'no harm shall befall thee: for I will conceal myself somewhere about the garden.' So the gardener exhorted him to the utmost prudence and went away. Presently, the princess entered the garden, attended by her damsels and the old woman, who said to herself, 'If these eunuchs abide with us, we shall not attain our object.' So she said to the princess, 'O my lady, I have somewhat to say to thee that will be for thy heart's ease.' 'Say on,' replied the princess. 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'thou hast no present need of these eunuchs; send them away, for thou wilt not be able to divert thyself at thine ease, whilst they are with us.' 'Thou art right,' rejoined the princess. So she dismissed the eunuchs and began to walk about, whilst Taj el Mulouk fed his eyes on her beauty and grace, without her knowledge, and fainted every time he looked at her, by reason of her surpassing loveliness. The old woman held her in converse and drew her on till they reached the pavilion, which the Vizier had caused to be decorated afresh, when the princess entered and looking round, perceived the picture of the fowler and the birds; whereupon she exclaimed, 'Glory be to God! This is the very presentment of what I saw

in my dream.' She continued to gaze at the painting, full of admiration, and presently she said, 'O my nurse, I have been wont to blame and dislike men, by reason of my having seen in my dream the female pigeon abandoned by her mate; but now see how the male pigeon was minded to return and set her free; but the hawk met him and tore him in pieces.' The old woman, however, feigned ignorance and ceased not to hold her in converse, till they drew near the place where the prince lay hidden, whereupon she signed to him to come out and walk under the windows of the pavilion. He did so: and presently the princess, chancing to look out, saw him and noting his beauty and symmetry, said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, whence comes yonder handsome youth?' 'I know nothing of him,' replied the old woman, 'except that I think he must be some great king's son, for he attains the utmost extreme of beauty and grace.' The princess fell passionately in love with him; the spells that bound her were dissolved and her reason was overcome by his beauty and elegance. So she said to the old woman, 'O my nurse this is indeed a handsome youth.' 'Thou art in the right O my lady!' replied the nurse and signed to Taj el Mulouk to go home. So he went away, not daring to cross her though desire flamed in him and he was distraught for love and longing, and taking leave of the gardener, returned to his lodging, where he told the Vizier and Aziz all that had passed. They exhorted him to patience, saying, 'Did not the old woman know that there was an object to be gained by thy departure, she had not signed to thee to return home.'

Meanwhile, desire and passion redoubled upon the princess, and she was overcome with love-longing and said to the old woman, 'I know not how I shall foregather with this youth, but through thee.' 'God be my refuge from Satan the Accursed!' exclaimed the old woman. 'Thou that art averse from men! How comes it that thou art thus afflicted with love of this young man? Though, by Allah, none is worthy of thy youth but he!' 'O my nurse,' said the princess, 'help me to foregather with him, and thou shalt have of me a thousand dinars and a dress worth as much more: but if thou aid me not to come at him, I shall assuredly die.' 'Go to thy palace,' replied the nurse, 'and leave me to devise means for bringing you together. I will risk my life to content you both.' So the princess returned to her palace, and the old woman betook herself to Taj el Mulouk, who rose to receive her and entreated her with respect and honour, making her sit by his side. Then said she, 'The device hath succeeded,' and told him all that had passed between the princess and herself. 'When is our meeting to be?' asked he. 'To-morrow,' replied the old woman. So he gave her a thousand dinars and a dress of equal value, and she took them and returned to the princess, who said to her, as soon as she saw her, 'O my nurse, what news of my beloved?' 'I have discovered where he lives,' replied she, 'and will bring him to thee to-morrow.' At this the princess was glad and gave her a thousand dinars and a dress worth as much more, with which she returned to her own house, where she passed the night. Next morning, she went to Taj el Mulouk and dressing him in women's clothes, said to him, 'Follow me and sway from side to side, as thou goest, and do not hasten in thy walk nor take heed of any that speaks to thee.' Then she went out and walked on, followed by the prince, whom she continued to lesson and hearten by the way, that he might not be afraid, till they came to the palace gate. She entered and the prince after her, and she led him through doors and vestibules, till they had passed six doors. As they approached the seventh door, she said to him, 'Take courage and when I call out

to thee and say, "Pass, O damsel!" do not hesitate, but hasten on. When thou art in the vestibule, thou wilt see on thy left a gallery, with doors along it: count five doors and enter the sixth, for therein is thy desire.' 'And whither wilt thou go?' asked the prince. 'Nowhere,' answered she; 'except that I may drop behind thee and the chief eunuch may detain me, whilst I talk with him.' Then they went up to the door, where the chief eunuch was stationed, and he, seeing Taj el Mulouk with her, dressed as a slave-girl, said to the old woman, 'What girl is this with thee?' Quoth she, 'This is a slave-girl of whom the Princess Dunya has heard that she is skilled in different arts, and she hath a mind to buy her.' 'I know no slave-girl,' rejoined the eunuch, 'nor any one else; and none shall enter here without being searched by me, according to the King's orders.' At this the old woman feigned to be angry and said, 'I thought thee a man of sense and good breeding: but, if thou be changed, I will let the princess know of it and how thou hinderest her slave-girl.' Then she cried out to Taj el Mulouk, saying, 'Pass on, O damsel!' So he passed on into the vestibule, whilst the eunuch was silent and said nothing. Then the prince counted five doors and entered the sixth, where he found the Princess Dunya standing awaiting him. As soon as she saw him, she knew him and pressed him to her bosom, and he returned her embrace. Then the old woman came in to them, having made a pretext to dismiss the princess's attendants for fear of discovery, and the princess said to her, 'Do thou keep the door.' So she and Taj el Mulouk abode alone together and passed the night in kissing and embracing and twining leg with leg. When the day drew near, she left him and shutting the door upon him, passed in to another apartment, where she sat down according to her wont, whilst her women came in to her, and she attended to their affairs and conversed with them awhile. Then she said to them, 'Leave me now, for I wish to be alone.' So they withdrew and she betook herself to Taj el Mulouk, and the old woman brought them food, of which they ate and after fell again to amorous dalliance, till the dawn. Then the princess left him, and locked the door as before; and they ceased not to do thus for a whole month.

Meanwhile, the Vizier and Aziz, when they found that the prince did not return from the princess's palace all this while, gave him up for lost and Aziz said to the Vizier, 'O my father, what shall we do?' 'O my son,' answered he, 'this is a difficult matter, and except we return to his father and tell him, he will blame us.' So they made ready at once and setting out, journeyed night and day along the valleys, in the direction of the Green Country, till they reached King Suleiman's capital and presenting themselves before him, acquainted him with what had befallen his son and how they had heard no news of him, since he entered the princess's palace. At this the King was greatly troubled and regret was sore upon him, and he let call a holy war throughout his realm. Then he encamped without the town with his troops and took up his abode in his pavilion, whilst the levies came from all parts of the kingdom; for his subjects loved him by reason of his much justice and beneficence. As soon as his forces were assembled, he took horse, with an army covering the country as far as the eye could reach, and departed in quest of his son Taj el Mulouk. Meanwhile, the latter sojourned with the princess half a year's time, whilst every day they redoubled in mutual affection and distraction and passion and love-longing and desire so pressed upon Taj el Mulouk, that at last he opened his mind to the princess and said to her, 'Know, O beloved of my heart and entrails, that the longer I abide with thee, the more

longing and passion and desire increase on me, for that I have not yet fulfilled the whole of my desire.' 'What then wouldst thou have, O light of my eyes and fruit of my entrails?' asked she. 'If thou desire aught beside kissing and embracing and entwining of legs, do what pleases thee; for, by Allah, none hath any part in us.' 'It is not that I desire,' rejoined he; 'but I would fain acquaint thee with my true history. I am no merchant, but a King, the son of a King, and my father is the supreme King Suleiman Shah, who sent his Vizier ambassador to thy father, to demand thy hand for me in marriage, but thou wouldst not consent.' Then he told her his story from first to last, nor is there any profit in repeating it, and added, 'And now I wish to return to my father, that he may send an ambassador to thy father, to demand thy hand for me, so we may be at ease.' When she heard this, she rejoiced greatly, because it fell in with her own wishes, and they passed the night on this understanding. But by the decree of Fate, it befell that sleep overcame them that night above all nights and they slept till the sun had risen. Now at this hour, King Shehriman was sitting on his chair of estate, with his amirs and grandees before him, when the chief of the goldsmiths presented himself before him carrying a large box, which he opened and brought out therefrom a small casket worth a hundred thousand dinars, for that which was therein of rubies and emeralds and other jewels, beyond the competence of any King. When the King saw this, he marveled at its beauty and turning to the chief eunuch (him with whom the old woman had had to do, as before related), said to him, 'O Kafour, take this casket to the Princess Dunya.' The eunuch took the casket and repairing to the princess's apartment, found the door shut and the old woman lying asleep on the threshold; whereupon said he, 'Asleep at this hour?' His voice aroused the old woman, who was terrified and said to him, 'Wait till I fetch the key.' Then she went out and fled for her life; but the eunuch, having his suspicions of her, lifted the door off its hinges and entering, found the princess and Taj el Mulouk lying asleep in each other's arms. At this sight he was confounded and was about to return to the King, when the princess awoke, and seeing him, was terrified and changed colour and said to him, 'O Kafour, veil thou what God hath veiled.' But he replied, 'I cannot conceal aught from the King;' and locking the door on them, returned to Shehriman, who said to him, 'Hast thou given the casket to the princess?' 'Here is the casket,' answered the eunuch. 'Take it, for I cannot conceal aught from thee. Know that I found a handsome young man in the princess's arms, and they asleep in one bed.' The King commanded them to be fetched and said to them, 'What manner of thing is this!' and being violently enraged, seized a dagger and was about to strike Taj el Mulouk with it, when the princess threw herself upon him and said to her father, 'Slay me before him.' The King reviled her and commanded her to be taken back to her chamber: then he turned to Taj el Mulouk and said to him, 'Woe to thee! Whence art thou? Who is thy father and what hath emboldened thee to debauch my daughter?' 'Know, O King,' replied the prince, 'that if thou put me to death, thou wilt repent it, for it will be thy ruin and that of all in thy dominions.' 'How so?' asked the King. 'Know,' answered Taj el Mulouk, 'that I am the son of King Suleiman Shah, and before thou knowest it, he will be upon thee with his horse and foot.' When King Shehriman heard this, he would have forborne to kill Taj el Mulouk and put him in prison, till he should know the truth of his words; but his Vizier said to him, 'O King of the age, it is my counsel that thou make haste to slay this gallows-bird, that dares debauch kings' daughters.' So the King

said to the headsman, 'Strike off his head; for he is a traitor.' Accordingly, the headsman took him and binding him fast, raised his hand to the amirs, as if to consult them, a first and a second time, thinking to gain time; but the King said to him, 'How long wilt thou consult the amirs? If thou do so again, I will strike off thine own head.' So the headsman raised his hand, till the hair of his armpit appeared, and was about to smite off Taj el Mulouk's head, when suddenly loud cries arose and the people closed their strops; whereupon the King said to him, 'Wait awhile,' and despatched one to learn the news. Presently, the messenger returned and said, 'I see an army like the stormy sea with its clashing billows; the earth trembles with the tramp of their horses, and I know not the reason of their coming.' When the King heard this, he was confounded and feared lest his realm should be torn from him; so he turned to his Vizier and said, 'Have not any of our troops gone forth to meet this army?' But before he had done speaking, his chamberlains entered with messengers from the approaching host, and amongst them the Vizier who had accompanied Taj el Mulouk. They saluted the King, who rose to receive them and bidding them draw near, enquired the reason of their coming; whereupon the Vizier came forward and said, 'Know that he who hath invaded thy realm is no king like unto the Kings and Sultans of time past.' 'Who is he?' asked Shehriman, and the Vizier replied, 'He is the lord of justice and loyalty, the report of whose magnanimity the caravans have blazed abroad, the Sultan Suleiman Shah, lord of the Green Country and the Two Columns and the mountains of Ispahan, he who loves justice and equity and abhors iniquity and oppression. He saith to thee that his son, the darling of his heart and the fruit of his loins, is with thee and in this thy city; and if he find him in safety, his aim is won and thou shalt have praise and thanks; but if he have disappeared from thy dominions or if aught have befallen him, look thou for ruin and the laying waste of thy realm; for this thy city shall become a desert, in which the raven shall croak. Thus have I done my errand to thee and peace be on thee!' When King Shehriman heard these words, his heart was troubled and he feared for his kingdom: so he cried out for his grandees and viziers and chamberlains and officers; and when they appeared, he said to them, 'Out on you! Go down and search for the young man!' Now the prince was still under the headsman's hands, but he was changed by the fright he had undergone. Presently, the Vizier, chancing to look aside, saw the prince on the carpet of blood and knew him; so he threw himself upon him, as did the other envoys. Then they loosed his bonds and kissed his hands and feet, whereupon he opened his eyes and recognizing his father's Vizier and his friend Aziz, fell down in a swoon, for excess of delight in them. When King Shehriman saw that the coming of the army was indeed on this youth's account, he was confounded and feared greatly; so he went up to Taj el Mulouk and kissing his head, said to him, with streaming eyes, 'O my son, bear me not malice neither blame the sinner for his evil-doing: but have compassion on my gray hairs and do not lay waste my kingdom.' But Taj el Mulouk drew near unto him and kissing his hand, replied, 'Fear not: no harm shall come to thee, for indeed thou art to me as my father; but look that nought befall my beloved, the lady Dunya.' 'O my lord,' replied the King, 'fear not for her; nought but joy shall betide her.' And he went on to excuse himself to him and made his peace with King Suleiman's Vizier, to whom he promised much money, if he would conceal from the King what he had seen. Then he bade his officers carry the prince to the bath and clothe him in one of the best of his own suits and bring him back

speedily. So they carried him to the bath and brought him back to the presence-chamber, after having clad him in the suit that the King had set apart for him. When he entered, the King rose to receive him and made all his grandees stand in attendance on him. Then he sat down to converse with Aziz and the Vizier and acquainted them with what had befallen him; after which they told him how they had returned to his father and given him to know of his son's perilous plight and added, 'And indeed our coming hath brought thee relief and us gladness.' Quoth he, 'Good fortune hath attended your every action, first and last.'

Meanwhile, King Shehriman went in to his daughter, the Princess Dunya, and found her weeping and lamenting for Taj el Mulouk. Moreover, she had taken a sword and fixed the hilt in the earth, with the point to her heart between her breasts; and she bent over it, saying, 'Needs must I kill myself and not live after my beloved.' When her father entered and saw her in this case, he cried out, 'O princess of kings' daughters, hold thy hand and have compassion on thy father and the people of thy realm!' Then he came up to her and said, 'God forbid that an ill thing should befall thy father for thy sake!' And he told her that her lover was the son of King Suleiman Shah and sought her to wife and that the marriage waited only for her consent; whereat she smiled and said, 'Did I not tell thee that he was a king's son? By Allah, I must let him crucify thee on a piece of wood worth two dirhems!' 'O my daughter,' answered the King, 'have mercy on me, so may God have mercy on thee!' 'Harkye,' rejoined she, 'make haste and bring him to me without delay.' The King replied, 'On my head and eyes be it,' and returning in haste to Taj el Mulouk, repeated her words in his ear. So he arose and accompanied the King to the princess, who caught hold of him and embraced him in her father's presence and kissed him, saying, 'Thou hast made me a weary woman!' Then she turned to her father and said to him, 'Sawst thou ever any do hurt to the like of this fair creature, more by token that he is a king, the son of a king, and of the free-bon, guarded against abominations?' Therewith Shehriman went out and shutting the door on them with his own hand, returned to the Vizier and the other envoys and bade them report to their King that his son was in health and gladness and enjoying all delight of life with his beloved. So they returned to King Suleiman and acquainted him with this, whereat he rejoiced and exclaimed, 'Praised be God who hath brought my son to his desire!'

Meanwhile, King Shehriman despatched largesse of money and victual to King Suleiman's troops, and choosing out a hundred coursers and a hundred dromedaries and a hundred white slaves and a hundred concubines and a hundred black slaves and a hundred female slaves, sent them all to the King as a present. Then he took horse, with his grandees and chief officers, and rode out of the city in the direction of King Suleiman's camp. As soon as the latter knew of his approach, he rose and advancing some paces to meet him, took him in his arms and made him sit down beside himself on the royal couch, where they conversed awhile frankly and cheerfully. Then food was set before them, followed by sweetmeats and fruits, and they ate till they were satisfied. Presently, they were joined by Taj el Mulouk, richly dressed and adorned, and when his father saw him, he rose and embraced him and kissed him. Then the two kings seated him between them, whilst all who were present rose to do him honour; and they sat conversing awhile, after which quoth King Suleiman to King Shehriman, 'I wish to

have the contract between my son and thy daughter drawn up in the presence of witnesses, that the marriage may be made public, as of wont.' 'I hear and obey,' answered King Shehriman and summoned the Cadi and the witnesses, who came and drew up the marriage contract between the prince and princess. Then they gave largesse of money and sweetmeats and burnt perfumes and sprinkled essences. And indeed it was a day of joy and festivity, and the grandees and soldiers rejoiced therein. Then King Shehriman proceeded to equip his daughter; and Taj el Mulouk said to his father, 'Of a truth, this young man Aziz is a man of great worth and generosity and hath done me right noble service, having wearied for me and travelled with me till he brought me to my desire. Indeed, he ceased never to have patience with me and exhort me to patience, till I accomplished my intent; and he has now companied with us two whole years, cut off from his native land. So now I purpose to equip him with merchandise, that he may depart with a light heart; for his country is near at hand.' 'It is well seen,' replied his father: so they made ready a hundred loads of the richest and most costly stuffs, which Taj el Mulouk presented to Aziz, saying, 'O my brother and my true friend, take these loads and accept them from me, as a gift and token of affection, and go in peace to thine own country.' Aziz accepted the presents and kissing the earth before the prince and his father, bade them farewell. Moreover, Taj el Mulouk mounted and brought him three miles on his homeward way, after which Aziz conjured him to turn back, saying, 'By Allah, O my lord, were it not for my mother, I would never part from thee! But leave me not without news of thee.' 'So be it,' replied Taj el Mulouk. Then the prince returned to the city, and Aziz journeyed on, till he came to his native town and repairing to his mother's house, found that she had built him a monument in the midst of the courtyard and used to visit it continually. When he entered, he found her, with her hair dishevelled and spread over the tomb, weeping and repeating the following verses:

Indeed, I'm very patient 'gainst all that can betide;
Yet do I lack of patience thine absence to abide.
Who is there can have patience after his friend and who
Bows not the head to parting, that comes with rapid stride?

Then sobs burst up out of her breast, and she repeated these verses also:

What ails me? I pass by the graveyard, saluting the tomb of my son,
And yet no greeting he gives me and answer comes there none.
"How shall I give thee an answer, who lie in the grip of the grave,
The hostage of earth and corruption," replies the beloved one.
"The dust hath eaten my beauties and I have forgotten thee,
Shut in from kindred and lovers and stars and moon and sun."

Then Aziz came in to her, and when she saw him, she fell down in a swoon for joy. He sprinkled water on her, till she revived and rising, took him in her arms and strained him to her bosom, whilst he in like manner embraced her. Then they exchanged greetings, and she asked the reason of his long absence, whereupon he told her all that had befallen him from first to last and how Taj el Mulouk had given him a hundred loads of wealth and stuffs. At this she rejoiced, and Aziz abode with his

mother in his native town, weeping for what had befallen him with the daughter of Delileh the Crafty, even her who had gelded him.

Meanwhile, Taj el Mulouk went in to his beloved, the Princess Dunya, and did away her maidenhead. Then King Shehriman proceeded to equip his daughter for her journey with her husband and father-in-law and let bring them victual and gifts and rarities. So they loaded their beasts and set forth, whilst Shehriman brought them three days' journey on their way, till King Suleiman begged him to return. So he took leave of them and turned back, and Taj el Mulouk and his wife and father journeyed on, night and day, with their troops, till they drew near the capital of the Green Country. As soon as the news of their coming became known, the folk decorated the city; so in they entered, and the King sitting down on his chair of estate, with his son by his side, gave alms and largesse and loosed those who were in bonds. Then he held a second bridal for his son, and the sound of the singing-women and players upon instruments of music ceased not for a whole month, during which time the tire-women stinted not to adorn the bride and display her in various dresses; and she tired not of the unveiling nor did they weary of gazing on her. Then Taj el Mulouk, after having companied awhile with his father and mother, took up his sojourn with his wife, and they abode in all delight of life and fair fortune, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights."

When the Vizier had made an end of the story of Taj el Mulouk and the Princess Dunya, Zoulmekan said to him, "Of a truth, it is the like of thee who lighten the mourning heart and are worthy to be the companions of kings and to guide their policy in the right way."

Meanwhile, they ceased not from the leaguer of Constantinople; and there they lay four whole years, till they yearned after their native land and the troops murmured, being weary of siege and vigil and stress of war by night and by day. Then King Zoulmekan summoned Rustem and Behram and Terkash and bespoke them thus, "Know that all these years we have lain here and have not come by our intent and have gotten us but increase of trouble and concern; for indeed we came, thinking to take our wreak for King Omar ben Ennuman and behold, my brother Sherkan was slain; so is our sorrow grown two sorrows and our affliction two afflictions. All this came of the old woman Dhat ed Dewahi, for it was she who slew the Sultan in his kingdom and carried off his wife, the Princess Sufiyeh; nor did this suffice her, but she must put another cheat on us and slay my brother Sherkan: and indeed I have bound myself and sworn by the most solemn oaths to avenge them of her. What say ye? Ponder my words and answer me." With this, they bowed their heads and answered, "It is for the Vizier Dendan to decide." So the Vizier came forward and said, "O King of the age, it avails us nothing to tarry here, and it is my counsel that we strike camp and return to our own country, there to abide awhile and after return and fall upon the worshippers of idols." "This is a good counsel," replied the King; "for indeed the folk weary for a sight of their families, and I also am troubled with yearning after my son Kanmakan and my brother's daughter Kuzia Fekan, for she is in Damascus and I know not how it is with her." So he bade the herald call the retreat after three days, whereupon the troops rejoiced and blessed the Vizier Dendan. Then they fell to preparing for the homeward march and on the fourth day, they beat the drums and unfurled the banners and the

army set forth, the Vizier in the van and the King riding in the mid-battle, with the Great Chamberlain by his side, and journeyed night and day, till they reached Baghdad. The folk rejoiced in their return, and care and hardship ceased from them, whilst those who had stayed at home came forth to meet those who had been so long absent and each amir betook him to his own house. As for Zoulmekan, he went up to the palace and went into his son Kanmakan, who had now reached the age of seven and used to go down [into the tilting-ground] and ride. As soon as the King was rested of his journey, he entered the bath with his son, and returning, seated himself on his chair of estate, whilst the Vizier Dendan took up his station before him and the amirs and grandees of the realm entered and stood in attendance upon him. Then he called for his comrade the stoker, who had befriended him in his strangerhood; and when he came, the King rose to do him honour and made him sit by his own side. Now he had acquainted the Vizier with all the kindness and fair service that the stoker had done him; so the Vizier and all the amirs made much of him. The stoker had waxed fat and burly with rest and good living, so that his neck was like an elephant's neck and his face like a porpoise's belly. Moreover, he was grown dull of wit, for that he had never stirred from his place; so at the first he knew not the King by his aspect. But Zoulmekan came up to him smilingly and saluted him after the friendliest fashion, saying, "How hast thou made haste to forget me!" So the stoker roused himself and looking steadfastly on Zoulmekan knew him: whereupon he sprang to his feet and exclaimed. "O my friend, who hath made thee Sultan?" Zoulmekan laughed at him and the Vizier, coming up to him, expounded the whole story to him and said, "He was thy brother and thy friend; and now he is King of the land and needs must thou get great good of him. So I counsel thee, if he say to thee, 'Ask a boon of me,' ask not but for some great thing; for thou art very dear to him." Quoth the stoker, "I fear lest, if I ask of him aught, he may not choose to grant it or may not be able thereto." "Have no care," answered the Vizier; "whatsoever thou asketh, he will give thee." "By Allah," rejoined the stoker, "I must ask of him a thing that is in my thought! Every night I dream of it and implore God to vouchsafe it to me." "Take heart," said the Vizier. "By Allah, if thou askedst of him the government of Damascus, in the room of his brother he would surely give it thee." With this, the stoker rose to his feet and Zoulmekan signed to him to sit; but he refused, saying, "God forfend! The days are gone by of my sitting in thy presence." "Not so," answered the Sultan; "they endure even now. Thou wert the cause that I am now alive, and by Allah, what thing soever thou askest of me, I will give it to thee! But ask thou first of God, and then of me." "O my lord," said the stoker, "I fear...," "Fear not," quoth the Sultan. "I fear," continued he, "to ask aught and that thou shouldst refuse it to me." At this the King laughed and replied, "If thou askedst of me the half of my kingdom, I would share it with thee: so ask what thou wilt and leave talking." "I fear...," repeated the stoker. "Do not fear," said the King. "I fear," went on the stoker, "lest I ask a thing and thou be not able thereto." With this, the Sultan waxed wroth and said, "Ask what thou wilt." Then said the stoker, "I ask, first of God and then of thee, that thou write me a patent of mastership over all the stokers in Jerusalem." The Sultan and all who were present laughed and Zoulmekan said, "Ask somewhat other than this." "O my lord," replied the stoker, "said I not I feared thou wouldst not choose to grant me what I should ask or be not able thereto?" Therewith the Vizier nudged him once and twice and thrice, and every time he began, "I ask of

thee..." Quoth the Sultan, "Ask and be speedy." So he said, "I beseech thee to make me captain of the scavengers in Jerusalem or Damascus." Then all those who were present laughed, till they fell backward, and the Vizier beat him. So he turned to the Vizier and said to him, "What art thou that thou shouldst beat me? It is no fault of mine: didst thou not bid me ask some considerable thing? Let me go to my own country." With this, the Sultan knew that he was jesting and took patience with him awhile; then turned to him and said, "O my brother, ask of me some considerable thing, befitting our dignity." So the stoker said, "O King of the age, I ask first of God and then of thee, that thou make me Viceroy of Damascus in the room of thy brother." "God granteth thee this," answered the King. So the stoker kissed the ground before him, and he bade set him a chair in his rank and put on him a viceroy's habit. Then he wrote him a patent of investiture and sealing it with his own seal, said to the Vizier, "None shall go with him but thou; and when thou returnest, do thou bring with thee my brother's daughter, Kuzia Fekan." "I hear and obey," answered the Vizier and taking the stoker, went down with him and made ready for the journey. Then the King appointed the stoker servants and officers and gave him a new litter and princely equipage and said to the amirs, "Whoso loves me, let him honour this man and give him a handsome present." So they brought him every one his gift, according to his competence; and the King named him Ziblcan, and conferred on him the surname of honour of El Mujahid. As soon as the new Viceroy's gear was ready, he went up with the Vizier to the King, to take leave of him and ask his permission to depart. The King rose to him and embracing him, exhorted him to do justice among his subjects and deal fairly with them and bade him make ready for war against the infidels after two years Then they took leave of each other and King Ziblcan, surnamed El Mujahid, set out on his journey, after the amirs had brought him slaves and servants, even to five thousand in number, who rode after him. The Grand Chamberlain also took horse, as did Behram, captain of the Medes, and Rustem, captain of the Persians, and Terkash, captain of the Arabs, and rode with him three days' journey, to do him honour and take their leaves of him. Then they returned to Baghdad and the Sultan Ziblcan and the Vizier Dendan fared on, with their company, till they drew near Damascus. Now news was come upon the wings of birds, to the notables of Damascus that King Zoulmekan had made Sultan over Damascus a Sultan called Ziblcan el Mujahid; so when he reached the city, he found it decorated in his honour, and all the folk came out to gaze on him. He entered Damascus in great state and went up to the citadel, where he sat down upon his chair of estate, whilst the Vizier Dendan stood in attendance on him, to acquaint him with the ranks and stations of the amirs. Then the grandees came in to him and kissed hands and called down blessings on him. He received them graciously and bestowed on them gifts and dresses of honour; after which he opened the treasuries and gave largesse to the troops, great and small. Then he governed and did justice and proceeded to equip the lady Kuzia Fekan, daughter of King Sherkan, appointing her a litter of silken stuff. Moreover, he furnished the Vizier Dendan also for the return journey and would have made him a gift of money, but he refused, saying, "Thou art near the time of the tryst with the King, and haply thou wilt have need of money, or we may send to seek of thee funds for the Holy War or what not." When the Vizier was ready, the Viceroy brought Kuzia Fekan to him and made her mount the litter, giving her ten damsels to do her service. Moreover, he mounted, to bid the Vizier farewell, and they

set forward, whilst Ziblcan returned to Damascus and busied himself in ordering the affairs of his government and making ready his harness of war, against such time as King Zoulmekan should send to him there for. Meanwhile the Vizier and his company fared forward by easy stages, till they came, after a month's travel, to Ruhbeh and thence pushed on, till they drew near Baghdad. Then he despatched messengers, to inform King Zoulmekan of his arrival; and he, when he heard this, took horse and rode out to meet him. The Vizier would have dismounted to receive him, but the King conjured him not to do so and spurred his steed, till he came up to him. Then he questioned him of Ziblcan, whereto the Vizier replied that he was well and that he had brought with him his brother's daughter, Kuzia Fekan. At this the King rejoiced and said to Dendan, "Go thou and rest thee of the fatigue of the journey, and after three days come to me again." "With all my heart," replied the Vizier and betook himself to his own house, whilst the King went up to his palace and went in to his brother's daughter, who was then a girl of eight years old. When he saw her, he rejoiced in her and sorrowed sore for her father. Then he let make for her clothes and gave her splendid jewels and ornaments and bade lodge her with his son Kanmakan in one place. So they both grew up, the brightest and bravest of the people of their time; but Kuzia Fekan grew up possessed of good sense and understanding and knowledge of the issues of events, whilst Kanmakan grew up generous and freehanded, taking no thought to the issue of aught. Now Kuzia Fekan used to ride a-horseback and fare forth with her cousin into the open plain and range at large with him in the desert; and they both learnt to smite with swords and thrust with spears. So they grew up, till each of them attained the age of twelve, when King Zoulmekan, having completed his preparations and provisions for the Holy War, summoned the Vizier Dendan and said to him, "Know that I am minded to do a thing, which I will discover to thee, and do thou with speed return me an answer thereon." "What is that, O King of the age?" asked the Vizier. "I am resolved," said the King, "to make my son Kanmakan king and rejoice in him in my lifetime and do battle before him, till death overcome me. What deemest thou of this?" The Vizier kissed the earth before the King and replied, "O King and Sultan, lord of the age and the time, this that is in thy mind is indeed good, save that it is now no time to carry it out, for two reasons: the first, that thy son Kanmakan is yet of tender age; and the second, that it is of wont that he who makes his son king in his lifetime, lives but a little thereafterward." "Know, O Vizier," rejoined the King, "that we will make the Grand Chamberlain guardian over him, for he is art and part of us and he married my sister, so that he is to me as a brother." Quoth the Vizier, "Do what seemeth good to thee: we will obey thine orders." Then the King sent for the Grand Chamberlain and the grandees of the kingdom and said to them, "Ye know that this my son Kanmakan is the first cavalier of the age and that he hath no peer in jousting and martial exercises; and now I appoint him to be Sultan over you in my stead and I make his uncle, the Grand Chamberlain, guardian over him." "O King of the age," replied the Chamberlain, "I am but an offset of thy bounty." And the King said, "O Chamberlain, verily this my son Kanmakan and my niece Kuzia Fekan are brothers' children; so I marry them one to the other and I call those present to witness thereof." Then he made over to his son such treasures as beggar description and going in to his sister Nuzhet ez Zeman told her what he had done, whereat she rejoiced greatly and said, "Verily, they are both my children. May

God preserve thee to them many a year!" "O my sister," replied he, "I have accomplished that which was in my heart of the world and I have no fear for my son: yet it were well that thou shouldst have a watchful eye to him and to his mother." And he went on to commend to the Chamberlain and Nuzhet ez Zeman his son and niece and wife. Thus did he nights and days till he [fell sick and] deeming surely that he should drink the cup of death, took to his bed and abode thus a whole year, whilst the Chamberlain took upon himself the ordering of the people and the realm. At the end of this time, the King summoned his son Kanmakan and the Vizier Dendan and said to the former, "O my son, this Vizier shall be thy father, when I am dead; for know that I am about to leave this transitory house of life for that which is eternal. And indeed I have fulfilled my lust of this world; yet there remaineth in my heart one regret, which may God dispel at thy hands!" "What regret is that, O my father?" asked his son. "O my son," answered Zoulmekan, "it is that I die without having avenged thy grandfather Omar ben Ennuman and thine uncle Sherkan on an old woman whom they call Dhat ed Dewahi; but, so God grant thee aid, do not thou fail to take thy wreak on her and to wipe out the disgrace we have suffered at the hands of the infidels. Beware of the old woman's craft and do as the Vizier shall counsel thee; for that he from of old time hath been the pillar of our realm." And his son assented to what he said. Then the King's eyes ran over with tears and his sickness redoubled on him, nor did it leave to press sore upon him four whole years, during which time his brother-in-law the Chamberlain held sway over the country, judging and commanding and forbidding, to the contentment of the people and the nobles, and all the land prayed for him what while Zoulmekan was occupied with his malady. As for Kanmakan, he had no thought but of riding and tilting with spears and shooting with arrows, and thus also did his cousin Kuzia Fekan; for they were wont to go forth at the first of the day and return at nightfall, when she would go in to her mother and he to his, to find her sitting weeping by his father's bed. Then he would tend his father till daybreak, when he would go forth again with his cousin, according to their wont. Now Zoulmekan's sufferings were long upon him and he wept and recited these verses:

My strength is past away, my tale of days is told
And I, alas! am left even as thou dost behold.
In honour's day, the first amongst my folk was I,
And in the race for fame the foremost and most bold.
Would that before my death I might but see my son
The empery in my stead over the people hold
And rush upon his foes and take on them his wreak,
At push of sword and pike, in fury uncontrolled.
Lo, I'm a man fordone, in this world and the next,
Except my spright of God be solaced and consoled!

When he had made an end of repeating these verses he laid his head on his pillow and his eyes closed and he slept. In his sleep he saw one who said to him, "Rejoice for thy son shall fill the lands with justice and have the mastery over them and men shall obey him." Then he awoke gladdened by this happy omen that he had seen, and after a few days, death smote him, whereat great grief fell on the people of Baghdad, and gentle and simple mourned for him. But time passed over him, as if he had never been,

and Kanmakan's estate was changed; for the people of Baghdad set him aside and put him and his family in a place apart. When his mother saw this, she fell into the sorriest of plights and said, "Needs must I go to the Grand Chamberlain, and I hope for the favour of the Subtle, the All-Wise One!" Then she betook herself to the house of the Chamberlain, who was now become Sultan, and found him sitting upon his couch. So she went in to his wife Nuzhet ez Zeman and wept sore and said, "Verily, the dead have no friends. May God never bring you to need and may you cease not to rule justly over rich and poor many days and years! Thine ears have heard and thine eyes have seen all that was ours aforetime of kingship and honour and dignity and wealth and goodliness of life and condition; and now fortune hath turned upon us, and fate and the time have played us false and wrought hostilely with us; wherefore I come to thee, craving thy bounties, I that have been used to confer favours; for when a man dies, women and girls are brought low after him." And she repeated the following verses:

Let it suffice thee that Death is the worker of wonders and know
That the lives which are gone from our sight will never return to us mo'.
The days of the life of mankind are nothing but journeys,
I wot, whose watering-places for aye are mixed with misfortune and woe.
Yet nothing afflicteth my heart like the loss of the good and the great,
Whom the stresses of adverse events have compassed about and laid low.

When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard this, she remembered her brother Zoulmekan and his son Kanmakan and making her draw near to her, said to her, "By Allah, I am now rich and thou poor, and by Allah, we did not leave to seek thee out, but that we feared to wound thy heart, lest thou shouldst deem our gifts to thee an alms. Of a truth, all the good that we now enjoy is from thee and thy husband: so our house is thy house and our place thy place, and all that we have of wealth and goods is thine." Then she clad her richly and appointed her a lodging in the palace, adjoining her own; and she and her son abode therein in all delight of life. Him also did Nuzhet ez Zeman clothe in kings' raiment and gave them handmaids to do them service. After a little, she told her husband of her brother's widow, whereat his eyes filled with tears and he said, "Wouldst thou see the world after thee, look upon the world after another than thyself. Entertain her honourably and enrich her poverty."

Meanwhile, Kanmakan and Kuzia Fekan grew up and flourished, like unto two fruit-laden saplings or two shining moons, till they reached the age of fifteen. As for the girl, she was indeed the fairest of the cloistered maids, with lovely face and smooth cheeks, slender waist, heavy hips and arrowy shape, lips sweeter than old wine and spittle as it were the fountain Selsebil of Paradise, even as saith the poet, describing her:

From her mouth's honeyed dew, meseems, the first-pressed wine is drawn
And on her sweetest lips the grapes, from which it's crushed, are grown;
And when thou makest her to bend, its vines sway in her shape.
Blessed be He who fashioned her and may not be made known!

For indeed God had united in her every attribute of beauty: her shape put to shame the willow-wand and the rose sought grace before her cheeks; the water of her mouth made mock of clear wine, and she gladdened heart and eyes, even as saith of her the poet:

Goodly and glorious she is, and perfect in every charm.
Her eyelashes put to shame kohl and the users of kohl.
Even as a sword in the hand of Ali, the Vicar of God,
So is the glance of her eye to a lover's heart and soul.

As for Kanmakan, he was no less accomplished in grace and excelling in perfection; there was none could match with him in beauty and qualities, and valour shone from between his liquid black eyes, testifying for him and not against him. The hardest hearts inclined to him; and when the tender down of his lips and cheeks began to sprout, many were the poems made in his honour: as for example quoth one:

Unshown was my excuse, till on his cheek the hair
Grew and the darkness crept, bewildered, here and there.
A fawn, when eyes of men are fixed upon his charms,
His glances straight on them a trenchant poniard bare.

And another:

His lovers' souls have woven upon his cheek, I ween,
A net the blood has painted with all its ruddy sheen.
Oh, how at them I marvel! They're martyrs; yet they dwell
In fire, and for their raiment, they're clad in sendal green.

It chanced, one festival day, that Kuzia Fekan went out, surrounded by her handmaids, to visit certain kindred of the court; and indeed beauty encompassed her; the rose of her cheek vied with the mole thereon, her teeth flashed from her smiling lips, like the petals of the camomile flower, and she was as the resplendent moon. Her cousin Kanmakan began to turn about her and devour her with his eyes. Then he took courage and giving loose to his tongue, repeated the following verses:

When shall the mourning heart be healed of anger and disdain?
When, rigour ceasing, shall the lips of union smile again?
Would God I knew if I shall lie, some night, within the arms
Of a beloved, in whose heart is somewhat of my pain!

When she heard this, she was angry and putting on a haughty air, said to him, "Hast thou a mind to shame me among the folk, that thou speakest thus of me in thy verse? By Allah, except thou leave this talk, I will assuredly complain of thee to the Grand Chamberlain, Sultan of Baghdad and Khorassan and lord of justice and equity, whereby disgrace and punishment will fall on thee?" To this Kanmakan made no reply, but returned to Baghdad: and Kuzia Fekan also returned home and complained of her cousin to her mother, who said to her, "O my daughter, belike he meant thee no ill, and is he not an orphan? Indeed, he said nought that implied reproach to thee; so look thou tell none of this, lest it come to the Sultan's ears and he cut short his life and blot out his name and make it even as yesterday, whose remembrance hath passed away." How ever, Kanmakan's case was not hidden from the people, and his love for Kuzia Fekan became known in Baghdad, so that the women talked of it. Moreover, his heart became contracted and his patience waned and he knew not what to do. Then longed he to give vent to the anguish he endured, by reason of the pangs of separation; but he feared her anger and her rebuke: so he recited the following verses:

What though I be fearful, anon, of her wrath,
Whose humour serene is grown troubled and dour,
I bear it with patience, as he who is sick
Endureth a caut'ry in hopes of a cure.

His verses came one day to the knowledge of King Sasan (for so had they named the Grand Chamberlain, on his assumption of the Sultanate), as he sat on his throne, and he was told of the love the prince bore to Kuzia Fekan; whereat he was sore vexed, and going in to his wife Nuzhet ez Zeman, said to her, "Verily, to bring together fire and dry grass is of the greatest of risks; and men may not be trusted with women, so long as eyes cast furtive glances and eyelids quiver. Now thy nephew Kanmakan is come to man's estate and it behoves us to forbid him access to the harem; nor is it less needful that thy daughter be kept from the company of men, for the like of her should be cloistered." "Thou sayest sooth, O wise King," answered she. Next day came Kanmakan, according to his wont, and going in to his aunt, saluted her. She returned his greeting and said to him, "O my son, I have somewhat to say to thee, that I would fain leave unsaid; yet must I tell it thee, in my own despite." "Speak," said he. "Know then," rejoined she, "that thine uncle the Chamberlain, the father of Kuzia Fekan, has heard of thy love for her and the verses thou madest of her and has ordered that she be kept from thee; wherefore, if thou have occasion for aught from us, I will send it to thee from behind the door, and thou shalt not look upon Kuzia Fekan nor return hither from day forth." When he heard this, he withdrew, without speaking a word, and betook himself to his mother, to whom he related what his aunt had said to him. Quoth she, "This all comes of thy much talk. Thou knowest that the news of thy passion for Kuzia Fekan is noised abroad everywhere and how thou eatest their victual and makest love to their daughter." "And who should have her but I?" replied the prince. "She is the daughter of my father's brother and I have the best of rights to her." "These are idle words," rejoined his mother. "Be silent, lest thy talk come to King Sasan's ears and it prove the cause of thy losing her and of thy ruin and increase of affliction. They have not sent us the evening meal to-night and we shall die of want; and were we in any land other than this, we were already dead of the pangs of hunger or the humiliation of begging our bread." When Kanmakan heard his mother's words, his anguish redoubled; his eyes ran over with tears and he sobbed and complained and repeated the following verses:

Give o'er this unrelenting blame, that never lets me be!
My heart loves her to whom it's thrall and may not struggle free.
Look not to me for any jot of patience, for I swear
By God His house, my patience all is clean divorced from me!
Blamers to prudence me exhort; I heed them not, for I
In my avouchment am sincere of love and constancy.
They hinder me by very force from visiting my dear,
Though, by the Merciful, nor rogue am I nor debauchee!
Indeed, my bones, whenas they hear the mention of her name,
Do quake and tremble even as birds from sparrow-hawks that flee.
O daughter of my uncle, say to him who chides at love,
That I, by Allah, am distraught with love-longing for thee.

And he said to his mother, "I can dwell no longer in my aunt's house nor among these people, but will go forth and abide in the corners of the city." So he and his mother left the palace and took up their abode in one of the quarters of the poorer sort: and she used to go from time to time to King Sasan's palace and take thence food for her own and her son's subsistence. One day, Kuzia Fekan took her aside and said to her, "Alas, my aunt, how is it with thy son?" "O my daughter," replied she, "sooth to say, he is tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, being fallen into the snare of thy love." And she repeated to her the verses he had made; whereupon Kuzia Fekan wept and said, "By Allah, I rebuked not him for his words of ill-will or dislike to him, but because I feared the malice of enemies for him. Indeed, my passion for him is double that he feels for me; words fail to set out my yearning for him; and were it not for the extravagances of his tongue and the wanderings of his wit, my father had not cut off his favours from him nor decreed unto him exclusion and prohibition. However, man's fortune is nought but change, and patience in every case is most becoming; peradventure He who ordained our severance will vouchsafe us reunion!" And she repeated the following:

O son of mine uncle, the like of thine anguish
I suffer, the like of thy passion I feel;
Yet hide I from men what I suffer for longing,
And shouldst thou not also thy passion conceal?

When his mother heard this, she thanked her and blessed her: then she left her and returning to her son, told him what his mistress had said; whereupon his desire for her increased. But he took heart, being eased of his despair, and the turmoil of his spirits was quelled. And he said, "By Allah, I desire none but her!" And he repeated the following verses:

Give over thy chiding; I'll hearken no whit to the flouts of my foes:
Indeed I've discovered my secret that nought should have made me disclose;
And she, whose enjoyment I hoped for, alack! is far distant from me;
Mine eyes watch the hours of the dark, whilst she passes the night in repose.

So the days and nights went by, whilst Kanmakan lay tossing upon coals of fire, till he reached the age of seventeen: and indeed his beauty was now come to perfection and his wit had ripened. One night, as he lay awake, he communed with himself and said, "Why should I keep silence, till I consume away, and see not my love? My only fault is poverty: so, by Allah, I will go out from this land and wander afar in the plains and valleys; for my condition in this city is one of misery and I have no friend nor lover in it to comfort me; wherefore I will distract myself by absence from my native land, till I die and am at peace from abasement and tribulation." And he repeated the following verses:

Though my soul weary for distress and flutter fast for woe,
Yet of its nature was it ne'er to buckle to a foe.
Excuse me; for indeed my heart is like a book, whereof
The superscription's nought but tears, that aye unceasing flow.
Behold my cousin, how she seems a maid of Paradise,
A houri come, by Rizwan's grace, to visit us below!

Who seeks the glances of her eyes and dares the scathing stroke
Of their bright swords, shall hardly 'scape their swift and deadly blow.
Lo, I will wander o'er the world, to free my heart from bale
And compensation for its loss upon my soul bestow!
Yea, I will range the fields of war and tilt against the brave
And o'er the champions will I ride roughshod and lay them low.
Then will I come back, glad at heart and rich in goods and store,
Driving the herds and flocks as spoil before me, as I go.

So he went out in the darkness of the night, barefoot, wearing a short-sleeved tunic and a skull-cap of felt seven years old and carrying a cake of dry bread, three days stale, and betook himself to the gate El Arij of Baghdad. Here he waited till the gate opened, when he was the first to go forth; and he went out at random and wandered in the deserts day and night. When the night came, his mother sought him, but found him not, whereupon the world, for all its wideness, was straitened upon her and she took no delight in aught of its good. She looked for him a first day and a second and a third, till ten days were past, but no news of him reached her. Then her breast became contracted and she shrieked and lamented, saying, "O my son, O my delight, thou hast revived my sorrows! Did not what I endured suffice, but thou must depart from the place of my abiding? After thee, I care not for food nor delight in sleep, and but tears and mourning are left me. O my son, from what land shall I call thee? What country hath given thee refuge?" And her sobs burst up, and she repeated the following verses:

We know that, since you went away, by grief and pain we're tried.
The bows of severance on us full many a shaft have plied.
They girt their saddles on and gainst the agonies of death
Left me to strive alone, whilst they across the sand-wastes tried.
Deep in the darkness of the night a ring-dove called to me,
Complaining of her case; but I, "Give o'er thy plaint," replied.
For, by thy life, an if her heart were full of dole, like mine,
She had not put a collar on nor yet her feet had dyed.
My cherished friend is gone and I for lack of him endure
All manner sorrows which with me for ever will abide.

Then she abstained from food and drink and gave herself up to weeping and lamentation. Her grief became known and all the people of the town and country wept with her and said, "Where is thine eye, O Zoulmekan?" And they bewailed the rigour of fate, saying, "What can have befallen him, that he left his native town and fled from the place where his father used to fill the hungry and do justice and mercy?" And his mother redoubled her tears and lamentations, till the news of Kanmakan's departure came to King Sasan through the chief amirs, who said to him, "Verily, he is the son of our (late) King and the grandson of King Omar ben Ennuman and we hear that he hath exiled himself from the country." When King Sasan heard these words, he was wroth with them and ordered one of them to be hanged, whereat the fear of him fell upon the hearts of the rest and they dared not speak one word. Then he called to mind all the kindness that Zoulmekan had done him and how he had commended his son to his care; wherefore he grieved for Kanmakan and said "Needs must I have search made

for him in all countries." So he summoned Terkash and bade him choose a hundred horse and go in quest of the prince. Accordingly he went out and was absent ten days, after which he returned and said, "I can learn no tidings of him and have come on no trace of him, nor can any tell me aught of him." With this, King Sasan repented him of that which he had done with Kanmakan; whilst his mother abode without peace or comfort, nor would patience come at her call: and thus twenty heavy days passed over her.

To return to Kanmakan. When he left Baghdad, he went forth, perplexed about his case and knowing not whither he should go: so he fared on alone into the desert for the space of three days and saw neither footman nor horseman. Sleep deserted him and his wakefulness redoubled, for he pined for his people and his country. So he wandered on, eating of the herbs of the earth and drinking of its waters and resting under its trees at the hour of the noontide heats, till he came to another road, into which he turned and following it other three days, came to a land of green fields and smiling valleys, abounding in the fruits of the earth. It had drunken of the beakers of the clouds, to the sound of the voices of the turtle and the ring-dove, till its hill-sides were enamelled with verdure and its fields were fragrant. At this sight, Kanmakan recalled his father's city Baghdad, and for excess of emotion repeated the following verses:

I wander on, in hope I may return
Some day, yet know not when that day shall be.
What drove me forth was that I found no means
To fend awe, the ills that pressed on me.

Then he wept, but presently wiped away his tears and ate of the fruits of the earth. Then he made his ablutions and prayed the ordained prayers that he had neglected all this time; after which he sat in that place, resting, the whole day. When the night came, he lay down and slept till midnight, when he awoke and heard a man's voice repeating the following verses:

Life unto me is worthless, except I see the shine
Of the flashing teeth of my mistress and eke her face divine.
The bishops in the convents pray for her day and night
And in the mosques the imams fall prone before her shrine.
Death's easier than the rigours of a beloved one,
Whose image never cheers me, whenas I lie and pine.
O joy of boon-companions, when they together be
And lover and beloved in one embrace entwine!
Still more so in the season of Spring, with all its flowers,
What time the world is fragrant with blossoms sweet and fine.
Up, drinker of the vine-juice, and forth, for seest thou not
Earth gilt with blooms and waters all welling forth like wine?

When Kanmakan heard this, it revived his sorrows; his tears ran down his cheeks like rivers and flames of fire raged in his heart. He rose to see who it was that spoke, but saw none, for the thickness of the dark; whereupon passion increased on him and he was alarmed and restlessness possessed him. So he descended to the bottom of the

valley and followed the banks of the stream, till he heard one sighing heavily, and the same voice recited the followed verses:

Though thou have used to dissemble the love in thy heart for fear,
Give on the day of parting, free course to sob and tear.
'Twixt me and my beloved were vows of love and troth;
So cease I for her never to long and wish her near.
My heart is full of longing; the zephyr, when it blows,
To many a thought of passion stirs up my heavy cheer.
Doth she o' the anklets hold me in mind, whilst far away,
Though between me and Saada were solemn vows and dear?
Shall the nights e'er unite us, the nights of dear delight,
And shall we tell our suff'rings, each in the other's ear?
"Thou seduced by passion for us," quoth she, and I,
"God keep Thy lovers all! How many have fallen to thy spear?"
If mine eyes taste the pleasance of sleep, while she's afar,
May God deny their vision her beauties many a year!
O the wound in mine entrails! I see no cure for it
Save love-delight and kisses from crimson lips and clear.

When Kanmakan heard this, yet saw no one, he knew that the speaker was a lover like unto himself, debarred the company of her whom he loved; and he said to himself; "It were fitting that this man should lay his head to mine and become my comrade in this my strangerhood." Then he hailed the speaker and cried out to him, saying "O thou that goest in the sombre night, draw near to me and tell me thy history. Haply thou shalt find in me one who will succour thee in shine affliction." "O thou that answerest my complaint and wouldst know my history," rejoined the other, "who art thou amongst the cavaliers? Art thou a man or a genie? Answer me speedily ere thy death draw near, for these twenty days have I wandered in this desert and have seen no one nor heard any voice but thine." When Kanmakan heard this, he said to himself, "His case is like unto mine, for I also have wandered twenty days in the desert and have seen none nor heard any voice: but I will make him no answer till the day." So he was silent and the other called out to him, saying, "O thou that callest, if thou be of the Jinn, go in peace, and if thou be a man, stay awhile, till the day break and the night flee with the dark." So they abode each in his own place, reciting verses and weeping with abundant tears, till the light of day appeared and the night departed with the darkness. Then Kanmakan looked at the other and found him a youth of the Bedouin Arabs, clad in worn clothes and girt-with a rusty sword, and the signs of passion were apparent on him. So he went up to him and accosting him, saluted him. The Bedouin returned the salute and greeted him courteously, but made little account of him, for what he saw of his tender years and his condition, which was that of a poor man. So he said to him, "O youth, of what tribe art thou and to whom art thou kin among the Arabs? What is thy history and wherefore goest thou by night, after the fashion of champions? Indeed, thou spokest to me in the night words such as are spoken of none but magnanimous cavaliers and lionhearted warriors; and now thy life is in my hand. But I have compassion on thee by reason of thy tender age; so I will make thee my companion, and thou shalt go with me, to do me service." When Kanmakan heard

him speak thus unseemly, after what he had shown him of skill in verse, he knew that he despised him and thought to presume with him; so he answered him with soft and dulcet speech, saying, "O chief of the Arabs, leave my tenderness of age and tell me thy story and why thou wanderest by night in the desert, reciting verses. Thou talkest of my serving thee; who then art thou and what moved thee to speak thus?" "Harkye, boy!" answered the Bedouin, "I am Subbah, son of Remmah ben Hummam. My people are of the Arabs of Syria, and I have a cousin called Nejmeh, who brings delight to all that look on her. My father died, and I was brought up in the house of my uncle, the father of Nejmeh; but when I grew up and my cousin became a woman, they excluded her from me and me from her, seeing that I was poor and of little estate. However, the chiefs of the Arabs and the heads of the tribes went in to her father and rebuked him, and he was abashed before them and consented to give me his daughter, but upon condition that I should bring him as her dower fifty head of horses and fifty dromedaries and fifty camels laden with wheat and a like number laden with barley, together with ten male and ten female slaves. The dowry he imposed upon me was beyond my competence; for he exacted more than the due marriage portion. So now I am travelling from Syria to Irak, having passed twenty days without seeing other than thyself, and I mean to go to Baghdad, that I may note what rich and considerable merchants start thence. Then I will go out in their track and seize their goods, for I will kill their men and drive off their camels with their loads. But what manner of man art thou?" "Thy case is like unto mine," replied Kanmakan; "save that my complaint is more grievous than thine; for my cousin is a king's daughter, and the dowry of which thou hast spoken would not content her family, nor would they be satisfied with the like of that from me." "Surely," said Subbah, "thou art mad or light-headed for excess of passion! How can thy cousin be a king's daughter? Thou hast no sign of princely rank on thee, for thou art but a mendicant." "O chief of the Arabs," rejoined Kanmakan, "marvel not at my case, for it is due to the shifts of fortune; and if thou desire proof of me, behold, I am Kanmakan, son of King Zoulmekan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad and Khorassan, and fortune hath played the tyrant with me; for my father died and (my uncle) King Sasan took the Sultanate. So I fled forth from Baghdad, secretly, lest any should see me, and have wandered twenty days, without seeing any but thyself. So now I have discovered to thee my case, and my history is as thy history and my need as thy need." When Subbah heard this, he cried out and said, "O joy! I have attained my desire! I will have no booty this day but thyself; for, since thou art of the lineage of kings and hast come out in the habit of a beggar, it cannot be but thy people will seek thee, and if they find thee in any one's hand, they will ransom thee with much treasure. So put thy hands behind thee, O my lad, and walk before me." "Softly, O brother of the Arabs," answered Kanmakan; "my people will not ransom me with silver nor with gold, no, not with a brass dirhem; and I am a poor man, having with me neither much nor little: so leave this behaviour with me and take me to comrade. Let us go forth of the land of Irak and wander over the world, so haply we may win dower and marriage-portion and enjoy our cousins' embraces." When Subbah heard this, he was angry; his arrogance and heat redoubled and he said, "Out on thee, O vilest of dogs! Dost thou bandy words with me? Turn thy back, or I will chastise thee." At this Kanmakan smiled and answered, "Why should I turn my back for thee? Is there no equity in thee? Dost thou not fear to bring reproach

upon the Arabs by driving a man like myself captive, in dishonour and humiliation, before thou hast proved him in the field, to know if he be a warrior or a coward?" The Bedouin laughed and replied, "By Allah, I wonder at thee! Thou art a boy in years, but old in talk. These words should come from none but a doughty champion: what wantest thou of equity? "If thou wilt have me be thy captive, to serve thee," said Kanmakan, "throw down thine arms and put off thine upper clothes and wrestle with me; and whichever of us throws the other shall have his will of him and make him his servant." The other laughed and said, "I think thy much talk denotes the nearness of thy death." Then he threw down his sword and tucking up his skirt, drew near unto Kanmakan, and they gripped each other. But the Bedouin found that Kanmakan had the better of him and outweighed him, as the quintal outweighs the dinar; and he looked at his legs and saw that they were as firmly planted as two well-builded minarets or two tent-poles driven into the ground or two immovable mountains. So he knew that he himself was not able to cope with him and repented of having come to wrestle with him, saying in himself, "Would I had fallen on him with my weapons!" Then Kanmakan took hold of him and mastering him shook him, till he thought his guts would burst in his belly and roared out, "Hold thy hand, O boy!" He heeded him not, but shook him again, and lifting him from the ground, made with him towards the stream, that he might throw him therein: whereupon the Bedouin cried out, saying, "O valiant man, what wilt thou do with me?" Quoth Kanmakan, "I mean to throw thee into this stream: it will carry thee to the Tigris. The Tigris will bring thee to the river Isa and the Isa to the Euphrates, and the Euphrates will bear thee to thine own country; so thy people will see thee and know thy manlihead and the sincerity of thy passion." When Subbah heard this, he cried out and said, "O champion of the desert, do not with me the deed of the wicked, but let me go, by the life of thy cousin, the jewel of the fair!" With this, Kanmakan set him down; and when he found himself at liberty, he ran to his sword and buckler and taking them up, stood plotting in himself treachery and a sudden attack on Kanmakan. The latter read his intent in his eye and said to him, "I know what is in thy mind, now thou hast hold of thy sword and buckler. Thou hast neither strength nor skill for wrestling, but thou thinkest that, wert thou on horseback and couldst wheel about and ply me with thy sword, I had been slain long ago. But I will give thee thy will, so there may be no despite left in thy heart. Give me the buckler and fall on me with thy sword; either I shall kill thee or thou me." "Here it is," answered Subbah and throwing him the shield, drew his sword and rushed at him. Kanmakan took the buckler in his right hand and began to fend himself with it, whilst Subbah struck at him with the sword, saying at each stroke, "This is the finishing one!" But Kanmakan received all his blows on his buckler and they fell harmless, though he did not strike back again, having no weapon of offence; and Subbah ceased not to smite at him, till his arm was weary. When the prince saw this, he rushed at him and seizing him in his arms, shook him and threw him to the ground. Then he turned him over on his face and binding his arms behind him with the hangers of his sword, began to drag him by the feet towards the river: whereupon cried Subbah, "What wilt thou do with me, O youth and cavalier of the age and hero of the field?" "Did I not tell thee," answered Kanmakan, "that it was my intent to send thee by the river to thy people and thy tribe, lest their hearts be troubled for thee and thou miss thy cousin's bride-feast?" At this, Subbah shrieked aloud and wept and said, "Do

not thus, O champion of the time! Let me go and make me one of thy servants." And he wept and wailed and recited the following verses:

An outcast from my folk (how long my exile lasts!) am I.
God I knew if I in this my strangerhood shall die!
I perish, and my folk know not the place where I am slain;
I fall in exile, far away from her for whom I sigh.

Kanmakan had compassion on him and said to him, "Make a covenant with me and swear to be a true comrade to me and to bear me company whithersoever I may go." "It is well," replied Subbah and took the required oath. So Kanmakan loosed him, and he rose and would have kissed the prince's hand; but he forbade him. Then the Bedouin opened his wallet and taking out three barley-cakes, laid them before Kanmakan, and they both sat down on the bank of the stream to eat. When they had done eating, they made the ablution and prayed, after which they sat talking of what had befallen each of them from his people and the shifts of fortune. Then said Kanmakan, "Whither dost thou now intend?" "I purpose," replied Subbah, "to repair to Baghdad, thy native town, and abide there, till God vouchsafe me the marriage-portion." "Up then," rejoined the other, "and to the road! I abide here." So the Bedouin took leave of him and set out for Baghdad, whilst Kanmakan remained behind, saying to himself, "O my soul, how shall I return poor and needy? By Allah, I will not go back empty-handed, and if God please, I will assuredly work my deliverance!" Then he went to the stream and made his ablutions and prayed to his Lord, laying his brow in the dust and saying, "O my God, Thou that makest the dew to fall and feedest the worm in the rock, vouchsafe me, I beseech Thee, my livelihood, of Thy power and the graciousness of Thy compassion!" Then he pronounced the salutation that closes prayer and sat, turning right and left and knowing not which way to take. Presently, he saw, making towards him, a horseman whose back was bowed and who let the reins droop. He sat still and after awhile the horseman came up to him, when, behold, he was at the last gasp and made sure of death, for he was grievously wounded. The tears streamed down his cheeks, like water from the mouths of skins, and he said to Kanmakan, "O chief of the Arabs, take me to friend, whilst I live, for thou wilt not find my like, and give me a little water, harmful though the drinking of water be to a wounded man, especially whilst the blood is flowing and the life with it. If I live, I will give thee what shall heal thy distress and thy poverty; and if I die, mayst thou be blessed for thy good intent!" Now this horseman had under him a stallion of the most generous breed, with legs like shafts of marble, the tongue fails to describe it; and when Kanmakan looked at it, he was seized with longing admiration and said in himself, "Verily, the like of this stallion is not to be found in our time." Then he helped the rider to alight and entreated him friendly and gave him a little water to drink; after which he waited till he was rested and said to him, "Who has dealt thus with thee?" "I will tell thee the truth of the case," answered the wounded man. "I am a horse-thief and all my life I have occupied myself with stealing and snatching horses, night and day, and my name is Ghessan, surnamed the plague of all stables and horses. I heard tell of this stallion, that he was with King Afridoun in the land of the Greeks, where they had named him El Catoul and surnamed him El Mejnoun. So I journeyed to Constantinople on his account, and whilst I was watching my opportunity to get at

him, there came out an old woman, much considered among the Greeks and whose word is law with them, a past mistress in all manner of trickery, by name Shewahi Dhat ed Dewahi. She had with her this stallion and ten slaves, no more, to attend on her and it, and was bound for Baghdad, there to sue for peace and pardon from King Sasan. So I went out in their track, thinking to get the horse, and ceased not to follow them, but was unable to get at the stallion, by reason of the strict guard kept by the slaves, till they reached this country and I feared lest they should enter the city of Baghdad. As I was casting about to steal the horse, behold, a great cloud of dust arose and covered the prospect. Presently it opened and disclosed fifty horsemen, banded together to waylay merchants and led by a captain by name Kehrdash, like a raging lion, yea, in battle a lion that lays heroes flat even as a carpet. They bore down on the old woman and her company, shouting and surrounding them, nor was it long before they bound her and the ten slaves and made off with their captives and the horse, rejoicing. When I saw this, I said to myself, 'My toil is wasted and I have not attained my desire.' However, I waited to see how the affair would result, and when the old woman found herself a captive, she wept and said to Kehrdash, 'O doughty champion and invincible warrior, what wilt thou do with an old woman and slaves, now thou hast thy will of the horse?' And she beguiled him with soft words and promises that she would send him horses and cattle, till he released her and her slaves. Then he went his way, he and his comrades, and I followed them to this country, watching my opportunity, till at last I succeeded in stealing the horse, whereupon I mounted him and drawing a whip from my wallet, struck him with it. When the robbers heard this, they came out on me and surrounded me on all sides and shot arrows and cast spears at me, whilst I stuck fast on the horse's back and he defended me with his hoofs, till at last he shot out with me from amongst them, like an arrow from the bow or a shooting star, after I had gotten a grievous wound in the press of the battle. Since that time, I have passed three days in the saddle, without tasting food or sleep, so that my strength is wasted and the world is become of no account to me. But thou hast dealt kindly with me and hast had pity on me: and I see thee naked of body and sorrowful of aspect; yet are the marks of gentle breeding manifest on thee. So tell me, what and whence art thou and whither art thou bound?" "My name is Kanmakan," answered the prince, "son of King Zoulmekan, son of King Omar ben Ennuman. My father died, and a base man seized the throne after his death and became king over great and small." Then he told him all his story from first to last; and the thief said to him, (and indeed he had compassion on him), "By Allah, thou art a man of great account and exceeding nobility and thou shalt surely win to high estate and become the first cavalier of thy time! If thou canst lift me into the saddle and mount behind me and bring me to my country, thou shalt have honour in this world and a reward on the Day of calling of men one to another; for I have no strength left to hold myself in the saddle; and if I die by the way, the steed is thine; for thou art worthier of it than any other." "By Allah," said Kanmakan, "if I could carry thee on my shoulders or share my life with thee, I would do so, without the horse! For I am of those that love to do good and succour the afflicted. So make ready to set out and put thy trust in the Subtle, the All-Wise." And he would have lifted him on to the horse and set forward, trusting in God the Succourable. But the robber said, "Wait for me a little." Then he closed his eyes and opening his hands, said, "I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God! O Glorious One, pardon

me my mortal sin, for none can pardon mortal sins save Thou!" And he made ready for death and recited the following verses:

I've ranged through all countries, oppressing mankind,
And in drinking of wine I have wasted my days.
I've waded through torrents, the horses to steal
And I've used with my guile the high places to raze.
My case is right grievous and great is my guilt,
And Catoul, alas! is the end of my ways.
I hoped of this horse I should get my desire;
But vain was my journey and vain my essays.
All my life I have stolen the steeds, and my death
Was decreed of the Lord of all power and all praise.
So, in fine, for the good of the stranger, the poor,
The orphan, I've wearied in toils and affrays.

When he had finished, he closed his eyes and opened his mouth; then giving one sob, he departed this life. Kanmakan rose and dug a grave and laid him in the earth. Then he went up to the stallion and kissed it and wiped its face and rejoiced with an exceeding joy, saying, "None has the like of this horse, no, not even King Sasan." So much for Kanmakan.

Meanwhile, news came to King Sasan that the Vizier Dendan and half the army had thrown off their allegiance to him and sworn that they would have no king but Kanmakan and the Vizier had bound the troops by a solemn covenant and had gone with them to the islands of India and Ethiopia, where he had gathered together a host like the swollen sea, none could tell its van from its rear. Moreover, he was resolved to make for Baghdad and possess himself of the kingdom and slay all who should let him, having sworn not to return the sword of war to its sheath, till he had set Kanmakan on the throne. When this news came to Sasan, he was drowned in the sea of melancholy, knowing that the whole state had furled against him, great and small, and trouble and anxiety were sore on him. So he opened his treasuries and distributed that which was therein among his officers and prayed for Kanmakan's return, that he might draw his heart to him with fair usage and bounty and make him commander of those troops that remained faithful to him, hoping thus to prop his [falling] power. The news of this reached Kanmakan by the merchants; so he returned in haste to Baghdad, riding on the aforesaid stallion, and the news of his coming reached King Sasan, as he sat perplexed upon his throne; whereupon he despatched all the troops and head-men of Baghdad to meet him. So all who were in Baghdad went out to meet the Prince and escorted him to the palace and kissed the threshold, whilst the damsels and eunuchs went in to his mother and gave her the good tidings of his return. She came to him and kissed him between the eyes, but he said to her, "O my mother, let me go to my uncle King Sasan, who hath overwhelmed us with favours and benefits." Then he repaired to the palace, whilst all the people marvelled at the beauty of the stallion and said, "No king is like unto this man." So he went in to King Sasan, who rose to receive him; and Kanmakan saluted him and kissing his hands, offered him the horse as a present. The King bade him welcome, saying, "Welcome and fair welcome to my son

Kanmakan! By Allah, the world hath been straitened on me by reason of thine absence, but praised be God for thy safety!" And Kanmakan called down blessings on him. Then the King looked at the stallion and knowing it for the very horse, Catoul by name, that he had seen in such and such a year, whilst at the leaguer of Constantinople with King Zoulmekan, said to Kanmakan, "I! thy father could have come by this horse, he would have bought him with a thousand chargers of price: but now let the honour return to thee who deservest it. We accept the steed and return it to thee as a gift, for thou hast more right to it than any man alive, being the prince of cavaliers." Then he bade bring forth for him dresses of honour and led horses and appointed him the chief lodging in the palace, giving him much money and showing him the utmost honour, for that he feared the issue of the Vizier Dendan's doings. At this Kanmakan rejoiced and despondency and humiliation ceased from him. Then he went to his house and said to his mother, "O my mother, how is it with my cousin?" "By Allah, O my son," answered she, "my concern for thine absence hath distracted me from any other, even to thy beloved; especially as she was the cause of thine exile and separation from me." Then he complained to her of his sufferings, saying, "O my mother, go to her and speak with her; haply she will favour me with a sight of her and dispel my anguish." "O my son," replied his mother, "idle desires abase the necks of men; so put away from thee this thought that will but lead to vexation; for I will not go to her nor carry her such a message." Thereupon he told her what he had heard from the horse-thief concerning Dhat ed Dewahi, how she was then in their land, on her way to Baghdad, and added, "It was she who slew my uncle and grandfather, and needs must I avenge them and wipe out our reproach." Then he left her and repaired to an old woman, by name Saadaneh, a cunning, perfidious and pernicious beldam, past mistress in all kinds of trickery and deceit To her he complained of what he suffered for love of his cousin Kuzia Fekan and begged her to go to her and implore her favour for him. "I hear and obey," answered the old woman and betaking herself to Kuzia Fekan's palace, interceded with her in his favour. Then she returned to him and said, "Thy cousin salutes thee and will visit thee this night at the middle hour." At this he rejoiced and sat down to await the fulfilment of his cousin's promise. At the appointed hour she came to him, wrapped in a veil of black silk, and aroused him from sleep, saying, "How canst thou pretend to love me, when thou art sleeping, heart-free, after the goodliest fashion?" So he awoke and said, "O desire of my heart, by Allah, I slept not but hoping that thine image might visit me in dreams!" Then she chid him tenderly and repeated the following verses:

Wert thou indeed a lover true and leal,
Thou hadst not suffered slumber on thee creep.
O thou who feign'st to walk the ways of love,
The watch of passion and desire to keep,
Son of my uncle, sure the eyes of those
Who're love-distraught know not the taste of sleep.

When he heard his cousin's words, he was abashed before her and rose and excused himself. Then they embraced and complained to each other of the anguish of separation; and thus they did, till the dawn broke and the day flowered forth over the lands; when she rose to depart. At this, Kanmakan wept and sighed and repeated the following verses:

She came to me, after her pride had driven me to despair,
She in whose lips the teeth as the pearls of her necklace were.
I kissed her a thousand times and clipped her close in my arms
And lay all night with my cheek pressed close to the cheek of the fair;
Till the day, that must sever our loves, as 'twere the blade of a sword
That flashes forth of its sheath, gleamed out on us unaware.

Then she took leave of him and returned to her palace. Now she let certain of her damsels into her secret, and one of them told the King, who went in to Kuzia Fekan and drawing his sabre upon her, would have slain her: but her mother Nuzhet ez Zeman entered and said to him, 'By Allah, do her no hurt, lest it be noised among the folk and thou become a reproach among the kings of the age! Thou knowest that Kanmakan is no base-born wretch, but a man of honour and nobility, who would not do aught that could shame him, and she was reared with him. So take patience and be not hasty; for verily the report is spread abroad, among the people of the palace and all the folk of the city, how the Vizier Dendan hath levied troops from all countries and is on his way hither to make Kanmakan king." "By Allah," said the King, "needs must I cast him into a calamity, such that neither earth shall bear him nor sky shadow him! I did but speak him fair and entreat him with favour, because of my subjects and officers, lest they should turn to him; but thou shalt see what will betide." Then he left her and went out to order the affairs of the kingdom.

Next day, Kanmakan came in to his mother and said to her, "O my mother, I am resolved to go forth a-raiding in quest of booty. I will waylay caravans and seize horses and flocks and slaves black and white, and as soon as my store is waxed great and my case is bettered, I will demand my cousin Kuzia Fekan in marriage of my uncle." "O my son," replied she, "of a truth the goods of men are not as a wastril camel, ready to thy hand; but between thee and them are sword-strokes and lance-thrusts and men that eat wild beasts and lay waste countries and snare lions and trap lynxes." Quoth he, "God forbid that I should turn from my purpose, till I have attained my desire!" Then he despatched the old woman to Kuzia Fekan, to tell her that he was about to set out in quest of a dowry befitting her, saying, "Thou must without fail bring me an answer from her." "I hear and obey," repled the old woman and going forth, presently returned with Kuzia Fekan's answer, which was that she would come to him at midnight. So he abode awake till one half of the night was past, when disquietude got hold on him, and

before he was aware, she came in to him, saying, "My life be thy ransom from wakefulness!" And he sprang up to receive her, exclaiming, "O desire of my heart, my life be thy ransom from all things evil!" Then he acquainted her with his intent, and she wept; but he said, "Weep not, O my cousin; for I beseech Him who decreed our separation to vouchsafe us reunion and felicity." Then Kanmakan went in to his mother and took leave of her, after which he girt on his sword and donned turban and chin-band and mounting his horse Catoul, rode through the streets of Baghdad, till he reached the gate of the city. Here he found his comrade Subbah ben Remmah going out, who, seeing him, ran to his stirrup and saluted him. He returned his greeting, and Subbah said to him, "O my brother, how camest thou by this steed and sword and clothes, whilst I up to now have gotten nothing but my sword and target?" Quoth Kanmakan, "The hunter returns not but with game after the measure of his intent. A little after thy departure, fortune came to me: so now wilt thou go with me and work thine intent in my company and journey with me in this desert?" "By the Lord of the Kaabeh," replied Subbah, "from this time forth I will call thee nought but 'My lord!'" Then he ran on before the horse with his sword hanging from his neck and his budget between his shoulder-blades, and they pushed on into the desert four days' space, eating of the gazelles they caught and drinking of the water of the springs. On the fifth day, they came in sight of a high hill, at whose foot was a Spring encampment and a running stream. The knolls and hollows were filled with camels and oxen and sheep and horses, and little children played about the cattle-folds. When Kanmakan saw this, he was right glad and his breast was filled with joy; so he addressed himself to battle, that he might take the camels and the cattle, and said to Subbah, "Come, let us fall upon this good, whose owners have left it unguarded, and do battle for it with near and far, so haply it may fall to our lot and we will share it between us." "O my lord," replied Subbah, "verily they to whom these herds belong are much people, and among them are doughty horsemen and footmen. If we cast ourselves into this great danger, neither of us will return to his people; but we shall both be cut off utterly and leave our cousins desolate." When Kanmakan heard this, he laughed and knew that he was a coward: so he left him and rode down the hill, intent on rapine, shouting and chanting aloud the following verses:

O the house of En Numan is mickle of might!
We're the champions with swords on the squadrons that smite!
When the fury of battle flames high in our hearts,
We're aye to be found in the front of the fight.
The poor man amongst us may slumber secure
Nor see the foul favour of want or upright.
I hope for the succour of Him in whose hand
Is the Kingdom, the Maker of body and spright.

Then he rushed upon the cattle, like a camel in heat, and drove them all, oxen and sheep and horses and camels, before him. Therewith the slaves ran at him with their bright swords and their long lances; and at their head was a Turkish horseman, a stout champion, doughty in battle and onset and skilled to wield the tawny spear and the white sabre. He drove at Kanmakan, saying, "Out on thee! Knewest thou to whom these cattle belong, thou hadst not done this thing! Know that they are the good of the

Greek band, the champions of the sea and the Circassian troop, and they are a hundred cavaliers, all stern warriors, who have forsworn the commandment of all kings. There has been stolen from them a steed of great price, and they have vowed not to return hence, but with it." When Kanmakan heard these words, he cried out, saying, "O losers, this that I bestride is the steed itself, after which ye seek and for whose sake ye would do battle with me! So come out against me, all of you at once, and do your dourest!" So saying, he cried out between Catoul's ears and he ran at them, as he were a ghoul. Then Kanmakan drove at the Turk and smote him and overthrew him and let out his life; after which he turned upon a second and a third and a fourth and bereft them also of life. When the slaves saw this, they were afraid of him, and he cried out and said to them, "Ho, sons of whores, drive out the cattle and the horses, or I will dye my spear in your blood!" So they untethered the cattle and began to drive them out, and Subbah came down to Kanmakan, crying out with a loud voice and rejoicing greatly; when, behold, there arose a cloud of dust and grew till it covered the prospect, and there appeared under it a hundred cavaliers, like fierce lions. With this Subbah fled up on to the hill, that he might gaze upon the fight in safety, saying, "I am no warrior but in sport and jest." Then the hundred cavaliers made towards Kanmakan from all sides, and one of them accosted him, saying, "Whither goest thou with this good?" "I have made prize of them," replied he, "and am carrying them away; and I forbid you from them, for know that he who is before you is a terrible lion and an illustrious champion and a sword that cuts wherever it turns!" When the horseman heard this, he looked at Kanmakan and saw that he was a cavalier as he were a strong lion, whilst his face was as the full moon rising on its fourteenth night, and valour shone from between his eyes. Now this horseman was the chief of the hundred horse, and his name was Kehrdash; and what he saw in Kanmakan of the perfection of martial grace, together with surpassing beauty and comeliness, reminded him of a mistress of his, by name Fatin. Now this Fatin was one of the fairest of women in face, for God had given her beauty and grace and charms and noble qualities of all kinds, such as the tongue fails to describe. Moreover, the cavaliers of the tribe feared her prowess and the champions of the land stood in awe of her, and she had sworn that she would not marry nor give any possession of her, except he should conquer her, saying to her father, "None shall approach me, except he master me in the field and the stead of war." Kehrdash was one of her suitors, and when the news reached him of the vow she had taken, he thought scorn to fight with a girl, fearing reproach; and one of his friends said to him, "Thou art accomplished in beauty and manly qualities; so if thou contend with her, even though she be stronger than thou, thou must needs overcome her, for when she sees thy beauty and grace, she will be discomfited before thee, seeing that women by nature incline unto men, as is not unknown to thee." Nevertheless he refused and would not contend with her, albeit indeed she loved him, for what she had heard of his beauty and velour: and he ceased not to abstain from her thus, till he met with Kanmakan, as hath been set down. Now he took the prince for his beloved Fatin and was afraid; so he went up to him and said, "Out on thee, O Fatin! Thou comest to show me thy prowess; but now alight from thy steed, that I may talk with thee, for I have driven off these cattle and waylaid horsemen and champions, all for the sake of thy beauty and grace, which are without peer. So now thou shalt marry me, that kings' daughters may wait on thee, and thou shalt become queen of these countries." When

Kanmakan heard this, the fires of wrath flamed up in him and he cried out, saying, "Out on thee, O dog of the barbarians! Leave thy raving of Fatin and come to cutting and thrusting, for eftsoon thou shalt lie in the dust." So saying, he began to wheel about him and offer battle. Then Kehrdash observed him more closely and saw that he was indeed a doughty knight and a stalwart champion; and the error of his thought was manifest to him, whenas he saw the tender down that adorned his cheeks, as it were myrtles springing from the heart of a red rose. And he feared his onslaught and said to those that were with him, "Out on you! Let one of you attack him and show him the keen sword and the quivering spear; for know that for a company to do battle with one man is foul shame, even though he be a doughty man of war and an invincible champion." With this, there ran at Kanmakan a lion-like horseman, mounted on a black horse with white feet and a star on his forehead, the bigness of a dirhem, astounding sight and wit, as he were Abjer, that was Antar's steed: even as saith of him the poet:

See, where the stallion yonder comes, that with a fierce delight
Drives to the battle, mingling earth with heaven in his might.
Meseems, the morning smote his brow and to avenge himself
Thereon, he plunges straight and deep into its heart of light.

He rushed upon Kanmakan, who met him in mid-career, and they wheeled about awhile in the dint of battle, exchanging blows such as confound the wit and dim the sight, till Kanmakan took the other at vantage and smote him a swashing blow, that shore through turban and iron skull-cap and reached his head, and he fell from his saddle, as a camel falls, when he rolls over. Then a second came out to him and a third and a fourth and a fifth, and he did with them all as he had done with the first. Thereupon the rest rushed upon him, all at once, for indeed they were wild with rage and concern; but it was not long before he had transfixed them all with the point of his lance. When Kehrdash saw his feats of arms, he knew that he was stout of heart and concluded that he was the phoenix of the champions and heroes of the age: so he feared death and said to Kanmakan, "I give thee thy life and pardon thee the blood of my comrades, for I have compassion on thee by reason of thy fair youth. So take what thou wilt of the cattle and go thy ways, for life is better for thee [than death]." "Thou lackest not of the generosity of the noble," replied Kanmakan; "but leave this talk and flee for thy life and reck not of blame nor think to get back the booty; but take the straight path for thine own safety." When Kehrdash heard this, he waxed exceeding wroth and his anger moved him to that which was the cause of his death; so he said to Kanmakan, "Out on thee! Knewest thou who I am, thou wouldst not talk thus in the open field. I am the doughty lion known as Kehrdash, he who despoils great kings and waylays all the travellers and seizes the merchants' goods. Yonder steed under thee is what I am seeking and I call upon thee to tell me how thou camest by it." "Know," replied Kanmakan, "that this steed was being carried to my uncle King Sasan in the company of a certain old woman, attended by ten slaves, when thou fellest upon her and tookest the horse from her; and I have a debt of blood against this old woman for the sake of my grandfather King Omar ben Ennuman and my uncle King Sherkan." "Out on thee!" said Kehrdash. "Who is thy father, O thou that hast no (known) mother?" "Know," answered the prince, "that I am Kanmakan, son of Zoulmekan, son

of Omar ben Ennuman." Quoth Kehrdash, "Thy perfection cannot be denied, nor yet the union in thee of martial virtue and comeliness: but go in peace, for thy father showed us favour and bounty." "By Allah, O vile wretch," rejoined Kanmakan, "I will not so far honour thee as to overcome thee in the open field!" At this the Bedouin was wroth and they drove at one another, shouting aloud, whilst their horses pricked up their ears and raised their tails. They clashed together with such a dint, that it seemed to each as if the heavens were split in sunder, and strove like two butting rams, smiting one another with thick-coming spear-strokes. Presently, Kehrdash aimed a blow at Kanmakan; but he evaded it and turning upon the brigand, smote him in the breast, that the head of the spear issued from his back. Then he collected the horses and cattle and cried out to the slaves, saying, "Up and drive them off briskly!" With this down came Subbah and accosting Kanmakan, said to him, "Thou hast quitted thee right well, O hero of the age! I prayed God for thee and He heard my prayer." Then he cut off Kehrdash's head and Kanmakan laughed and said, "Out on thee, Subbah! I thought thee a man of valour." Quoth the Bedouin, "Forget not thy slave in the division of the spoil, so haply I may win therewith to marry my cousin Nejmeh." "Thou shalt surely have a share in it," answered Kanmakan, "but now keep watch over the booty and the slaves." Then they set out and journeyed night and day till they drew near Baghdad, and all the troops heard of Kanmakan and saw the booty and the brigand's head on the point of Subbah's spear. Moreover, the merchants knew Kehrdash's head and rejoiced, for he was a noted highwayman, saying, "Allah hath rid mankind of him!" And they marvelled at his death and called down blessings on his slayer. Then all the people of Baghdad came to Kanmakan, seeking to know what had befallen him, and he told them what had passed, whereupon they were taken with awe of him and all the champions and men of war feared him. After this, he drove his spoil to the palace and planting the spear, on which was Kehrdash's head, before the gate, gave largesse to the people of camels and horses so that they loved him and all hearts inclined to him. Then he took Subbah and lodged him in a spacious dwelling, giving him part of the booty; after which he went in to his mother and told her all that had befallen him. Meanwhile the news of him reached the King, who rose and shutting himself up with his chief officers, said to them, "I wish to reveal to you my secret and acquaint you with the truth of my case. Know that Kanmakan will be the cause of our expulsion from the kingdom; for he has slain Kehrdash, albeit he had with him the tribes of the Turks and the Kurds, and our affair with him will assuredly result in our destruction, seeing that the most part of our troops are his kinsmen and ye know what the Vizier Dendan hath done; how he refuses to recognize me, after all the favours I have done him, and is become a traitor to his faith. Indeed, it has come to my knowledge that he hath levied an army in the provinces and goeth about to make Kanmakan king, for that the kingdom was his father's and his grandfather's before him, and he will surely slay me without mercy." When they heard this, they replied, "O King, verily he is unequal to this, and did we not know him to have been reared by thee, not one of us would take thought to him. We are at thy commandment; if thou wilt have us slay him, we will do so, and if thou wilt have him kept at a distance, we will chase him away." When King Sasan heard this, he said, "Verily, it were wise to slay him: but needs must ye take an oath of it." So they all pledged themselves to kill him, to the intent that, when the Vizier Dendan came and heard of his death, his might should be

weakened and fail of that which he designed to do. When they had made this compact with him, the King bestowed great gifts upon them and dismissing them, retired to his own apartments. Now the troops refused their service, awaiting what should befall, for they saw that the most part of the army was with the Vizier Dendan. Presently, the news of these things came to Kuzia Fekan and caused her much concern; so that she sent for the old woman, who was wont to carry messages between her and her cousin, and bade her go to him and warn him of the plot against his life. Accordingly, she repaired to Kanmakan and gave him the princess's message, to which he replied, "Bear my cousin my salutation and say to her, 'The earth is God's (to whom belong might and majesty), and He maketh whom He willeth of His servants to inherit it. How excellent is the saying of the poet:

The kingship is God's alone, and him who would fain fulfil
His wishes He driveth away and maketh him rue for his ill.
Had I or another than I a handsbreadth of earth to my own, The
Godship were sundered in twain and two were the Power and the Will.'"

The old woman returned to Kuzia Fekan with Kanmakan's reply and told her that he abode in the city. Meanwhile, King Sasan awaited his going forth from Baghdad, that he might send after him and kill him; till, one day, it befell that Kanmakan went out to hunt, accompanied by Subbah, who would not leave him day or night. He caught ten gazelles and among them one that had soft black eyes and turned right and left; so he let her go, and Subbah said to him, "Why didst thou let her go?" Kanmakan laughed and set the others free also, saying, "It behoves us, of humanity, to release gazelles that have young, and this one only turned from side to side, to look for her young ones: so I let her go and released the others in her honour." Quoth Subbah, "Do thou release me, that I may go to my people." At this Kanmakan laughed and smote him on the breast with the butt of his spear, and he fell to the ground, writhing like a serpent. Whilst they were thus occupied, they saw cloud of dust and heard the tramp of horse; and presently there appeared a troop of armed cavaliers. Now King Sasan had heard of Kanmakan's going out and sending for an Amir of the Medes, called Jami, and twenty men, had given them money and bidden them slay Kanmakan. So, when they drew near the prince, they rushed at him and he met them in mid-career and killed them all, to the last man. Meanwhile the King took horse and riding out to meet his men, found them all slain, whereat he wondered and turned back; but the people of the city laid hands on him and bound him straitly. As for Kanmakan, he left that place behind him and rode onward with Subbah. As he went, he saw a youth sitting at the door of a house in his road and saluted him. The youth returned his greeting and going into the house, brought out two platters, one full of milk and the other of brewis swimming in (clarified) butter, which he set before Kanmakan, saying, "Favour me by eating of my victual." But he refused and the young man said to him, "What ails thee, O man, that thou wilt not eat?" "I have a vow upon me," replied the prince. "What is the cause of thy vow?" asked the youth, and Kanmakan answered, "Know that King Sasan seized upon my kingdom wrongfully and oppressively, albeit it was my father's and my grandfather's before me; yet he laid hands upon the throne by force, after my father's death, and took no count of me, for that I was of tender years. So I have bound myself by a vow to eat no man's victual, till I have eased my heart of my enemy."

"Rejoice," rejoined the youth, "for God hath fulfilled thy vow. Know that he is in prison and methinks he will soon die." "In what house is he imprisoned?" asked Kanmakan. "In yonder high pavilion," answered the other. The prince looked and saw the folk entering and buffeting Sasan, who was suffering the agonies of death. So he went up to the pavilion and noted what was therein; after which he returned to his place and sitting down to meat, ate what sufficed him and put the rest in his budget. Then he waited till it was dark night. And the youth, whose guest he was, slept; when he rose and repaired to the pavilion in which Sasan was confined. Now about it were dogs, guarding it, and one of them ran at him; so he took out of his wallet a piece of meat and threw it to him. He ceased not to do thus, till he came to the pavilion and making his way to the place where Sasan was, laid his hand upon his head; whereupon he said in a loud voice, "Who art thou?" "I am Kanmakan," replied the prince, "whom thou wentest about to kill; but God made thee fall into the evil thyself hadst devised. Did it not suffice thee to take my kingdom and that of my father, but thou must go about to kill me?" And Sasan swore a vain oath that he had not plotted his death and that the report was untrue. So Kanmakan forgave him and said to him, "Follow me." Quoth he, "I cannot walk a single step for weakness." "If the case be thus," replied Kanmakan, "we will get us two horses and ride forth and seek the open country." So they took horse and rode till daybreak, when they prayed the morning-prayer and fared on till they came to a garden, where they sat down and talked awhile. Then Kanmakan rose and said to Sasan, "Is there aught of bitterness left in thy heart against me?" "No, by Allah!" replied Sasan. So they agreed to return to Baghdad and Subbah the Bedouin said, "I will go on before you, to give the folk notice of your coming." Then he rode on in advance, acquainting men and women with the news; so all the people came out to meet Kanmakan with tabrets and flutes; and Kuzia Fekan also came out, like the full moon shining in all her splendour in the thick darkness of the night. Kanmakan met her, and their hearts yearned each to each and their bodies longed one for the other. There was no talk among the people of the time but of Kanmakan; for the cavaliers bore witness of him that he was the most valiant of the folk of the age and said, "It is not just that other than he should be King over us; but the throne of his grandfather shall revert to him as it was." Meanwhile King Sasan went in to his wife Nuzhet ez Zeman, who said to him, "I hear that the folk talk of nothing but Kanmakan and attribute to him such qualities as beggar description." "Hearing is not like seeing," replied the King; "I have seen him, but have noted in him not one of the attributes of perfection. Not all that is heard is said; but the folk ape one another in extolling and cherishing him, and God makes his praise to run on the lips of men, so that there incline to him the hearts of the people of Baghdad and of the perfidious traitor the Vizier Dendan, who has levied troops from all countries and arrogates to himself the right of naming a king of the country and chooses that it shall be under the hand of a worthless orphan." "What then dost thou purpose to do?" asked Nuzhet ez Zeman. "I mean to kill him," replied the King, "that the Vizier may be baulked of his intent and return to his allegiance to me, seeing nothing for it but my service." Quoth she, "Perfidy is a foul thing with strangers, and how much more with kinsfolk? Thou wouldst do better to marry him to thy daughter Kuzia Fekan and give heed to what was said of old time:

If Fate set over thee a man, though thou than he
Be worthier and this be grievous unto thee,
Yield him the honour due to his estate; thou'lt find
He will advantage thee, though near or far thou be.
Speak not thy thought of him; else wilt thou be of those
Who of their own accord the way of weal do flee.
Many in the harem oft are brighter than the bride;
But time is on her side, and opportunity."

When Sasan heard this, he rose in anger and said to her, "Were it not that to kill thee would bring disgrace and reproach on me, I would take off thy head with my sword and make an end of thee." Quoth she, "I did but jest with thee." And rose and kissed his head and hands, saying, "Thou art right, and we will cast about for some means to kill him." When he heard this, he was glad and said, "Make haste and contrive some device to relieve me of my affliction; for I am at my wit's end." Said she, "I will make shift to do away his life for thee." "How so?" asked he; and she answered, "By means of our female slave Bakoun." Now this Bakoun was past mistress in all kinds of knavery and was one of the most pernicious of old women, in whose religion it was not lawful to abstain from wickedness; she had brought up Kanmakan and Kuzia Fekan, and the former had her in so great affection, that he was wont to sleep at her feet. So when King Sasan heard his wife name her, he said, "This is a good counsel," and sending for the old woman, told her what had passed and bade go about to kill Kanmakan, promising her all good. "O my lord," replied she, "thy commandment shall be done: but I would have thee give me a dagger that has been tempered in water of dearth, that I may despatch him the quicklier for thee." "So be it," said Sasan and gave her a knife that would well-nigh forego destiny. Now this woman had heard stories and verses and committed to memory great store of witty traits and anecdotes: so she took the dagger and went out, considering how she should compass Kanmakan's destruction. Then she repaired to the prince, whom she found sitting awaiting [the coming of a messenger with] his cousin's tryst; so that night his thought was taken up with Kuzia Fekan and the fires of love for her raged in his heart. Bakoun went in to him, saying, "The time of union is at hand and the days of separation are over and gone." When he heard this, he said, "How is it with Kuzia Fekan?" And she answered, "Know that she is distraught for love of thee." At this he rose and taking off his [upper] clothes, put them on her and promised her all good. Then said she, "Know that I mean to pass this night with thee, that I may repeat to thee what talk I have heard and divert thee with tales of many a slave of love, whom passion hath made sick." Quoth he, "Tell me a story, that will gladden my heart and dispel my cares." "With all my heart," answered she and sitting down beside him, with the dagger under her clothes, began thus, "The pleasantest thing I ever heard was as follows:

Bakoun's Story of the Hashish-eater.

A CERTAIN man loved the fair and spent his substance on them, till he became a beggar and used to go about the streets and markets, seeking his bread. One day, as he went along, a splinter of iron pierced his finger and made it bleed; so he sat down and wiping away the blood, bound up his finger. Then he went on, crying out, till he came to a bath, and entering found it clean (and empty). So he took off his clothes and sitting down by the basin, fell to pouring water on his head, till he was tired, when he went out to the room in which was the tank of cold water. Finding none there, he shut himself up [in a cabinet] and taking out a piece of hashish, swallowed it. The fumes of the drug spread through his brain and he rolled over on to the marble floor. Then the hashish made it appear to him as if a great lord were kneading him and as if two slaves stood at his head, one bearing a bowl and the other washing gear and all the requisites of the bath. When he saw this, he said to himself, 'Meseems these are mistaken in me; or else they are of the company of us hashish-eaters.' Then he stretched out his legs and it seemed to him that the bathman said to him, 'O my lord, the time of thy going forth draws near and it is to-day thy turn of service (at the palace).' At this he laughed and said, 'As God wills, O hashish!' Then he sat and said nothing, whilst the bathman took him by the hand and raising him up, girt his middle with a waist-cloth of black silk, after which the two slaves followed him, with the bowls and implements, till they brought him into a cabinet, wherein they set perfumes burning. He found the place full of various kinds of fruits and sweet-scented flowers, and they cut him a melon and seated him on a stool of ebony, whilst the bathman stood to wash him and the slaves poured water on him; after which they rubbed him down well and said, 'O our lord the Vizier, may the bath profit thee and mayst thou come to delight everlasting!' Then they went out and shut the door on him; and he took up the waist-cloth and laughed till he well-nigh lost his senses. He gave not over laughing for some time and saying to himself, 'What ails them to bespeak me as if I were a Vizier and style me "Master" and "our lord"? Surely they are dreaming now; but presently they will know me and say, "This fellow is a beggar," and take their fill of cuffing me on the nape of the neck.' Presently, he felt hot and opened the door, whereupon it seemed to him that a little white slave and an eunuch entered, carrying a parcel. The slave opened the parcel and brought out three kerchiefs of silk, one of which he threw over his head, a second over his shoulders, and a third he tied round his waist. Moreover, the eunuch gave him a pair of bath-clogs, and he put them on; after which in came eunuchs and slaves and supported him, laughing the while, to the outer hall, which he found hung and spread with magnificent furniture, such as beseems none but kings; and the pages hastened up to him and seated him on the divan. Then they fell to kneading him, till sleep overcame him and he dreamt that he had a girl in his arms. So he kissed her and set her between his thighs; then, clipping her as a man clips a woman, took his yard in his hand and was about to have at her, when he heard one saying to him, 'Awake, thou good-for-nought! The hour of noon is come and thou art still asleep.' He opened his eyes and found himself lying on the merge of the cold-water tank, with a crowd of people about him, laughing at him; for the napkin was fallen from his middle and discovered his yard in point. So he knew

that all this was but an imbroglio of dreams and an illusion of hashish and was vexed and said to him who had aroused him, 'Would thou hadst waited till I had put it in!' Then said the folk, 'Art thou not ashamed, O hashish-eater, and thou lying asleep and naked, with thy yard on end?' And they cuffed him, till the nape of his neck was red. Now he was starving, yet had he tasted the savour of delight in sleep."

When Kanmakan heard this story, he laughed till he fell backward and said to Bakoun, "O my nurse, this is indeed a rare story; I never heard its like. Hast thou any more?" "Yes," answered she and went on to tell him diverting stories and laughable anecdotes, till sleep overcame him. Then she sat by him till the most part of the night was past, when she said to herself, "It is time to profit by the occasion." So she unsheathed the dagger and drawing near to Kanmakan, was about to slaughter him, when, behold, in came his mother. When Bakoun saw her, she rose to meet her, and fear got hold on her and she fell a-trembling, as if she had the ague. The princess mother marvelled to see her thus and aroused her son, who awoke and found her sitting at his head. Now the reason of her coming was that Kuzia Fekan heard of the plot to kill Kanmakan and said to his mother, "O wife of my uncle, go to thy son, ere that wicked baggage Bakoun kill him." And she told her what had passed, from beginning to end. So she rose at once and stayed not for aught, till she came to her son's lodgings, just as Bakoun was about to slay him. When he awoke, he said to his mother, "O my mother, indeed thou comest at a good time, for my nurse Bakoun has been with me this night." Then he turned to Bakoun and said to her, "My life on thee, knowest thou any story better than those thou hast told me?" "What I have told thee," answered she, "is nothing to what I will tell thee; but that must be for another time." Then she rose to go, hardly believing that she should escape with her life, for she perceived of her cunning that his mother knew what was toward; and he said, "Go in peace." So she went her way, and his mother said to him, "O my son, blessed be this night, wherein God the Most High hath delivered thee from this accursed woman!" "How so?" asked he, and she told him the whole story. "O my mother," said he, "whoso is fated to live finds no slayer; nor, though he be slain, will he die; but now it were wise that we depart from amongst these enemies and let God do what He will." So, as soon as it was day, he left the city and joined the Vizier Dendan, and certain things befell between King Sasan and Nuzhet ez Zeman, which caused her also to leave the city and join herself to Kanmakan and Dendan, as did likewise such of the King's officers as inclined to their party. Then they took counsel together what they should do and agreed to make an expedition into the land of the Greeks and take their revenge for the death of King Omar ben Ennuman and his son Sherkan. So they set out with this intent and after adventures which it were tedious to set out, but the drift of which will appear from what follows, they fell into the hands of Rumzan, King of the Greeks. Next morning, King Rumzan caused Dendan and Kanmakan and their company to be brought before him and seating them at his side, bade spread the tables of food. So they ate and drank and took heart of grace, after having made sure of death, for that, when they were summoned to the King's presence, they said to one another, "He has not sent for us but to put us to death." Then said the King, "I have had a dream, which I related to the monks and they said, 'None can expound it to thee but the Vizier Dendan.'" "And what didst thou see in thy dream, O King of the age?" asked Dendan. "I dreamt," answered the King, "that I was in a pit, as it were a black well, where

meseemed folk were tormenting me; and I would have risen, but fell on my feet and could not get out of the pit. Then I turned and saw on the ground a girdle of gold and put out my hand to take it; but when I raised it from the ground, I saw it was two girdles. So I girt my middle with them, and behold, they became one girdle; and this, O Vizier, is my dream and what I saw in sleep." "O our lord the Sultan," said Dendan, "this thy dream denotes that thou hast a brother or a brother's son or an uncle's son or other near kinsman of thy flesh and blood [of whom thou knowest not]." When the King heard this, he looked at Kanmakan and Dendan and Nuzhet ez Zeman and Kuzia Fekan and the rest of the captives and said in himself, "If I cut off these people's heads, their troops will lose heart for the loss of their chiefs and I shall be able to return speedily to my realm, lest the kingdom pass out of my hands." So he called the headsman and bade him strike off Kanmakan's head, when behold, up came Rumzan's nurse and said to him, "O august King, what wilt thou do?" Quoth he, "I mean to put these captives to death and throw their heads among their troops; after which I will fall upon them, I and all my men, and kill all we may and put the rest to the rout; so will this be the end of the war and I shall return speedily to my kingdom, ere aught befall among my subjects."

When the nurse heard this, she came up to him and said in the Frank tongue, "How canst thou slay thine own brother's son and thy sister and thy sister's daughter?" When he heard this, he was exceeding angry and said to her, "O accursed woman, didst thou not tell me that my mother was murdered and that my father died by poison? Didst thou not give me a jewel and say to me, 'This jewel was thy father's'? Why didst thou not tell me the truth?" "All that I told thee is true," replied she: "but thy case and my own are wonderful and thine and my history extraordinary. My name is Merjaneh and thy mother's name was Abrizeh. She was gifted with such beauty and grace and valour that proverbs were made of her, and her prowess was renowned among men of war. Thy father was King Omar ben Ennuman, lord of Baghdad and Khorassan. He sent his son Sherkan on an expedition, in company with this very Vizier Dendan; and Sherkan thy brother separated himself from the troops and fell in with thy mother Queen Abrizeh, in a privy garden of her palace, whither we had resorted to wrestle, she and I and her other damsels. He came on us by chance and wrestled with thy mother, who overcame him by the splendour of her beauty and her valour. Then she entertained him five days in her palace, till the news of this came to her father, by the old woman Shewahi, surnamed Dhat ed Dewahi, whereupon she embraced Islam at Sherkan's hands and he carried her by stealth to Baghdad, and with her myself and Rihaneh and other twenty damsels. When we came to thy father's presence, he fell in love with thy mother and going in to her one night, foregathered with her, and she became with child by him of thee. Now thy mother had three jewels, which she gave to thy father, and he gave one of them to his daughter Nuzhet ez Zeman, another to thy brother Zoulmekan and the third to thy brother Sherkan. This last thy mother took from Sherkan, and I kept it for thee. When the time of the princess's delivery drew near, she yearned after her own people and discovered her secret to me; so I went privily to a black slave called Ghezban and telling him our case, bribed him to go with us. Accordingly, he took us and fled forth the city with us by stealth towards the land of the Greeks, till we came to a desert place on the borders of our own country. Here the pangs of labour came upon thy mother, and the slave, being moved by lust, sought

of her a shameful thing; whereat she cried out loudly and was sore affrighted at him. In the excess of her alarm, she gave birth to thee at once, and at this moment there arose, in the direction of our country, a cloud of dust which spread till it covered the plain. At this sight, the slave feared for his life; so, in his rage, he smote Queen Abrizeh with his sword and slew her, then, mounting his horse, went his way. Presently, the dust lifted and discovered thy grandfather, King Herdoub, who, seeing thy mother his daughter dead on the ground, was sorely troubled and questioned me of the manner of her death and why she had left her father's kingdom. So I told him all that had happened, first and last; and this is the cause of the feud between the people of the land of the Greeks and the people of Baghdad. Then we took up thy dead mother and buried her; and I took thee and reared thee, and hung this jewel about thy neck. But, when thou camest to man's estate, I dared not acquaint thee with the truth of the matter, lest it should stir up a war of revenge between you. Moreover, thy grandfather had enjoined me to secrecy, and I could not gainsay the commandment of thy mother's father, Herdoub, King of the Greeks. This, then, is why I forbore to tell thee that thy father was King Omar ben Ennuman; but, when thou camest to the throne, I told thee [what thou knowest]; and the rest I could not reveal to thee till this moment. So now, O King of the age, I have discovered to thee my secret and have acquainted thee with all that I know of the matter; and thou knowest best what is in thy mind." When Nuzhet ez Zeman heard what the King's nurse said, she cried out, saying, "This King Rumzan is my brother by my father King Omar ben Ennuman, and his mother was the Princess Abrizeh, daughter of Herdoub, King of the Greeks; and I know this damsel Merjaneh right well." With this, trouble and perplexity got hold upon Rumzan and he caused Nuzhet ez Zeman to be brought up to him forthright. When he looked upon her, blood drew to blood and he questioned her of his history. So she told me all she knew, and her story tallied with that of his nurse; whereupon he was assured that he was indeed of the people of Irak and that King Omar ben Ennuman was his father. So he caused his sister to be unbound, and she came up to him and kissed his hands, whilst her eyes ran over with tears. He wept also to see her weeping, and brotherly love entered into him and his heart yearned to his brother's son Kanmakan. So he sprang to his feet and taking the sword from the headsman's hands, bade bring the captives up to him. At this, they made sure of death; but he cut their bonds with the sword and said to Merjaneh, "Explain the matter to them, even as thou hast explained it to me." "O King," replied she, "know that this old man is the Vizier Dendan and he is the best of witnesses to my story, seeing that he knows the truth of the case." Then she turned to the captives and repeated the whole story to them and to the princes of the Greeks and the Franks who were present with them, and they all confirmed her words. When she had finished, chancing to look at Kanmakan, she saw on his neck the fellow jewel to that which she had hung round King Rumzan's neck, whereupon she gave such a cry, that the whole palace rang again, and said to the King, "Know, O my son, that now my certainty is still more assured, for the jewel that is about the neck of yonder captive is the fellow to that I hung to thy neck, and this is indeed thy brother's son Kanmakan." Then she turned to Kanmakan and said to him, "O King of the age, let me see that jewel." So he took it from his neck and gave it to her. Then she asked Nuzhet ez Zeman of the third jewel and she gave it to her, whereupon she delivered the two to King Rumzan, and the truth of the matter was made manifest to him and he was assured

that he was indeed Prince Kanmakan's uncle and that his father was King Omar ben Ennuman. So he rose at once and going up to the Vizier Dendan, embraced him; then he embraced Prince Kanmakan, and they cried aloud for very gladness. The joyful news was blazed abroad and they beat the drums and cymbals, whilst the flutes sounded and the people held high festival. The army of Irak and Syria heard the clamour of rejoicing among the Greeks; so they mounted, all of them, and King Ziblcan also took horse, saying in himself, "What can be the cause of this clamour and rejoicing in the army of the Franks?" Then the Muslim troops made ready for fight and advancing into the field, drew out in battle array. Presently, King Rumzan turned and seeing the army deployed in battalia, enquired the reason and was told the state of the case; so he bade Kuzia Fekan return at once to the Muslim troops and acquaint them with the accord that had betided and how it was come to light that he was Kanmakan's uncle. So she set out, putting away from her sorrows and troubles, and stayed not till she came to King Ziblcan, whom she found tearful-eyed, fearing for the captive chiefs and princes. She saluted him and told him all that had passed, whereat the Muslims' grief was turned to gladness. Then he and all his officers took horse and followed the princess to the pavilion of King Rumzan, whom they found sitting with his nephew, Prince Kanmakan. Now they had taken counsel with the Vizier Dendan concerning King Ziblcan and had agreed to commit to his charge the city of Damascus of Syria and leave him king over it as before, whilst themselves entered Irak. Accordingly, they confirmed him in the viceroyalty of Damascus and bade him set out at once for his government, so he departed with his troops and they rode with him a part of the way, to bid him farewell. Then they returned and gave orders for departure, whereupon the two armies united and King Rumzan and his nephew set out, surrounded by their nobles and grandees. And indeed Kanmakan rejoiced in his uncle King Rumzan and called down blessings on the nurse Merjaneh, who had made them known to each other; but the two Kings said to one another, "Our hearts will never be at rest nor our wrath appeased, till we have taken our wreak of the old woman Shewahi, surnamed Dhat ed Dewahi, and wiped out the blot upon our honour." So they fared on till they drew near Baghdad, and Sasan, hearing of their approach, came out to meet them and kissed the hand of the King of the Greeks, who bestowed on him a dress of honour. Then King Rumzan sat down on the throne and seated his nephew at his side, who said to him, "O my uncle, this kingdom befits none but thee." "God forbid," replied Rumzan, "that I should supplant thee in thy kingdom!" So the Vizier Dendan counselled them to share the throne between them, ruling each one day in turn, and they agreed to this. Then they made feasts and offered sacrifices and held high festival, whilst King Kanmakan spent his nights with his cousin Kuzia Fekan; and they abode thus awhile.

One day, as the two Kings sat, rejoicing in the happy ending of their troubles, they saw a cloud of dust arise and up came a merchant, who ran to them, shrieking and crying out for succour. "O Kings of the age," said he, "how comes it that I was in safety in the country of the infidels and am plundered in your realm, what though it be a land of peace and justice?" King Rumzan questioned him of his case, and he replied, "I am a merchant, who have been nigh a score of years absent from my native land, travelling in far countries; and I have a patent of exemption from Damascus, which the late Viceroy King Sherkan wrote me, for that I had made him gift of a slave-girl. Now I

was returning to Irak, having with me a hundred loads of rarities of Ind; but, as I drew near Baghdad, the seat of your sovereignty and the abiding-place of your peace and your justice, there came out upon me Bedouins and Kurds banded together from all parts, who slew my men and robbed me of all my goods. This is what hath befallen me." Then he wept and bemoaned himself before the two Kings, who took compassion on him and swore that they would sally out upon the thieves. So they set out with a hundred horse, each reckoned worth thousands of men, and the merchant went before them, to guide them in the right way. They fared on all that day and the following night till daybreak, when they came to a valley abounding in streams and trees. Here they found the bandits dispersed about the valley, having divided the treasure between them; but there was yet some of it left. So they fell upon them and surrounded them on all sides, nor was it long before they made prize of them all, to the number of near three hundred horsemen, banded together of the scourings of the Arabs. They bound them all, and taking what they could find of the merchant's goods, returned to Baghdad, where the two Kings sat down upon one throne and passing the prisoners in review before them, questioned them of their condition and their chiefs. So they pointed out to them three men and said, "These are our only chiefs, and it was they who gathered us together from all parts and countries." The Kings bade lay on these three and set the rest free, after taking from them all the goods in their possession and giving them to the merchant, who examined them and found that a fourth of his stock was missing. The two Kings engaged to make good his loss, whereupon he pulled out two letters, one in the handwriting of Sherkan and the other in that of Nuzhet ez Zeman; for this was the very merchant who had bought Nuzhet ez Zeman of the Bedouin, as hath been before set forth. Kanmakan examined the letters and recognized the handwriting of his uncle Sherkan and his aunt Nuzhet ez Zeman; then (for that he knew the latter's history) he went in to her with that which she had written and told her the merchant's story. She knew her own handwriting and recognizing the merchant, despatched to him guest-gifts (of victual and what not) and commended him to her brother and nephew, who ordered him gifts of money and slaves and servants to wait on him, besides which the princess sent him a hundred thousand dirhems in money and fifty loads of merchandise, together with other rich presents. Then she sent for him and made herself known to him, whereat he rejoiced greatly and kissed her hands, giving her joy of her safety and union with her brother and thanking her for her bounty: and he said to her, "By Allah, a good deed is not lost upon thee!" Then she withdrew to her own apartment and the merchant sojourned with them three days, after which he took leave of them and set out to return to Damascus. After this, the two Kings sent for the three robber-chiefs and questioned them of their condition, whereupon one of them came forward and said, "Know that I am a Bedouin, who use to lie in wait, by the way, to steal children and virgin girls and sell them to merchants; and this I did for many a year until these latter days, when Satan incited me to join these two gallows-birds in gathering together all the riff-raff of the Arabs and other peoples, that we might waylay merchants and plunder caravans." Said the two Kings, "Tell us the rarest of the adventures that have befallen thee in kidnapping children and girls." "O Kings of the age," replied he, "the strangest thing that ever happened to me was as follows. Two-and-twenty years ago, being at Jerusalem, I saw a girl come out of the khan, who was possessed of beauty and grace, albeit she was but a servant and was

clad in worn clothes, with a piece of camel-cloth on her head; so I entrapped her by guile and setting her on a camel, made off with her into the desert, thinking to carry her to my own people and there set her to pasture the camels and collect their dung (for fuel); but she wept so sore, that after beating her soundly, I carried her to Damascus, where a merchant saw her and being astounded at her beauty and accomplishments, bid me more and more for her, till at last I sold her to him for a hundred thousand dinars. I heard after that he clothed her handsomely and presented her to the Viceroy of Damascus, who gave him for her her price thrice told; and this, by my life, was but little for such a damsel! This, O Kings of the age, is the strangest thing that ever befell me." The two Kings wondered at his story; but, when Nuzhet ez Zeman heard it, the light in her face became darkness, and she cried out and said to her brother, "Sure, this is the very Bedouin who kidnapped me in Jerusalem!" And she told them all that she had endured from him in her strangerhood of hardship and blows and hunger and humiliation, adding, "And now it is lawful to me to slay him." So saying, she seized a sword and made at him; but he cried out and said, "O Kings of the age, let her not kill me, till I have told you the rare adventures that have betided me." And Kanmakan said to her, "O my aunt, let him tell his story, and after do with him as thou wilt." So she held her hand and the Kings said to him, "Now let us hear thy story." "O Kings of the age," said he, "if I tell you a rare story, will you pardon me?" "Yes," answered they. Then said the Bedouin, "know that

Hemmad the Bedouin's Story.

A WHILE ago, I was sore wakeful one night and thought the dawn would never break: so, as soon as it was day, I rose and girding on my sword, mounted my steed and set my lance in rest. Then I rode out to hunt, and as I went along, a company of men accosted me and asked me whither I went. I told them, and they said, 'We will bear thee company.' So we all fared on together, and presently we saw an ostrich and gave chase; but it evaded us and spreading its wings, fled before us and drew us on after it, till it brought us to a desert, wherein there was neither grass nor water, nor was aught to be heard there save the hissing of serpents, the wailing of Jinn and the howling of ghouls. Here we lost sight of the ostrich, nor could we tell whether it had flown up into the sky or sunk into the ground. Then we turned our horses' heads and thought to go back; but found that our return would be toilsome and dangerous at that time of exceeding heat; for the heat was grievous to us, so that we were sore athirst and our horses stood still. So we made sure of death; but as we were in this case, we espied a spacious meadow afar off, wherein were gazelles frisking. There was a tent pitched and by the tent-side a horse tethered and a spear stuck in the earth, whose head glittered in the sun. When we saw this, our hearts revived, after we had despaired, and we turned our horses' heads towards the meadow and rode on, till we came to a spring, where we alighted and drank and watered our beasts. Then I was seized with a frenzy of curiosity and went up to the door of the tent, where I saw a young man like the new moon, without hair on his cheeks, and on his right hand a slender damsel, as she were a willow wand. No sooner did I set eyes on the girl, than love of her got hold upon my heart and I saluted the young man, who returned my greeting. Then said I to him, 'O brother of the Arabs, tell me who thou art and what is this damsel to thee?' With this, he bent down his head awhile, then raised it and replied, 'Tell me first who thou art and what are these horsemen with thee.' 'I am Hemmad, son of El Fezari,' answered I, 'the renowned cavalier, who is reckoned as five hundred horse among the Arabs. We went forth this morning to hunt and were overcome by thirst; so I came to the door of this tent, thinking to get of thee a draught of water.' When he heard this, he turned to the fair maiden and said to her, 'Bring this man water and what there is of food.' So she went in, trailing her skirts, whilst her feet stumbled in her long hair and the golden bangles tinkled on her ankles, and returned after a little, bearing in her right hand a silver vessel of cold water and in her left a bowl full of milk and dates and flesh of wild cattle. But, of the excess of my passion for her, I could take of her nor meat nor drink, and I recited to her the following verses, applying them to her:

The dye of the henna upon her hand doth show,
As 'twere a raven new lighted on fresh-fall'n snow;
And see the full moon and the sun beside her face,
This dim and the other fearful for shame and woe.

Then, after I had eaten and drunk, I said to the youth, 'O chief of the Arabs, I have told thee truly who and what I am, and now I would fain have thee do the like by me and tell me the truth of thy case.' 'As for this damsel,' replied he, 'she is my sister.'

Quoth I, 'It is my desire that thou give her to me to wife of free will: else will I slay thee and take her by force.' With this, he bowed his head awhile, then raised his eyes to me and answered, 'Thou sayest sooth in avouching thyself a renowned cavalier and a famous champion and the lion of the desert; but if ye all attack me treacherously and slay me and take my sister by force, it will be a stain upon your honour. If ye be, as thou sayest, cavaliers that are counted among the champions and fear not the shock of battle, give me time to don my armour and gird on my sword and set my lance in rest and mount my horse. Then will we go forth into the field and fight; and if I conquer you, I will kill you, every man of you; and if you overcome me and slay me, this damsel my sister is thine.' 'This is but just,' answered I, 'and we oppose it not.' Then I turned my horse's head, mad for love of the damsel, and rode back to my companions, to whom I set forth her beauty and grace, as also the comeliness of the young man and his valour and strength of soul and how he avouched himself a match for a thousand horse. Moreover, I described to them the tent and all the riches and rarities it contained and said to them, 'Be sure that this youth would not have taken up his abode alone in this desert place, were he not a man of great prowess: so I propose that whoso slays him shall take his sister.' And they agreed to this. Then we armed ourselves and mounting, rode to the tent, where we found the young man armed and mounted; but his sister ran up to him, with her veil drenched with tears, and laying hold of his stirrup, cried out, saying, 'Alas!' and 'Woe worth the day!' in her fear for her brother, and recited the following verses:

To God above I make my moan of sorrow and affright.
Mayhap, the empyrean's Lord will smite them with dismay.
They fain would kill thee, brother mine, with malice aforethought,
Though never cause of anger was nor fault forewent the fray.
Yet for a champion art thou known among the men of war,
The doughtiest knight that East or West goes camping by the way.
Thou wilt thy sister's honour guard, whose might is small, for thou
Her brother art and she for thee unto the Lord doth pray
Let not the foe possess my soul nor seize on me perforce
And work their cruel will on me, without my yea or nay.
By God His truth, I'll never live in any land where thou
Art not albeit all the goods of plenty it display!
But I will slay myself for love and yearning for thy sake
And in the darksome tomb I'll make my bed upon the clay.

When he heard her words, he wept sore and turning his horse's head towards her, made answer with the following verses:

Stand by and see the wondrous deeds that I will do this day,
Whenas we meet and I on them rain blows in the mellay.
E'en though the lion of the war, the captain of the host,
The stoutest champion of them all, spur out into the fray,
I'll deal a Thaalebiyan blow at him and in his heart
I'll let my spear, even to the shaft, its thirst for blood allay.
If I defend thee not from all that seek thee, sister mine,

May I be slaughtered and my corse given to the birds of prey!
Ay, I will battle for thy sake, with all the might I may,
And books shall story after me the marvels of this day.

Then said he, 'O my sister, give ear to what I shall enjoin on thee.' And she answered, 'I hear and obey.' Quoth he, 'If I fall, let none possess thee;' and she buffeted her face and said, 'God forbid, O my brother, that I should see thee laid low and yield myself to thine enemies!' With this he put out his hand to her and drew aside her veil, whereupon her face shone forth, like the sun from out clouds. Then he kissed her between the eyes and bade her farewell; after which he turned to us and said, 'Ho, cavaliers! Come ye as guests or are you minded to cut and thrust? If ye come as guests, rejoice in hospitality; and if ye covet the shining moon, come out against me, one by one, and fight.' Then came out to him a sturdy horseman, and the young man said to him, 'Tell me thy name and thy father's name, for I have sworn to fight with none whose name and whose father's name tally with mine and my father's, and if it be thus with thee, I will give thee up the girl.' 'My name is Bilal,' answered the other; and the young man repeated the following verses:

Thou liest when thou talkest of "benefits"; for lo,
Thou comest with mischief and malice and woe!
So, an thou be doughty, heed well what I say:
I'm he who the braver in the battle lays low
With a keen-cutting sword, like the horn of the moon;
So look(and beware) for a hill-shaking blow!

Then they ran at one another, and the youth smote his adversary in the breast, that the lance-head issued from his back. With this, another came out, and the youth repeated the following verses:

O dog, that art noisome of stench and of sight,
What is there of worth that to come by is light?
'Tis only the lion, of race and of might
Right noble, recks little of life in the fight.

Nor was it long before he left him also drowned in his blood and cried out, 'Who will come out to me?' So a third horseman pricked out, reciting the following verses:

I come to thee, with a fire in my breast that blazes free,
And call on my comrades all to the fight to follow me.
Though thou hast slain the chiefs of the Arabs, yet, perdie,
Thou shalt not 'scape this day from those that follow thee!

When the youth heard this, he answered him, saying:

Thou com'st, like theright evil fiend that thou art,
With a lie on thy lips and a fraud at thy heart;
This day shalt thou taste of a death-dealing dart
And a spear that shall rid thee of life with its smart.

Then he smote him on the breast, that the spear-point issued from his back, and cried out, saying, 'Will another come out?' So a fourth came out and the youth asked

him his name. He replied, 'My name is Hilal.' And the youth repeated these verses:

Thou err'st, that wouldst plunge in my sea of affray
And thinkest to daunt me with lies and dismay.
Lo, I, to whose chant thou hast hearkened this day,
Thy soul, ere thou know'st it, will ravish away!

Then they drove at one another and exchanged blows; but the youth's stroke forewent that of his adversary and slew him: and thus he went on to kill all who sallied out against him. When I saw my comrades slain, I said in myself, 'If I fight with him, I shall not be able to withstand him, and if I flee, I shall become a byword among the Arabs.' However, the youth gave me no time to think, but ran at me and laying hold of me, dragged me from my saddle. I swooned away and he raised his sword to cut off my head; but I clung to his skirts and he lifted me in his hand, as I were a sparrow [in the clutches of a hawk]. When the maiden saw this, she rejoiced in her brother's prowess and coming up to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he delivered me to her, saying, 'Take him and entreat him well, for he is come under our rule.' So she took hold of the collars of my coat-of-arms and led me away by them as one would lead a dog. Then she did off her brother's armour and clad him in a robe, after which she brought him a stool of ivory, on which he sat down, and said to him, 'May God whiten thine honour and make thee to be as a provision against the shifts of fortune!' And he answered her with the following verses:

My sister said, (who saw my lustrous forehead blaze
Midmost the war, as shine the sun's meridian rays)
"God bless thee for a brave, to whom, when he falls on,
The desert lions bow in terror and amaze!"
"Question the men of war," I answered her, "of me,
Whenas the champions flee before my flashing gaze.
I am the world-renowned for fortune and for might,
Whose prowess I uplift to what a height of praise!
O Hemmad, thou hast roused a lion, who shall show
Thee death that comes as swift as vipers in the ways."

When I heard what he said, I was perplexed about my affair, and considering my condition and how I was become a captive, I was lessened in my own esteem. Then I looked at the damsel and said to myself, 'It is she who is the cause of all this trouble;' and I fell a-marvelling at her beauty and grace, till the tears streamed from my eyes and I recited the following verses:

Reproach me not, O friend, nor chide me for the past,
For I will pay no heed to chiding and dispraise.
Lo, I am clean distraught for one, whom when I saw,
Fate in my breast forthright the love of her did raise.
Her brother was my foe and rival in her love,
A man of mickle might and dreadful in affrays.

Then the maiden set food before her brother, and he bade me eat with him, whereat I rejoiced and felt assured of my life. When he had made an end of eating, she

brought him a flagon of wine and he drank, till the fumes of the wine mounted to his head and his face flushed. Then he turned to me and said, 'Harkye, Hemmad, dost thou know me?' 'By thy life,' answered I, 'I am rich in nought but ignorance!' Said he, 'I am Ibad ben Temim ben Thaalebeh, and indeed God giveth thee thy liberty and spareth thee confusion.' Then he drank to my health and gave me a cup of wine and I drank it off. Then he filled me a second and a third and a fourth, and I drank them all; and he made merry with me and took an oath of me that I would never betray him. So I swore to him a thousand oaths that I would never deal perfidiously with him, but would be a friend and a helper to him.

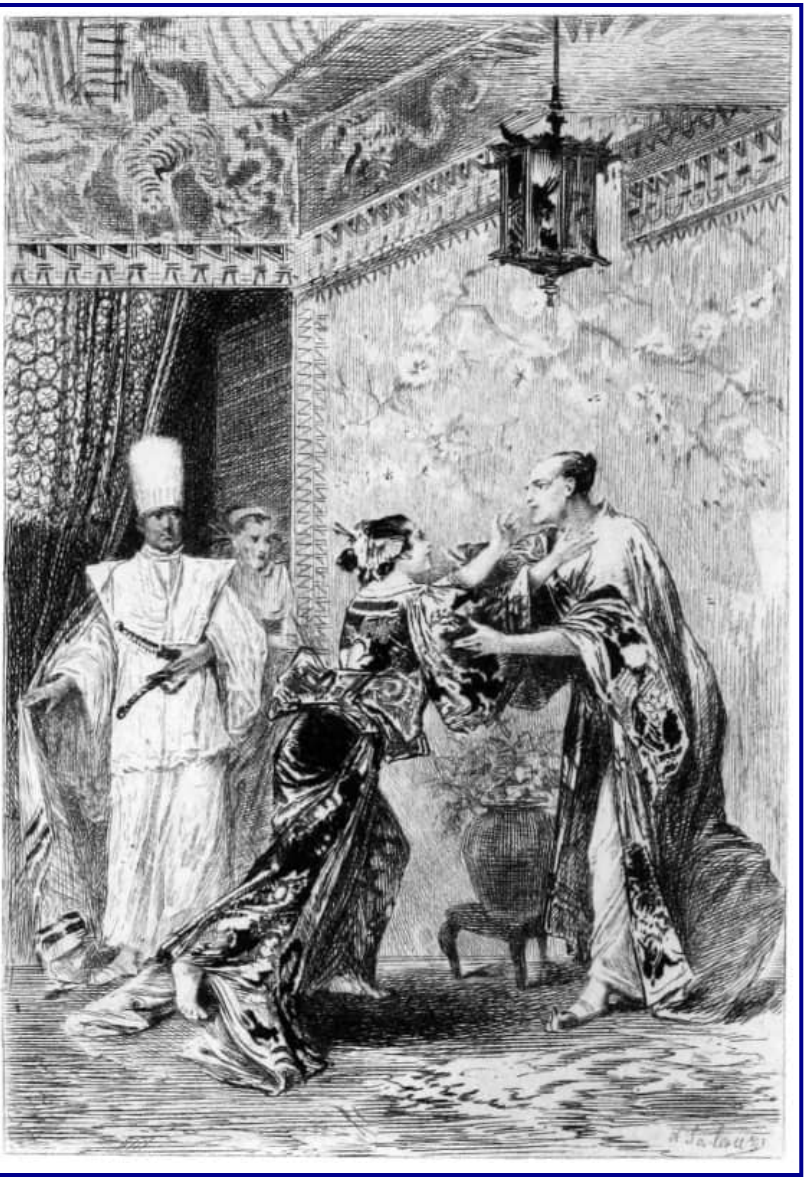
Then he bade his sister bring me ten dresses of silk; so she brought them and laid them on me, and this gown I have on my body is one of them. Moreover, he made her bring one of the best of the riding camels, laden with stuffs and victual, and a sorrel horse, and gave the whole to me. I abode with them three days, eating and drinking, and what he gave me is with me to this day. At the end of this time, he said to me, 'O Hemmad, O my brother, I would fain sleep awhile and rest myself. I trust myself to thee; but if thou see horsemen making hither, fear not, for they are of the Beni Thaalebeh, seeking to wage war on me.' Then he laid his sword under his head and slept; and when he was drowned in slumber, the devil prompted me to kill him; so I rose, and drawing the sword from under his head, dealt him a blow that severed his head from his body. His sister heard what I had done, and rushing out from within the tent, threw herself on his body, tearing her clothes and repeating the following verses:

Carry the tidings to the folk, the saddest news can be;
But man from God His ordinance no whither hath to flee.
Now art thou slaughtered, brother mine, laid prostrate on the earth,
Thou whose bright face was as the round of the full moon to see.
Indeed, an evil day it was, the day thou mettest them,
And after many a fight, thy spear is shivered, woe is me!
No rider, now that thou art dead, in horses shall delight
Nor evermore shall woman bear a male to match with thee.
Hemmad this day hath played thee false and foully done to death;
Unto his oath and plighted faith a traitor base is he.
He deemeth thus to have his will and compass his desire;
But Satan lieth to his dupes in all he doth decree.

When she had ended, she turned to me and said, 'O man of accursed lineage, wherefore didst thou play my brother false and slay him, whenas he purposed to send thee back to thy country with gifts and victual and it was his intent also to marry thee to me at the first of the month?' Then she drew a sword she had with her, and planting it in the ground, with the point set to her breast, threw herself thereon and pressed upon it, till the blade issued from her back and she fell to the ground, dead. I mourned for her and wept and repented when repentance availed me nothing. Then I went in haste to the tent and taking whatever was light of carriage and great of worth, went my way: but in my haste and fear, I took no heed of my (dead) comrades, nor did I bury the maiden and the youth. This, then, is my story, and it is still more extraordinary than that of the serving-maid I kidnapped in Jerusalem."

When Nuzet ez Zeman heard these words of the Bedouin, the light in her eyes was changed to darkness, and she rose and drawing the sword, smote him amiddleward the shoulder-blades, that the point issued from his throat. The bystanders said to her, "Why hast thou made haste to slay him?" And she answered, "Praised be God who hath granted me to avenge myself with my own hand!" And she bade the slaves drag the body out by the feet and cast it to the dogs. Then they turned to the second prisoner, who was a black slave, and said to him, "What is thy name? Tell us the truth of thy case." "My name is Ghezban," answered he and told them what had passed between himself and the princess Abrizeh and how he had slain her and fled. Hardly had he made an end of his story, when King Rumzan struck off his head with his sabre, saying, "Praised be God that gave me life! I have avenged my mother with my own hand." Then he repeated to them what his nurse Merjaneh had told him of this same Ghezban; after which they turned to the third prisoner and said to him, "Tell us who thou art and speak the truth." Now this was the very camel-driver, whom the people of Jerusalem hired to carry Zoulmekan to the hospital at Damascus; but he threw him down on the fuel-heap and went his way. So he told them how he had dealt with Zoulmekan, whereupon Kanmakan took his sword forthright and cut off his head, saying, "Praised be God who hath given me life, that I might requite this traitor what he did with my father, for I have heard this very story from King Zoulmekan himself!" Then they said to each other "It remains only for us to take our wreak of the old woman Shewahi, yclept Dhat ed Dewahi, for that she is the prime cause of all these troubles. Who will deliver her into our hands, that we may avenge ourselves upon her and wipe out our dishonour?" And King Rumzan said, "Needs must we bring her hither." So he wrote a letter to his grandmother, the aforesaid old woman, giving her to know that he had subdued the kingdoms of Damascus and Mosul and Irak and had broken up the host of the Muslims and captured their princes and adding, "I desire thee of all urgency to come to me without delay, bringing with thee the princess Sufiyeh, daughter of King Afridoun, and whom thou wilt of the Nazarene chiefs, but no troops; for the country is quiet and under our hand." And he despatched the letter to her, which when she read, she rejoiced greatly and forthwith equipping herself and Sufiyeh, set out with their attendants and journeyed, without stopping, till they drew near Baghdad. Then she sent a messenger to acquaint the King of her arrival, whereupon quoth Rumzan, "We should do well to don the habit of the Franks and go out to meet the old woman, to the intent that we may be assured against her craft and perfidy." So they clad themselves in Frankish apparel, and when Kuzia Fekan saw them, she exclaimed, "By the Lord of Worship, did I not know you, I should take you to be indeed Franks!" Then they sallied forth, with a thousand horse, to meet the old woman, and King Rumzan rode on before them. As soon as his eyes met hers, he dismounted and walked towards her, and she, recognizing him, dismounted also and embraced him; but he pressed her ribs with his hands, till he well-nigh broke them. Quoth she, "What is this, O my son?" But before she had done speaking, up came Kanmakan and Dendan, and the horsemen with them cried out at the women and slaves and took them all prisoners. Then the two Kings returned to Baghdad, with their captives, and Rumzan bade decorate the city three days long, at the end of which time they brought out the old woman, with a tall red bonnet of palm-leaves on her head, diademed with asses' dung, and preceded by a herald, proclaiming aloud, "This is the

reward of those who presume to lay hands on kings and kings' sons!" Then they crucified her on one of the gates of Baghdad; and her companions, seeing what befell her, all embraced the faith of Islam. As for Kanmakan and his uncle Rumzan and his aunt Nuzhet ez Zeman, they marvelled at the wonderful events that had betided them and bade the scribes set them down orderly in books, that those who came after might read. Then they all abode in the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, till there overtook them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and this is all that hath come down to us of the dealings of fortune with King Omar ben Ennuman and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan and his son's son Kanmakan and his daughter Nuzhet ez Zeman and her daughter Kuzia Fekan.



VOLUME III.

The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night

WHEN Shehrzad had made an end of the history of King Omar teen Ennuman and his sons, Shehriyar said to her, "I desire that thou tell me some story about birds;" and Dunyazad, hearing this, said to her sister, "All this while I have never seen the Sultan light at heart till this night; and this gives me hope that the issue may be a happy one for thee with him." Then drowsiness overcame the Sultan; so he slept and Shehrzad, perceiving the approach of day, was silent.

When it was the hundred and forty-sixth night, Shehrzad began as follows: "I have heard tell, O august King, that

Story of the Birds and Beasts and the Son of Adam.

A PEACOCK once abode with his mate on the sea-shore, in a place that abounded in trees and streams, but was infested with lions and all manner other wild beasts, and for fear of these latter, the two birds were wont to roost by night upon a tree, going forth by day in quest of food. They abode thus awhile, till, their fear increasing on them, they cast about for some other place wherein to dwell, and in the course of their search, they happened on an island abounding in trees and streams. So they alighted there and ate of its fruits and drank of its waters. Whilst they were thus engaged, up came a duck, in a state of great affright, and stayed not till she reached the tree on which the two peacocks were perched, when she seemed reassured. The peacock doubted not but that she had some rare story; so he asked her of her case and the cause of her alarm, to which she replied, 'I am sick for sorrow and my fear of the son of Adam: beware, O beware of the sons of Adam!' 'Fear not,' rejoined the peacock, 'now that thou hast won to us.' 'Praised be God,' cried the duck, 'who hath done away my trouble and my concern with your neigbourhood! For indeed I come, desiring your friendship.' Thereupon the peahen came down to her and said, 'Welcome and fair welcome! No harm shall befall thee: how can the son of Adam come at us and we in this island midmost the sea? From the land he cannot win to us, neither can he come up to us out of the sea. So be of good cheer and tell us what hath betided thee from him. 'Know then, O peahen,' answered the duck, 'that I have dwelt all my life in this island in peace and safety and have seen no disquieting thing, till one night, as I was asleep, I saw in a dream the semblance of a son of Adam, who talked with me and I with him. Then I heard one say to me, "O duck, beware of the son of Adam and be not beguiled by his words nor by that he may suggest to thee; for he aboundeth in wiles and deceit; so beware with all wariness of his perfidy, for he is crafty and guileful, even as saith of him the poet:

He giveth thee honeyed words with the tip of his tongue, galore.
But sure he will cozen thee, as the fox cloth, evermore.

For know that the son of Adam beguileth the fish and draweth them forth of the waters and shooteth the birds with a pellet of clay and entrappeth the elephant with his craft. None is safe from his mischief, and neither beast nor bird escapeth him. Thus have I told thee what I have heard concerning the son of Adam." I awoke, fearful and trembling (continued the duck), and from that time to this my heart hath not known gladness, for fear of the son of Adam, lest he take me unawares by his craft or trap me in his snares. By the time the end of the day overtook me, I was grown weak and my strength and courage failed me; so, desiring to eat and drink, I went forth, troubled in spirit and with a heart ill at ease. I walked on, till I reached yonder mountain, where I saw a tawny lion-whelp at the door of a cave. When he saw me, he rejoiced greatly in me, for my colour pleased him and my elegant shape: so he cried out to me, saying "Draw nigh unto me." So I went up to him and he said to me, "What is thy name and thy kind?" Quoth I, "My name is 'duck,' and I am of the bird-kind; but thou, why tarriest thou in this place till now?" "My father the lion," answered he, "has bidden me many a day beware of the son of Adam, and it befell this night that I saw in my sleep

the semblance of a son of Adam." And he went on to tell me the like of that I have told you. When I heard this, I said to him, "O lion, I resort to thee, that thou mayst kill the son of Adam and steadfastly address thy thought to his slaughter; for I am greatly in fear for myself of him, and fear is added to my fear, for that thou also fearest the son of Adam, and thou the Sultan of the beasts. Then, O my sister, I ceased not to bid him beware of the son of Adam and urge him to slay him, till he rose of a sudden from his stead and went out, lashing his flanks with his tail. He fared on, and I after him, till we came to a place, where several roads met, and saw cloud of dust arise, which, presently clearing away, discovered a naked runaway ass, and now running and galloping and now rolling in the dust. When the lion saw the ass, he cried out to him, and he came up to him submissively. Then said the lion, "Harkye, crack-brain! What is thy kind and what brings thee hither?" "O, son of the Sultan," answered the ass, "I am by kind an ass, and the cause of my coming hither is that I am fleeing from the son of Adam." "Dost thou fear then that he will kill thee?" asked the lion-whelp. "Not so, O son of the Sultan," replied the ass; "but I fear lest he put a cheat on me; for he hath a thing called the pad, that he sets on my back, and a thing called the girth, that he binds about my belly, and a thing called the crupper, that he puts under my tail, and a thing called the bit, that he places in my mouth; and he fashions me a goad and goads me with it and makes me run more than my strength. If I stumble, he curses me, and if I bray, he reviles me; and when I grow old and can no longer run, he puts a wooden pannel on me and delivers me to the water-carriers, who load my back with water from the river, in skins and other vessels, such as jars, and I wear out my life in misery and abasement and fatigue till I die, when they cast me on the rubbish-heaps to the dogs. So what misery can surpass this, and what calamities can be greater than these?" When, O peahen, I heard the ass's words, my skin shuddered at the son of Adam and I said to the lion-whelp, "Of a verity, O my lord, the ass hath excuse, and his words add terror to my terror." Then said the lion to the ass, "Whither goest thou?" "Before the rising of the sun" answered he, "I espied the son of Adam afar off and fled from him, and now I am minded to flee forth and run without ceasing, for the greatness of my fear of him, so haply I may find a place to shelter me from the perfidious son of Adam." Whilst he was thus discoursing, seeking the while to take leave of us and go away, behold, another cloud of dust arose, at sight of which the ass brayed and cried out and let fly a great crack of wind. Presently, the dust lifted and discovered a handsome black horse of elegant shape, with white feet and fine legs and a brow-star like a dirhem, which made towards us, neighing, and stayed not till he stood before the whelp, the son of the lion, who, when he saw him, marvelled at his beauty and said to him, "What is thy kind, O noble wild beast, and wherefore fleest thou into this vast and wide desert?" "O lord of the beasts," answered he, "I am of the horse-kind, and I am fleeing from the son of Adam." The whelp wondered at the horse's words and said to him, "Say not thus; for it is shame for thee, seeing that thou art tall and stout. How comes it that thou fearest the son of Adam, thou, with thy bulk of body and thy swiftness of running, when I, for all my littleness of body, am resolved to find out the son of Adam, and rushing on him, eat his flesh, that I may allay the affright of this poor duck and make her to dwell in peace in her own place. But now thou hast wrung my heart with thy talk and turned me back from what I had resolved to do, in that, for all thy bulk, the son of Adam hath mastered thee and feared neither thy height nor thy breadth, though, wert thou to

kick him with thy foot, thou wouldst kill him, nor could he prevail against thee, but thou wouldst make him drink the cup of death." The horse laughed, when he heard the whelp's words, and replied, "Far, far is it from my power to overcome him, O king's son! Let not my length and my breadth nor yet my bulk delude thee, with respect to the son of Adam; for he, of the excess of his guile and his cunning, fashions for me a thing called a hobble and hobbles my four legs with ropes of palm-fibres, bound with felt, and makes me fast by the head to a high picket, so that I remain standing and can neither sit nor lie down, being tied up. When he hath a mind to ride me, he binds on his feet a thing of iron called a stirrup and lays on my back another thing called a saddle, which he fastens by two girths, passed under my armpits. Then he sets in my mouth a thing of iron he calls a bit, to which he ties a thing of leather called a rein; and when he mounts on the saddle on my back, he takes the rein in his hand and guides me with it, goading my flanks the while with the stirrups, till he makes them bleed: so do not ask, O king's son, what I endure from the son of Adam. When I grow old and lean and can no longer run swiftly, he sells me to the miller, who makes me turn in the mill, and I cease not from turning night and day, till I grow decrepit. Then he in turn sells me to the knacker, who slaughters me and flays off my hide, after which he plucks out my tail, which he sells to the sieve-makers, and melts down my fat for tallow." At this, the young lion's anger and vexation redoubled, and he said to the horse, "When didst thou leave the son of Adam?" "At mid-day," replied the horse; "and he is now on my track." Whilst the whelp was thus conversing with the horse, there arose a cloud of dust and presently subsiding, discovered a furious camel, which made toward us, braying and pawing the earth with his feet. When the whelp saw how great and lusty he was, he took him to be the son of Adam and was about to spring at him, when I said to him, "O king's son, this is not the son of Adam, but a camel, and me seems he is fleeing from the son of Adam." As I spoke, O my sister, the camel came up and saluted the lion-whelp, who returned his greeting and said to him, "What brings thee hither?" Quoth he, "I am fleeing from the son of Adam." "And thou," said the whelp, "with thy huge frame and length and breadth, how comes it that thou fearest the son of Adam, seeing that one kick of thy foot would kill him?" "O son of the Sultan," answered the camel, "know that the son of Adam has wiles, which none can withstand, nor can any but Death prevail against him; for he puts in my nostrils a twine of goat's-hair he calls a nose-ring and over my head a thing he calls a halter; then he delivers me to the least of his children, and the youngling draws me along by the nose-ring, for all my size and strength. Then they load me with the heaviest of burdens and go long journeys with me and put me to hard labours all hours of the day and night. When I grow old and feeble, my master keeps me not with him, but sells me to the knacker, who slaughters me and sells my hide to the tanners and my flesh to the cooks: so do not ask what I suffer from the son of Adam." "When didst thou leave the son of Adam?" asked the young lion. "At sundown," replied the camel; "and I doubt not but that, having missed me, he is now in search of me: wherefore, O son of the Sultan, let me go, that I may flee into the deserts and the wilds." "Wait awhile, O camel," said the whelp, "till thou see how I will rend him in pieces and give thee to eat of his flesh, whilst I crunch his bones and drink his blood." "O king's son," rejoined the camel, "I fear for thee from the son of Adam, for he is wily and perfidious." And he repeated the following verse:

Whenas on any land the oppressor cloth alight, There's nothing left for those, that dwell therein, but flight.

Whilst the camel was speaking, there arose a cloud of dust, which opened and showed a short thin old man, with a basket of carpenters' tools on his shoulder and a branch of a tree and eight planks on his head. He had little children in his hand, and came on at a brisk pace, till he drew near us. When I saw him, O my sister, I fell down for excess of affright; but the young lion rose and went to meet the carpenter, who smiled in his face and said to him, with a glib tongue, "O illustrious king and lord of the long arm, may God prosper shine evening and shine endeavour and increase thy velour and strengthen thee! Protect me from that which hath betided me and smitten me with its mischief, for I have found no helper save only thee." And he stood before him, weeping and groaning and lamenting. When the whelp heard his weeping and wailing, he said, "I will succour thee from that thou fearest. Who hath done thee wrong and what art thou, O wild beast, whose like I never saw in my life nor saw I ever one goodlier of form or more eloquent of tongue than thou? What is thy case?" "O lord of the beasts," answered the man, "I am a carpenter; he who hath wronged me is a son of Adam, and by break of dawn he will be with thee in this place." When the lion heard this, the light in his face was changed to darkness and he roared and snorted and his eyes cast forth sparks. Then he said, "By Allah, I will watch this night till the dawn, nor will I return to my father till I have compassed my intent. But thou," continued he, addressing the carpenter, "I see thou art short of step, and I would not wound thy feelings, for that I am generous of heart; yet do I deem thee unable to keep pace with the wild beasts: tell me then whither thou goest." "Know," answered the carpenter, "that I am on my way to thy father's Vizier, the Lynx; for when he heard that the son of Adam had set foot in this country, he feared greatly for himself and sent one of the beasts for me, to make him a house, wherein he should dwell, that it might shelter him and hold his enemy from him, so not one of the sons of Adam should come at him." When the young lion heard this, he envied the lynx and said to the carpenter, "By my life, thou must make me a house with these planks, ere thou make one for the lynx! When thou hast done my work, go to the lynx and make him what he wishes." "O lord of the beasts," answered the carpenter, "I cannot make thee aught, till I have made the lynx what he desires: then will I return to thy service and make thee a house, to ward thee from shine enemy." "By Allah," exclaimed the whelp, "I will not let thee go hence, till thou make me a house of these planks!" So saying, he sprang upon the carpenter, thinking to jest with him, and gave him a cuff with his paw. The blow knocked the basket off the man's shoulder and he fell down in a swoon, whereupon the young lion laughed at him and said, "Out on thee, O carpenter! Of a truth thou art weak and hast no strength; so it is excusable in thee to fear the son of Adam." Now the carpenter was exceeding wroth; but he dissembled his anger, for fear of the whelp, and sat up and smiled in his face, saying, "Well, I will make thee the house." With this, he took the planks, and nailing them together, made a house in the form of a chest, after the measure of the young lion. In this he cut a large opening, to which he made a stout cover and bored many holes therein, leaving the door open. Then he took out some nails of wrought iron and a hammer and said to the young lion, "Enter this opening, that I may fit it to thy measure." The whelp was glad and went up to the opening, but saw that it was strait; and the carpenter said to him, "Crouch down and so enter." So

the whelp crouched down and entered the chest, but his tail remained outside. Then he would have drawn back and come out; but the carpenter said to him, "Wait till I see if there be room for thy tail with thee." So saying, he twisted up the young lion's tail, and stuffing it into the chest, whipped the lid on to the opening and nailed it down; whereat the whelp cried out and said, "O carpenter, what is this narrow house thou hast made me? Let me out." But the carpenter laughed and answered, "God forbid! Repentance avails nothing for what is passed, and indeed thou shalt not come out of this place. Verily thou art fallen into the trap and there is no escape for thee from duresse, O vilest of wild beasts!" "O my brother," rejoined the whelp, "what manner of words are these?" "Know, O dog of the desert," answered the man, "that thou hast fallen into that which thou fearedst; Fate hath overthrown thee, nor did thought-taking profit thee." When the whelp heard these words, he knew that this was indeed the very son of Adam, against whom he had been warned by his father on wake and by the mysterious voice in sleep; and I also, O my sister, was certified that this was indeed he without doubt; wherefore there took me great fear of him for myself and I withdrew a little apart and waited to see what he would do with the young lion. Then I saw the son of Adam dig a pit hard by the chest and throwing the latter therein, heap brushwood upon it and burn the young lion with fire. At this sight, my fear of the son of Adam redoubled, and in my affright I have been these two days fleeing from him.'"

When the peahen heard the duck's story, she wondered exceedingly and said to her, 'O my sister, thou art safe here from the son of Adam, for we are in one of the islands of the sea, whither there is no way for him; so do thou take up shine abode with us, till God make easy shine and our affair.' Quoth the duck, 'I fear lest some calamity come upon me by night, for no runaway can rid him of fate.' 'Abide with us,' rejoined the peahen, 'and be even as we;' and ceased not to persuade her, till she yielded, saying, 'O my sister, thou knowest how little is my fortitude: had I not seen thee here, I had not remained.' 'That which is written on our foreheads,' said the peahen, 'we must indeed fulfil, and when our appointed day draws near, who shall deliver us? But not a soul passes away except it have accomplished its predestined term and fortune.' As they talked, a cloud of dust appeared, at sight of which the duck shrieked aloud and ran down into the sea, crying out, 'Beware, beware, albeit there is no fleeing from Fate and Fortune!' After awhile, the dust subsided and discovered an antelope; whereat the duck and the peahen were reassured and the latter said to her companion, 'O my sister, this thou seest and wouldst have me beware of is an antelope, and he is making for us. He will do us no hurt, for the antelope feeds upon the herbs of the earth, and even as thou art of the bird-kind, so is he of the beast-kind. So be of good cheer and leave care-taking; for care-taking wasteth the body.' Hardly had the peahen done speaking, when the antelope came up to them, thinking to shelter under the shade of the tree, and seeing the two birds, saluted them and said, 'I came to this island to-day, and I have seen none richer in herbage nor more pleasant of habitance.' Then he besought them of company and amity, and they, seeing his friendly behaviour to them, welcomed him and gladly accepted his offer. So they swore friendship one to another and abode in the island in peace and safety, eating and drinking and sleeping in common, till one day there came thither a ship, that had strayed from its course in the sea. It cast anchor near them, and the crew landing, dispersed about the island. They soon caught sight of the three animals and made for them, whereupon the

peahen flew up into the tree and the antelope fled into the desert, but the duck abode paralysed (by fear). So they chased her, till they caught her and carried her with them to the ship, whilst she cried out and said, 'Caution availed me nothing against Fate and destiny!' When the peahen saw what had betided the duck, she came down from the tree, saying, 'I see that misfortunes lie in wait for all. But for yonder ship, parting had not befallen between me and this duck, for she was one of the best of friends. Then she flew off and rejoined the antelope, who saluted her and gave her joy of her safety and enquired for the duck, to which she replied, 'The enemy hath taken her, and I loathe the sojourn of this island after her.' Then she wept for the loss of the duck and repeated the following verses:

The day of severance broke my heart in tway.
God do the like unto the severance-day!

And also these:

I pray that we may yet foregather once again.
That I may tell her all that parting wrought of pain.

The antelope was greatly moved at hearing of their comrade's fate, but dissuaded the peahen from her resolve to leave the island. So they abode there together, eating and drinking in peace and safety, save that they ceased not to mourn for the loss of the duck, and the antelope said to the peahen, 'Thou seest, O my sister, how the folk who came forth of the ship were the means of our severance from the duck and of her destruction; so do thou beware of them and guard thyself from them and from the craft of the son of Adam and his perfidy.' But the peahen replied, 'I am assured that nought caused her death but her neglect to celebrate the praises of God, and indeed I said to her, "Verily I fear for thee, because thou art not careful to praise God; for all things that He hath made do glorify Him, and if any neglect to do so, it leadeth to their destruction."' When the antelope heard the peahen's words, he exclaimed, 'May God make fair thy face!' and betook himself to the celebration of the praises of the Almighty, never after slackening therefrom. And it is said that his form of adoration was as follows: 'Glory be to the Requiter of good and evil, the Lord of glory and dominion!'

The Hermits.

THERE was once a hermit, who served God on a certain mountain, whither resorted a pair of pigeons; and he was wont to make two parts of his daily bread, eating one half himself and giving the other to the pigeons. He prayed also for them, that they might be blest with increase; so they increased and multiplied greatly. Now they resorted only to that mountain, and the reason of their foregathering with the holy man was their assiduity in celebrating the praises of God; for it is said that the pigeons' formula of praise is, 'Glory be to the Creator of all things, Who appointeth to every one his daily bread, Who builded the heavens and spread out the earth like a carpet!' They dwelt thus together, in the happiest of life, they and their brood, till the holy man died, when the company of the pigeons was broken up, and they all dispersed among the towns and villages and mountains.

Now in a certain other mountain there dwelt a shepherd, a man of piety and chastity and understanding; and he had flocks of sheep, which he tended, and made his living by their milk and wool. The mountain aforesaid abounded in trees and pasturage and wild beasts, but the latter had no power over the peasant nor over his flocks; so he continued to dwell therein, in security, taking no thought to the things of the world, by reason of his happiness and assiduity in prayer and devotion, till God ordained that he should fall exceeding sick. So he betook himself to a cavern in the mountain, and his sheep used to go out in the morning to the pasturage and take refuge at night in the cave. Now God was minded to try him and prove his obedience and constancy; so He sent him one of His angels, who came in to him in the semblance of a fair woman and sat down before him. When the shepherd saw the woman seated before him, his flesh shuddered with horror of her and he said to her, 'O woman, what brings thee hither? I have no need of thee, nor is there aught betwixt thee and me that calls for thy coming in to me.' 'O man,' answered she, 'dost thou not note my beauty and grace and the fragrance of my breath and knowest thou not the need women have of men and men of women? Behold, I have chosen to be near thee and desire to enjoy thy company; so who shall forbid thee from me? Indeed, I come to thee willingly and do not withhold myself from thee: there is none with us whom we need fear; and I wish to abide with thee as long as thou sojournest in this mountain and be thy companion. I offer myself to thee, for thou needest the service of women; and if thou know me, thy sickness will leave thee and health return to thee and thou wilt repent thee of having forsworn the company of women during thy past life. Indeed, I give thee good advice: so give ear to my counsel and draw near unto me.' Quoth he, 'Go out from me, O deceitful and perfidious woman! I will not incline to thee nor approach thee. I want not thy company; he who coveteth thee renounceth the future life, and he who coveteth the future life renounceth thee, for thou seduces the first and the last. God the Most High lieth in wait for His servants and woe unto him who is afflicted with thy company!' 'O thou that errest from the truth and wanderest from the path of reason,' answered she, 'turn thy face to me and look upon my charms and profit by my nearness, as did the wise who have gone before thee. Indeed, they were richer than thou in experience and greater of wit; yet they rejected not the society of

women, as thou dost, but took their pleasure of them and their company, and it did them no hurt, in body or in soul. Wherefore do thou turn from thy resolve and thou shalt praise the issue of shine affair.' 'All thou sayest I deny and abhor,' rejoined the shepherd, 'and reject all thou offerest; for thou art cunning and perfidious and there is no faith in thee, neither honour. How much foulness cost thou hide under thy beauty and how many a pious man hast thou seduced, whose end was repentance and perdition! Avaunt from me, O thou who devotes thyself to corrupt others!' So saying, he threw his goat's-hair cloak over his eyes, that he might not see her face, and betook himself to calling upon the name of his Lord. When the angel saw the excellence of his obedience (to God), he went out from him and ascended to heaven.

Now hard by the mountain was a village wherein dwelt a pious man, who knew not the other's stead, till one night he saw in a dream one who said to him, 'In such a place near to thee is a pious man: go to him and be at his command.' So when it was day, he set out afoot to go thither, and at the time when the heat was grievous upon him, he came to a tree, which grew beside a spring of running water. He sat down to rest in the shadow of the tree, and birds and beasts came to the spring to drink; but when they saw him, they took fright and fled. Then said he, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High! I am resting here, to the hurt of the beasts and fowls.' So he rose and went on, blaming himself and saying, 'My tarrying here hath wronged these beasts and birds, and what excuse have I towards my Creator and the Creator of these creatures, for that I was the cause of their flight from their watering-place and their pasture? Alas, my confusion before my Lord on the day when He shall avenge the sheep of the goats!' And he wept and repeated the following verses:

By Allah, if men knew for what they are create,
They would not go and sleep, unheeding of their fate!
Soon cometh death, then wake and resurrection come;
Then judgment and reproof and terrors passing great.
Obey me or command, the most of us are like.
The dwellers in the cave, asleep early and late.

Then he fared on, weeping for that he had driven the birds and beasts from the spring by sitting down under the tree, till he came to the shepherd's dwelling and going in, saluted him. The shepherd returned his greeting and embraced him, weeping and saying, 'What brings thee hither, where no man hath ever come in to me?' Quoth the other, 'I saw in my sleep one who described to me this thy stead and bade me repair to thee and salute thee: so I came, in obedience to the commandment.' The shepherd welcomed him, rejoicing in his company, and they both abode in the cavern, doing fair service to their Lord and living upon the flesh and milk of their sheep, having put away from them wealth and children and other the goods of this world, till there came to them Death, the Certain, the Inevitable. And this is the end of their story."

"O Shehrzad," said King Shehriyar, "thou puttest me out of conceit with my kingdom and makest me repent of having slain so many women and maidens. Hast thou any stories of birds?" "Yes," answered she, and began as follows:

The Water-fowl and the Tortoise

WATER-FOWL flew high up into the air and alighted on rock in the midst of a running water. As it sat, behold, the water floated up a carcase, that was swollen and rose high out of the water, and lodged it against the rock. The bird drew near and examining it, found that it was the dead body of a man and saw in it spear and sword wounds. So he said in himself, 'Belike, this was some evil-doer, and a company of men joined themselves together against him and slew him and were at peace from him and his mischief.' Whilst he was marvelling at this, vultures and eagles came down upon the carcase from all sides; which when the water-fowl saw, he was sore affrighted and said, 'I cannot endure to abide here longer.' So he flew away in quest of a place where he might harbour, till the carcase should come to an end and the birds of prey leave it, and stayed not in his flight, till he came to a river with a tree in its midst. He alighted on the tree, troubled and distraught and grieved for his separation from his native place, and said to himself, 'Verily grief and vexation cease not to follow me: I was at my ease, when I saw the carcase, and rejoiced therein exceedingly, saying, "This is a gift of God to me;" but my joy became sorrow and my gladness mourning, for the lions of the birds took it and made prize of it and came between it and me. How can I trust in this world or hope to be secure from misfortune therein? Indeed, the proverb says, "The world is the dwelling of him who hath no dwelling: he who hath no understanding is deceived by it and trusteth in it with his wealth and his child and his family and his folk; nor doth he who is deluded by it leave to rely upon it, walking proudly upon the earth, till he is laid under it and the dust is cast over him by him who was dearest and nearest to him of all men; but nought is better for the noble than patience under its cares and miseries." I have left my native place, and it is abhorrent to me to quit my brethren and friends and loved ones.' Whilst he was thus devising with himself, behold, a tortoise descended into the water and approaching the bird, saluted him, saying, 'O my lord, what hath exiled thee and driven thee afar from thy place?' 'The descent of enemies thereon,' replied the water-fowl; 'for the understanding cannot brook the neighbourhood of his enemy; even as well says the poet:

Whenas on any land the oppressor doth alight, There's nothing left for those, that dwell therein, but flight.'

Quoth the tortoise, 'If the case be as thou sayest, I will not leave thee nor cease to be before thee, that I may do thy need and fulfil thy service; for it is said that there is no sorer desolation than that of him who is an exile, cut off from friends and country; and also that no calamity equals that of severance from virtuous folk; but the best solace for the understanding is to seek companionship in his strangerhood and be patient under adversity. Wherefore I hope that thou wilt find thine account in my company, for I will be to thee a servant and a helper.' 'Verily, thou art right in what thou sayest,' answered the water-fowl; 'for, by my life, I have found grief and pain in separation, what while I have been absent from my stead and sundered from my friends and brethren, seeing that in severance is an admonition to him who will be admonished and matter of thought for him who will take thought. If one find not a companion to console him, good is cut off from him for ever and evil stablished with

him eternally; and there is nothing for the wise but to solace himself in every event with brethren and be instant in patience and constancy; for indeed these two are praiseworthy qualities, that uphold one under calamities and shifts of fortune and ward off affliction and consternation, come what will.' 'Beware of sorrow,' rejoined the tortoise, 'for it will corrupt thy life to thee and do away thy fortitude.' And they gave not over converse, till the bird said, 'Never shall I leave to fear the strokes of fortune and the vicissitudes of events.' When the tortoise heard this, he came up to him and kissing him between the eyes, said to him, 'Never may the company of the birds cease to be blest in thee and find good in thy counsel! How shalt thou be burdened with inquietude and harm?' And he went on to comfort the water-fowl and soothe his disquiet, till he became reassured. Then he flew to the place, where the carcase was, and found the birds of prey gone and nothing left of the body but bones; whereupon he returned to the tortoise and acquainted him with this, saying, 'I wish to return to my stead and enjoy the society of my friends; for the wise cannot endure separation from his native place.' So they both went thither and found nought to affright them; whereupon the water-fowl repeated the following verses:

Full many a sorry chance doth light upon a man and fill
His life with trouble, yet with God the issue bideth still.
His case is sore on him, but when its meshes straitened are
To att'rest, they relax, although he deem they never will.

So they abode there in peace and gladness, till one day fate led thither a hungry hawk, which drove its talons into the bird's belly and killed him, nor did caution stand him in stead seeing that his hour was come. Now the cause of his death was that he neglected to praise God, and it is said that his form of adoration was as follows, 'Glory be to our Lord in that He ordereth and ordaineth, and glory be to our Lord in that He maketh rich and maketh poor!'"

"O Shehrzad," said the Sultan, "verily, thou overwhelmest me with admonitions and salutary instances! Hast thou any stories of beasts?" "Yes," answered she. "Know, O King, that

The Wolf and the Fox.

A FOX and a wolf once dwelt in the same den, harbouring therein together day and night; but the wolf was cruel and oppressive to the fox. They abode thus awhile, till one day the fox exhorted the wolf to use gentle dealing and leave evil-doing, saying, 'If thou persist in thine arrogance, belike God will give the son of Adam power over thee, for he is past master in guile and craft and knavery. By his devices he brings down the birds from the air and draws the fish forth of the waters and sunders mountains in twain and transports them from place to place. All this is of his craft and wiliness; wherefore do thou betake thyself to equity and fair dealing and leave evil and tyranny; and thou shalt fare the better for it.' But the wolf rejected his counsel and answered him roughly, saying, 'Thou hast no call to speak of matters of weight and stress.' And he dealt the fox a buffet that laid him senseless; but, when he revived, he smiled in the wolf's face and excused himself for his unseemly speech, repeating the following verses:

If I have sinned in aught that's worthy of reproach Or if
I've made default against the love of you,
Lo, I repent my fault; so let thy clemency
The sinner comprehend, that doth for pardon sue.

The wolf accepted his excuse and held his hand from him, saying, 'Speak not of that which concerns thee not, or thou shalt hear what will not please thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the fox; 'henceforth I will abstain from what pleaseth thee not; for the sage says, "Speak thou not of that whereof thou art not asked; answer not, when thou art not called upon; leave that which concerns thee not for that which does concern thee and lavish not good counsel on the wicked, for they will repay thee therefor with evil."' And he smiled in the wolf's face, but in his heart he meditated treachery against him and said in himself, 'Needs must I compass the destruction of this wolf.' So he bore with his ill usage, saying in himself, 'Verily arrogance and falsehood lead to perdition and cast into confusion, and it is said, "He who is arrogant suffers and he who is ignorant repents and he who fears is safe: fair dealing is a characteristic of the noble, and gentle manners are the noblest of gains." It behoves me to dissemble with this tyrant, and needs must he be cast down.' Then said he to the wolf, 'Verily, the Lord pardons his erring servant and relents towards him, if he confess his sins; and I am a weak slave and have sinned in presuming to counsel thee. If thou knewest the pain that befell me by thy buffet, thou wouldst see that an elephant could not stand against it nor endure it: but I complain not of the pain of the blow, because of the contentment that hath betided me through it; for though it was exceeding grievous to me, yet its issue was gladness. As saith the sage, "The blow of the teacher is at first exceeding grievous, but the end of it is sweeter than clarified honey."' Quoth the wolf, 'I pardon thine offence and pass over thy fault; but be thou ware of my strength and avow thyself my slave; for thou knowest how rigorously I deal with those that transgress against me.' Thereupon the fox prostrated himself to the wolf, saying, 'May God prolong thy life and mayst thou cease never to subdue thine enemies!' And he abode in fear of the wolf and ceased not to wheedle him and dissemble with him.

One day, the fox came to a vineyard and saw a breach in its wall; but he mistrusted it and said in himself, 'Verily, there must be some reason for this breach and the adage says, "He who sees a cleft in the earth and doth not shun it or be wary in going up to it, is self-deluded and exposes himself to destruction." Indeed, it is well known that some folk make a semblant of a fox in their vineyards, even to setting before it grapes in dishes, that foxes may see it and come to it and fall into destruction. Meseems, this breach is a snare and the proverb says, "Prudence is the half of cleverness." Now prudence requires that I examine this breach and see if there be ought therein that may lead to perdition; and covetise shall not make me cast myself into destruction.' So he went up to the breach and examining it warily, discovered a deep pit, lightly covered (with boughs and earth), which the owner of the vineyard had dug, thinking to trap therein the wild beasts that laid waste his vines. Then he drew back from it, saying in himself, 'I have found it as I expected. Praised be God that I was wary of it! I hope that my enemy the wolf, who makes my life miserable, will fall into it; so will the vineyard be left to me and I shall enjoy it alone and dwell therein in peace.' So saying, he shook his head and laughed aloud, repeating the following verses:

Would God I might see, even now,
A wolf fallen into yon pit,
That this long time hath tortured my heart
And made me quaff bitters, God wit!
God grant I may live and be spared
And eke of the wolf be made quit!
So the vineyard of him shall be rid
And I find my purchase in it.

Then he returned in haste to the wolf and said to him, 'God hath made plain the way for thee into the vineyard, without toil. This is of thy good luck; so mayst thou enjoy the easy booty and the plentiful provant that God hath opened up to thee without trouble!' 'What proof hast thou of what thou sayest?' asked the wolf; and the fox answered, 'I went up to the vineyard and found that the owner was dead, having been devoured by wolves: so I entered and saw the fruit shining on the trees.' The wolf misdoubted not of the fox's report and gluttony got hold on him; so he rose and repaired to the breach, blinded by greed; whilst the fox stopped short and lay as one dead, applying to the case the following verse:

Lustest after Leila's favours? Look thou rather bear in mind That 'tis covetise plays havoc with the necks of human kind.

Then said he to the wolf, 'Enter the vineyard: thou art spared the trouble of climbing, for the wall is broken down, and with God be the rest of the benefit.' So the wolf went on, thinking to enter the vineyard; but when he came to the middle of the covering (of the pit), he fell in; whereupon the fox shook for delight and gladness; his care and concern left him and he sang out for joy and recited the following verses:

Fortune hath taken ruth on my case;
Yea, she hath pitied the length of my pain,
Doing away from me that which I feared
And granting me that whereto I was fain.

So I will pardon her all the sins
She sinned against me once and again;
Since for the wolf there is no escape
From certain ruin and bitter bane,
And now the vineyard is all my own
And no fool sharer in my domain.

Then he looked into the pit, and seeing the wolf weeping for sorrow and repentance over himself, wept with him; whereupon the wolf raised his head to him and said, 'Is it of pity for me thou weepest, O Aboulhussein?' 'Not so,' answered the fox, 'by Him who cast thee into the pit! I weep for the length of thy past life and for regret that thou didst not sooner fall into the pit; for hadst thou done so before I met with thee, I had been at peace: but thou wast spared till the fulfilment of thine allotted term.' The wolf thought he was jesting and said, 'O sinner, go to my mother and tell her what has befallen me, so haply she may make shift for my release.' 'Verily,' answered the fox, 'the excess of thy gluttony and thy much greed have brought thee to destruction, since thou art fallen into a pit whence thou wilt never escape. O witless wolf, knowest thou not the proverb, "He who taketh no thought to results, Fate is no friend to him, nor shall he be safe from perils?"' 'O Aboulhussein,' said the wolf, 'thou wast wont to show me affection and covet my friendship and fear the greatness of my strength. Bear me not malice for that I did with thee, for he who hath power and forgiveth, his reward is with God; even as saith the poet:

Sow benefits aye, though in other than fitting soil.
A benefit's never lost, wherever it may be sown;
And though time tarry full long to bring it to harvest-tide,
Yet no man reapeth its fruit, save he who sowed it alone.'

'O most witless of beasts of prey and stupidest of the wildings of the earth,' rejoined the fox, 'hast thou forgotten thine arrogance and pride and tyranny and how thou disregardedst the due of comradeship and wouldst not take counsel by what the poet says:

Do no oppression, whilst the power thereto is in thine hand,
For still in danger of revenge the sad oppressor goes.
Thine eyes will sleep anon, what while the opprest, on wake, call down
Curses upon thee, and God's eye shuts never in repose.'

'O Aboulhussein,' replied the wolf, 'reproach me not for past offences; for forgiveness is expected of the noble, and the practice of kindness is the best of treasures. How well says the poet:

Hasten to do good works, whenever thou hast the power, For thou art not able thereto at every season and hour.'

And he went on to humble himself to the fox and say to him, 'Haply, thou canst do somewhat to deliver me from destruction.' 'O witless, deluded, perfidious, crafty wolf,' answered the fox, 'hope not for deliverance, for this is but the just reward of thy foul dealing.' Then he laughed from ear to ear and repeated the following verses:

A truce to thy strife to beguile me! For nothing of me shalt thou gain. Thy prayers are but idle; thou sowedst Vexation; so reap it amain.

'O gentlest of beasts of prey,' said the wolf, 'I deem thee too faithful to leave me in this pit.' Then he wept and sighed and recited the following verses, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes:

O thou, whose kindnesses to me are more than one,
I trow, Whose bounties unto me vouchsafed are countless as the sand,
No shift of fortune in my time has ever fall'n on me,
But I have found thee ready still to take me by the hand.

'O stupid enemy,' said the fox, 'how art thou reduced to humility and obsequiousness and abjection and submission, after disdain and pride and tyranny and arrogance! Verily, I companied with thee and cajoled thee but for fear of thy violence and not in hope of fair treatment from thee: but now trembling is come upon thee and vengeance hath overtaken thee.' And he repeated the following verses:

O thou that for aye on beguiling art bent,
Thou'rt fall'n in the snare of thine evil intent.
So taste of the anguish that knows no relent
And be with the rest of the wolven forspent!

'O clement one,' replied the wolf, 'speak not with the tongue of despite nor look with its eyes; but fulfil the covenant of fellowship with me, ere the time for action pass away. Rise, make shift to get me a rope and tie one end of it to a tree; then let the other end down to me, that I may lay hold of it, so haply I may escape from this my strait, and I will give thee all my hand possesseth of treasures.' Quoth the fox, 'Thou persistest in talk of that wherein thy deliverance is not. Hope not for this, for thou shalt not get of me wherewithal to save thyself; but call to mind thy past ill deeds and the craft and perfidy thou didst imagine against me and bethink thee how near thou art to being stoned to death. For know that thy soul is about to leave the world and cease and depart from it; so shalt thou come to destruction and evil is the abiding-place to which thou goest!' 'O Aboulhussein,' rejoined the wolf, 'hasten to return to friendliness and persist not in this rancour. Know that he, who saves a soul from perdition, is as if he had restored it to life, and he, who saves a soul alive, is as if he had saved all mankind. Do not ensue wickedness, for the wise forbid it: and it were indeed the most manifest wickedness to leave me in this pit to drink the agony of death and look upon destruction, whenas it lies in thy power to deliver me from my strait. Wherefore go thou about to release me and deal benevolently with me.' 'O thou barbarous wretch,' answered the fox, 'I liken thee, because of the fairness of thy professions and the foulness of thine intent and thy practice, to the hawk with the partridge.' 'How so ?' asked the wolf; and the fox said,

The Hawk and the Partridge.

'I ENTERED a vineyard one day and saw a hawk stoop upon a partridge and seize it: but the partridge escaped from him and entering its nest, hid itself there. The hawk followed and called out to it, saying, "O wittol, I saw thee in the desert, hungry, and took pity on thee; so I gathered grain for thee and took hold of thee that thou mightest eat; but thou fledst, wherefore I know not, except it were to slight me. So come out and take the grain I have brought thee to eat, and much good may it do thee!" The partridge believed what he said and came out, whereupon the hawk stuck his talons into him and seized him. "Is this that which thou saidst thou hadst brought me from the desert," cried the partridge, "and of which thou badest me eat, saying, 'Much good may it do thee?' Thou hast lied to me and may God make what thou eatest of my flesh to be a deadly poison in thy maw!" So when the hawk had eaten the partridge, his feathers fell off and his strength failed and he died on the spot. Know, then, O wolf, that he, who digs a pit for his brother, soon falls into it himself, and thou first dealtest perfidiously with me.' 'Spare me this talk and these moral instances,' said the wolf, 'and remind me not of my former ill deeds, for the sorry plight I am in suffices me, seeing that I am fallen into a place, in which even my enemy would pity me, to say nothing of my friend. So make thou some shift to deliver me and be thou thereby my saviour. If this cause thee aught of hardship, think that a true friend will endure the sorest travail for his friend's sake and risk his life to deliver him from perdition; and indeed it hath been said, "A tender friend is better than an own brother." So if thou bestir thyself and help me and deliver me, I will gather thee such store of gear, as shall be a provision for thee against the time of want, and teach thee rare tricks to gain access to fruitful vineyards and strip the fruit-laden trees.' 'How excellent,' rejoined the fox, laughing, 'is what the learned say of those who are past measure ignorant, like unto thee!' 'What do they say?' asked the wolf; and the fox answered, 'They say that the gross of body are gross of nature, far from understanding and nigh unto ignorance. As for thy saying, O perfidious, stupid self-deceiver, that a friend should suffer hardship to succour his friend, it is true, as thou sayest: but tell me, of thine ignorance and poverty of wit, how can I be a true friend to thee, considering thy treachery? Dost thou count me thy friend? Behold, I am thine enemy, that exulteth in thy misfortune; and couldst thou understand it, this word were sorer to thee than slaughter and arrow-shot. As for thy promise to provide me a store against the time of want and teach me tricks to enter vineyards and spoil fruit-trees, how comes it, O crafty traitor, that thou knowest not a trick to save thyself from destruction? How far art thou from profiting thyself and how far am I from lending ear to thy speech! If thou have any tricks, make shift for thyself to save thee from this peril, wherefrom I pray God to make thine escape distant! So look, O idiot, if there be any trick with thee and save thyself from death therewith, before thou lavish instruction on others. But thou art like a certain sick man, who went to another, suffering from the same disease, and said to him, "Shall I heal thee of thy disease?" "Why dost thou not begin by healing thyself?" answered the other; so he left him and went his way. And thou, O ignorant wolf, art like this; so stay where thou art and be patient under what hath befallen thee.' When the wolf heard what the fox said, he knew

he had no hope from him; so he wept for himself, saying, 'Verily, I have been heedless of mine affair; but if God deliver me from this scrape, I will assuredly repent of my arrogance towards those who are weaker than I and will put on wool and go upon the mountains, celebrating the praises of God the Most High and fearing His wrath. Yea, I will sunder myself from all the other wild beasts and feed the poor and those who fight for the Faith.' Then he wept and lamented, till the heart of the fox was softened and he took pity on him, whenas he heard his humble words and his professions of repentance for his past arrogance and tyranny. So he sprang up joyfully and going to the brink of the pit, sat down on his hind quarters and let his tail fall therein; whereupon the wolf arose and putting out his paw, pulled the fox's tail, so that he fell down into the pit with him. Then said the wolf, 'O fox of little ruth, why didst thou exult over me, thou that wast my companion and under my dominion? Now thou art fallen into the pit with me and retribution hath soon overtaken thee. Verily, the wise have said, "If one of you reproach his brother with sucking the teats of a bitch, he also shall suck her," and how well saith the poet:

When fortune's blows on some fall hard and heavily,
With others of our kind as friend encampeth she.
So say to those who joy in our distress,
"Awake; For those who mock our woes shall suffer even as we."

And death in company is the best of things; wherefore I will make haste to kill thee, ere thou see me killed.' 'Alas! Alas!' said the fox in himself. 'I am fallen in with this tyrant, and my case calls for the use of craft and cunning; for indeed it is said that a woman fashions her ornaments for the festival day, and quoth the proverb, "I have kept thee, O my tear, against the time of my distress!" Except I make shift to circumvent this overbearing beast, I am lost without recourse; and how well says the poet:

Provide thee by craft, for thou liv'st in a time
Whose folk are as lions that lurk in a wood,
And set thou the mill-stream of knavery abroach,
That the mill of subsistence may grind for thy food,
And pluck the fruits boldly; but if they escape
From thy grasp, then content thee with hay to thy food.'

Then said he to the wolf, 'Hasten not to slay me, for that is not my desert and thou wouldst repent it, O valiant beast, lord of might and exceeding prowess! If thou hold thy hand and consider what I shall tell thee, thou wilt know that which I purpose; but if thou hasten to kill me, it will profit thee nothing and we shall both die here.' 'O wily deceiver,' answered the wolf, 'how hopest thou to work my deliverance and thine own, that thou wouldst have me grant thee time? Speak and let me know thy purpose.' 'As for my purpose,' replied the fox, 'it was such as deserves that thou reward me handsomely for it; for when I heard thy promises and thy confession of thy past ill conduct and regrets for not having earlier repented and done good and thy vows, shouldst thou escape from this thy stress, to leave harming thy fellows and others and forswear eating grapes and other fruits and devote thyself to humility and cut thy claws and break thy teeth and don wool and offer thyself as a sacrifice to God the Most

High, — when (I say), I heard thy repentance and vows of amendment, compassion took me for thee, though before I was anxious for thy destruction, and I felt bound to save thee from this thy present plight. So I let down my tail, that thou mightest grasp it and make thine escape. Yet wouldst thou not put off thy wonted violence and brutality nor soughtest to save thyself by fair means, but gavest me such a tug that I thought my soul would depart my body, so that thou and I are become involved in the same stead of ruin and death. There is but one thing can deliver us, to which if thou agree, we shall both escape; and after it behoves thee to keep the vows thou hast made, and I will be thy friend.' 'What is it thou hast to propose?' asked the wolf. 'It is,' answered the fox, 'that thou stand up, and I will climb up on to thy head and so bring myself nigh on a level with the surface of the earth. Then will I give a spring and as soon as I reach the ground, I will fetch thee what thou mayst lay hold of and make thine escape.' 'I have no faith in thy word,' rejoined the wolf, 'for the wise have said, "He who practices trust in the place of hate, errs," and "He who trusts in the faithless is a dupe; he who tries those that have been [already] tried (and found wanting) shall reap repentance and his days shall pass away without profit; and he who cannot distinguish between cases, giving each its due part, his good fortune will be small and his afflictions many." How well saith the poet:

Be thy thought ever ill and of all men beware;
Suspicion of good parts the helpfullest was e'er.
For nothing brings a man to peril and distress
As doth the doing good (to men) and thinking fair.

And another:

Be constant ever in suspect; 'twill save thee aye anew;
For he who lives a wakeful life, his troubles are but few.
Meet thou the foeman in thy way with open, smiling face;
But in thy heart set up a host shall battle with him do.

And yet another:

Thy worst of foes is thy nearest friend, in whom thou puttest trust;
So look thou be on thy guard with men and use them warily aye.
'Tis weakness to augur well of fate; think rather ill of it.
And be in fear of its shifts and tricks, lest it should thee bewray.'

'Verily,' said the fox, 'distrust is not to be commended in every case; on the contrary, a confiding disposition is the characteristic of a noble nature and its issue is freedom from terrors. Now it behoves thee, O wolf, to put in practice some device for thy deliverance from this thou art in and the escape of us both will be better than our death: so leave thy distrust and rancour; for if thou trust in me, one of two things will happen; either I shall bring thee whereof to lay hold and escape, or I shall play thee false and save myself and leave thee; and this latter may not be, for I am not safe from falling into some such strait as this thou art in, which would be fitting punishment of perfidy. Indeed the adage saith, "Faith is fair and perfidy foul." It behoves thee, therefore, to trust in me, for I am not ignorant of the vicissitudes of Fortune: so delay not to contrive some device for our deliverance, for the case is too urgent for further

talk.' 'To tell thee the truth,' replied the wolf, 'for all my want of confidence in thy fidelity, I knew what was in thy mind and that thou wast minded to deliver me, whenas thou heardest my repentance, and I said in myself, "If what he asserts be true, he will have repaired the ill he did: and if false, it rests with God to requite him." So, behold, I accept thy proposal, and if thou betray me, may thy perfidy be the cause of thy destruction!' Then he stood upright in the pit and taking the fox upon his shoulders, raised him to the level of the ground, whereupon the latter gave a spring and lighted on the surface of the earth. When he found himself in safety, he fell down senseless, and the wolf said to him, 'O my friend, neglect not my case and delay not to deliver me.' The fox laughed derisively and replied, 'O dupe, it was but my laughing at thee and making mock of thee that threw me into thy hands: for when I heard thee profess repentance, mirth and gladness seized me and I frisked about and danced and made merry, so that my tail fell down into the pit and thou caughtest hold of it and draggedst me down with thee. Why should I be other than a helper in thy destruction, seeing that thou art of the host of the devil! I dreamt yesterday that I danced at thy wedding and related my dream to an interpreter, who told me that I should fall into a great danger and escape from it. So now I know that my falling into thy hand and my escape are the fulfilment of my dream, and thou, O ignorant dupe, knowest me for thine enemy; so how canst thou, of thine ignorance and lack of wit, hope for deliverance at my hands, after all thou hast heard of harsh words from me, and wherefore should I endeavour for thy deliverance, whenas the wise have said, "In the death of the wicked is peace for mankind and purgation for the earth?" Yet, but that I fear to reap more affliction by keeping faith with thee than could follow perfidy, I would do my endeavour to save thee.' When the wolf heard this, he bit his paws for despite and was at his wit's end what to do. Then he gave the fox fair words, but this availed nought; so he said to him softly, 'Verily, you foxes are the most pleasant spoken of folk and the subtlest in jest, and this is but a jest of thine; but all times are not good for sport and jesting.' 'O dolt,' answered the fox, 'jesting hath a limit, that the jester overpasses not, and deem not that God will again give thee power over me, after having once delivered me from thee.' Quoth the wolf, 'It behoves thee to endeavour for my release, by reason of our brotherhood and fellowship, and if thou deliver me, I will assuredly make fair thy reward.' 'The wise say,' rejoined the fox,' "Fraternize not with the ignorant and wicked, for he will shame thee and not adorn thee, — nor with the liar, for if thou do good, he will hide it, and if evil, he will publish it;" and again, "There is help for everything but death: all may be mended, save natural depravity, and everything may be warded off, except Fate." As for the reward thou promisest me, I liken thee therein to the serpent that fled from the charmer. A man saw her affrighted and said to her, "What ails thee, O serpent?" Quoth she, "I am fleeing from the serpent-charmer, who is in chase of me, and if thou wilt save me and hide me with thee, I will make fair thy recompense and do thee all manner of kindness." So he took her, moved both by desire of the promised recompense and a wish to find favour with God, and hid her in his bosom. When the charmer had passed and gone his way and the serpent had no longer any reason to fear, he said to her, "Where is the recompense thou didst promise me? Behold, I have saved thee from that thou dreadest." "Tell me where I shall bite thee," replied she, "for thou knowest we overpass not that recompense." So saying, she gave him a bite, of which he died. And I liken thee, O

dullard, to the serpent in her dealings with the man. Hast thou not heard what the poet says?

Trust not in one in whose heart thou hast made wrath to abide
And thinkest his anger at last is over and pacified.
Verily vipers, though smooth and soft to the feel and the eye
And graceful of movements they be, yet death-dealing venom they hide.'

'O glib-tongue, lord of the fair face,' said the wolf, 'thou art not ignorant of my case and of men's fear of me and knowest how I assault the strong places and root up the vines. Wherefore, do as I bid thee and bear thyself to me as a servant to his lord.' 'O stupid dullard,' answered the fox, 'that seekest a vain thing, I marvel at thy stupidity and effrontery, in that thou biddest me serve thee and order myself towards thee as I were a slave bought with thy money; but thou shalt see what is in store for thee, in the way of breaking thy head with stones and knocking out thy traitor's teeth.' So saying, he went up to a hill that gave upon the vineyard and standing there, called out to the people of the place, nor did he give over crying, till he woke them and they, seeing him, came up to him in haste. He held his ground till they drew near him and near the pit, when he turned and fled. So they looked into the pit and spying the wolf, fell to pelting him with heavy stones, nor did they leave smiting him with sticks and stones and piercing him with lances, till they killed him and went away; whereupon the fox returned to the pit and looking down, saw the wolf dead: so he wagged his head for excess of joy and chanted the following verses:

Fate took the soul o' the wolf and snatched it far away;
Foul fall it for a soul that's lost and perished aye!
How oft, O Gaffer Grim, my ruin hast thou sought!
But unrelenting bale is fallen on thee this day.
Thou fellst into a pit, wherein there's none may fall
Except the blasts of death blow on him for a prey.

Then he abode alone in the vineyard, secure and fearing no hurt.

The Mouse and the Weasel.

A MOUSE and a weasel once dwelt in the house of a poor peasant, one of whose friends fell sick and the doctor prescribed him husked sesame. So he sought of one of his comrades sesame and gave the peasant a measure thereof to husk for him; and he carried it home to his wife and bade her dress it. So she steeped it and husked it and spread it out to dry. When the weasel saw the grain, he came up to it and fell to carrying it away to his hole, nor stinted all day, till he had borne off the most of it. Presently, in came the peasant's wife, and seeing great part of the sesame gone, stood awhile wondering; after which she sat down to watch and find out the cause. After awhile, out came the weasel to carry off more of the grain, but spying the woman seated there, knew that she was on the watch for him and said to himself, 'Verily, this affair is like to end ill. I fear me this woman is on the watch for me and Fortune is no friend to those who look not to the issues: so I must do a fair deed, whereby I may manifest my innocence and wash out all the ill I have done.' So saying, he began to take of the sesame in his hole and carry it out and lay it back upon the rest. The woman stood by and seeing the weasel do thus, said in herself, 'Verily, this is not the thief, for he brings it back from the hole of him that stole it and returns it to its place. Indeed, he hath done us a kindness in restoring us the sesame and the reward of those that do us good is that we do them the like. It is clear that this is not he who stole the grain. But I will not leave watching till I find out who is the thief.' The weasel guessed what was in her mind, so he went to the mouse and said to her, 'O my sister, there is no good in him who does not observe the claims of neighbourship and shows no constancy in friendship.' 'True, O my friend,' answered the mouse, 'and I delight in thee and in thy neighbourhood; but what is the motive of thy speech?' Quoth the weasel, 'The master of the house has brought home sesame and has eaten his fill of it, he and his family, and left much; every living soul has eaten of it, and if thou take of it in thy turn, thou art worthier thereof than any other.' This pleased the mouse and she chirped and danced and frisked her ears and tail, and greed for the grain deluded her; so she rose at once and issuing forth of her hole, saw the sesame peeled and dry, shining with whiteness, and the woman sitting watching, armed with a stick. The mouse could not contain herself, but taking no thought to the issue of the affair, ran up to the sesame and fell to messing it and eating of it; whereupon the woman smote her with the stick and cleft her head in twain: so her greed and heedlessness of the issue of her actions led to her destruction."

"By Allah," said the Sultan to Shehrzad, "this is a goodly story! Hast thou any story bearing upon the beauty of true friendship and the observance of its obligations in time of distress and rescuing from destruction?" "Yes, answered she; "it hath teached me that

The Cat and the Crow.

A CROW and a cat once lived in brotherhood. One day, as they were together under a tree, they spied a leopard making towards them, of which they had not been ware, till he was close upon them. The crow at once flew up to the top of the tree; but the cat abode confounded and said to the crow, 'O my friend, hast thou no device to save me? All my hope is in thee.' 'Indeed,' answered the crow, 'it behoveth brethren, in case of need, to cast about for a device, whenas any peril overtakes them, and right well saith the poet:

He is a right true friend who is with thee indeed
And will himself undo, to help thee in thy need,
Who, when love's severance is by evil fate decreed,
To join your sundered lives will risk his own and bleed.'

Now hard by the tree were shepherds with their dogs; so the crow flew towards them and smote the face of the earth with his wings, cawing and crying out, to draw their attention. Then he went up to one of the dogs and flapped his wings in his eyes and flew up a little way, whilst the dog ran after him, thinking to catch him. Presently, one of the shepherds raised his head and saw the bird flying near the ground and lighting now and then; so he followed him, and the crow gave not over flying just out of the dogs' reach and tempting them to pursue and snap at him: but as soon as they came near him, he would fly up a little; and so he brought them to the tree. When they saw the leopard, they rushed upon it, and it turned and fled. Now the leopard thought to eat the cat, but the latter was saved by the craft of its friend the crow. This story, O King, shows that the friendship of the virtuous saves and delivers from difficulties and dangers.

The Fox and the Crow.

A FOX once dwelt in a cave of a certain mountain, and as often as a cub was born to him and grew stout, he would eat it, for, except he did so, he had died of hunger; and this was grievous to him. Now on the top of the same mountain a crow had made his nest, and the fox said to himself, 'I have a mind to strike up a friendship with this crow and make a comrade of him, that he may help me to my day's meat, for he can do what I cannot.' So he made for the crow's stead, and when he came within earshot, he saluted him, saying, 'O my neighbour, verily a true-believer hath two claims upon his true-believing neighbour, that of neighbourliness and that of community of faith; and know, O my friend, that thou art my neighbour and hast a claim upon me, which it behoves me to observe, the more that I have been long thy neighbour. Moreover, God hath set in my breast a store of love to thee, that bids me speak thee fair and solicit thy friendship. What sayst thou?' 'Verily,' answered the crow, 'the best speech is that which is soothest, and most like thou speakest with thy tongue that which is not in thy heart. I fear lest thy friendship be but of the tongue, outward, and shine enmity of the heart, inward; for that thou art the Eater and I the Eaten, and to hold aloof one from the other were more apt to us than friendship and fellowship. What, then, maketh thee seek that thou mayst not come at and desire what may not be, seeing that thou art of the beast and I of the bird kind? Verily, this brotherhood [thou profferest] may not be, neither were it seemly.' He who knoweth the abiding-place of excellent things,' rejoined the fox, 'betters choice in what he chooses therefrom, so haply he may win to advantage his brethren; and indeed I should love to be near thee and I have chosen thy companionship, to the end that we may help one another to our several desires; and success shall surely wait upon our loves. I have store of tales of the goodliness of friendship, which, an it like thee, I will relate to thee.' 'Thou hast my leave,' answered the crow; 'let me hear thy story and weigh it and judge of thine intent thereby.' 'Hear then, O my friend,' rejoined the fox, 'that which is told of a mouse and a flea and which bears out what I have said to thee.' 'How so?' asked the crow. 'It is said,' answered the fox, 'that

The Mouse and the Flea.

A MOUSE once dwelt in the house of a rich and busy merchant. One night, a flea took shelter in the merchant's bed and finding his body soft and being athirst, drank of his blood. The smart of the bite awoke the merchant, who sat up and called to his serving men and maids. So they hastened to him and tucking up their sleeves, fell to searching for the flea. As soon as the latter was ware of the search, he turned to flee and happening on the mouse's hole, entered it. When the mouse saw him, she said to him, "What brings thee in to me, seeing that thou art not of my kind and canst not therefore be assured of safety from violence or ill-usage?" "Verily," answered the flea, "I took refuge in thy dwelling from slaughter and come to thee, seeking thy protection and not anywise coveting thy house, nor shall aught of mischief betide thee from me nor aught to make thee leave it. Nay, I hope to repay thy favours to me with all good, and thou shalt assuredly see and praise the issue of my words." "If the case be as thou sayest," answered the mouse, "be at thine ease here; for nought shall betide thee, save what may pleasure thee; there shall fall on thee rain of peace alone nor shall aught befall thee, but what befalls me. I will give thee my love without stint and do not thou regret thy loss of the merchant's blood nor lament for thy subsistence from him, but be content with what little of sufficient sustenance thou canst lightly come by; for indeed this is the safer for thee, and I have heard that one of the moral poets saith as follows:

I have trodden the road of content and retirement
And lived out my life with whatever betided;
With a morsel of bread and a draught of cold water,
Coarse salt and patched garments content I abided.
If God willed it, He made my life easy of living;
Else, I was contented with what He provided."

"O my sister," rejoined the flea, "I hearken to thine injunction and submit myself to yield thee obedience, nor have I power to gainsay thee, till life be fulfilled, in this fair intent." "Purity of intent suffices to sincere affection," replied the mouse. So love befell and was contracted between them and after this, the flea used (by night) to go to the merchant's bed and not exceed moderation (in sucking his blood) and harbour with the mouse by day in the latter's hole. One night, the merchant brought home great store of dinars and began to turn them over. When the mouse heard the chink of the coin, she put her head out of her hole and gazed at it, till the merchant laid it under his pillow and went to sleep, when she said to the flea, "Seest thou not the favourable opportunity and the great good fortune! Hast thou any device to bring us to our desire of yonder dinars?" "Verily," answered the flea, "it is not good for one to strive for aught, but if he be able to compass his desire; for if he lack of ableness thereto, he falls into that of which he should be ware and attains not his wish for weakness, though he use all possible cunning, like the sparrow that picks up grain and falls into the net and is caught by the fowler. Thou hast no strength to take the dinars and carry them into thy hole, nor can I do this; on the contrary, I could not lift a single dinar; so what hast thou to do with them?" Quoth the mouse, "I have made me

these seventy openings, whence I may go out, and set apart a place for things of price, strong and safe; and if thou canst contrive to get the merchant out of the house, I doubt not of success, so Fate aid me." "I will engage to get him out of the house for thee," answered the flea and going to the merchant's bed, gave him a terrible bite, such as he had never before felt, then fled to a place of safety. The merchant awoke and sought for the flea, but finding it not, lay down again on his other side. Then came the flea and bit him again, more sharply than before. So he lost patience and leaving his bed, went out and lay down on the bench before the door and slept there and awoke not till the morning. Meanwhile the mouse came out and fell to carrying the dinars into her hole, till not one was left; and when it was day, the merchant began to accuse the folk and imagine all manner of things. And know, O wise, clear-sighted and experienced crow (continued the fox), that I only tell thee this to the intent that thou mayst reap the recompense of thy goodness to me, even as the mouse reaped the reward of her kindness to the flea; for see how he repaid her and requited her with the goodliest of requitals.' Quoth the crow, 'It lies with the benefactor to show benevolence or not; nor is it incumbent on us to behave kindly to whoso seeks an impossible connection. If I show thee favour, who art by nature my enemy, I am the cause of my own destruction, and thou, O fox, art full of craft and cunning. Now those, whose characteristics these are, are not to be trusted upon oath, and he who is not to be trusted upon oath, there is no good faith in him. I heard but late of thy perfidious dealing with thy comrade the wolf and how thou leddest him into destruction by thy perfidy and guile, and this though he was of thine own kind and thou hadst long companied with him; yet didst thou not spare him; and if thou didst thus with thy fellow, that was of thine own kind, how can I have confidence in thy fidelity and what would be thy dealing with thine enemy of other than thy kind? Nor can I liken thee and me but to the Falcon and the Birds.' 'How so?' asked the fox. 'They say,' answered the crow, 'that

The Falcon and the Birds.

THERE was once a falcon who was a cruel tyrant in the days of his youth, so that the beasts of prey of the air and of the earth feared him and none was safe from his mischief; and many were the instances of his tyranny, for he did nothing but oppress and injure all the other birds. As the years passed over him, he grew weak and his strength failed, so that he was oppressed with hunger; but his cunning increased with the waning of his strength and he redoubled in his endeavour and determined to go to the general rendezvous of the birds, that he might eat their leavings, and in this manner he gained his living by cunning, whenas he could do so no longer by strength and violence. And thou, O fox, art like this: if thy strength fail thee, thy cunning fails not; and I doubt not that thy seeking my friendship is a device to get thy subsistence; but I am none of those who put themselves at thy mercy, for God hath given me strength in my wings and caution in my heart and sight in my eyes, and I know that he who apeth a stronger than he, wearieth himself and is often destroyed, wherefore I fear for thee lest, if thou ape a stronger than thou, there befall thee what befell the sparrow.' 'What befell the sparrow?' asked the fox. 'I conjure thee, by Allah, to tell me his story.' 'I have heard,' replied the crow, 'that

The Sparrow and the Eagle.

A SPARROW was once hovering over a sheep-fold, when he saw a great eagle swoop down upon a lamb and carry it off in his claws. Thereupon the sparrow clapped his wings and said, "I will do even as the eagle hath done;" and he conceited himself and aped a greater than he. So he flew down forthright and lighted on the back of a fat ram, with a thick fleece that was become matted, by his lying in his dung and stale, till it was like felt. As soon as the sparrow lighted on the sheep's back, he clapped his wings and would have flown away, but his feet became tangled in the wool and he could not win free. All this while the shepherd was looking on, having seen as well what happened with the eagle as with the sparrow; so he came up to the latter in a rage and seized him. Then he plucked out his wing-feathers and tying his feet with a twine, carried him to his children and threw him to them. "What is this?" asked they and he answered, "This is one that aped a greater than himself and came to grief." Now thou, O fox,' continued the crow, 'art like this and I would have thee beware of aping a greater than thou, lest thou perish. This is all I have to say to thee; so go from me in peace.' When the fox despaired of the crow's friendship, he turned away, groaning and gnashing his teeth for sorrow and disappointment, which when the crow heard, he said to him, 'O fox, why dost thou gnash thy teeth?' 'Because I find thee wilier than myself,' answered the fox and made off to his den."

"O Shehrzad," said the Sultan, "how excellent and delightful are these thy stories! Hast thou more of the like edifying tales?" "It is said," answered she, "that

The Hedgehog and the Pigeons.

A HEDGEHOG once took up his abode under a palm-tree, on which roosted a pair of wood-pigeons, that had made their nest there and lived an easy life, and he said to himself, 'These pigeons eat of the fruit of the palm-tree, and I have no means of getting at it; but needs must I go about with them.' So he dug a hole at the foot of the palm-tree and took up his lodging there, he and his wife. Moreover, he made a place of prayer beside the hole, in which he shut himself and made a show of piety and abstinence and renunciation of the world. The male pigeon saw him praying and worshipping and inclined to him for his much devoutness and said to him, 'How long hast thou been thus?' 'Thirty years,' replied the hedgehog. 'What is thy food?' asked the bird and the other answered, 'What falls from the palm-tree.' 'And what is thy clothing?' asked the pigeon. 'Prickles,' replied the hedgehog; 'I profit by their roughness.' 'And why,' continued the bird, 'hast thou chosen this place rather than another?' 'I chose it,' answered the hedgehog, 'that I might guide the erring into the right way and teach the ignorant.' 'I had thought thee other-guise than this,' rejoined the pigeon; but now I feel a yearning for that which is with thee.' Quoth the hedgehog, 'I fear lest thy deed belie thy speech and thou be even as the husbandman, who neglected to sow in season, saying, "I fear lest the days bring me not to my desire, and I shall only waste my substance by making haste to sow." When the time of harvest came and he saw the folk gathering in their crops, he repented him of what he had lost by his tardiness and died of chagrin and vexation.' 'What then shall I do,' asked the pigeon, 'that I may be freed from the bonds of the world and give myself up altogether to the service of my Lord?' 'Betake thee to preparing for the next world,' answered the hedgehog, 'and content thyself with a pittance of food.' 'How can I do this,' said the pigeon, 'I that am a bird and may not go beyond the palm-tree whereon is my food? Nor, could I do so, do I know another place, wherein I may abide.' Quoth the hedgehog, 'Thou canst shake down of the fruit of the palm what shall suffice thee and thy wife for a year's victual; then do ye take up your abode in a nest under the tree, that ye may seek to be guided in the right way, and do ye turn to what ye have shaken down and store it up against the time of need; and when the fruits are spent and the time is long upon you, address yourselves to abstinence from food.' 'May God requite thee with good,' exclaimed the pigeon, 'for the fair intent with which thou hast reminded me of the world to come and hast directed me into the right way!' Then he and his wife busied themselves in knocking down the dates, till nothing was left on the palm-tree, whilst the hedgehog, finding whereof to eat, rejoiced and filled his den with the dates, storing them up for his subsistence and saying in himself, 'When the pigeon and his wife have need of their provant, they will seek it of me, trusting in my devoutness and abstinence; and from what they have heard of my pious counsels and admonitions, they will draw near unto me. Then will I seize them and eat them, after which I shall have the place and all that drops from the palm-tree, to suffice me.' Presently the pigeon and his wife came down and finding that the hedgehog had carried off all the dates, said to him, 'O pious and devout-spoken hedgehog of good counsel, we can find no sign of the dates and know not on what else we shall feed.' 'Belike,' replied the hedgehog, 'the winds have carried them away; but the turning from the provision to

the Provider is of the essence of prosperity, and He who cut the corners of the mouth will not leave it without victual.' And he gave not over preaching to them thus and making a show of piety and cozening them with fine words, till they put faith in him and entered his den, without suspicion, where-upon he sprang to the door and gnashed his tusks, and the pigeon, seeing his perfidy manifested, said to him, 'What has to-night to do with yester-night? Knowest thou not that there is a Helper for the oppressed? Beware of treachery and craft, lest there befall thee what befell the sharpers who plotted against the merchant.' 'What was that?' asked the hedgehog. 'I have heard tell,' answered the pigeon, 'that

The Merchant and the Two Sharpers.

THERE was once in a city called Sendeh a very wealthy merchant, who made ready merchandise and set out with it for such a city, thinking to sell it there. There followed him two sharpers, who had made up into bales what goods they could get and giving out to him that they also were merchants, companied with him by the way. At the first halting-place, they agreed to play him false and take his goods; but, at the same time, each purposed inwardly foul play to the other, saying in himself, "If I can cheat my comrade, it will be well for me and I shall have all to myself." So each took food and putting therein poison, brought it to his fellow; and they both ate of the poisoned mess and died. Now they had been sitting talking with the merchant; so when they left him and were long absent from him, he sought for them and found them both dead; whereby he knew that they were sharpers, who had plotted to play him foul, but their treachery had recoiled upon themselves; so the merchant was preserved and took what they had.'"

"O Shehrzad," said the Sultan, "verily thou hast aroused me to all whereof I was negligent! Continue to edify me with these fables." Quoth she, "It has come to my knowledge, O King, that

The Thief and His Monkey.

A CERTAIN man had a monkey and was a thief, who never entered one of the markets of the city in which he dwelt, but he made off with great purchase. One day, he saw a man offering for sale worn clothes, and he went calling them in the market, but none bid for them, and all to whom he showed them refused to buy of him. Presently, the thief saw him put the clothes in a wrapper and sit down to rest for weariness; so he made the ape sport before him, and whilst he was busy gazing at it, stole the parcel from him. Then he took the ape and made off to a lonely place, where he opened the wrapper and taking out the old clothes, wrapped them in a piece of costly stuff. This he carried to another market and exposed it for sale with what was therein, making it a condition that it should not be opened and tempting the folk with the lowness of the price he set on it. A certain man saw the wrapper and it pleased him; so he bought the parcel on these terms and carried it home, doubting not but he had gotten a prize. When his wife saw it, she said, 'What is this?' And he answered, 'It is precious stuff, that I have bought below its worth, meaning to sell it again and take the profit.' 'O dupe,' rejoined she, 'would this stuff be sold under its value, except it were stolen? Dost thou not know that he who buys a ware, without examining it, erreth? And indeed he is like unto the weaver.' 'What is the story of the weaver?' asked he; and she said, 'I have heard tell that

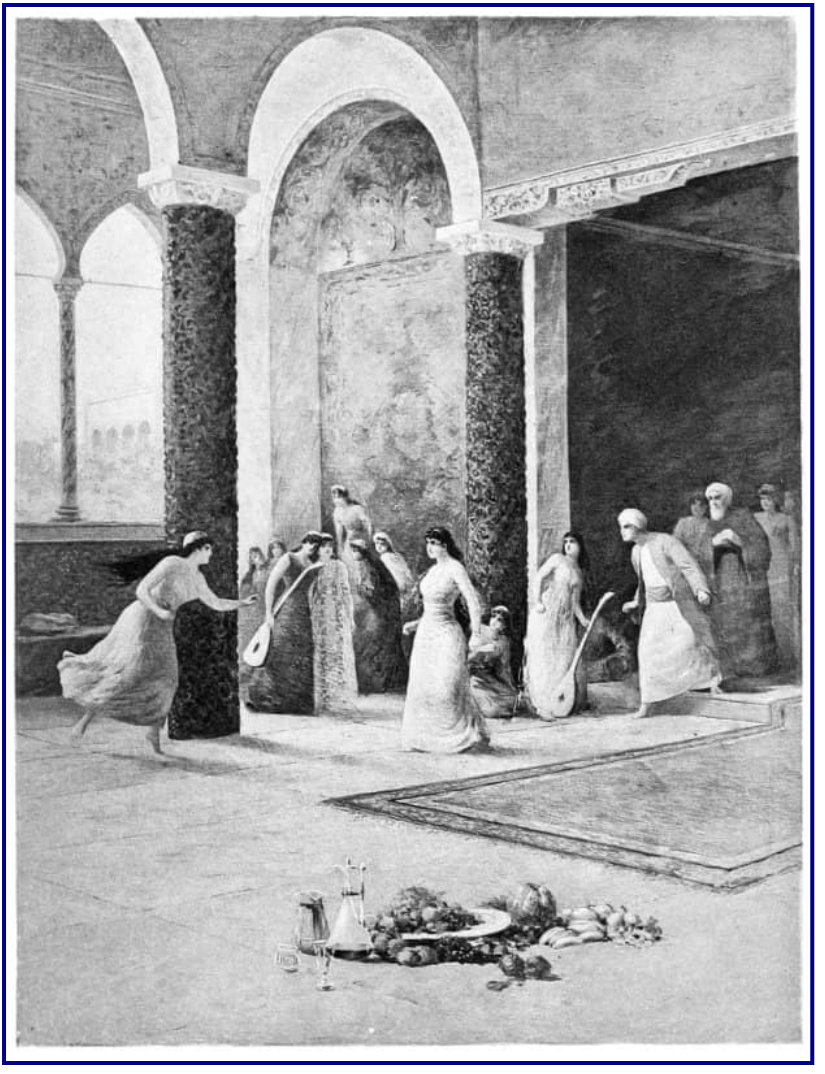
The Foolish Weaver.

THERE was once in a certain village a weaver who could not earn his living save by excessive toil. One day, it chanced that a rich man of the neighbourhood made a feast and bade the folk thereto. The weaver was present and saw such as were richly clad served with delicate meats and made much of by the master of the house, for what he saw of their gallant array. So he said in himself, "If I change this my craft for another, easier and better considered and paid, I shall amass store of wealth and buy rich clothes, that so I may rise in rank and be exalted in men's eyes and become like unto these." Presently, one of the mountebanks there climbed up to the top of a steep and lofty wall and threw himself down, alighting on his feet; which when the weaver saw, he said to himself, "Needs must I do as this fellow hath done, for surely I shall not fail of it." So he climbed up on to the wall and casting himself down to the ground, broke his neck and died forthright. I tell thee this (continued the woman) that thou mayst get thy living by that fashion thou knowest and throughly understandest, lest greed enter into thee and thou lust after what is not of thy competence.' Quoth he, 'Not every wise man is saved by his wisdom nor is every fool lost by his folly. I have seen a skilful charmer versed in the ways of serpents, bitten by a snake and killed, and I have known others prevail over serpents, who had no skill in them and no knowledge of their ways.' And he hearkened not to his wife, but went on buying stolen goods below their value, till he fell under suspicion and perished.

The Sparrow and the Peacock.

THERE was once a sparrow, that used every day to visit a certain king of the birds and was the first to go in to him and the last to leave him. One day, a company of birds assembled on a high mountain, and one of them said to another, 'Verily, we are waxed many and many are the differences between us, and needs must we have a king to order our affairs, so shall we be at one and our differences will cease.' Thereupon up came the sparrow and counselled them to make the peacock, — that is, the prince he used to visit, — king over them. So they chose the peacock to their king and he bestowed largesse on them and made the sparrow his secretary and vizier. Now the sparrow was wont bytimes to leave his assiduity [in the personal service of the king] and look into affairs [in general]. One day, he came not at the usual time, whereat the peacock was sore troubled; but presently, he returned and the peacock said to him, 'What hath delayed thee, that art the nearest to me of all my servants and the dearest?' Quoth the sparrow, 'I have seen a thing that is doubtful to me and at which I am affrighted.' 'What was it thou sawest?' asked the king; and the sparrow answered, 'I saw a man set up a net, hard by my nest, and drive its pegs fast into the ground. Then he strewed grain in its midst and withdrew afar off. As I sat watching what he would do, behold, fate and destiny drove thither a crane and his wife, which fell into the midst of the net and began to cry out; whereupon the fowler came up and took them. This troubled me, and this is the reason of my absence from thee, O king of the age; but never again will I abide in that nest, for fear of the net.' 'Depart not thy dwelling,' rejoined the peacock; 'for precaution will avail thee nothing against destiny.' And the sparrow obeyed his commandment, saying, 'I will take patience and not depart, in obedience to the king.' So he continued to visit the king and carry him food and water, taking care for himself, till one day he saw two sparrows fighting on the ground and said in himself, 'How can I, who am the king's vizier, look on and see sparrows fighting in my neighbourhood? By Allah, I must make peace between them!' So he flew down to them, to reconcile them; but the fowler cast the net over them and taking the sparrow in question, gave him to his fellow, saying, 'Take care of him, for he is the fattest and finest I ever saw.' But the sparrow said in himself, 'I have fallen into that which I feared and it was none but the peacock that inspired me with a false security. It availed me nothing to beware of the stroke of fate, since for him who taketh precaution there is no fleeing from destiny; and how well says the poet:

That which is not to be shall by no means be brought
To pass, and that which is to be shall come, unsought,
Even at the time ordained; but he that knoweth not
The truth is still deceived and finds his hopes grown nought.'



Story of Ali Ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar.

THERE lived once [at Baghdad] in the days of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid a merchant named Aboulhusn Ali ben Tahir, who was great of goods and grace, handsome and pleasant-mannered, beloved of all. He used to enter the royal palace without asking leave, for all the Khalif's concubines and slave-girls loved him, and he was wont to company with Er Reshid and recite verses to him and tell him witty stories. Withal he sold and bought in the merchants' bazaar, and there used to sit in his shop a youth named Ali ben Bekkar, a descendant of the ancient kings of Persia, who was fair of face and elegant of shape, with rosy cheeks and joined eyebrows, sweet of speech and laughing-lipped, a lover of mirth and gaiety. It chanced one day, as they sat laughing and talking, there came up ten damsels like moons, every one of them accomplished in beauty and symmetry, and amongst them a young lady riding on a mule with housings of brocade and golden stirrups. She was swathed in a veil of fine stuff, with a girdle of gold-embroidered silk, and was even as says the poet:

She hath a skin like very silk and a soft speech and sweet;
Gracious to all, her words are nor too many nor too few.
Two eyes she hath, quoth God Most High, "Be," and forthright they were;
They work as wine upon the hearts of those whom they ensue.
Add to my passion, love of her, each night; and, solacement
Of loves, the Resurrection be thy day of rendezvous!

The lady alighted at Aboulhusn's shop and sitting down there, saluted him, and he returned her salute. When Ali ben Bekkar saw her, she ravished his understanding and he rose to go away; but she said to him, 'Sit in thy place. We came to thee and thou goest away: this is not fair.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'by Allah, I flee from what I see; for the tongue of the case saith:

She's the sun and her dwelling's in heaven on high;
Look, then, to thine heart thou fair patience commend.
Thou mayst not climb up to her place in the sky,
Nor may she to thee from her heaven descend.'

When she heard this, she smiled and said to Aboulhusn, 'What is the name of this young man?' 'He is a stranger,' answered he. 'What countryman is he?' asked she, and the merchant replied, 'He is a descendant of the (ancient) kings of Persia; his name is Ali ben Bekkar, and indeed it behoves us to use strangers with honour.' 'When my damsel comes to thee,' rejoined she, 'come thou at once to us and bring him with thee, that we may entertain him in our abode, lest he blame us and say, "There is no hospitality in the people of Baghdad:" for niggardliness is the worst fault that a man can have. Thou hearest what I say to thee and if thou disobey me, thou wilt incur my displeasure and I will never again visit thee or salute thee.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered Aboulhusn; 'God preserve me from thy displeasure, fair lady!' Then she rose and went away, leaving Ali ben Bekkar in a state of bewilderment. Presently, the damsel came and said to the merchant, 'O my lord Aboulhusn, my lady Shemsennehar, the favourite of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid, bids thee to her, thee

and thy friend, my lord Ali ben Bekkar.' So he rose and taking Ali with him, followed the girl to the Khalif's palace, where she carried them into a chamber and made them sit down. They talked together awhile, till she set trays of food before them, and they ate and washed their hands. Then she brought them wine, and they drank and made merry; after which she bade them rise and carried them into another chamber, vaulted upon four columns and adorned and furnished after the goodliest fashion with various kinds of furniture and decorations, as it were one of the pavilions of Paradise. They were amazed at the rarities they saw and as they were gazing at these marvels, up came ten damsels, like moons, with a proud and graceful gait, dazzling the sight and confounding the wit, and ranged themselves in two ranks, as they were of the houris of Paradise. After awhile, in came ten other damsels, with lutes and other instruments of mirth and music in their hands, who saluted the two guests and sitting down, fell to tuning their instruments. Then they rose and standing before them, played and sang and recited verses: and indeed each one of them was a seduction to the faithful. Whilst they were thus occupied, there entered other ten damsels like unto them, high-bosomed and of an equal age, with black eyes and rosy cheeks, joined eyebrows and languorous looks, a seduction to the faithful and a delight to all who looked upon them, clad in various kinds of coloured silks, with ornaments that amazed the wit. They took up their station at the door, and there succeeded them yet other ten damsels, fairer than they, clad in gorgeous apparel, such as defies description; and they also stationed themselves by the door. Then in came a band of twenty damsels and amongst them the lady Shemsennehar, as she were the moon among the stars, scarved with the luxuriance of her hair and dressed in a blue robe and a veil of silk, embroidered with gold and jewels. About her middle she wore a girdle set with various kinds of precious stones, and she advanced with a graceful and coquettish gait, till she came to the couch that stood at the upper end of the chamber and seated herself thereon. When Ali ben Bekkar saw her, he repeated the following couplets:

Yes, this is she indeed, the source of all my ill,
For whom with long desire I languish at Love's will.
Near her, I feel my soul on fire and bones worn waste
For yearning after her that doth my heart fulfih

Then said he to Aboulhusn, 'Thou hadst dealt more kindly with me to have forewarned me of these things; that I might have prepared my mind and taken patience to support what hath befallen me ;' and he wept and groaned and complained. 'O my brother,' replied Aboulhusn, 'I meant thee nought but good; but I feared to tell thee of this, lest such transport should overcome thee as might hinder thee from foregathering with her and intervene between thee and her: but take courage and be of good heart, for she is well disposed to thee and inclineth to favour thee.' 'What is the lady's name?' asked Ali ben Bekkar. 'She is called Shemsennehar,' answered Aboulhusn 'she is one of the favourites of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid and this is the palace of the Khalifate.' Then Shemsennehar sat gazing upon Ali ben Bekkar's charms and he upon hers, till each was engrossed with love of the other. Presently, she commanded the damsels to sit; so they sat down, each in her place, on a couch before one of the windows, and she bade them sing; whereupon one of them took a lute and sang the following verses:

Twice be the message to my love made known,
And take the answer from his lips alone.
To thee, O monarch of the fair, I come
And stand, of this my case to make my moan.
O thou my sovereign, dear my heart and life,
That in my inmost bosom hast thy throne,
Prithee, bestow a kiss upon thy slave;
If not as gift, then even as a loan.
I will repay it, (mayst thou never fail!)
Even as I took it, not a little gone.
Or, if thou wish for more than thou didst lend,
Take and content thee; it is all thine own.
May health's fair garment ever gladden thee,
Thee that o'er me the wede of woe hast thrown!

Her singing charmed Ali ben Bekkar, and he said to her, 'Sing me more of the like of these verses.' So she struck the strings and sang as follows:

By excess of estrangement, beloved mine,
Thou hast taught long weeping unto my eyne.
O joy of my sight and its desire,
O goal of my hopes, my worship's shrine,
Have pity on one, whose eyes are drowned
In the sorrowful lover's tears of brine!

When she had finished, Shemsennehar said to another damsel, 'Sing us somewhat, thou.' So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

His looks 'twas made me drunken, in sooth, and not his wine;
And the grace of his gait has banished sleep from these eyes of mine.
'Twas not the wine-cup dazed me, but e'en his glossy curls;
His charms it was that raised me and not the juice o' the vine.
His winding browlocks have routed my patience, and my wit
Is done away by the beauties his garments do enshrine.

When Shemsennehar heard this, she sighed heavily, and the song pleased her. Then she bade another damsel sing; so she took the lute and chanted the following:

A face that vies, indeed, with heaven's lamp, the sun;
The welling of youth's springs upon him scarce begun.
His curling whiskers write letters wherein the sense
Of love in the extreme is writ for every one.
Beauty proclaimed of him, whenas with him it met,
"A stuff in God's best loom was fashioned forth and done!"

When she had finished, Ali Ben Bekkar. said to the damsel nearest him, 'Sing us somewhat, thou.' So she took the lute and sang these verses:

The time of union's all too slight
For coquetry and prudish flight.
Not thus the noble are.
How long This deadly distance and despite?
Ah, profit by the auspicious time,
To sip the sweets of love-delight.

Ali ben Bekkar followed up her song with plentiful tears; and when Shemsennehar saw him weeping and groaning and lamenting, she burned with love-longing and desire and passion and transport consumed her. So she rose from the couch and came to the door of the alcove, where Ali met her and they embraced and fell down a-swoon in the doorway; whereupon the damsels came to them and carrying them into the alcove, sprinkled rose-water upon them. When they revived, they missed Aboulhusn, who had hidden himself behind a couch, and the young lady said, 'Where is Aboulhusn?' So he showed himself to her from beside the couch, and she saluted him, saying, 'I pray God to give me the means of requiting thee thy kindness!' Then she turned to Ali ben Bekkar and said to him, 'O my lord, passion has not reached this pass with thee, without doing the like with me; but there is nothing for it but to bear patiently what hath befallen us.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' rejoined he, 'converse with thee may not content me nor gazing upon thee assuage the fire of my heart, nor will the love of thee, that hath mastered my soul, leave me, but with the passing away of my life.' So saying, he wept and the tears ran down upon his cheeks, like unstrung pearls. When Shemsennehar saw him weep, she wept for his weeping; and Aboulhusn exclaimed, 'By Allah, I wonder at your plight and am confounded at your behaviour; of a truth, your affair is amazing and your case marvellous. If ye weep thus, what while ye are yet together, how will it be when ye are parted? Indeed, this is no time for weeping and wailing, but for foregathering and gladness; rejoice, therefore, and make merry and weep no more.' Then Shemsennehar signed to a damsel, who went out and returned with handmaids bearing a table, whereon were silver dishes, full of all manner rich meats. They set the table before them, and Shemsennehar began to eat and to feed Ali ben Bekkar, till they were satisfied, when the table was removed and they washed their hands. Presently the waiting-women brought censors and casting bottles and sprinkled them with rose-water and incensed them with aloes and ambergris and other perfumes; after which they set on dishes of graven gold, containing all manner of sherbets, besides fruits and confections, all that the heart can desire or the eye delight in, and one brought a flagon of carnelian, full of wine. Then Shemsennehar chose out ten handmaids and ten singing-women to attend on them and dismissing the rest to their apartments, bade some of those who remained smite the lute. They did as she bade them and one of them sang the following verses:

My soul be a ransom for him who returned my salute with a smile
And revived in my breast the longing for union after despair!
The hands of passion have brought my secret thoughts to the light
And that which is in my bosom unto my censors laid bare.
The very tears of my eyes press betwixt me and him,
As though they, even as I, enamoured of him were.

When she had finished, Shemsennehar rose and filling a. cup, drank it off, then filled it again and gave it to Ali ben Bekkar; after which she bade another damsel sing; and she sang the following verses:

My tears, as they flow, are alike to my wine, as I brim it up!
For my eyes pour forth of their lids the like of what froths in my cup.
By Allah, I know not, for sure, whether my eyelids it is
Run over with wine or else of my tears it is that I sup!

Then Ali ben Bekkar drank off his cup and returned it to Shemsennehar. She filled it again and gave it to Aboulhusn, who drank it off. Then she took the lute, saying, 'None shall sing over my cup but myself.' So she tuned the strings and sang these verses:

The hurrying tears upon his cheeks course down from either eye'
For very passion, and love's fires within his heart flame high.
He weeps whilst near to those he loves, for fear lest they depart:
So, whether near or far they be, his tears are never dry.

And again:

Our lives for thee, O cupbearer, O thou whom beauty's self
From the bright parting of thy hair doth to the feet army!
The full moon from thy collar-folds rises, the Pleiades
Shine from thy mouth and in thine hands there beams the sun of day.
I trow, the goblets wherewithal thou mak'st us drunk are those
Thou pourest to us from thine eyes, that lead the wit astray.
Is it no wonder that thou art a moon for ever full
And that thy lovers 'tis, not thou, that wane and waste away?
Art thou a god, that thou, indeed, by favouring whom thou wilt
And slighting others, canst at once bring back to life and slay?
God moulded beauty from thy form and eke perfumed the breeze
With the sheer sweetness of the scent that cleaves to thee alway.
None of the people of this world, an angel sure thou art,
Whom thy Creator hath sent down, to hearten our dismay.

When Ali and Aboulhusn and the bystanders heard Shemsennehar's song, they were transported and laughed and sported; but while they were thus engaged, up came a damsel, trembling for fear, and said, 'O my lady, Afif and Mesrour and Merjan and others of the Commander of the Faithful's eunuchs, whom I know not, are at the door.' When they heard this they were like to die of fright, but Shemsennehar laughed and said, 'Have no fear.' Then said she to the damsel, 'Hold them in parley, whilst we remove hence.' And she caused shut the doors of the alcove upon Ali and Aboulhusn and drew the curtains over them; after which she shut the door of the saloon and went out by the privy gate into the garden, where she seated herself on a couch she had there and bade one of the damsels rub her feet. Then she dismissed the rest of her women and bade the portress admit those who were at the door; whereupon Mesrour entered, he and his company, twenty men with drawn swords, and saluted her. Quoth she, 'Wherefore come-ye?' And they answered, 'The Commander of the Faithful salutes

thee. He wearies for thy sight and would have thee to know that this with him is a day of great joy and gladness and he is minded to seal his gladness with thy present company: wilt thou then go to him or shall he come to thee?' At this she rose, and kissing the earth, said, 'I hear and obey the commandment of the Commander of the Faithful.' Then she summoned the chief (female) officers of her household and other damsels and made a show of complying with the Khalif's orders and commanding them to make preparations for his reception, albeit all was in readiness; and she said to the eunuchs, 'Go to the Commander of the Faithful and tell him that I await him after a little space, that I may make ready for him a place with carpets and so forth.' So they returned in haste to the Khalif, whilst Shemsennehar, doffing her (outer) clothing, repaired to her beloved Ali ben Bekkar and strained him to her bosom and bade him farewell, whereat he wept sore and said, 'O my lady, this leave-taking will lead to the ruin of my soul and the loss of my life; but I pray God to grant me patience to bear this my love, wherewith He hath smitten me!' 'By Allah, answered she, 'none will suffer perdition but I; for thou wilt go out to the market and company with those that will divert thee, and thine honour will be in safety and thy passion concealed; whilst I shall fall into trouble and weariness nor find any to console me, more by token that I have given the Khalif a rendezvous, wherein haply great peril shall betide me, by reason of my love and longing passion for thee and my grief at being parted from thee. For with what voice shall I sing and with what heart shall I present me before the Khalif and with what speech shall I entertain the Commander of the Faithful and with what eyes shall I look upon a place where thou art not and take part in a banquet at which thou art not present and with what taste shall I drink wine of which thou partakest not?' 'Be not troubled,' said Aboulhusn 'but take patience and be not remiss in entertaining the Commander of the Faithful this night, neither show him any neglect, but be of good courage.' At this juncture, up came a damsel, who said to Shemsennehar, 'O my lady, the Khalif's pages are come.' So she rose to her feet and said to the maid, 'Take Aboulhusn and his friend and carry them to the upper gallery giving upon the garden and there leave them, till it be dark; when do thou make shift to carry them forth.' Accordingly, the girl carried them up to the gallery and locking the door upon them, went away. As they sat looking on the garden, the Khalif appeared, preceded by near a hundred eunuchs with drawn swords and compassed about with a score of damsels, as they were moons, holding each a lighted flambeau. They were clad in the richest of raiment and on each one's head was a crown set with diamonds and rubies. The Khalif walked in their midst with a majestic gait, whilst Mesrour and Afif and Wesif went before him and Shemsennehar and all her damsels rose to receive him and meeting him at the garden door, kissed the earth before him; nor did they cease to go before him, till they brought him to the couch, whereon he sat down, whilst all the waiting-women and eunuchs stood before him and there came fair maids and slave-girls with lighted flambeaux and perfumes and essences and instruments of music. Then he bade the singers sit down, each in her room, and Shemsennehar came up and seating herself on a stool by the Khalif's side, began to converse with him, whilst Ali and the jeweller looked on and listened, unseen of the prince. The Khalif fell to jesting and toying with Shemsennehar and bade throw open the (garden) pavilion. So they opened the doors and windows and lighted the flambeaux till the place shone in the season of darkness even as the day. The eunuchs removed thither the wine-service and (quoth Aboulhusn),

'I saw drinking-vessels and rarities, whose like mine eyes never beheld, vases of gold and silver and all manner precious stones and jewels, such as beggar description, till indeed meseemed I was dreaming, for excess of amazement at what I saw!' But as for Ali ben Bekkar, from the moment Shemsennehar left him, he lay prostrate on the ground for excess of passion and desire and when he revived, he fell to gazing upon these things that had not their like, and saying to Aboulhusn, 'O my brother, I fear lest the Khalif see us or come to know of us; but the most of my fear is for thee. For myself, I know that I am surely lost past recourse, and the cause of my destruction is nought but excess of passion and love-longing and desire and separation from my beloved, after union with her; but I beseech God to deliver us from this predicament.' Then they continued to look on, till the banquet was spread before the Khalif, when he turned to one of the damsels and said to her, 'O Gheram, let us hear some of thine enchanting songs.' So she tool: the lute and tuning it, sang as follows:

The longing of a Bedouin maid, whose folk are far away,
Who yearns after the willow of the Hejaz and the bay, –
Whose tears, when she on travellers lights, might for their water serve
And eke her passion, with its heat, their bivouac-fire purvey, –
Is not more fierce nor ardent than my longing for my love,
Who deem: that I commit a crime in loving him alway.

When Shemsennehar heard this, she slipped off the stool on which she sat and fell to the earth insensible; where upon the damsels came and lifted her up. When Ali ben Bekkar saw this from the gallery, he also fell down senseless, and Aboulhusn said, 'Verily Fate hath apportioned passion equally between you!' As he spoke, in came the damsel who had brought them thither and said to him, 'O Aboulhusn, arise and come down, thou and thy friend, for of a truth the world is grown strait upon us and I fear lest our case be discovered or the Khalif become aware of you: so, except you descend at once, we are dead folk. 'How shall this youth descend,' replied he, 'seeing that he hath not strength to rise?' With this she fell to sprinkling rose-water on Ali ben Bekkar, till he came to himself, when Aboulhusn lifted him up and the damsel stayed him. So they went down from the gallery and walked on awhile, till they came to a little iron door, which the damsel opened, and they found themselves on the Tigris' bank. Here they sat down on a stone bench, whilst the girl clapped her hands and there came up a man with a little boat, to whom said she, 'Carry these two young men to the other bank.' So they all three entered the boat and the man put off with them; and as they launched out into the stream, Ali ben Bekkar looked back towards the Khalif's palace and the pavilion and the garden and bade them farewell with these verses:

I stretch forth a feeble hand to bid farewell to thee,
With the other upon my burning breast, beneath the heart of me.
But be not this the last of the love betwixt us twain
And let not this the last of my soul's refreshment be.

The damsel said to the boatman, 'Make haste with them.' So he plied his oars swiftly till they reached the opposite bank, where they landed, and she took lease of them, saying, 'It were my wish not to leave you, but I can go no farther than this.' Then she turned back, whilst Ali ben Bekkar lay on the ground before Aboulhusn and could

not rise, till the latter said to him, 'This place is not sure and I am in fear of our lives, by reason of the thieves and highwaymen and men of lawlessness.' With this Ali arose and essayed to walk a little, but could not. Now Aboulhusn had friends in that quarter, so he made for the house of one of them, in whom he trusted and who was of his intimates, and knocked at the door. The man came out quickly and seeing them, bade them welcome and brought them into his house, where he made them sit down and talked with them and asked them whence they came. Quoth Aboulhusn 'We came out but now, being moved thereto by a man with whom I had dealings and who hath in his hands monies of mine. It was told me that he was minded to flee into foreign countries with my money; so I came out to-night in quest of him, taking with me this my friend Ali ben Bekkar for company but he hid from us and we could get no speech of him So we turned back, empty-handed, and knew not whither to go, for it were irksome to us to return home at this hour of the night; wherefore we came to thee, knowing thy wonted courtesy and kindness.' 'Ye are right welcome,' answered the host, and studied to do them honour. They abode with him the rest of the night, and as soon as it was day, they left him and made their way back to the city. When they came to Aboulhusn's house, the latter conjured his friend to enter; so they went in and lying down on the bed, slept awhile. When they awoke, Aboulhusn bade his servants spread the house with rich carpets saying in himself, 'Needs must I divert this youth and distract him from thoughts of his affliction, for I know his case better than another.' Then he called for water for Ali ben Bekkar, and the latter rose and making his ablutions, prayed the obligatory prayers that he had omitted for the past day and night; after which he sat down and began to solace himself with talk with his friend. When Aboulhusn saw this, he turned to him and said, 'O my lord, it were better for thy case that thou abide with me this night, so thy heart may be lightened and the anguish of love-longing that is upon thee be dispelled and thou make merry with us and haply the fire of thy heart be allayed.' 'O my brother,' answered Ali, 'do what seemeth good to thee; for I may not anywise escape from what hath befallen me.' Accordingly, Aboulhusn arose and bade his servants summon some of the choicest of his friends and sent for singers and musicians. Meanwhile he made ready meat and drink for them, and they came and sat eating and drinking and making merry till nightfall Then they lit the candles, and the cups of friendship and good fellowship went round amongst them, and the time passed pleasantly with them. Presently, a singing-woman took the lute and sang the following verses:

Fate launched at me a dart, the arrow of an eye;
It pierced me and cut off from those I love am I.
Fortune hath mauled me sore and patience fails me now;
But long have I forebode misfortune drawing nigh.

When Ali ben Bekkar heard this, he fell to the earth in a swoon and abode thus till daybreak, and Aboulhusn despaired of him. But, with the dawning, he came to himself and sought to go home; nor could Aboulhusn deny him, for fear of the issue of his affair. So he made his servants bring a mule and mounting Ali thereon, carried him to his lodging, he and one of his men. When he was safe at home, the merchant thanked God for his deliverance from that peril and sat awhile with him, comforting him; but Ali could not contain himself, for the violence of his passion and love-

longing. Presently Aboulhusn rose to take leave of him and Ali said, 'O my brother, leave me not without news.' 'I hear and obey, answered Aboulhusn, and repairing to his shop, opened it and sat there all day, expecting news of Shemsennehar; but none came. He passed the night in his own house and when it was day, he went to Ali ben Bekkar's lodging and found him laid on his bed, with his friends about him and physicians feeling his pulse and prescribing this or that. When he saw Aboulhusn, he smiled, and the latter saluting him, enquired how he did and sat with him till the folk withdrew, when he said to him, 'What plight is this?' Quoth Ali, 'It was noised abroad that I was ill and I have no strength to rise and walk, so as to give the lie to the report of my sickness, but continue lying here as thou seest. So my friends heard of me and came to visit me. But, O my brother, hast thou seen the damsel or heard any news of her?' 'I have not seen her,' answered Aboulhusn, 'since we parted from her on the Tigris' bank; but, O my brother, beware of scandal and leave this weeping.' 'O my brother,' rejoined Ali, 'indeed, I have no control over myself ;' and he sighed and recited the following verses:

She giveth unto her hand that whereof mine doth fail,
A dye on the wrist, wherewith she doth my patience assail
She standeth in fear for her hand of the arrows she shoots from her eyes;
So, for protection, she's fain to clothe it in armour of mail.
The doctor in ignorance felt my pulse, and I said to him,
"Leave thou my hand alone; my heart it is that doth ail."
Quoth she to the dream of the night, that visited me and fled,
"By Allah, describe him to me and bate me no jot of the tale!"
It answered, "I put him away, though he perish of thirst, and said,
'Stand off from the watering-place!' So he could not to drink avail."
She poured forth the pearls of her tears from her eyes' narcissus and gave
The rose of her cheeks to drink and bit upon jujubes with hail.

Then he said, 'O Aboulhusn, I am smitten with an affliction, from which I deemed myself in surety, and there is no greater ease for me than death.' 'Be patient,' answered his friend: 'peradventure God will heal thee.' Then he went out from him and repairing to his shop, opened it, nor had he sat long, when up came Shemsennehar's hand-maid, who saluted him. He returned her salute and looking at her, saw that her heart was palpitating and that she was troubled and bore the traces of affliction: so he said to her, 'Thou art welcome. How is it with Shemsennehar?' 'I will tell thee,' answered she; 'but first tell me how doth Ali ben Bekkar.' So he told her all that had passed, whereat she was grieved and sighed and lamented and marvelled at his case. Then said she, 'My lady's case is still stranger than this; for when you went away, I turned back, troubled at heart for you and hardly crediting your escape, and found her lying prostrate in the pavilion, speaking not nor answering any, whilst the Commander of the Faithful sat by her head, unknowing what aided her and finding none who could give him news of her. She ceased not from her swoon till midnight, when she revived and the Khalif said to her, "What ails thee, O Shemsennehar, and what has behllen thee this night?" "May God make me thy ransom, O Commander of the Faithful!" answered she. "Verily, bile rose in me and lighted a fire in my body, so that I lost my senses for excess of pain, and I know no more." "What hast thou eaten to-day?" asked

the Khalif. Quoth she, "I broke my fast on something I had never before eaten." Then she feigned to be recovered and calling for wine, drank it and begged the Khalif to resume his diversion. So he sat down again on his couch in the pavilion and made her sit as before. When she saw me, she asked me how you fared; so I told her what I had done with you and repeated to her the verses that Ali ben BeLkar had recited at parting, whereat she wept secretly, but presently stinted. After awhile, the Khalif ordered a damsel to sing, and she chanted the following verses:

Life, as I live, has not been sweet since I did part from thee;
Would God I knew but how it fared with thee too after me!
If thou be weeping tears of brine for sev'rance of our loves,
Ah, then, indeed, 'twere meet my tears of very blood should be.

When my lady heard this, she fell back on the sofa in a swoon, and I seized her hand and sprinkled rose-water on her face, till she revived, when I said to her, "O my lady, do not bring ruin on thyself and on all thy house-hold, but be patient, by the life of thy beloved!" "Can aught befall me worse than death?" answered she. "That, indeed, I long for, for, by Allah, my ease is therein." Whilst we were talking, another damsel sang the following words of the poet:

"Patience shall peradventure lead to solacement," quoth they; and
I, "Where's patience to be had, now he is gone away?"
He made a binding covenant with me to cut the cords
Of patience, when we two embraced upon the parting day.

When Shemsennehar heard this, she swooned away once more, which when the Khalif saw, he came to her in haste and commanded the wine-service to be removed and each damsel to return to her chamber. He abode with her the rest of the night, and when it was day, he sent for physicians and men of art and bade them medicine her, knowing not that her sickness arose from passion and love-longing. He tarried with her till he deemed her in a way of recovery, when he returned to his palace, sore concerned for her illness, and she bade me go to thee and bring her news of Ali ben Bekkar. So I came, leaving with her a number of her bodywomen; and this is what has delayed me from thee.' When Aboulhusn heard her story, he marvelled and said, 'By Allah, I have acquainted thee with his whole case; so now return to thy mistress; salute her for me and exhort her to patience and secrecy and tell her that I know it to be a hard matter and one that calls for prudent ordering.' She thanked him and taking leave of him, returned to her mistress, whilst he abode in his place till the end of the day, when he shut the shop and betaking himself to Ali ben Bekkar's house, knocked at the door. One of the servants came out and admitted him; and when Ali saw him, he smiled and re-joiced in his coming, saying, 'O Aboulhusn, thou hast made a weary man of me by thine absence from me this day; for indeed my soul is pledged to thee for the rest of my days.' 'Leave this talk,' answered the other. 'Were thy healing at the price of my hand, I would cut it off, ere thou couldst ask me; and could I ransom thee with my life, I had already laid it down for thee. This very day, Shemsennehar's handmaid has been with me and told me that what hindered her from coming before this was the Khalif's sojourn with her mistress;' and he went on to repeat to him all that the girl had told him of Shemsennehar; at which Ali lamented sore and wept and said to him, 'O my

brother, I conjure thee by God to help me in this mine affliction and teach me how I shall do! Moreover, I beg thee of thy grace to abide with me this night, that I may have the solace of thy company.' Aboulhusn agreed to this; so they talked together till the night darkened, when Ali groaned aloud and lamented and wept copious tears, reciting the following verses:

My eye holds thine image ever; thy name in my mouth is aye
And still in my heart is thy sojourn; so how canst thou absent be?
How sore is my lamentation for life that passes away
Nor is there, alas! in union a part for thee and me!

And also these:

She cleft with the sword of her glance the helm of my courage in two
And the mail of my patience she pierced with the spear of her shape through and through.
She unveiled to us, under the musk of the mole that is set on her cheek,
Camphor-white dawning a-break through a night of the ambergris' hue.
Her spirit was stirred to chagrin and she bit on cornelian with pearls,
Whose unions unvalued abide in a lakelet of sugary dew.
She sighed for impatience and smote with her palm on the snows of her breast.
Her hand left a scar; so I saw what never before met my view;
Pens fashioned of coral (her nails), that, dinting the book of her breast
Five lines, scored in ambergris ink, on a table of crystal drew,
O ye that go girded with steel, O swordsmen, I rede you beware
Of the stroke of her death-dealing eyes, that never looked yet but they slew!
And guard yourselves, ye of the spears, and fence off her thrust from your hearts,
If she tilt with the quivering lance of her shape straight and slender at you.

Then he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. Aboulhusn thought that his soul had departed his body and he ceased not from his swoon till daybreak, when he came to himself and talked with his friend, who sat with him till the forenoon. Then he left him and repaired to his shop. Hardly had he opened it, when the damsel came and stood before him. As soon as he saw her, she made a sign of salutation to him, which he returned; and she greeted him for her mistress, saying, 'How doth Ali ben BeLkar?' 'O good damsel,' replied he, 'ask me not how he doth nor what he suffers for excess of passion; for he sleeps not by night neither rests by day; wakefulness wasteth him and affliction hath gotten the mastery of him and his case is distressful to his friend.' Quoth she, 'My lady salutes thee and him, and indeed she is in worse case than he. She hath written him a letter and here it is. When she gave it me, she said to me, "Do not return save with the answer." So wilt thou go with me to him and get his reply?' 'I hear and obey,' answered Aboulhusn, and shutting his shop, carried her, by a different way to that by which he came, to Ali ben Bekkar's house, where he left her standing at the door and entered. When Ali saw him, he rejoiced, and Aboulhusn said to him, 'The reason of my coming is that such an one hath sent his handmaid to thee with a letter, containing his greeting to thee and excusing himself for that he hath tarried by reason of a certain matter that hath betided him. The girl stands even now at the door: shall she have leave to enter?' And he signed to him that it was Shemsennehar's slave-girl. Ali understood his sign and answered, 'Bring her in.' So she

entered and when he saw her, he shook for joy and signed to her, as who should say, 'How doth thy lord, may God grant him health and recovery!' 'He is well,' answered she and pulling out the letter, gave it to him. He took it and kissing it, opened and read it; after which he handed it to Aboulhusn, who found written therein what follows:

The messenger of me will give thee news aright;
So let his true report suffice thee for my sight.
A lover hast thou left, for love of thee distraught;
Her eyes cease never-more from watching, day or night.
I brace myself to bear affliction, for to foil
The buffets of ill-fate is given to no wight.
But be thou of good cheer; for never shall my heart
Forget thee nor thy thought be absent from my spright.
Look on thy wasted frame and what is fallen thereon
And thence infer of me and argue of my plight.

To proceed: I have written thee a letter without fingers and speak to thee without tongue; to tell thee my whole state, I have an eye from which sleeplessness is never absent and a heart whence sorrowful thought stirs not. It is with me as I had never known health nor let sadness, neither beheld a fair face nor spent an hour of pleasant life; but it is as I were made up of love-longing and of the pain of passion and chagrin. Sickness is unceasing upon me and my yearning redoubles ever; desire increases still and longing rages in my heart. I pray God to hasten our union and dispel the trouble of my mind: and I would fain have thee write me some words, that I may solace myself withal. Moreover, I would have thee put on a becoming patience, till God give relief; and peace be on thee.' When Ali ben Bekkar had read this letter, he said, 'With what hand shall I write and with what tongue shall I make moan and lament? Indeed she addeth sickness to my sickness and draweth death upon my death!' Then he sat up and taking inkhorn and paper, wrote the following reply: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. O my lady, thy letter hath reached me and hath given ease to a mind worn out with passion and desire and brought healing to a wounded heart, cankered with languishment and sickness; for indeed I am become even as saith the poet:

Bosom contracted and grievous thought dilated,
Eyes ever wakeful and body wearied aye;
Patience cut off and separation ever present,
Reason disordered and heart all stolen away.

Know that complaining quenches not the fire of calamity; but it eases him whom love-longing consumes and separation destroys; and so I comfort myself with the mention of the word "union;" for how well saith the poet:

If love had not pain and pleasure, satisfaction and despite,
Where of messengers and letters were for lovers the delight?'

When he had made an end of this letter, he gave it to Aboulhusn, saying, 'Read it and give it to the damsel.' So he took it and read it and its words stirred his soul and

its meaning wounded his vitals. Then he gave it to the girl, and Ali said to her, 'Salute thy lady for me and tell her of my passion and longing and how love is blent with my flesh and my bones; and say to her that I need one who shall deliver me from the sea of destruction and save me from this dilemma; for of a truth fortune oppresseth me with its vicissitudes; and is there any helper to free me from its defilements?' So saying, he wept and the damsel wept for his weeping. Then she took leave of him and Aboulhusn went out with her and bade her farewell. So she went her way and he returned to his shop, which he opened, and sat down there, according to his wont; but as he sat, he found his bosom straitened and his heart oppressed and was troubled about his case. He ceased not from melancholy thought the rest of that day and night, and on the morrow he betook himself to Ali ben Bekkar, with whom he sat till the folk withdrew, when he asked him how he did. Ali began to complain of passion and descant upon the longing and distraction that possessed him, ending by repeating the following words of the poet:

Folk have made moan of passion before me of past years,
And live and dead for absence have suffered pains and fears;
But what within my bosom I harbour, with mine eyes
I've never seen the like of nor heard it with mine ears.

And also these:

I've suffered for thy love what Caïs, that madman hight,
Did never undergo for love of Leila bright.
Yet chase I not the beasts o' the desert, as did he;
For madness hath its kinds for this and th' other wight.

Quoth Aboulhusn, 'Never did I see or hear of one like unto thee in thy love! If thou sufferest all this transport and sickness and trouble, being enamoured of one who returns thy passion, how would it be with thee, if she whom thou lovest were contrary and perfidious? Meseems, thy case will be discovered, if thou abide thus.' His words pleased Ali ben Bekkar and he trusted in him and thanked him.

Now Aboulhusn had a friend, to whom he had discovered his affair and that of Ali ben Bekkar and who knew that they were close friends; but none other than he was acquainted with what was betwixt them. He was wont to come to him and enquire how Ali did and after a little, he began to ask about the damsel; but Aboulhusn put him off, saying, 'She invited him to her and there was between him and her what passeth words, and this is the end of their affair; but I have devised me a plan which I would fain submit to thy judgment.' 'And what is that?' asked his friend. 'O my brother,' answered Aboulhusn, 'I am a man well known, having much dealing among the notables, both men and women, and I fear lest the affair of these twain get wind and this lead to my death and the seizure of my goods and the ruin of my repute and that of my family. Wherefore I purpose to get together my property and make ready forthright and repair to the city of Bassora and abide there, till I see what comes of their affair, that none may know of me, for passion hath mastered them and letters pass between them. Their go-between and confidant at this present is a slave-girl, who hath till now kept their counsel, but I fear lest haply she be vexed with them or anxiety get the better of her and she discover their case to some one and the matter be noised abroad and prove the

cause of my ruin; for I have no excuse before God or man.' 'Thou acquaintest me with a perilous matter,' rejoined his friend, 'and one from the like of which the wise and understanding will shrink in affright. May God preserve thee and avert from thee the evil thou dreadest! Assuredly, thy resolve is a wise one.' So Aboulhusn returned home and betook himself to setting his affairs in order and preparing for his journey; nor had three days elapsed ere he made an end of his business and departed for Bassora. Three days after, his friend came to visit him, but finding him not, asked the neighbours of him; and they answered, 'He set out three days ago for Bassora, for he had dealings with merchants there and is gone thither to collect his debts; but he will soon return.' The man was confounded at the news and knew not whither to go; and he said in himself, 'Would I had not parted with Aboulhusn!' Then he bethought him how he should gain access to Ali ben Bekkar and repairing to the latter's lodging, said to one of his servants, 'Ask leave for me of thy master that I may go in and salute him.' So the servant went in and told his master and presently returning, invited the man to enter. So he went in and found Ali ben Bekkar lying back on the pillow and saluted him. Ali returned his greeting and bade him welcome; whereupon the other began to excuse himself for having held aloof from him all this while and added, 'O my lord, there was a close friendship between Aboulhusn and myself, so that I used to trust him with my secrets and could not brook to be severed from him an hour. It chanced but now that I was absent three days' space on certain business with a company of my friends, and when I came back, I found his shop shut; so I asked the neighbours of him and they replied, "He is gone to Bassora." Now I know he had no surer friend than thou; so I conjure thee, by Allah, to tell me what thou knowest of him.' When Ali heard this, his colour changed and he was troubled and answered, 'I never heard of his departure till this day, and if it be as thou sayest, weariness is come upon me.' And he repeated the following verses:

Whilom I wept for what was past of joy and pleasant cheer,
Whilst yet the objects of my love were unremoved and near;
But now my sad and sorry fate hath sundered me and them
And I to-day must weep for those that were to me most dear.

Then he bent his head awhile in thought and presently raising it, said to one of his servants, 'Go to Aboulhusn" house and enquire whether he be at home or gone on a journey. If they say, "He is abroad;" ask whither.' The servant went out and presently returning, said to his master, 'When I asked after Aboulhusn, his people told me that he was gone on a journey to Bassora; but I saw a damsel standing at the door, who knew me, though I knew her not, and said to me, "Art thou not servant to Ali ben Bekkar?" "Yes," answered I. And she said, "I have a message for him from one who is the dearest of all folk to him." So she came with me and is now at the door.' Quoth Ali, 'Bring her in.' So the servant went out and brought her in, and the man who was with Ali ben Bekkar looked at her and found her comely. She came up to Ali and saluting him, talked with him privily; and he from time to time exclaimed with an oath and swore that he had not done as she avouched. Then she took leave of him and went away. When she was gone, Aboulhusn's friend, who was a jeweller, took occasion to speak and said to Ali ben Bekkar, 'Doubtless, the women of the palace have some claim upon thee or thou hast dealings with the Khalif's household?' 'Who told thee of

this?' asked Ali. 'I know it by yonder damsel,' replied the jeweller, 'who is Shemsennehar's slave-girl; for she came to me awhile since with a written order for a necklace of jewels; and I sent her a costly one.' When Ali heard this, he was greatly troubled, so that the jeweller feared for his life, but after awhile he recovered himself and said, 'O my brother, I conjure thee by Allah to tell me truly how thou knowest her.' 'Do not press me as to this,' replied the other; and Ali said, 'Indeed, I will not desist from thee till thou tell me the truth.' 'Then,' said the jeweller, 'I will tell thee all, that thou mayst not distrust me nor be alarmed at what I said, nor will I conceal aught from thee, but will discover to thee the truth of the matter, on condition that thou possess me with the true state of thy case and the cause of thy sickness.' Then he told him all that had passed between Aboulhusn and himself, adding that he had acted thus only out of friendship for him and of his desire to serve him and assuring him that he would keep his secret and venture life and goods in his service. So Ali in turn told him his story and added, 'By Allah, O my brother, nought moved me to keep my case secret from thee and others but my fear lest the folk should lift the veils of protection from certain persons.' 'And I,' rejoined the jeweller, 'desired not to foregather with thee but of the great affection I bear thee and my zeal for thee in every case and my compassion for the anguish thy heart endureth for severance. Haply, I may be a comforter to thee in the room of my friend Aboulhusn, during his absence. So take heart and be of good cheer.' Ali thanked him and repeated the following verses:

If, 'I am patient,' I say, since forth from me he went,
My tears give me the lie and the stress of my lament.
And how shall I hide the tears, that flow in streams adown
The table of my cheek for his evanishment?

Then he was silent awhile, and presently said to the jeweller, 'Knowest thou what the girl whispered to me?' 'Not I, by Allah, O my lord,' answered he. Quoth Ali, 'She would have it that I had counselled Aboulhusn to go to Bassora and that I had used this device to put a stop to our correspondence and intercourse. I swore to her that this was not so: but she would not credit me and went away to her mistress, persisting in her injurious suspicions; and indeed I know not what I shall do without Aboulhusn, for she inclined to him and gave ear to his word.' 'O my brother,' answered the jeweller, 'I guessed as much from her manner; but, if it please God the Most High, I will help thee to thy desire.' 'Who can help me,' rejoined Ali, 'and how wilt thou do with her, when she takes umbrage like a wilding of the desert?' 'By Allah,' exclaimed the jeweller, 'needs must I do my utmost endeavour to help thee and contrive to make her acquaintance, without exposure or mischief!' Then he asked leave to depart, and Ali said, 'O my brother, see thou keep my counsel' And he looked at him and wept. The jeweller bade him farewell and went away, knowing not what he should do to further his wishes; but as he went along pondering the matter, he spied a letter lying in the road, and taking it up, found that it bore the following superscription, 'From the least worthy of lovers to the most excellent of beloved ones.' He opened it and found these words written therein:

'The messenger brought me a promise of union and delight;
But yet that he had mistaken 'twas constant in my spright.

Wherefore I joyed not: but sorrow was added unto me,
For that I knew my envoy had read thee not aright.

To proceed: Know, O my lord, that I am ignorant of the cause of the breaking off of the correspondence between thee and me: but if it arise from cruelty on thy part, I will meet it with fidelity, and if love have departed from thee, I will remain constant to my love in absence for I am with thee even as says the poet:

Be haughty and I will be patient; capricious, I'll bear; turn away, I'll draw near thee; be harsh, I'll be abject; command, I'll give ear and obey.

As he was reading, up came the slave-girl, looking right and left, and seeing the letter in the jeweller's hand, said to him, 'O my lord, this letter is one I let fall.' He made her no answer, but walked on, and she followed him, till he came to his house, when he entered and she after him, saying, 'O my lord, give me back the letter, for it fell from me.' He turned to her and said, 'O good slave-girl, fear not, neither grieve, for verily God the Protector loves to protect [His creatures]; but tell me the truth of thy case, for I am one who keepeth counsel. I conjure thee by an oath to hide from me nothing of thy lady's affair; for haply God shall help me to further her wishes and make easy what is hard by my hand' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'indeed a secret is not lost whereof thou art the keeper; nor shall any affair come to nought for which thou strivest. Know that my heart inclines to thee, and do thou give me the letter.' Then she told him the whole story, adding, 'God is witness to what I say.' 'Thou hast spoken truly,' said the jeweller, 'for I am acquainted with the root of the matter.' Then he told her how he had come by Ali ben Bekkar's secret and related to her all that had passed, whereat she rejoiced; and they agreed that she should carry the letter to Ali and return and tell the jeweller all that passed. Accordingly he gave her the letter and she took it and sealed it up as it was before, saying, 'My mistress Shemsennehar gave it to me sealed; and when he hath read it and given me the reply, I will bring it to thee.' Then she repaired to Ali ben Bekkar, whom she found waiting, and gave him the letter. He read it and writing an answer, gave it to the damsel. She carried it to the jeweller, who broke the seal and read what was written therein, as follows:

'Neglected are our messages, for lo, our go-between,
That wont to keep our counsel erst, is wroth with us, I ween.
So choose us out a messenger, a true and trusty wight,
Yea, one of whom fidelity, not falsehood, is well seen.

To proceed: Verily, I have not entered upon perfidy nor left fidelity; I have not used cruelty, neither have I put off loyalty nor broken faith. I have not ceased from affection nor severed myself from grief; neither have I found aught after separation but misery and ruin. I know nothing of that thou avouchest nor do I love aught but that which thou lovest. By Him who knoweth the secret of the hidden things, I have no desire but to be united with her whom I love and my one business is the concealment of my passion, though sickness consume me. This is the exposition of my case and peace be on thee.' When the jeweller read this letter, he wept sore and the girl said to him, 'Leave not this place, till I return to thee; for he suspects me of such and such things, in which he is excusable; so it is my desire to bring thee in company with my mistress Shemsennehar, howsoever I may contrive it. I left her prostrate, awaiting my

return with the answer.' Then she went away and the jeweller passed the night in a state of agitation. On the morrow he prayed the morning prayer and sat awaiting the girl's coming. Presently she came in to him, rejoicing, and he said to her, 'What news, O damsel?' Quoth she, 'I gave my mistress Ali ben Bekkar's reply, and when she read it, she was troubled in her mind; but I said to her, "O my lady, have no fear of the hindrance of your affair by reason of Aboulhusn's absence, for I have found one to take his place, better than he and more of worth and apt to keep secrets." Then I told her what was between Aboulhusn and thyself and how thou camest by his confidence and that of Ali ben Bekkar and how I met with thee and showed her how matters stood betwixt thee and me. Now she is minded to have speech of thee, that she may be assured by thy words of the covenants between thee and him; so do thou make ready to go with me to her forthwith. When the jeweller heard the girl's words, he saw that what she proposed was a grave matter and a great peril, not lightly to be undertaken or entered upon, and said to her, 'O my stster, verily, I am of the common people and not like unto Aboulhusn; for he was of high rank and repute and was wont to frequent the Khalif's household, because of their need of his wares. As for me, he used to talk with me, and I trembled before him the while. So, if thy mistress would have speech of me, it must be in some place other than the Khalif's palace and far from the abode of the Commander of the Faithful; for my reason will not let me do what thou proposest.' Accordingly, he refused to go with her, and she went on to assure him of impunity, saying, 'Fear not,' and pressed him, till he consented to accompany her; but, when he would have risen, his legs bent under him and his hands trembled and he exclaimed, 'God forbid that I should go with thee! Indeed, I cannot do this.' 'Reassure thyself,' answered she; 'if it irk thee to go to the Khalif's palace and thou canst not muster up courage to accompany me, I will make her come to thee; so stir not from thy place till I return to thee with her.' Then she went away and returning after a little, said to the jeweller, 'Look that there be with thee neither slave-girl nor man-slave nor any other.' Quoth he, 'I have but an old negress-slave, who waits on me.' So she locked the door between the jeweller and his negress and sent his man-servants out of the house, after which she went out and presently returned, followed by a lady, who filled the house with the sweet scent of her perfumes. When the jeweller saw her, he sprang to his feet and set her a couch and a cushion, and she sat down. He seated himself before her and she abode awhile without speaking, till she was rested, when she unveiled her face and it seemed to the jeweller as if the sun had risen in his house. Then said she to her slave-girl, 'Is this the man of whom thou spakest to me?' 'Yes,' answered she; whereupon the lady turned to the jeweller and said to him, 'How is it with thee?' 'Well,' replied he. 'May God preserve thy life and that of the Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth she, 'Thou hast moved us to come to thee and possess thee with our secret.' Then she questioned him of his household and family; and he discovered to her all his circumstance and said to her, 'I have another house, which I have set apart for entertaining my friends and brethren, and there is none there save the old negress, of whom I spoke to thy handmaid.' She asked him how he came first to know of the matter and what had made Aboulhusn absent himself, so he told her all and she bewailed the loss of Aboulhusn and said to the jeweller, 'Know that the minds of men are at one in desires, and however they may differ in estate, men are still men and have need one of the other: an affair is not accomplished without speech nor is a wish

fulfilled save by endeavour: ease comes not but after weariness nor is succour compassed save by the help of the generous. Now I have trusted my secret to thee and it is in thy power to expose or shield us; I say no more, because of thy generosity of nature. Thou knowest that this my hand-maid keeps my counsel and is therefore in high favour with me and I have chosen her to transact my affairs of importance. So let none be worthier in thy sight than she and acquaint her with thine affair. Be of good cheer, for thou art safe from what thou fearest on our account, and there is no shut place but she shall open it to thee. She shall bring thee messages from me to Ali ben Bekkar, and thou shalt be our go-between.' So saying, she rose, scarcely able to stand, and the jeweller forewent her to the door of the house, after which he returned and sat down again in his place, having seen of her beauty what dazzled him and heard of her speech what confounded his wit and witnessed of her grace and courtesy what bewitched him. He sat musing on her perfections till his trouble subsided, when he called for food and ate enough to stay his stomach. Then he changed his clothes and repairing to Ali ben Bekkar's house, knocked at the door. The servants hastened to admit him and brought him to their master, whom he found laid upon his bed. When he saw the jeweller, he said to him, 'Thou hast tarried long from me and hast added concern to my concern.' Then he dismissed his servants and bade shut the doors, after which he said to the jeweller, 'By Allah, O my brother, I have not closed my eyes since I saw thee last; for the slave-girl came to me yesterday with a sealed letter from her mistress Shemsennehar;' and went on to tell him all that had passed, adding, 'Indeed, I am perplexed concerning mine affair and my patience fails me: for Aboulhusn was of comfort to me, because he knew the girl.' When the jeweller heard this, he laughed and Ali said, 'Why dost thou laugh at my words, thou in whom I rejoiced and to whom I looked for succour against the shifts of fortune?' Then he sighed and wept and repeated the following verses:

Many an one laughs at my weeping, whenas he looks on my pain.
Had he but suffered as I have, he, also, to weep would be fain.
No one hath ruth on the smitten, for that he is doomed to endure
But he who alike is afflicted and long in affliction hath lain
My passion, my yearning, my sighing, my care and distraction end woe
Are all for a loved one, whose dwelling is in my heart's innermost fane.
He made his abode in my bosom and never will leave it again;
And yet with my love to foregather I weary and travail in vain.
I know of no friend I can choose me to stand in his stead unto me,
Nor ever, save him, a companion, to cherish and love have I ta'en.

When the jeweller heard this, he wept also and told him all that had passed betwixt himself and the slave-girl and her mistress, since he left him, whilst Ali gave ear to his speech, and at every fresh word his colour shifted 'twixt white and red and his body grew now stronger and now weaker, till he came to the end of his tale, when Ali wept and said to him, 'O my brother, I am a lost man in any event. Would my end were near, that I might be at rest from ail this! But I beg thee, of thy favour, to be my helper and comforter in all my affairs, till God accomplish His will; and I will not gainsay thee in aught.' Quoth the jeweller, 'Nothing will quench the fire of thy passion save union with her whom thou lovest: and this must not be in this perilous place, but

in a house of mine other than in which the girl and her mistress came to me. This place she chose for herself, to the intent that ye may there foregather and complain one to the other of what you have suffered from the pangs of love.' 'O my lord,' answered Ali ben Bekkar, 'do as thou wilt and may God requite thee for me! What thou deemest fit will be right: but be not long about it, lest I die of this anguish.' So I abode with him (quoth the jeweller) that night, entertaining him with converse, till daybreak, when I prayed the morning prayers and going out from him, returned to my house. Hardly had I done so, when the damsel came up and saluted me. I returned her greeting and told her what had passed between Ali ben Bekkar and myself; and she said, 'Know that the Khalif has left us and there is none in our lodging, and it is safer for us and better.' 'True,' replied I; 'yet it is not like my house yonder, which is both surer and fitter for us.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' rejoined she. 'I will go to my lady and tell her what thou sayest.' So she went away and presently returned and said to me, 'It is to be as thou sayest: so make us ready the place and expect us.' Then she took out a purse of diners and said to me, 'My lady salutes thee and bids thee take this and provide therewith what the case calls for.' But I swore that I would have nought of it; so she took the purse and returning to her mistress, said to her, 'He would not take the money, but gave it back to me.' 'No matter,' answered Shemsennehar. As soon as she was gone, I betook myself to my other house and transported thither all that was needful, by way of furniture and utensils and rich carpets and vessels of china and glass and gold and silver, and made ready meat and drink for the occasion. When the damsel came and saw what I had done, it pleased her and she bade me fetch Ali ben Bekkar; but I said, 'None shall fetch him but thou.' Accordingly she went to him and brought him back, dressed to perfection and looking his best. I met him and welcomed him and making him sit down on a couch befitting his condition, set before him sweet-scented flowers in vases of china and crystal of various colours. Then I set on a tray of vari-coloured meats, of such as rejoice the heart with their sight, and sat talking with him and diverting him, whi'st the girl went away and was absent till after sundown, when she returned with Shemsennehar, attended by two maids and no more. When Ali saw her, he rose and embraced her and they both fell down in a swoon. They lay awhile insensible, then, coming to themselves, began to complain to each other of the pains of separation. They sat awhile, conversing with eloquence and tenderness, after which they perfumed themselves and fell to thanking me for what I had done. Said I, 'Have ye a mind for food?' 'Yes,' answered they. So I set food before them, and they ate till they were satisfied and washed their hands, after which I carried them to another room and brought them wine. So they drank and grew merry with wine and inclined to one another, and Shemsennehar said to me, 'O my lord, complete thy kindness by bringing us a lute or other instrument of music that the measure of our joy may be filled.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered I and rising, brought her a lute. She took it and tuned it, then laying it in her lap, made masterly music, at once exciting to sorrowful thoughts and cheering the afflicted; after which she sang the following verses:

I wake and I watch till it seemeth as I were in love with unrest
And I waste and I languish, as sickness, meseemeth, were born in my breast.
The tides of my tears, ever flowing, have burnt up my cheeks with their heat:
Would I knew if our loves, after sev'rance, with union again will be blest!

She went on to sing song after song, choice words set to various airs, till our minds were bewitched and it seemed as if the very room would dance with excess of pleasure for the marvel of her sweet singing and there was nor thought nor reason left in us. When we had sat awhile and the cup had gone round amongst us, the damsel took the lute and sang the following verses to a lively measure:

My love a visit promised me and did fulfil his plight
One night that I shall reckon aye for many and many a night.
O night of raptures that the fates vouchsafed unto us twain;
Unheeded of the railing tribe and in the spies' despite!
My loved one lay the night with me and I of my content
Clipped him with my left hand, while he embraced me with his right.
I strained him to my breast and drank his lips' sweet wine, what while
I of the honey and of him who sells it had delight.

Whilst we were thus drowned in the sea of gladness, in came a little maid, trembling, and said, 'O my lady, look how you may go away, for the folk are upon us and have surrounded the house, and we know not the cause of this.' When I heard this, I arose in affright, and behold, in came a slave-girl, who said, 'Calamity hath overtaken you!' At the same moment, the door was burst open and there rushed in upon us half a score masked men, with poniards in their hands and swords by their sides, and as many more behind them. When I saw this, the world, for all its wideness, was straitened on me and I looked to the door, but saw no way out; so I sprang (from the roof) into the house of one of my neighbours and hid myself there. Thence I heard a great uproar in my house and concluded that the Khalif had gotten wind of us and sent the chief of the police to seize us and bring us before him. So I abode confounded and remained in my place, without daring to move, till midnight, when the master of the house became aware of me and being greatly affrighted, made at me with a drawn sword in his hand, saying, 'Who is this in my house?' Quoth I, 'I am thy neighbour, the jeweller;' and he knew me and held his hand. Then he fetched a light and coming up to me, said, 'O my brother, indeed that which hath befallen thee this night is grievous to me.' 'O my brother,' answered I, 'tell me who it was entered my house and broke in the door, for I fled to thee, not knowing what was the matter.' Quoth he, 'The robbers, who visited our neighbours yesterday and slew such an one and took his goods, saw thee yesterday bringing hither furniture and what not; so they broke in upon thee and stole thy goods and slew thy guests.' Then we arose, he and I, and repaired to my house, which I found empty and stripped of everything, whereat I was confounded and said to myself, 'I care not for the loss of the gear, though indeed I borrowed part thereof of my friends; yet is there no harm in that, for they know my excuse in the loss of my goods and the pillage of my house; but as for Ali ben Bekkar and the Khalif's favourite, I fear lest their case get wind and this cause the loss of my life.' So I turned to my neighbour and said to him, 'Thou art my brother and my neighbour and wilt cover my nakedness; what dost thou counsel me to do?' 'I counsel thee to wait,' answered he; 'for they who entered thy house and stole thy goods have murdered the better part of a company from the Khalif's palace, besides some of the police, and the Khalif's officers are now in quest of them on every side. Haply they will chance on them and so thy wish will come about without effort of thine.' Then I

returned to my other house, that in which I dwelt, saying to myself, 'This that hath befallen me is what Aboulhusn feared and from which he fled to Bassora.' Presently the pillage of my pleasure-house was noised abroad among the folk, and they came to me from all sides, some rejoicing in my misfortune and others excusing me and condoling with me, whilst I bewailed myself to them and ate not neither drank for grief. As I sat, repenting me of what I had done, one of my servants came in to me and said, 'There is a man at the door, who asks for thee; and I know him not.' So I went out and found at the door a man whom I knew not. I saluted him, and he said to me, 'I have somewhat to say to thee privily.' So I brought him in and said to him, 'What hast thou to say to me?' Quoth he, 'Come with me to thine other house.' 'Doss thou then know my other house,' asked I. 'I know all about thee,' replied he, 'and I know that also wherewith God will dispel thy concern.' So I said to myself, 'I will go with him whither he will;' and we went out and walked on till we came to my other house, which when he saw, he said to me, 'It is without door or doorkeeper, and we cannot sit in it; so come thou with me to another house.' Accordingly, he went on from place to place and I with him, till the night overtook us. Yet I put no question to him and we ceased not to walk on, till we reached the open country. He kept saying, 'Follow me,' and quickened his pace, whilst I hurried after him, heartening myself to go on. Presently; we came to the river-bank, where he took boat with me, and the boatman rowed us over to the other side. Here my guide landed and I after him and he took my hand and led me to a street I had never before entered, nor do I know in what quarter it is. Presently he stopped at the door of a house, and opening, entered and made me enter with him; after which he bolted the door with a bolt of iron and carried me along the vestibule, till he brought me in presence of ten men, brothers, as they were one and the same man. We saluted them and they returned our greeting and bade us be seated; so we sat down. Now I was like to die for very weariness; so they brought rose-water and sprinkled it on my face, after which they gave me to drink and set food before me, of which some of them ate with me. Quoth I to myself, 'Were there aught of harm in the food, they would not eat with me.' So I ate, and when we had washed our hands, each of us returned to his place. Then said they to me, 'Dost thou know us?' 'I never in my life saw you nor this your abode,' answered I; 'nay, I know not even him who brought me hither.' Said they, 'Tell us thy case and lie not in aught.' 'Know then,' rejoined I, 'that my case is strange and my affair marvellous: but do you know aught of me?' 'Yes,' answered they; 'it was we took thy goods yesternight and carried off thy friend and her who was singing to him.' 'May God let down the veil of His protection over you!' said I. 'But where is my friend and she who was singing to him?' They pointed to two doors and replied, 'They are yonder, each in a room apart; but, by Allah, O our brother, the secret of their case is known to none but thee, for from the time we brought them hither, we have not seen them nor questioned them of their condition, seeing them to be persons of rank and dignity. This it was that hindered us from putting them to death: so tell us the truth of their case and be assured of their safety and thine own.' When I heard this, I was like to die of fright and said to them, 'O my brethren, if generosity were lost, it would not be found save with you and had I a secret, which I feared to divulge, your breasts alone should have the keeping of it.' And I went on to expatiate to them in this sense, till I saw that frankness would profit me more than concealment; so I told them the whole story. When they heard it, they said, 'And is this young man Ali ben Bekkar and this

damsel Shemsennehar?' 'Yes,' answered I. This was grievous to them and they rose and made their excuses to the two lovers. Then they said to me, 'Part of what we took from thy house is spent, but here is what is left of it.' So saying, they gave me back the most part of my goods and engaged to return them to my house and restore me the rest. So my heart was set at ease, and some of them abode with me, whilst the rest fetched Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar, who were well-nigh dead for excess of fear. Then they all sallied forth with us and I went up to the two lovers and saluting them, said to them, 'What became of the damsel and the two maids?' 'We know nothing of them,' answered they. Then we walked on till we came to the river-bank, where we all embarked in the boat that had brought me over before, and the boatman rowed us to the other side; but hardly had we landed and sat down on the bank to rest, when a troop of horse swooped down on us like eagles and surrounded us on all sides, whereupon the robbers with us sprang up in haste and the boatman, putting back for them, took them in and pushed off into mid-stream, leaving us on the bank, unable to move or abide still. The horseman said to us, 'Whence come ye?' And we were perplexed for an answer; but I said, 'Those ye saw with us are rogues: we know them not. As for us, we are singers, whom they would have taken to sing to them, nor could we win free of them, save by subtlety and fair words, and they have but now left us.' They looked at Ali and Shemsennehar and said to me, 'Thou hast not spoken sooth; but if thy tale be true, tell us who you are and whence you come and in what quarter you dwell.' I knew not what to answer, but Shemsennehar sprang up and approaching the captain of the troop, spoke with him privily, whereupon he dismounted and setting her on his steed, began to lead it along by the bridle. Two of his men did the like with Ali ben Bekkar and myself, and they fared on with us, till they reached a certain part of the river-bank, when the captain sang out in jargon and there came to us a number of men with two boats. The captain embarked with Shemsennehar in one boat and went his way, whilst the rest of his men put off in the other, with Ali ben Bekkar and myself, and rowed on with us, we the while enduring the agonies of death for excess of fear, till they came to a place whence there was a way to our quarter. Here we landed and walked on, escorted by some of the horsemen, till we came to Ali ben Bekkar's house, where they took leave of us and went their way. We entered the house and abode there, unable to stir and knowing not night from day, till nightfall of the next day, when I came to myself and saw Ali ben Bekkar stretched out without sense or motion, and the men and women of his household weeping over him. When they saw that I had recovered my senses, some of them came to me and helping me sit up, said to me, 'Tell us what hath befallen our son and how he came in this plight.' 'O folk,' answered I, 'hearken to me and importune me not; but be patient and he will come to himself and tell you his story for himself.' And I was round with them and made them afraid of a scandal between us; but as we were thus, behold, Ali ben Bekkar moved in his bed, whereat his friends rejoiced and the [most part of the] folk withdrew from him; but his people forbade me to go away. Then they sprinkled rose-water on his face, and he presently revived and breathed the air, whereupon they questioned him of his case. He essayed to answer them, but could not speak forthright and signed to them to let me go home. So they let me go, and I returned to my own house, supported by two men and hardly crediting my escape. When my people saw me thus, they fell a-shrieking and buffeting their faces; but I signed to them to hold their peace, and they were silent.

Then the two men went their way and I threw myself down on my bed, where I lay the rest of the night and awoke not till the forenoon, when I found my people collected round me and they said, 'What hath befallen thee and what (evil) hath smitten thee with its mischief?' Quoth I, 'Bring me to drink.' So they brought me wine, and I drank what I would and said to them, 'Wine got the better of me and it was this caused the state in which ye saw me' Then they went away, and I made my excuses to my friends and asked if any of the goods that had been stolen from my other house had been returned.' 'Yes,' answered they. 'Some of them have come back: and the manner of their coming was that a man came and threw them down in the doorway and we saw him not.' So I comforted myself and abode two days, unable to rise, at the end of which time I began to regain strength and went to the bath, for I was worn out with fatigue and troubled at heart for Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar, because I had no news of them all this time and could neither get to Ali's house nor rest in my own, out of fear for myself. And I repented to God the Most High of what I had done and praised Him for my safety. Then I bethought me to go to such and such a place and see the folk and divert myself; so I went to the stuff-market and sat awhile with a friend of mine there. When I rose to go, I saw a woman standing in my road; so I looked at her, and behold it was Shemsennehar's slave-girl. When I saw her, the world grew dark in my eyes and I hurried on. She followed me, but I was afraid and fled from her, trembling whenever I looked at her, whilst she pursued me, saying, 'Stop, that I may tell thee somewhat.' But I heeded her not and went on, till I reached a mosque in an unfrequented spot, and she said to me, 'Enter the mosque, that I may say a word to thee, and fear nothing.' And she conjured me: so I entered the mosque, and she after me. I prayed a two-bow prayer, after which I turned to her, sighing, and said, 'What dost thou want?' She asked me how I did, and I told her all that had befallen myself and Ali ben Bekkar and asked her for news of herself. 'Know,' answered she, 'that when I and the two maids saw the robbers break open thy door, we doubted not but they were the Khalif's officers and would seize us and our mistress and we perish forthright: so we fled over the roofs and casting ourselves down from a high place, took refuge with some people, who harboured us and brought us to the palace, where we arrived in the sorriest of plights. We concealed our case and abode on coals of fire till nightfall, when I opened the river-gate and calling the boatman who had carried us the night before, said to him, "I know not what is come of my mistress; so take me in thy boat, that we may seek her on the river: it may be I shall chance on some news of her." So he took me into the boat and rowed about with me till midnight, when I spied a boat making towards the water-gate, with one man rowing and another standing up and a woman lying prostrate between them. When they reached the shore and the woman landed, I looked at her, and behold, it was Shemsennehar. So I landed and joined her, dazed for joy, after having lost hope of her. When I came up to her, she bade me give the man who had brought her thither a thousand diners, and I and the two maids carried her in and laid her on her bed, and she at death's door. She abode thus all that day and the next day and I forbade the eunuchs and women to go in to her; but on the third day, she revived and I found her as she had come out of the grave. So I sprinkled rose-water upon her face and changed her clothes and washed her hands and feet, nor did I cease to persuade her, till I brought her to eat a little and drink some wine, though she had no mind to it. As soon as she had breathed the air and strength began to return to her, I fell to

upbraiding her, saying, "Consider, O my lady, and have pity on thyself; thou seest what has betided us Surely, enough of evil hath befallen thee and thou hast been nigh upon death." "By Allah, O good damsel," replied she, "death were easier to me than what hath befallen me; for I had renounced all hope of deliverance and gave myself up for lost. When the robbers took us from the jeweller's house, they asked me who I was; I replied, 'I am a singing-girl,' and they believed me. Then they said to Ali ben Bekkar, 'And who art thou and what is thy condition?' And he answered, 'I am of the common people.' So they carried us to their abode, and we hurried on with them for fear; but when they had us with them in the house, they looked at me and seeing the clothes I wore and my necklaces and jewellery, believed me not and said to me, 'No singing-girl ever had such jewels as these; tell us the truth of thy case.' I returned them no answer, saying in myself, 'Now will they kill me for my clothes and ornaments;' and I spoke not a word. Then they turned to Ali ben Bekkar and said to him, 'And thou, who and whence art thou? For thy favour is not as that of the common folk.' But he was silent and we ceased not to keep our counsel and weep, till God inclined the rogues' hearts towards us and they said to us, 'Who is the owner of the house in which you were?' 'Such an one, the jeweller,' answered we; whereupon quoth one of them, 'I know him well and where he lives, and I will engage to bring him to you forthright.' Then they agreed to set me in a place by myself and Ali ben Bekkar in a place by himself, and said to us, 'Be at rest and fear not lest your secret be divulged; ye are safe from us.' Meanwhile their comrade went away and returned with the jeweller, who made known to them our case, and we joined company with him; after which one of the band fetched a boat, in which they embarked us all three and rowing us over the river, landed us on the opposite bank and went away; whereupon up came a horse-patrol and asked us who we were. So I spoke with the captain and said to him, 'I am Shemsennehar, the Khalif's favourite; I had drunken wine and went out to visit certain of my acquaintance of the wives of the Viziers, when yonder rogues laid hold of me and brought me hither; but when they saw you, they fled. I met these men with them; so do thou escort me and them to a place of safety and I will requite thee.' When the captain heard my speech, he knew me and alighting, mounted me on his horse; and in like manner did two of his men with Ali and the jeweller. And now my heart is on fire on their account, especially for Ali's friend the jeweller: so do thou go to him and salute him and ask him for news of Ali ben Bekkar." I spoke to her and blamed her and bade her beware, saying' "O my lady, have a care for thyself and give up this intrigue." But she was angered at my words and cried out at me. So I came forth in quest of thee, but found thee not and dared not go to Ali's house; so stood watching for thee, that I might ask thee of him and know how it is with him. And I beg thee, of thy favour, to take some money of me, for belike thou borrowedst of thy friends some of the goods, and as they are lost, it behoves thee to make them compensation.' 'I hear and obey,' answered I. 'Go on.' And I walked with her till we drew near my house, when she said to me, 'Wait till I return to thee.' So she went away and presently returned with a bag of money, which she handed to me, saying, 'O my lord, where shall we meet?' Quoth I, 'I will go to my house at once and suffer hardship for thy sake and contrive how thou mayst win to him, for access to him is difficult at this present.' 'Let me know where I shall come to thee,' said she, and I answered, 'In my other house; I will go thither forthright and have the doors repaired and the place made secure again, and

henceforth we will meet there.' Then she took leave of me and went her way, whilst I carried the money home, and counting it, found it five thousand diners. I gave my people some of it and made good their loss to all who had lent me aught, after which I took my servants and repaired to my other house, with builders and carpenters, who restored it to its former state. Moreover, I placed my negress-slave there and forgot what had befallen me. Then I repaired to Ali ben Bekkar's house, where his servants accosted me, saying, 'Our lord calls for thee day and night and hath promised his freedom to whichever of us brings thee to him; so we have been in quest of thee everywhere, but knew not where to find thee. Our master is by way of recovery, but he has frequent relapses, and when he revives, he names thee and says, "Needs must ye bring him to me, though but for an instant," and sinks back into his torpor.' So I went in to Ali ben Bekkar and finding him unable to speak, sat down at his head, whereupon he opened his eyes and seeing me, wept and said, 'Welcome and fair welcome!' I raised him and making him sit up, strained him to my bosom, and he said, 'Know, O my brother, that, since I took to my bed, I have not sat up till now: praised be God that I see thee again!' Presently, little by little, I made him stand up and walk a few steps, after which I changed his clothes and he drank some wine. All this he did to please me. Then, seeing him to be somewhat restored, I told him what had befallen me with the slave-girl, none else hearing me, and said to him, 'I know what thou sufferest; but take heart and be of good courage; for henceforth nought shall betide thee, but what shall rejoice thee and ease thine heart.' He smiled and called for food, which being brought, he signed to his servants, and they withdrew. Then said he to me, 'O my brother, thou seest what hath befallen me;' and he made his excuses to me and enquired how I had fared all that while. I told him all that had befallen me, from first to last, at which he wondered and calling his servants, said, 'Bring me such and such things.' Accordingly, they brought in rich carpets and hangings and utensils of gold and silver, more than I had lost, and he gave them all to me; so I sent them to my house and abode with him that night. When the day began to break, he said to me, 'To everything there is an end, and the end of love is death or enjoyment. I am nearer unto death, would I had died ere this befell! For, had not God favoured us, we had been discovered and put to shame. And now I know not what shall deliver me from this my strait, and were it not that I fear God, I would hasten my own death; for know, O my brother, that I am like the bird in the cage and that my life is of a surety perished, by reason of the distresses that have befallen me; yet hath it a fixed period and an appointed term.' And he wept and groaned and repeated the following verses:

Indeed, it sufficeth the lover the time that his tears have run;
As for affliction, of patience it hath him all fordone.
He who concealeth the secrets conjoined us heretofore
And now His hand hath severed that which Himself made one.

When he had finished, I said to him, 'O my lord, I would fain return to my house; it may be the damsel will come back to me with news.' 'It is well,' answered he; 'go and return to me speedily with news, for thou seest my condition.' So I took leave of him and went home. Hardly had I sat down, when up came the damsel, choked with her tears. 'What is the matter?' asked I, and she said, 'O my lord, what we feared has fallen on us; for, when I returned yesterday to my lady, I found her enraged with one of

the two maids who were with us the other night, and she ordered her to be beaten. The girl took fright and ran away; but one of the gate-keepers stopped her and would have sent her back to her mistress. However, she let fall some hints, which excited his curiosity; so he coaxed her and led her on to talk, and she acquainted him with our case. This came to the ears of the Khalif, who bade remove my mistress and all her gear to his own palace and set over her a guard of twenty eunuchs. Since then he has not visited her nor given her to know the cause of his action, but I suspect this to be the cause; wherefore I am in fear for myself and am perplexed, O my lord, knowing not what I shall do nor how I shall order my affair and hers, for she had none more trusted nor trustier than myself. So do thou go quickly to Ali ben Bekkar and acquaint him with this, that he may be on his guard; and if the affair be discovered, we will cast about for a means of saving ourselves.' At this, I was sore troubled and the world grew dark in my sight for the girl's words. Then she turned to go, and I said to her, 'What is to be done?' Quoth she, 'My counsel is that thou hasten to Ali ben Bekkar, if thou be indeed his friend and desire his escape; thine be it to carry him the news forthright, and be it mine to watch for further news.' Then she took her leave of me and went away. I followed her out and betaking myself to Ali ben Bekkar, found him flattering himself with hopes of speedy enjoyment and staying himself with vain expectations. When he saw me, he said, 'I see thou hast come back to me forthwith' 'Summon up all thy patience,' answered I, 'and put away thy vain doting and shake off thy preoccupation, for there hath befallen that which may bring about the loss of thy life and goods.' When he heard this, he was troubled and his colour changed and he said to me, 'O my brother, tell me what hath happened.' 'O my lord,' replied I, 'such and such things have happened and thou art lost without recourse, if thou abide in this thy house till the end of the day.' At this he was confounded and his soul well-nigh departed his body, but he recovered himself and said to me, 'What shall I do, O my brother, and what is thine advice?' 'My advice,' answered I, 'is that thou take what thou canst of thy property and whom of thy servants thou trustest and flee with me to a land other than this, ere the day come to an end.' And he said, 'I hear and obey.' So he rose, giddy and dazed, now walking and now falling down and took what came under his hand. Then he made an excuse to his household and gave them his last injunctions, after which he loaded three camels and mounted his hackney. I did the like and we went forth privily in disguise and fared on all day and night, till nigh upon morning, when we unloaded and hobbling our camels, lay down to sleep; but, being worn with fatigue, we neglected to keep watch, so that there fell on us robbers, who stripped us of all we had and slew our servants, when they would have defended us, after which they made off with their booty, leaving us naked and in the sorriest of plights. As soon as they were gone, we arose and walked on till morning, when we came to a village and took refuge in its mosque. We sat in a corner of the mosque all that day and the next night, without meat or drink; and at daybreak, we prayed the morning prayer and sat down again. Presently, a man entered and saluting us, prayed a two-bow prayer, after which he turned to us and said, 'O folk, are ye strangers?' 'Yes,' answered we, 'robbers waylaid us and stripped us, and we came to this town, but know none here with whom we may shelter.' Quoth he, 'What say you? Will you come home with me?' And I said to Ali ben Bekkar, 'Let us go with him, and we shall escape two evils; first, our fear lest some one who knows us enter the mosque and so we be discovered; and secondly, that

we are strangers and have no place to lodge in.' 'As thou wilt,' answered he. Then the man said to us again, 'O poor folk, give ear unto me and come with me to my house.' 'We hear and obey,' answered I; whereupon he pulled off a part of his own clothes and covered us therewith and made his excuses to us and spoke kindly to us. Then we accompanied him to his house and he knocked at the door, whereupon a little servant came out and opened to us. We entered after our host, who called for a parcel of clothes and muslin for turbans, and gave us each a suit of clothes and a piece of muslin; so we made us turbans and sat down. Presently, in came a damsel with a tray of food and set it before us, saying, 'Eat.' We ate a little and she took away the tray; after which we abode with our host till nightfall, when Ali ben Bekkar sighed and said to me, 'Know, O my brother, that I am a dead man and I have a charge to give thee: it is that, when thou seest me dead, thou go to my mother and tell her and bid her come hither, that she may be present at the washing of my body and take order for my funeral; and do thou exhort her to bear my loss with patience.' Then he fell down in a swoon and when he revived, he heard a damsel singing afar off and addressed himself to give ear to her and hearken to her voice; and now he was absent from the world and now came to himself, and anon he wept for grief and mourning at what had befallen him. Presently, he heard the damsel sing the following verses:

Parting hath wrought in haste our union to undo
After the straitest loves and concord 'twixt us two.
The shifts of night and day have torn our lives apart.
When shall we meet again? Ah, would to God I knew!
After conjoined delight, how bitter sev'rance is!
Would God it had no power to baffle lovers true!
Death's anguish hath its hour, then endeth; but the pain
Of sev'rance from the loved at heart is ever new.
Could we but find a way to come at parting's self,
We'd surely make it taste of parting's cup of rue.

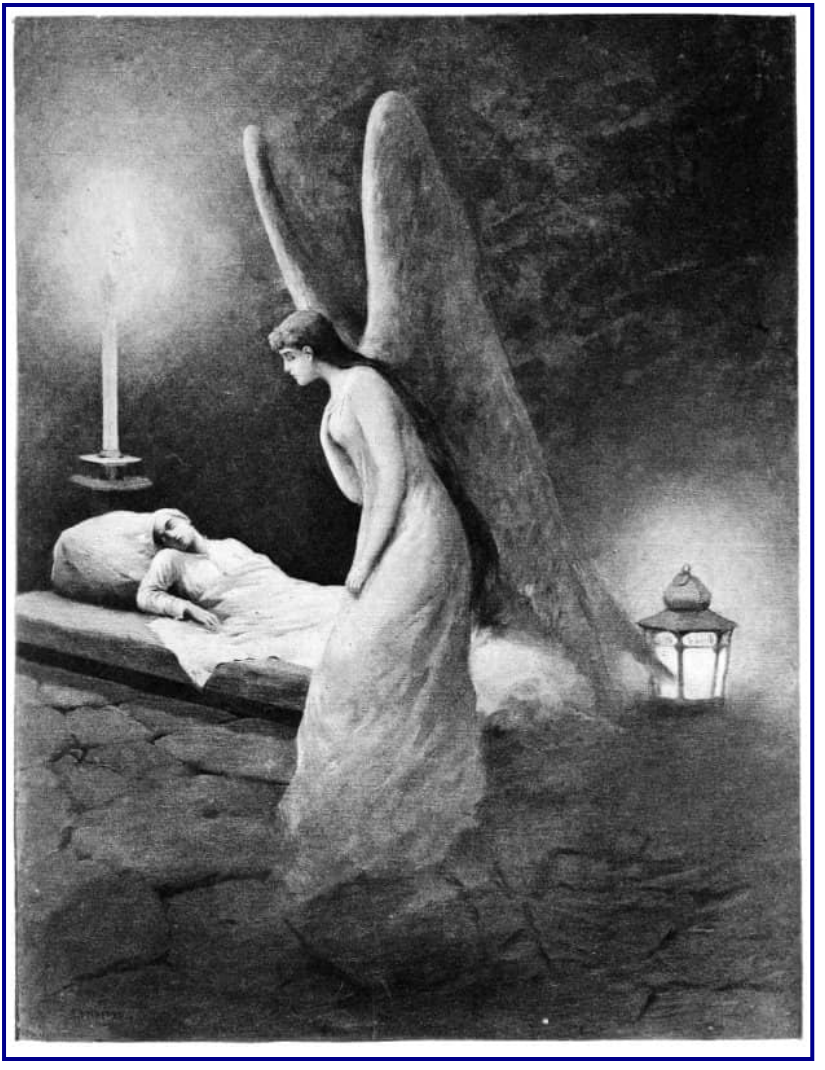
When he heard this, he gave one sob and his soul quitted his body. As soon as I saw that he was dead, I committed his body to the care of the master of the house and said to him, 'I go to Baghdad, to tell his mother and kinsfolk, that they may come hither and take order for his burial' So I betook myself to Baghdad and going to my house, changed my clothes, after which I repaired to Ali ben Bekkar's lodging. When his servants saw me, they came to me and questioned me of him, and I bade them ask leave for me to go in to his mother. She bade admit me; so I entered and saluting her, said, 'Verily God orders the lives of all creatures by His commandment and when He decreeth aught, there is no escaping its fulfilment, nor can any soul depart but by His leave, according to the Writ which prescribeth the appointed terms.' She guessed by these words that her son was dead and wept sore, then she said to me, 'I conjure thee by Allah, tell me, is my son dead?' I could not answer her for tears and much grief, and when she saw me thus, she was choked with weeping and fell down in a swoon. As soon as she came to herself, she said to me, 'Tell me how my son died.' 'May God abundantly requite thee for him!' answered I and told her all that had befallen him, from first to last. 'Did he give thee any charge?' asked she. 'Yes,' answered I and told her what he had said, adding, 'Hasten to take order for his funeral.' When she heard

this, she swooned away again; and when she recovered, she addressed herself to do as I bade her. Then I returned to my house; and as I went along, musing sadly upon his fair youth, a woman caught hold of my hand. I looked at her and behold, it was Shemsennehar's slave-girl, broken for grief. When we knew each other, we both wept and gave not over weeping till we reached my house, and I said to her, 'Knowest thou the news of Ali ben Bekkar?' 'No, by Allah,' replied she; so I told her the manner of his death and all that had passed, whilst we both wept; after which I said to her, 'And how is it with thy mistress?' Quoth she, 'The Khalif would not hear a word against her, but saw all her actions in a favourable light, of the great love he bore her, and said to her, "O Shemsennehar, thou art dear to me and I will bear with thee and cherish thee, despite thine enemies." Then he bade furnish her a saloon decorated with gold and a handsome sleeping-chamber, and she abode with him in all ease of life and high favour. One day, as he sat at wine, according to his wont, with his favourites before him, he bade them be seated in their places and made Shemsennehar sit by his side. (Now her patience was exhausted and her disorder redoubled upon her.) Then he bade one of the damsels sing: so she took a lute and tuning it, preluded and sang the following verses:

One sought me of lore and I yielded and gave him that which he sought.
And my tears write the tale of my transport in furrows upon my cheek.
Meseemeth as if the teardrops were ware, indeed, of our case
And hide what I'd fain discover and tell what to hide I seek.
How can I hope to be secret and hide the love that I feel,
Whenas the stress of my longing my passion for thee doth speak?
Death, since the loss of my loved ones, is sweet to me: would I knew
What unto them is pleasant, now that they've lost me eke!

When Shemsennehar heard these verses, she could not keep her seat, but fell down in a swoon, whereupon the Khalif threw the cup from his hand and drew her to him, crying out. The damsels clamoured and he turned her over and shook her, and behold, she was dead. The Khalif grieved sore for her death and bade break all the vessels and lutes and other instruments of mirth and music in the place; then carrying her body to his closet, he abode with her the rest of the night. When the day broke, he laid her out and commanded to wash her and shroud her and bury her. And he mourned very sore for her and questioned not of her case nor what ailed her. And I beg thee in God's name,' continued the damsel, 'to let me know the day of the coming of Ali ben Bekkar's funeral train, that I may be present at his burial.' Quoth I, 'For myself, thou canst find me where thou wilt; but thou, who can come at thee where thou art?' 'On the day of Shemsennehar's death,' answered she, 'the Commander of the Faithful freed all her women, myself among the rest; and we are now abiding at the tomb in such a place.' So I accompanied her to the burial-ground and visited Shemennehar's tomb; after which I went my way and awaited the coming of Ali ben Bekkar's funeral. When it arrived, the people of Baghdad went forth to meet it and I with them; and I saw the damsel among the women and she the loudest of them in lamentation, crying out and wailing with a voice that rent the vitals and made the heart ache. Never was seen in Baghdad a greater funeral than his and we ceased not to follow in crowds, till we reached the cemetery and buried him to the mercy of God the most High; nor from

that time to this have I ceased to visit his tomb and that of Shemsennehar." This, then, is their story, and may God the Most High have mercy upon them!



Kemerezzeman and Budour.

THERE was once, of old time, a king called Shehriman, who was lord of many troops and guards and officers and reigned over certain islands, known as the Khalidan Islands, on the borders of the land of the Persians; but he was grown old and decrepit, without having been blessed with a son, albeit he had four wives, daughters of kings, and threescore concubines, with each of whom he was wont to lie one night in turn. This preyed upon his mind and disquieted him, so that he complained thereof to one of his Viziers, saying, 'I fear lest my kingdom be lost, when I die, for that I have no son to take it after me.' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'peradventure God shall yet provide for this; do thou put thy trust in Him and be constant in supplication to Him.' So the King rose and making his ablutions, prayed a two-bow prayer with a believing heart; after which he called one of his wives to bed and lay with her forthright. By God's grace, she conceived by him and when her months were accomplished, she bore a male child, like the moon on the night of its full. The King named him Kemerezzeman and rejoiced in him with exceeding joy and bade decorate the city in his honour. So they decorated the city seven days, whilst the drums beat and the messengers bore the glad tidings abroad. Meanwhile nurses and attendants were provided for the boy and he was reared in splendour and delight, until he reached the age of fifteen. He grew up of surpassing beauty and symmetry, and his father loved him very dear, so that he could not brook to be parted from him day or night. One day, he complained to one of his Viziers of the excess of his love for his son, saying, 'O Vizier, of a truth I fear the shifts and accidents of fortune for my son Kemerezzeman and fain would I marry him in my lifetime.' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'marriage is one of the most honourable of actions, and thou wouldst indeed do well to marry thy son in thy lifetime, ere thou make him king.' Quoth the King, 'Fetch me my son;' so Kemerezzeman came and bowed his head before his father, out of modesty. 'O Kemerezzeman,' said the King, 'I desire to marry thee and rejoice in thee in my lifetime.' 'O my father,' answered the prince, 'know that I have no wish to marry, nor doth my soul incline to women; for that I have read many books and heard much talk concerning their craft and perfidy, even as saith the poet:

If ye would know of women and question of their case,
Lo, I am versed in their fashions and skilled all else above.
When a man's head grows grizzled or for the nonce his wealth
Falls from his hand, then, trust me, he hath no part in their love.

And again:

Gainsay women; he obeyeth Allah best who saith them nay,
And he prospers not who giveth them his bridle-rein to sway;
For they'll hinder him from winning to perfection in his gifts,
Though a thousand years he study, seeking after wisdom's way.

Wherefore (continued Kemerezzeman) marriage is a thing to which I will never consent; no, not though I drink the cup of death.' When the King heard this, the light in his sight became darkness and he was excessively chagrined at his son's lack of

obedience to his wishes; yet, for the great love he bore him, he forbore to press him and was not wroth with him, but caressed him and spoke him fair and showed him all manner of kindness such as tends to cultivate affection. He took patience with him a whole year, during which time Kemerezzeman increased daily in beauty and elegance and amorous grace, till he became perfect in eloquence and loveliness. All men were ravished with his beauty and every breeze that blew carried the tidings of his charms; he was a seduction to lovers and a garden of delight to longing hearts, for he was sweet of speech and his face put the full moon to shame. Accomplished in symmetry as in elegance and engaging manners, his shape was slender and graceful as the willow-wand or the flowering cane and his cheeks might pass for roses or blood-red anemones. He was, in fine, charming in all respects, even as the poet hath said of him:

He comes and "Blest be God!" say all men, high and base.
"Glory to Him who shaped and fashioned forth his face!"
He's monarch of the fair, wherever they may be;
For, lo, they're all become the liegemen of his grace.
The water of his mouth is liquid honey-dew
And 'twixt his lips for teeth fine pearls do interlace.
Perfect in every trait of beauty and unique,
His witching loveliness distracts the human race.
Beauty itself hath writ these words upon his cheek,
"Except this youth there's none that's fair in any place."

When the year came to an end, the King called his son to him and said, 'O my son, wilt thou not hearken to me?' Whereupon Kemerezzeman fell down for respect and shame before his father and replied, 'O my father, how should I not hearken to thee, seeing that God commandeth me to obey thee and not gainsay thee?' 'O my son,' said King Shehriman, 'know that I desire to marry thee and rejoice in thee, whilst yet I live, and make thee king over my realm, before my death.' When the prince heard this, he bowed his head awhile, then raised it and said, 'O my father, this is a thing that I will never do, though I drink the cup of death. I know of a surety that God the Most High enjoins on me obedience to thee; but in His name I conjure thee, press me not in this matter of marriage, neither think that I will ever marry my life long; for that I have read the books both of the ancients and the moderns and have come to know all the troubles and calamities that have befallen them through women and the disasters that have sprung from their craft without end. How well says the poet:

He, whom the baggages entrap,
Deliverance shall never know,
Although a thousand forts he build,
Plated with lead;— 'gainst such a foe
It shall not profit him to build
Nor citadels avail, I trow.
Women are traitresses to all,
Both near and far and high and low.
With fingers dyed and flowing hair
Plaited with tresses, sweet of show,

And eyelids beautified with kohl,
They make one drink of bale and woe.

And no less excellently saith another:

Women, for all to chastity they're bidden, everywhere
Are carrion tossed about of all the vultures of the air.
To-night their converse, ay, and all their secret charms are thine,
But on the morn their leg and wrist fall to another's share;
Like to an inn in which thou lodg'st, departing with the dawn,
And one thou know'st not, after thee, lights down and lodges there.

When King Shehriman heard these his son's words, he made him no answer, of his great love for him, but redoubled in favour and kindness to him. As soon as the audience was over, he called his Vizier and taking him apart, said to him, 'O Vizier, tell me how I shall do with my son in this matter of his marriage. I took counsel with thee thereon and thou didst counsel me to marry him, before making him king. I have spoken with him once and again of marriage, and he still gainsaid me; so do thou now counsel me what to do.' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'wait another year, and if after that thou be minded to speak to him on the matter of marriage, do it not privily, but on a day of state, when all the Viziers and Amirs are present and all the troops standing before thee. Then send for thy son and broach to him the matter of marriage before the Viziers and grandees and officers of state and captains; for he will surely be daunted by their presence and will not dare to oppose thy will.' The King rejoiced exceedingly in his Vizier's advice, deeming it excellent, and bestowed on him a splendid robe of honour. Then he took patience with his son another year, whilst, with every day that passed over him, Kemerezzeman increased in grace and beauty and elegance and perfection, till he was nigh twenty years old. Indeed, God had clad him in the habit of beauty and crowned him with the crown of perfection: his eyes were more ensorcelling than Harout and Marout and the play of his glances more misleading than Taghout. His cheeks shone with redness and his eyelashes outvied the keen-edged sword: the whiteness of his forehead resembled the shining moon and the blackness of his hair was as the murky night. His waist was more slender than the gossamer and his buttocks heavier than two hills of sand, troubling the heart with their softness; but his waist complained of their weight. In fine, his charms ravished all mankind, even as saith the poet:

By his cheeks' unfading damask and his smiling teeth I swear,
By the arrows that he feathers with the witchery of his air,
By his sides so soft and tender and his glances bright and keen,
By the whiteness of his forehead and the blackness of his hair,
By his arched imperious eyebrows, chasing slumber from mine eyes,
With their yeas and noes that hold me 'twixt rejoicing and despair,
By the scorpious that he launches from his ringlet-clustered brows,
Seeking ever in their meshes hapless lovers to ensnare,
By the myrtle of his whiskers and the roses of his cheeks,
By hislips' incarnate rubies and his teeth's fine pearls and rare,
By his breath's delicious fragrance and the waters of his mouth,

That defy old wine and choicest with their sweetness to compare,
By his heavy hips that tremble, both in motion and repose,
And the slender waist above them, all too slight their weight to bear,
By his hand's perennial bounty and his true and trusty speech,
By the stars that smile upon him, favouring and debonair,
Lo, the scent of musk none other than his very perfume is,
And the ambergris's fragrance breathes about him everywhere.
Yea, the sun in all his splendour cannot with his brightness vie,
And the crescent moon's a fragment that he from his nail doth pare.

The King, accordingly, waited till a day of state, when the audience hall was filled with his Amirs and Viziers and grandees and officers of state and captains. As soon as they were all assembled, he sent for his son Kemerezzeman, who came and kissing the earth three times, stood before him, with his hands clasped behind his back. Then said the King to him, 'Know, O my son, that I have sent for thee and summoned thee to appear before this assembly and all these officers of state that I may lay a commandment on thee, wherein do thou not gainsay me. It is that thou marry, for I am minded to wed thee to a king's daughter and rejoice in thee ere I die.' When the prince heard these his father's words, he bowed his head awhile, then raising it, replied, being moved thereto by youthful folly and boyish ignorance, 'Never will I marry, no, not though I drink the cup of death! As for thee, thou art great in years and little of wit: hast thou not, twice before this, questioned me of the matter of marriage, and I refused thee? Indeed, thou dotest and art not fit to govern a flock of sheep!' So saying, he unclasped his hands from behind his back and rolled up his sleeves, in his rage; moreover, he added many words to his father, knowing not what he said, in the trouble of his spirit. The King was confounded and ashamed, for that this befell in the presence of his grandees and officers assembled on an occasion of state; but presently the energy of kingship took him and he cried out upon his son and made him tremble. Then he called to his guards and bade them seize him and bind his hands behind his back. So they laid hands on Kemerezzeman and binding him, brought him before his father, full of shame and confusion, with his head bowed down for fear and inquietude and his brow and face beaded with sweat. The King loaded him with reproaches, saying, 'Out on thee, thou whoreson and nursling of abomination! Dost thou dare to answer me thus before my captains and officers? But hitherto none hath corrected thee. Knowest thou not that this thou hast done were disgraceful in the meanest of my subjects?' And he commanded his guards to loose his bonds and imprison him in one of the turrets of the citadel. So they carried the prince into an old tower, wherein there was a dilapidated saloon, after having first swept it and cleansed its floor and set him a couch in its midst, on which they laid a mattress, a leathern rug and a cushion. Then they brought him a great lantern and a candle, for the place was dark, even by day, and posting an eunuch at the door, left him to himself. Kemerezzeman threw himself on the couch, broken-spirited and mournful-hearted, blaming himself and repenting of his unseemly behaviour to his father, when repentance availed him nothing, and saying, 'May God curse marriage and girls and women, the traitresses! Would I had hearkened to my father and married! It were better for me than this prison.'

Meanwhile, King Shehriman abode on his throne till sundown, when he took the Vizier apart and said to him, 'O Vizier, thine advice is the cause of all this that hath befallen between me and my son. What doth thou counsel me to do now?' 'O King,' answered he, 'leave thy son in prison for the space of fifteen days; then send for him and command him to marry, and he will not again gainsay thee.' The King accepted the Vizier's counsel and lay down to sleep, troubled at heart concerning Kemerezzeman, for he loved him very dearly, having no other child, and it was his wont not to sleep, save with his arm about his son's neck. So he passed the night in trouble and unease, tossing from side to side, as he were laid on coals of tamarisk-wood; for he was overcome with inquietude and sleep visited him not all that night; but his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated the following verses:

The night, whilst the slanderers sleep, is tedious unto me;
Suffice thee a heart that aches for parting's agony!
I cry, whilst my night for care grows long and longer aye,
"O light of the morning, say, is there no returning for thee?"

And these also:

When the Pleïads I saw leave to shine in their stead
And over the pole-star a lethargy shed
And the maids of the Bier in black raiment unveiled,
I knew that the lamp of the morning was dead.

To return to Kemerezzeman. When the night came on, the eunuch set the lantern before him and lighting a candle, placed it in the candlestick; then brought him food. The prince ate a little and reproached himself for his ill-behaviour to his father, saying to himself, 'O my soul, knowst thou not that a son of Adam is the hostage of his tongue and that a man's tongue is what casts him into perils?' Then his eyes ran over with tears and he bewailed that which he had done, from an anguished heart and an aching bosom, repenting him with an exceeding repentance of the wrong he had done his father repeating the following verses:

For the sheer stumble of his tongue the youth must death aby,
Though for the stumble of his foot the grown man shall not die.
Thus doth the slipping of his mouth smite off his head, I ween,
What while the slipping of his foot is healed, as time goes by.

When he had made an end of eating, he called the eunuch, who washed his hands. Then he made his ablutions and prayed the prayers of sundown and nightfall, after which he sat down on the couch, to read the Koran. He read the chapters called 'The Cow,' 'The family of Imran,' 'Ya-Sin,' 'The Compassionate,' 'Blessed be the King,' 'Unity' and 'The two Amulets,' and concluded with blessing and supplication, seeking refuge with God from Satan the accursed. Then he put off his trousers and the rest of his clothes and lay down, in a shirt of fine waxed cloth and a coif of blue stuff of Merv, upon a mattress of satin, embroidered on both sides with gold and quilted with Irak silk, having under his head a pillow stuffed with ostrich-down. In this guise, he was like the full moon, when it rises on its fourteenth night. Then, drawing over himself a coverlet of silk, he fell asleep with the lantern burning at his feet and the candle at his

head, and woke not for a third part of the night, being ignorant of that which lurked for him in the secret purpose of God and what He who knoweth the hidden things had appointed unto him. Now, as chance and destiny would have it, the tower in question was old and had been many years deserted; and there was therein a Roman well, inhabited by an Afriteh of the lineage of Iblis the Accursed, by name Maimouneh, daughter of Ed Dimiryat, a renowned King of the Jinn. In the middle of the night, Maimouneh came up out of the well and made for heaven, thinking to listen by stealth to the discourse of the angels; but, when she reached the mouth of the well, she saw a light shining in the tower, contrary to wont; whereat she was mightily amazed, having dwelt there many years and never seen the like, and said to herself, 'Needs must there be some cause for this.' So she made for the light and found that it came from the saloon, at whose door she found the eunuch sleeping. She entered and saw a man Iying asleep upon the couch, with the lantern burning at his feet and the candle at his head; at which she wondered and going softly up to him, folded her wings and drawing back the coverlid, discovered his face. The lustre of his visage outshone that of the candle, and the Afriteh abode awhile, astounded at his beauty and grace; for his face beamed with light, his cheeks were rose-red and his eyelids languorous; his brows were arched like bows and his whole person exhaled a scent of musk, even as saith of him the poet:

I kissed him and his cheeks forthwith grew red, and black and bright
The pupils grew that are my soul's seduction and delight.
O heart, if slanderers avouch that there exists his like
For goodliness, say thou to them, "Produce him to my sight."

When Maimouneh saw him, she glorified God and said, 'Blessed be Allah, the best of Creators!' For she was of the true-believing Jinn. She stood awhile, gazing on his face, proclaiming the unity of God and envying the youth his beauty and grace. And she said in herself, 'By Allah, I will do him no hurt nor let any harm him, but will ransom him from all ill, for this fair face deserves not but that folk should look upon it and glorify God. But how could his family find it in their hearts to leave him in this desert place, where if one of our Marids came upon him at this hour, he would kill him?' Then she bent over him and kissing him between the eyes, folded back the coverlet over his face; after which she spread her wings and soaring into the air, flew upward till she drew near the lowest heaven, when she heard the noise of wings beating the air and making for the sound, found that it came from an Afrit called Dehnesh. So she swooped down on him like a sparrow-hawk; and when he was ware of her and knew her to be Maimouneh, daughter of the King of the Jinn, he feared her and his nerves trembled; and he implored her forbearance, saying, 'I conjure thee by the Most Great and August Name and by the most noble talisman graven upon the seal of Solomon, entreat me kindly and harm me not!' When she heard this, her heart inclined to him and she said, 'Verily, thou conjurest me with a mighty conjuration, O accursed one! Nevertheless, I will not let thee go, till thou tell me whence thou comest at this hour.' 'O princess,' answered he, 'know that I come from the uttermost end of the land of Cathay and from among the islands, and I will tell thee of a wonderful thing I have seen this night. If thou find my words true, let me go my way and write me a patent under thy hand that I am thy freedman, so none of the Jinn, whether of the air or the

earth, divers or flyers, may do me let or hindrance.' 'And what is it thou hast seen this night, O liar, O accursed one?' rejoined Maimouneh. 'Tell me without leasing and think not to escape from my hand with lies, for I swear to thee by the inscription on the beazel of the ring of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace,) except thy speech be true, I will pluck out thy feathers with mine own hand and strip off thy skin and break thy bones.' 'I accept this condition, O my lady,' answered Dehnesh, son of Shemhourish the Flyer. 'Know that I come to-night from the Islands of the Inland Sea in the parts of Cathay, which are the dominions of King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the Seas and the Seven Palaces. There I saw a daughter of his, than whom God hath made none fairer in her time, — I cannot picture her to thee, for my tongue would fail to describe her aright; but I will name to thee somewhat of her charms, by way of approximation. Her hair is like the nights of estrangement and separation and her face like the days of union; and the poet hath well described her when he says:

She took up three locks of her hair and spread them out one night
And straight four nights discovered at once unto my sight.
Then did she turn her visage up to the moon of the sky
And showed me two moons at one season, both burning clear and bright.

She hath a nose like the point of the burnished sword and cheeks like purple wine or blood-red anemones: her lips are like coral and cornelian and the water of her mouth is sweeter than old wine, its taste would allay the torments of Hell. Her tongue is moved by abounding wit and ready repartee: her breast is a temptation to all that see it, glory be to Him who created it and finished it: and joined thereto are two smooth round arms. As says of her the poet El Welhan:

She hath two wrists, which, were they not by bracelets held, I trow, Would flow out of their sleeves as brooks of liquid silver flow.

She has breasts like two globes of ivory, the moons borrow from their brightness, and a belly dimpled as it were a brocaded cloth of the finest Egyptian linen, with creases like folded scrolls, leading to a waist slender past conception, over buttocks like a hill of sand, that force her to sit, when she would fain stand, and awaken her, when she would sleep, even as saith of her the poet:

Her slender waist a pair of buttocks overlies,
The which both over her and me do tyrannize.
For they confound my wit, whenas I think on them,
And eke enforce her sit, whenas she fain would rise.

They are upborne by smooth round thighs and legs like columns of pearl, and all this rests upon two slender feet, pointed like spear-blades, the handiwork of God, the Protector and Requiter, I wonder how, of their littleness, they can sustain what is above them. But I cut short my description of her charms, lest I be tedious. The father of this young lady is a powerful king, a fierce cavalier, immersed night and day in wars and battles, fearless of death and dreading not ruin, for that he is a masterful tyrant and an irresistible conqueror, lord of troops and armies, continents and islands, cities and villages, and his name is King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the Seas and of the Seven Palaces. He loves his daughter, the young lady whom I have described to thee,

very dearly, and for love of her, he gathered together the treasures of all the kings and built her therewith seven palaces, each of a different fashion; the first of crystal, the second of marble, the third of China steel, the fourth of precious stones, the fifth of porcelain and vari-coloured onyx, the sixth of silver and the seventh of gold. He filled the seven palaces with rich silken carpets and hangings and vessels of gold and silver and all manner of gear befitting kings and commanded his daughter, whose name is the Princess Budour, to abide in each by turns for a certain season of the year. When her beauty became known and her fame was noised abroad in the neighbouring countries, all the kings sent to her father, to demand her in marriage, and he consulted her on the matter, but she misliked it and said, "O my father, I have no mind to marry; for I am a sovereign lady and a princess ruling over men, and I have no desire for a man who shall rule over me." The more she refused, the more the eagerness of her suitors increased and all the kings of the Islands of the Inland Sea sent gifts and offerings to her father, with letters asking her in marriage. So he pressed her again and again to make choice of a husband, despite her refusals, till at last she turned upon him angrily and said to him, "O my father, if thou name marriage to me again, I will go into my chamber and take a sword and fixing its hilt in the ground, set its point to my breast; then will I lean upon it, till it come forth from my back, and so kill myself." When the King heard this, the light became darkness in his sight and his heart was torn with anxiety and perplexity concerning her affair; for he feared lest she should kill herself and knew not how to deal with the kings who sought her hand. So he said to her, "If thou be irrevocably determined not to marry, abstain from going in and out." Then he shut her up in her chamber, appointing ten old body-women to guard her, and made as though he were wroth with her, forbidding her to go forth to the seven palaces; moreover, he sent letters to all the kings, giving them to know that she had been stricken with madness. It is now a year (continued Dehnesh) since she has been thus cloistered, and every night I go to her, whilst she is asleep, and take my fill of gazing on her face and kiss her between the eyes: yet, of my love to her, I do her no hurt neither swive her, for that her youth is fair and her loveliness surpassing; every one who sees is jealous for her of himself. I conjure thee, therefore, O my lady, to go back with me and look on her beauty and symmetry; and after, if thou wilt, chastise me or enslave me: for it is thine to command and to forbid.' So saying, he bowed his head towards the earth and drooped his wings; but Maimouneh laughed at his words and spitting in his face, answered, 'What is this girl of whom thou pratest but a potsherd to cleanse the privities withal? Faugh! Faugh! By Allah, O accursed one, I thought thou hadst some rare story to tell me or some marvel to make known to me! How would it be if thou sawest my beloved? Verily this night I have seen a young man whom if thou sawest though but in sleep, thou wouldst be palsied with admiration and thy mouth would water.' 'And who and what is this youth?' asked the Afrit. 'Know, O Dehnesh,' answered she, 'that there hath befallen him the like of what befell thy mistress; for his father pressed him again and again to marry, but he refused, till at length his father waxed wroth and imprisoned him in the tower where I dwell: and I came up to-night and saw him.' 'O my lady,' said Dehnesh, 'show me the youth, that I may see if he be indeed handsomer than my mistress, the Princess Budour, or not; for I cannot believe that there lives her equal.' 'Thou liest, O accursed one!' rejoined Maimouneh. 'O most ill-omened of Marids and vilest of Satans! Sure am I that there is not in this world the

like of my beloved. Art thou mad to even thy beloved with mine?' 'I conjure thee by Allah, O my lady,' said Dehnesh, 'to go back with me and see my mistress, and after I will return with thee and look upon thy beloved.' 'It must needs be so, O accursed one!' answered she. 'Yet, for that thou art a knavish devil, I will not go with thee nor shalt thou come with me, save upon surety and condition of pledge. If thy beloved prove handsomer than mine, the pledge shall be thine against me; but if my beloved prove the fairer, the pledge shall be mine against thee.' 'O my lady,' said Dehnesh, 'I accept this thy condition; so come with me to the Islands.' 'Not so,' replied Maimouneh; 'for the abode of my beloved is nearer than that of thine: here it is under us; so come down with me and see my beloved, and after we will go look upon thy mistress.' 'I hear and obey,' said Dehnesh. So they descended and alighting on the tower, entered the saloon, where Maimouneh stationed Dehnesh beside the bed and putting out her hand, drew back the silken coverlet, whereupon Kemerezzeman's face shone out like the sun. She looked at him a moment, then turning to Dehnesh, said, "Look, O accursed one, and be not the vilest of madmen; I am a maiden and am ravished with him.' So Dehnesh looked at the prince and gazed steadfastly on him awhile, then, shaking his head, said to Maimouneh, 'By Allah, O my lady, thou art excusable; but there is another thing to be considered, and that is that the female estate differs from the male. By the virtue of God, this thy beloved is the likest of all created things to my mistress in beauty and loveliness and grace and it is as though they were both cast alike in the mould of perfection!' When Maimouneh heard these words, the light in her sight became darkness and she dealt him so fierce a buffet on the head with her wing as well-nigh made an end of him. Then, 'I conjure thee,' said she, 'by the light of his glorious countenance, go at once, O accursed one, and bring hither thy mistress in haste that we may lay them together and look on them both, as they lie asleep side by side; so will it appear to us whether is the goodlier and more beautiful of the two. Except thou obey me forthright, I will dart my sparks at thee and consume thee with my fire; yea, I will rend thee in pieces and cast thee into the deserts, as an example to stay-at-home and wayfarer.' 'O my lady,' answered the Afrit, 'I will do thy bidding, for I know that my mistress is the fairer and sweeter.' So saying, he flew away and Maimouneh flew with him, to guard him. They were absent awhile and presently returned, bearing the young lady, who was clad in a shift of fine Venetian silk, laced with gold and wrought with the most exquisite broidery and having the following verses worked upon the ends of the sleeves:

Three things for ever hinder her to visit us, for fear
Of the intriguing spy and eke the rancorous envier;
Her forehead's lustre and the sound of all her ornaments
And the sweet scent her creases hold of ambergris and myrrh.
Grant with the border of her sleeve she hide her brows and doff
Her ornaments, how shall she do her scent away from her?

They carried her into the saloon and laying her beside Kemerezzeman, uncovered both their faces, and behold, they were the likest of all folk, one to the other, as they were twins or an only brother and sister; and indeed they were a temptation to the pious, even as says of them the poet El Mubin:

Be not thy love, O heart, to one alone confined,
Lest, for that one, amaze and doting thee enwind;
But love thou rather all the fair, and thou shalt find,
If one contrarious prove, another will be kind.

And quoth another:

Two fair ones lying on the earth I did of late espy;
Two that I needs must love, although they lay upon mine eye.

Dehnesh and Maimouneh gazed on them awhile, and the former said, 'By Allah, O my lady, it is good! My mistress is assuredly the fairer.' 'Not so,' answered she, 'my beloved is the fairer. Out on thee, O Dehnesh! Thou art blind of eye and heart and distinguishest not between good and bad. Wilt thou hide the truth? Dost thou not see his beauty and grace and symmetry? Out on thee, hear what I purpose to say in praise of my beloved, and do thou the like for her thou lovest, an thou be a true lover.' Then she kissed Kemerezzeman again and again between the eyes and repeated the following ode:

Ah me, what ails the censurer that he at thee should flite?
How shall I be consoled for thee, and thou a sapling slight?
Thou of the black and languorous eye, that casteth far and wide
Charms, whose sheer witchery compels to passion's utmost height,
Whose looks, with Turkish languor fraught, work havoc in the breast,
Leaving such wounds as ne'er were made of falchion in the fight,
Thou layst on me a heavy load of passion and desire,
On me that am too weak to bear a shift upon me dight.
My love for thee, as well thou know'st, my very nature is,
And that for others which I feign dissembling but and sleight.
An if my heart were like to thine, I'd not refuse; alack!
'Tis but my body's like thy waist, worn thin and wasted quite.
Out on him for a moon that's famed for beauty far and near,
That for th' exemplar of all grace men everywhere do cite!
The railers say, "Who's this for love of whom thou art distressed?"
And I reply, "An if ye can, describe the lovely wight."
O learn to yield, hard heart of his, take pattern by his shape!
So haply yet he may relent and put away despite.
Thou, that my prince in beauty art, a steward hast, whose rule
Aggrieves me and a chamberlain that doth me foul upright.
He lies who says, "All loveliness in Joseph was comprised."
How many a Joseph is there not within thy beauty bright!
The Jinn do fear me, whenas I confront them face to face;
But when I meet with thee, my heart doth tremble for affright.
I feign aversion unto thee, for fear of slanderous tongues;
The more I feign, the more my love to madness I excite.
Black hair and smooth and glistening brows, eyes languorous and soft,
As of the maids of Paradise, and slender shape and slight!

When Dehnesh heard this, he shook for delight and was filled with admiration and said, 'Thou hast indeed done well in praise of him whom thou lovest! Needs must I do my endeavour, in my turn, to celebrate my mistress, to the best of my power, and recite somewhat in her honour.' Then he went up to the lady Budour and kissing her between the eyes, looked at her and at Maimouneh and recited the following verses, for all he had no skill in poetry:

They chide my passion for my fair in harsh and cruel guise;
But, of their ignorance, forsooth, they're neither just nor wise.
Vouchsafe thy favours to the slave of love, for, an he taste
Of thine estrangement and disdain, assuredly he dies.
Indeed, for very stress of love, I'm drenched with streaming tears,
That, like a rivulet of blood, run ever from mine eyes.
No wonder 'tis what I for love endure; the wonder is
That any, since the loss of thee, my body recognize.
Forbidden be thy sight to me, if I've a thought of doubt
Or if my heart of passion tire or feign or use disguise!

And also the following:

I feed mine eyes on the places where we met long ago;
Far distant now is the valley and I'm forslain for woe.
I'm drunk with the wine of passion and the teardrops in mine eyes
Dance to the song of the leader of the camels, as we go.
I cease not from mine endeavour to win to fortune fair;
Yet in Budour, Suada, all fortune is, I know.
Three things I reckon, I know not of which to most complain;
Give ear whilst I recount them and be you judge, I trow.
Firstly, her eyes, the sworders; second, the spearman, her shape,
And thirdly, her ringlets that clothe her in armour, row upon row.
Quoth she (and indeed I question, for tidings of her I love,
All whom I meet, or townsman or Bedouin, high or low)
Quoth she unto me, "My dwelling is in thy heart; look there
And thou shalt see me." I answer, "And where is my heart? Heigho!"

When Maimouneh heard this, she said, 'Thou hast done well, O Dehnesh! But tell me, which of the two is the handsomer?' And he answered, 'My mistress Budour is certainly handsomer than thy beloved.' 'Thou liest, O accursed one!' cried Maimouneh. 'Nay, my beloved is more beautiful than thine!' And they ceased not to gainsay each other, till Maimouneh cried out at Dehnesh and would have laid violent hands on him; but he humbled himself to her and softening his speech, said to her, 'Let us leave talking, for we do but contradict each other, and rather seek one who shall judge fairly between us, whether of the two is fairer, and let us abide by his sentence.' 'I agree to this,' answered she and smote the earth with her foot, whereupon there came up a one-eyed Afrit, hump-backed and scurvy, with eyes slit endlong in his face. On his head were seven horns and four locks of hair falling to his heels; his hands were like pitchforks, his legs like masts and he had claws like a lion and hoofs like those of the wild ass. When he saw Maimouneh, he kissed the earth before her and standing with

his hands clasped behind him, said, 'What is thy will, O king's daughter?' 'O Keshkesh,' answered she, 'I would have thee judge between me and this accursed Dehnesh.' And she made known to him the whole matter, whereupon he looked at the prince and princess and saw them lying asleep, embraced, each with an arm about the other's neck, alike in beauty and grace and equal in goodliness. The Marid gazed long and fixedly upon them, marvelling at their beauty, and repeated the following verses:

Cleave fast to her thou lov'st and let the envious rail amain,
For calumny and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.
Lo, the Compassionate hath made no fairer thing to see
Than when one couch in its embrace enfoldeth lovers twain,
Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their own delight,
Whilst hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain.
If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true,
I rede thee cast the world away and with that one remain.
Lo, when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire,
But on cold iron smite the folk that chide at them in vain.
Thou that for loving censures the votaries of love,
Canst thou assain a heart diseased or heal a cankered brain?
O Lord, O Thou Compassionate, I prithee, ere we die,
Though only for a single day, unite us two again!

Then he turned to Maimouneh and Dehnesh and said to them, 'By Allah, if you will have the truth, they are equal in beauty and grace and perfection, nor is there any difference between them but that of sex. But I have another idea, and it is that we wake each of them in turn, without the other's knowledge, and whichever is more enamoured of the other shall be held the lesser in beauty and grace.' 'This is a good counsel,' answered Maimouneh, and Dehnesh said, 'I consent to this.' Then Dehnesh changed himself to a flea and bit Kemerezzeman on the neck, whereupon the prince awoke with a start and rubbed the place of the bite, because of the smart. Then turning sideways, he found lying by him something, whose breath was more fragrant than musk, and whose body was softer than cream. At this he marvelled greatly and sitting up, looked at this that lay beside him and saw it to be a young lady like the moon, as she were a splendid pearl, or a shining sun, five feet high, with a shape like the letter I, high-bosomed and rosy-checked; even as saith of her the poet:

Four things there are, which ne'er unite, except it be
To shed my heart's best blood and take my soul by storm.
And these are night-black locks and brow as bright as day,
Cheeks ruddy as the rose and straight and slender form.

And also quoth another:

She shineth forth, a moon, and bends, a willow-wand,
And breathes, pure ambergris, and gazes, a gazelle.
It seems as if grief loved my heart and when from her
Estrangement I endure, possession to it fell.

She was clad in a shift of Venetian silk, without drawers, and wore on her head a kerchief embroidered with gold and jewels; her ears were hung with earrings, that shone like stars, and round her neck was a collar of great pearls, past the competence of any king. When he saw this, his reason was confounded and natural heat began to stir in him; God awoke in him the desire of coition and he said, 'What God wills, shall be, and what He will not, shall not be!' So saying, he put out his hand and turning her over, loosed the collar of her shift, laying bare her bosom, with its breasts like globes of ivory; whereat his inclination for her redoubled and he desired her with an exceeding desire. Then he shook her and moved her, essaying to waken her and saying, 'O my beloved, awake and look on me; I am Kemerezzeman.' But she awoke not, neither moved her head, for Dehnesh made her sleep heavy. With this, he considered awhile and said to himself, 'If I guess aright, this is she to whom my father would have married me and I have refused these three years past; but, God willing, as soon as it is day, I will say to him, "Marry me to her that I may enjoy her," nor will I let half the day pass ere I possess her and take my fill of her beauty and grace.' Then he bent over Budour, to kiss her, whereat Maimouneh trembled and was confounded and Dehnesh was like to fly for joy. But, as Kemerezzeman was about to kiss her, he was ashamed before God and turned away his head, saying to his heart, 'Have patience.' Then he considered awhile and said, 'I will be patient, lest my father have brought this young lady and made her lie by my side, to try me with her, charging her not to be lightly awakened, whenas I would fain arouse her, and bidding her tell him all that I do to her. Belike, he is hidden somewhere whence he can see all I do with this young lady, himself unseen; and to-morrow he will flout me and say, "How comes it that thou feignest to have no mind to marry and yet didst kiss and clip yonder damsel?" So I will forbear her, lest I be shamed before my father; and it were well that I look not on her nor touch her at this present, except to take from her somewhat to serve as a sign of remembrance and a token between us.' Then he lifted her hand and took from her little finger a ring worth much money, for that its beazel was of precious jewels and around it were graven the following verses:

Think not that I have forgotten thy sometime promises,
Though long thou hast protracted thy cruelty, ywis.
Be generous, O my master, vouchsafe me of thy grace,
So it to me be given thy lips and cheeks to kiss.
Never, by Allah, never will I abandon thee,
Though thou transgress thy limits in love and go amiss!

Then he put the ring on his own little finger, and turning his back to her, went to sleep. When Maimouneh saw this, she was glad and said, 'Saw ye how my beloved Kemerezzeman forbore this young lady? Verily, this was of the perfection of his excellences; for see how he looked on her and noted her beauty and grace, yet clipped her not neither kissed her nor put his hand to her, but turned his back to her and slept.' 'It is well,' answered they; 'we saw how perfectly he bore himself.' Then Maimouneh changed herself into a flea and entering Budour's clothes, crept up her leg and bit her four finger-breadths below the navel; whereupon she opened her eyes and sitting up in bed, saw a youth lying beside her and breathing heavily in his sleep, the loveliest of God's creatures, with eyes that put to shame the fair maids of Paradise,

mouth like Solomon's seal, whose water was sweeter to the taste and more efficacious than triacle, lips the colour of coral and cheeks like blood-red anemones, even as saith one, describing him:

From Zeyneb and Newar my mind is drawn away
By the rose of a cheek, whereo'er a whisker's myrtles stray.
I'm fallen in love with a fawn, a youngling tunic-clad,
And joy no more in love of bracelet-wearing may.
My mate in banquet-hall and closet's all unlike
To her with whom within my harem's close I play:
O thou that blames me, because I flee from
Hind And Zeyneb, my excuse is clear as break of day.
Would'st have me be a slave, the bondsman of a slave,
One cloistered and confined behind a wall alway?

When the princess saw him, a transport of passion and longing seized her and she said to herself, 'Alas my shame! This is a strange youth and I know him not. How comes he lying in one bed with me?' Then she looked at him again and noting his beauty and grace, said, 'By Allah, he is a comely youth and my heart is well-nigh torn in sunder with longing for him. But alas, how am I shamed by him! By Allah, had I known it was he who sought my hand of my father, I had not rejected him, but had married him and enjoyed his loveliness!' Then she gazed in his face and said, 'O my lord and light of mine eyes, awake from sleep and enjoy my beauty and grace.' And she moved him with her hand; but Maimouneh let down sleep upon him (as it were a curtain) and pressed on his head with her wings, so that he awoke not. The princess went on to shake him and say, 'My life on thee, give ear unto me! Awake and look on the narcissus and the tender green and enjoy my body and my secret charms and dally with me and touzle me from now till break of day! I conjure thee by Allah, O my lord, sit up and lean against the pillow and sleep not!' Still he made her no answer, but breathed heavily in his sleep. 'Alas! Alas!' continued she. 'Thou art proud in thy beauty and grace and lovely looks! But if thou art handsome, so am I; what then is this thou dost? Have they lessoned thee to flout me or has the wretched old man, my father, made thee swear not to speak to me to-night?' But he opened not his mouth neither awoke, whereat her passion redoubled and God inflamed her heart with love of him. She stole one glance at him that cost her a thousand sighs: her heart fluttered and her entrails yearned and she exclaimed, 'Speak to me, O my lord! O my friend, my beloved, answer me and tell me thy name, for indeed thou hast ravished my wit!' Still he abode drowned in sleep and answered her not a word, and she sighed and said, 'Alas! Alas! why art thou so self-satisfied?' Then she shook him and turning his hand over, saw her ring on his little finger, whereat she cried out and said, with a sigh of passion, 'Alack! Alack! By Allah, thou art my beloved and lovest me! Yet meseems thou turnest away from me out of coquetry, for all thou camest to me whilst I was asleep and knew not what thou didst, and tookest my ring. But I will not pull it off thy finger.' So saying, she opened the bosom of his shirt and kissed him and put her hand to him, seeking somewhat that she might take as a token, but found nothing. Then she put her hand into his breast, and for the smoothness of his body, it slipped down to his navel and thence to his yard, whereupon her heart ached and her entrails quivered and desire was

sore upon her, for that women's lust is fiercer than that of men, and she was confounded. Then she took his ring from his finger and put it on her own and kissed his mouth and hands, nor did she leave any part of him unkissed; after which she took him to her breast and laying one of her hands under his neck and the other under his armpit, fell asleep by his side. Then said Maimouneh to Dehnesh, 'O accursed one, sawst thou how prudishly and coquettishly my beloved bore himself and what ardour of passion thy mistress showed to him? There can be no doubt that my beloved is handsomer than thine; nevertheless I pardon thee.' Then she wrote him a patent of manumission and said to Keshkesh, 'Help Dehnesh to take up his mistress and carry her back to her own place, for the night wanes apace and there is but little left of it.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Keshkesh. So the two Afrits lifted up the Princess Budour and flying away with her, carried her back to her own place and laid her on her bed, whilst Maimouneh abode alone with Kemerezzeman, gazing upon him as he slept, till the night was all but spent, when she went her way.

At break of day, the prince awoke from sleep and turned right and left, but found not the young lady by him and said in himself, 'What is this? It would seem as if my father would fain incline me to marriage with the young lady, that was with me, and have now taken her away by stealth, to the intent that my desire for marriage may redouble.' Then he called out to the eunuch who slept at the door, saying, 'Out on thee, O accursed one, arise forthright!' So the eunuch arose, dazed with sleep, and brought him basin and ewer, whereupon Kemerezzeman entered the draught-house and did his need; then, coming out, made his ablutions and prayed the morning-prayer, after which he sat telling his beads. Then he looked up, and seeing the eunuch standing waiting upon him, said to him, 'Out on thee, O Sewab! Who was it came hither and took away the young lady from beside me, whilst I slept?' 'O my lord, what young lady?' asked the eunuch. 'She that lay with me last night,' replied Kemerezzeman. The eunuch was troubled at his words and said to him, 'By Allah, there has been with thee neither young lady nor other! How should she have come in to thee, when the door was locked and I asleep before it? By Allah, O my lord, neither man nor woman has come in to thee!' 'Thou liest, O pestilent slave!' exclaimed the prince. 'Dost thou also presume to hoodwink me and wilt thou not tell me what is come of the young lady who lay with me last night and who took her away?' The eunuch was affrighted at him and answered, 'By Allah, O my lord, I have seen neither girl nor boy!' His words only angered Kemerezzeman and he said to him, 'O accursed one, my father hath taught thee deceit! Come hither.' So the eunuch came up to him, and the prince seized him by the collar and threw him to the ground. He let fly a crack of wind, and Kemerezzeman, kneeling upon him, kicked him and throttled him, till he fainted away. Then he tied him to the well-rope, and lowering him into the well, plunged him into the water, then drew him up and plunged him in again. Now it was hard winter weather, and Kemerezzeman ceased not to lower the eunuch into the water and pull him up again, whilst he screamed and called for help. Quoth the prince, 'By Allah, O accursed one, I will not draw thee up out of the well, till thou tell me the story of the young lady and who it was took her away, whilst I slept.' 'O my lord,' answered the eunuch, seeing death staring him in the face, 'let me go and I will tell thee the truth.' So Kemerezzeman pulled him up out of the well, all but dead for cold and wet and torture and beating and fear of drowning. His teeth chattered and he shook like the reed in the hurricane

and his clothes were drenched and his body befouled and torn by the rough slimy sides of the well. When Kemerezzeman saw him in this sorry plight, he relented towards him; and as soon as the eunuch found himself on dry land, he said to him, 'O my lord, let me go and put off my clothes and wring them out and spread them in the sun to dry and don others; after which I will return to thee forthwith and tell thee the truth of the matter.' 'O wretched slave,' answered the prince, 'hadst thou not seen death face to face, thou hadst never confessed; but go now and do thy will, and after return speedily and tell me the truth.' So the eunuch went out, hardly crediting his escape, and gave not over running and stumbling, in his haste, till he came in to King Shehriman, whom he found sitting talking with his Vizier of Kemerezzeman's case and saying, 'I slept not last night, for anxiety concerning my son Kemerezzeman, and indeed I fear lest some harm befall him in that old tower. What good was there in imprisoning him?' 'Have no care for him,' answered the Vizier. 'By Allah, no hurt will befall him! Leave him in prison for a month, till his humour yield and his spirit be broken and he return to his senses.' As he spoke, in came the eunuch, in the aforesaid plight, and said to the King, who was troubled at sight of him, 'O our lord the Sultan, thy son's wits are fled and he has gone mad; he has dealt with me thus and thus, so that I am become as thou seest, and says, "A young lady lay with me this night and stole away whilst I slept. Where is she?" And insists on my telling him where she is and who took her away. But I have seen neither girl nor boy; the door was locked all night, for I slept before it, with the key under my head, and opened to him in the morning with my own hand.' When the King heard this, he cried out, saying, 'Alas, my son!' And he was sore enraged against the Vizier, who had been the cause of all this, and said to him, 'Go, bring me news of my son and see what hath befallen his wit.' So the Vizier rose and hastened with the slave to the tower, tumbling over his skirts, in his fear of the King's anger. The sun had now risen and when he came in to Kemerezzeman, he found him sitting on the couch, reading the Koran; so he saluted him and sitting down by his side, said to him, 'O my lord, this wretched slave brought us news that disquieted and alarmed us and incensed the King.' 'And what,' asked Kemerezzeman, 'hath he told you of me, to trouble my father? In good sooth, he hath troubled none but me.' 'He came to us in a sorry plight,' answered the Vizier, 'and told us of thee a thing which God forfend and a lie which it befits not to repeat, may God preserve thy youth and sound wit and eloquent tongue and forbid aught of foul to come from thee!' 'O Vizier,' said the prince, 'what did this pestilent slave say of me?' 'He told us,' replied the Vizier, 'thou hadst taken leave of thy wits and would have it that a young lady lay with thee last night and wast instant with him to tell thee whither she had gone and didst torture him to that end.' When Kemerezzeman heard this, he was sore enraged and said to the Vizier, 'It is manifest to me that you taught the eunuch to do as he did and forbade him to tell me what became of the young lady. But thou, O Vizier, art more reasonable than the eunuch; so do thou tell me forthright whither went the young lady that lay in my bosom last night; for it was you who sent her and bade her sleep in my arms, and we lay together till day; but when I awoke, I found her not. So where is she now?' 'O my lord Kemerezzeman,' said the Vizier, 'the name of God encompass thee! By Allah, we sent none to thee last night, but thou layest alone, with the door locked on thee and the eunuch sleeping before it, nor did there come to thee a young lady or any other. Stablish thy reason, O my lord, and return to thy senses and occupy thy mind no

longer [with vain imaginations].' 'O Vizier,' rejoined Kemerezzeman, incensed at his words, 'the young lady in question is my beloved, the fair one with the black eyes and red cheeks, whom I held in my arms all last night.' The Vizier wondered at his words and said to him, 'Didst thou see this damsel with thine eyes and on wake, or in sleep?' 'O wretched old man,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'thinkest thou I saw her with my ears? Indeed, I saw her with my very eyes and on wake and touched her with my hand and watched by her half the night, gazing my fill on her beauty and grace and elegance and lovely looks. But thou hadst schooled her and charged her to speak no word to me; so she feigned sleep and I lay by her side till morning, when I awoke and found her gone.' 'O my lord Kemerezzeman,' rejoined the Vizier, 'surely thou sawest this in thy sleep; it must have been a delusion of dreams or a hallucination caused by eating various kinds of food or a suggestion of the accursed devils.' 'O pestilent old man,' cried the prince, 'wilt thou too make a mock of me and tell me this was an illusion of dreams, when this eunuch confessed to the young lady, saying, "I will return to thee forthwith and tell thee all about her?"' So saying, he sprang up and laying hold of the Vizier's long beard, twisted his hand in it and tugging him off the couch, threw him on the floor. It seemed to the Vizier as though his soul departed his body for the violent plucking at his beard, and Kemerezzeman fell to kicking him and pummelling his breast and sides and cuffing him on the nape, till he had well-nigh made an end of him. Then said the Vizier in himself, 'I must save myself from this madman by telling him a lie, even as did the eunuch; else he will kill me, for he is mad beyond a doubt.' So he said to Kemerezzeman, 'O my lord, bear me not malice, for indeed thy father charged me to conceal from thee this affair of the young lady; but now I am weak and weary and sore with beating; for I am an old man and lack strength to endure blows. So have a little patience with me and I will tell thee all.' When the prince heard this, he left beating him and said, 'Why couldst thou not tell me without blows and humiliation? Rise now, unlucky old man that thou art, and tell me her story.' Quoth the Vizier, 'Dost thou ask of the young lady with the fair face and perfect shape?' 'Yes,' answered Kemerezzeman. 'Tell me who it was laid her by my side and took her away by night, and let me know whither she is gone, that I may go to her. If my father did this to try me, with a view to our marriage, I consent to marry her and be quit of this trouble; for he only dealt thus with me, because I refused to marry. I say again, I consent to marry: so tell this to my father, O Vizier, and advise him to marry me to her, for I will have none other and my heart loveth her alone. Go now to my father and counsel him to hasten our marriage and bring me his answer forthright.' 'It is well,' rejoined the Vizier, and went out from him, hardly crediting his escape. Then he set off running and stumbling as he went, for excess of affright and agitation, till he came in to the King, who said to him, 'O Vizier, what has befallen thee and who has maltreated thee and how comes it that I see thee thus confounded and terrified?' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'I bring thee news.' 'What is it?' asked Shehriman, and the Vizier said, 'Know that thy son Kemerezzeman's wits are gone and that madness hath betided him.' When the King heard this, the light in his face became darkness and he said, 'Expound to me the nature of my son's madness.' 'O my lord,' answered the Vizier, 'I hear and obey.' Then he told him all that had passed and the King said to him, 'O most ill-omened of Viziers and filthiest of Amirs, know that the reward I will give thee in return for this thy news of my son's madness shall be the cutting off of thy bead and the forfeiture of thy goods; for thou

hast caused my son's disorder by the wicked and sinister counsel thou hast given me first and last. By Allah, if aught of mischief or madness have befallen him, I will nail thee upon the dome [of the palace] and make thee taste the bitterness of death!' Then rising, he betook himself with the Vizier to the tower, and when Kemerezzeman saw him, he came down to him in haste from the couch on which he sat and kissing his hands, drew back and stood before him awhile, with his eyes cast down and his hands clasped behind him. Then he raised his head and repeated the following verses, whilst the tears streamed down his cheeks:

If I have borne myself blameworthily to you
Or if I've made default in that which is your due,
I do repent my fault; so let your clemency
Th' offender comprehend, who doth for pardon sue.

When the King heard this, he embraced his son and kissing him between the eyes, made him sit by his side on the couch; then turned to the Vizier and looking on him with angry eyes, said to him, 'O dog of a Vizier, why didst thou tell me that my son was mad and make my heart quake for him?' Then he turned to the prince and said to him, 'O my son, what is to-day called?' 'O my father,' answered he, 'to-day is Saturday and to-morrow Sunday: then come Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.' 'O my son, O Kemerezzeman,' exclaimed the King, 'praised be God for the preservation of thy reason! What is this present month called in Arabic?'

'Dhoulcaadeh,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'and it is followed by Dhoulhejjeh; then comes Muherrem, then Sefer, then Rebia the First and Rebia the Second, the two Jumadas, Rejeb, Shaaban, Ramazan and Shewwal.' At this the King rejoiced exceedingly and spat in the Vizier's face, saying, 'O wicked old man, how canst thou pretend that my son is mad? None is mad but thou.' The Vizier shook his head and would have spoken, but bethought himself to wait awhile and see what befell. Then the King said to Kemerezzeman, 'O my son, what is this thou sayest to the eunuch and the Vizier of a fair damsel that lay with thee last night? What damsel is this of whom thou speakest?' Kemerezzeman laughed at his father's words and replied, 'O my father, I can bear no more jesting; so mock me not with another word, for my humour is soured by that you have done with me. Let it suffice thee to know that I consent to marry, but on condition that thou give me to wife her with whom I lay yesternight; for I am assured that it was thou sentest her to me and madest me in love with her, then tookest her away from beside me before the dawn.' 'O my son,' rejoined the King, 'the name of God encompass thee and preserve thy wit from madness! What young lady is this of whom thou talkest? By Allah, O my son, I know nothing of the affair, and I conjure thee, tell me if it be a delusion of sleep or a hallucination caused by food? Doubtless, thou layest down to sleep last night, with thy mind occupied with marriage and troubled with the thought of it (may God curse marriage and the hour in which it occurred to me and him who counselled it!) and dreamtest that a handsome young lady embraced thee and didst fancy thou sawst her on wake; but all this, O my son, is but an illusion of dreams.' 'Leave this talk,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'and swear to me by God, the All-wise Creator, the Humbler of the mighty and the Destroyer of the Chosroës, that thou knowest nothing of the young lady nor of her abiding-place.' 'By the virtue of the Most High God,' said the King, 'the God of Moses and Abraham, I

know nothing of all this and it is assuredly but an illusion of dreams that thou hast seen in sleep.' Quoth the prince, 'I will give thee a proof that it was not a dream. Come, let me put a case to thee: did it ever happen to any to dream that he was fighting a sore battle and after to awake and find in his hand a sword besmeared with blood?' 'No, by Allah, O my son,' answered the King, 'this hath never been.' 'I will tell thee what happened to me,' rejoined Kemerezzeman. 'Meseemed I awoke from sleep in the middle of the past night and found a young lady lying by my side, whose shape and favour were as mine. I embraced her and turned her about with my hand and took her ring, which I put on my finger, and she pulled off my ring and put it on her finger. Then I went to sleep by her side, but refrained from her and was ashamed to kiss her on the mouth, deeming that thou hadst sent her to me, with intent to tempt me with her and incline me to marriage, and misdoubting thee to be hidden somewhere whence thou couldst see what I did with her. At point of day, I awoke and found no trace of her, nor could I come at any news of her, and there befell me what thou knowest of with the eunuch and the Vizier. How then can this have been a dream and a delusion, seeing that the ring is a reality? I should indeed have deemed it a dream but for her ring on my finger. Here it is: look at it, O King, and see what is its worth.' So saying, he handed the ring to his father, who examined it and turned it over, then said to his son, 'Verily, there hangs some mighty mystery by this ring and some strange secret. What befell thee last night is indeed a mysterious affair and I know not how this intruder came in upon us. None is the cause of all this trouble save the Vizier; but I conjure thee, O my son, to take patience, so haply God may do away this affliction from thee and bring thee complete relief: as quoth one of the poets:

It may be Fate at last shall draw its bridle-rein
And bring us happy chance; for Fortune changes still;
And things shall happen yet, despite the things fordone,
To further forth my hopes and bring me to my will.

And now, O my son,' added he, 'I am certified that thou art not mad; but thy case is a strange one, none can unravel it for thee but God the Most High.' 'By Allah, O my father,' cried the prince, 'deal kindly with me and seek out this damsel and hasten her coming to me; else I shall die of grief.' And he repeated the following verses, in a voice that betrayed the ardour of his passion:

An if thy very promise of union prove untrue,
Let but in sleep thy favours the longing lover cheer.
"How can the phantom visit a lover's eyes," quoth they,
"From which the grace of slumber is banned and banished sheer?"

And he sighed and wept and groaned aloud from a wounded heart, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes. Then turning to his father, with submission and despondency, he said to him, 'By Allah, O my father, I cannot endure to be parted from her even for an hour.' The King smote hand upon hand and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God, the Most High, the Sublime! There is no device can profit us in this affair!' Then he took his son by the hand and carried him to the palace, where Kemerezzeman lay down on the bed of languor and the King sat at his head, weeping and mourning over him and leaving him not night or day, till at last the

Vizier came in to him and said, 'O King of the age and the time, how long wilt thou remain shut up with thy son and deny thyself to thy troops? Verily, the order of thy realm is like to be deranged, by reason of thine absence from thy grandees and officers of state. It behoves the man of understanding, if he have various wounds in his body, to apply him (first) to heal the most dangerous; so it is my counsel to thee that thou transport the prince to the pavilion overlooking the sea and shut thyself up with him there, setting apart Monday and Thursday in every week for state receptions and the transaction of public business. On these days let thine Amirs and Viziers and Chamberlains and deputies and captains and grandees and the rest of the troops and subjects have access to thee and submit their affairs to thee, and do thou their needs and judge between them and give and take with them and command and forbid. The rest of the week thou shalt pass with thy son Kemerezzeman, and thus do till God vouchsafe you both relief. Think not, O King, that thou art exempt from the shifts of fortune and the strokes of calamity; for the wise man is still on his guard, as well saith the poet:

Thou madest fair thy thought of Fate, whenas the days were fair,
And fearedst not the unknown ills that they to thee might bring.
The nights were fair and calm to thee; thou wast deceived by them,
For in the peace of night is born full many a troublous thing.
O all ye children of mankind, to whom the Fates are kind,
Let caution ever have a part in all your reckoning.'

The King was struck with the Vizier's words and deemed his counsel wise and timely, fearing lest the order of the state be deranged; so he rose at once and bade carry his son to the pavilion in question, which was built (upon a rock) midmost the water and was approached by a causeway, twenty cubits wide. It had windows on all sides, overlooking the sea; its floor was of variegated marble and its roof was painted in the richest colours and decorated with gold and lapis-lazuli. They furnished it for Kemerezzeman with embroidered rugs and carpets of the richest silk and hung the walls with choice brocades and curtains bespangled with jewels. In the midst they set him a couch of juniper-wood, inlaid with pearls and jewels, and he sat down thereon, like a man that had been sick twenty years; for the excess of his concern and passion for the young lady had wasted his charms and emaciated his body, and he could neither eat nor drink nor sleep. His father seated himself at his head, mourning sore for him, and every Monday and Thursday he gave his Viziers and Amirs and grandees and officers and the rest of his subjects leave to come in to him in the pavilion. So they entered and did their several service and abode with him till the end of the day, when they went their ways and he returned to his son, whom he left not night nor day; and on this wise did he many days and nights.

To return to the Princess Budour. When the two Afrits carried her back to her palace and laid her on her bed, she slept on till daybreak, when she awoke and sitting up, looked right and left, but saw not the youth who had lain in her bosom. At this, her heart was troubled, her reason fled and she gave a great cry, whereupon all her damsels and nurses and serving-women awoke and came in to her; and the chief of them said to her, 'What ails thee, O my lady?' 'O wretched old woman,' answered the princess, 'where is my beloved, the handsome youth that lay last night in my bosom?

Tell me where he is gone.' When the old woman heard this, the light in her eyes became darkness and she was sore in fear of her mischief and said to her, 'O my lady Budour, what unseemly words are these?' 'Out on thee, pestilent crone that thou art!' cried the princess. 'Where is my beloved, the goodly youth with the shining face and the slender shape, the black eyes and the joined eyebrows, who lay with me last night from dusk until near daybreak?' 'By Allah, O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'I have seen no young man nor any other; but I conjure thee, leave this unseemly jesting, lest we be all undone. Belike, it may come to thy father's ears and who shall deliver us from his hand?' 'I tell thee,' rejoined Budour, 'there lay a youth with me last night, one of the fairest-faced of men.' 'God preserve thy reason!' exclaimed the nurse. 'Indeed, no one lay with thee last night.' The princess looked at her hand and seeing her own ring gone and Kemerezzeman's ring on her finger in its stead, said to the nurse, 'Out on thee, thou accursed traitress, wilt thou lie to me and tell me that none lay with me last night and forswear thyself to me?' 'By Allah,' replied the nurse, 'I do not lie to thee nor have I sworn falsely!' Her words incensed the princess and drawing a sword she had by her, she smote the old woman with it and slew her; whereupon the eunuch and the waiting-women cried out at her and running to her father, acquainted him with her case. So he went to her forthright and said to her, 'O my daughter, what ails thee?' 'O my father,' answered she, 'where is the young man that lay with me last night?' Then her reason left her and she cast her eyes right and left and rent her dress even to the skirt. When the King saw this, he bade the women lay hands on her; so they seized and bound her, then putting a chain of iron about her neck, made her fast to the window and there left her. As for her father, the world was straitened upon him, when he saw what had befallen her, for that he loved her and her case was not a little thing to him. So he summoned the doctors and astrologers and magicians and said to them, 'Whoso cureth my daughter of her disorder, I will marry him to her and give him half my kingdom; but whoso cometh to her and cureth her not, I will strike off his head and hang it over her palace-gate.' Accordingly, all who went in to her, but failed to cure her, he beheaded and hung their heads over her palace-gate, till he had beheaded forty physicians and crucified as many astrologers on her account; wherefore all the folk held aloof from her, for all the physicians failed to cure her malady and her case was a puzzle to the men of science and the magicians. And as her longing and passion redoubled and love and distraction were sore upon her, she poured forth tears and repeated the following verses:

My longing after thee, my moon, my foeman is;
The thought of thee by night doth comrade with me dwell.
I pass the darksome hours, and in my bosom flames
A fire, for heat that's like the very fire of hell.
I'm smitten with excess of ardour and desire;
By which my pain is grown an anguish fierce and fell.

Then she sighed and repeated these also:

My peace on the belovéd ones, where'er they light them down!
I weary for the neighbourhood of those I love, full sore.
My salutation unto you, – not that of taking leave,
But greetings of abundant peace, increasing evermore!

For, of a truth, I love you dear and love your land no less; But
woe is me! I'm far away from that I weary for.

Then she wept till her eyes grew weak and her cheeks pale and withered: and thus she abode three years. Now she had a foster-brother, by name Merzewan, who was absent from her all this time, travelling in far countries. He loved her with an exceeding love, passing that of brothers; so when he came back, he went in to his mother and asked for his foster-sister the princess Budour. 'Alas, my son,' answered she, 'thy sister has been smitten with madness and has passed these three years, with an iron chain about her neck; and all the physicians and men of science have failed of curing her.' When he heard this, he said, 'I must needs go in to her; peradventure I may discover what ails her, and be able to cure her.' 'So be it,' replied his mother; 'but wait till to-morrow, that I may make shift for thee.' Then she went to the princess's palace and accosting the eunuch in charge of the door, made him a present and said to him, 'I have a married daughter, who was brought up with thy mistress and is sore concerned for what has befallen her, and I desire of thy favour that my daughter may go in to her and look on her awhile, then return whence she came, and none shall know it.' 'This may not be, except by night,' replied the eunuch, 'after the King has visited the princess and gone away; then come thou and thy daughter.' She kissed the eunuch's hand and returning home, waited till the morrow at nightfall, when she dressed her son in woman's apparel and taking him by the hand, carried him to the palace. When the eunuch saw her, he said, 'Enter, but do not tarry long.' So they went in and when Merzewan saw the princess in the aforesaid plight, he saluted her, after his mother had taken off his woman's attire: then pulling out the books he had brought with him and lighting a candle, he began to recite certain conjurations. The princess looked at him and knowing him, said to him, 'O my brother, thou hast been absent on thy travels and we have been cut off from news of thee.' 'True,' answered he; 'but God has brought me back in safety and I am now minded to set out again; nor has aught delayed me but the sad news I hear of thee; wherefore my heart ached for thee and I came to thee, so haply I may rid thee of thy malady.' 'O my brother,' rejoined she, 'thinkest thou it is madness ails me?' 'Yes,' answered he, and she said, 'Not so, by Allah! It is even as says the poet:

Quoth they, "Thou'rt surely mad for him thou lov'st;" and
I replied, "Indeed the sweets of life belong unto the raving race.
Lo, those who love have not, for that, the upper hand of fate;
Only the madman 'tis, I trow, o'ercometh time and space.
Yes, I am mad; so bring me him for whom ye say I'm mad;
And if he heal my madness, spare to blame me for my case."'

Then she told him that she was in love, and he said, 'Tell me thy story and what befell thee: peradventure God may discover to me a means of deliverance for thee.' 'Know then,' said she, 'that one night I awoke from sleep, in the last watch of the night, and sitting up, saw by my side the handsomest of youths, as he were a willow-wand or an Indian cane, the tongue fails to describe him. Me-thought this was my father's doing to try me, for that he had consulted me, when the kings sought me of him in marriage, and I had refused. It was this idea that withheld me from arousing him, for I thought that if I did aught or embraced him, he would most like tell my

father. When I awoke in the morning, I found his ring on my finger in place of my own, which he had taken; and, O my brother, my heart was taken with him at first sight; and for the violence of my passion and longing, I have never since known the taste of sleep and have no occupation save weeping and repeating verses night and day. This, then, O my brother, is the story of the cause of my (pretended) madness.' Then she poured forth tears and repeated the following verses:

Love has banished afar my delight; they are fled
With a fawn that hath hearts for a pasturing-stead.
To him lovers' blood is a trifle, for whom
My soul is a-wasting for passion and dread.
I'm jealous for him of my sight and my thought;
My heart is a spy on my eyes and my head.
His eyelashes dart at us death-dealing shafts;
The hearts that they light on are ruined and dead.
Whilst yet there is left me a share in the world,
Shall I see him, I wonder, or ever I'm sped?
I fain would conceal what I suffer for him;
'Tis shown to the spy by the tears that I shed.
When near, his enjoyment is distant from me:
But his image is near, when afar he doth tread.

'See then, O my brother,' added she, 'how thou mayest aid me in this my affliction.' Merzewan bowed his head awhile, marvelling and knowing not what to do, then raised it and said to her, 'I believe all thou hast said to be true, though the case of the young man passes my imagination: but I will go round about all countries and seek for what may heal thee; peradventure God shall appoint thy deliverance to be at my hand. Meanwhile, take patience and be not disquieted.' So saying, he took leave of her, after he had prayed that she might be vouchsafed constancy, and left her repeating the following verses:

Thine image in my thoughts fares as a pilgrim aye,
For all thy stead and mine are distant many a day.
The wishes of my heart do bring thee near to me
For 'gainst the speed of thought what is the levin's ray?
Depart thou not, that art the lustre of mine eyes;
Yea, when thou'rt far removed, all void of light are they.

He returned to his mother's house, where he passed the night, and on the morrow, after furnishing himself for his journey, he set out and travelled from city to city and from island to island for a whole month. Everywhere he heard talk of the princess Budour's madness, till he came to a city named Teyreb and seeking news of the townsfolk, so haply he might light on a cure for his foster-sister's malady, heard that Kemerezzeman, son of King Shehriman, was fallen sick and afflicted with melancholy madness. He enquired the name of this prince's capital and was told that it stood on the Islands of Khalidan and was distant thence a whole month's journey by sea and six by land. So he took passage in a ship that was bound thither, and they sailed with a favouring breeze for a whole month, till they came in sight of the city and there

remained for them but to enter the harbour; when there came out on them a tempestuous wind which carried away the masts and rent the canvas, so that the sails fell into the sea and the ship foundered, with all on board. Each looked to himself, and as for Merzewan, the current carried him under the King's palace, wherein was Kemerezzeman. As fate would have it, it was the day on which the King gave audience to his grandees and officers, and he was sitting, with his son's head in his lap, whilst an eunuch whisked away the flies. The prince had not spoken, neither had he eaten nor drunk for two days, and he was grown thinner than a spindle. Now the Vizier was standing near the window giving on the sea and raising his eyes, saw Merzewan at the last gasp for struggling with the waves; whereupon his heart was moved to pity for him and he drew near to the King and said to him, 'O King, I crave thy leave to go down to the court of the pavilion and open the water-gate, that I may rescue a man who is at the point of drowning in the sea and bring him forth of peril into deliverance; peradventure, on this account, God may ease thy son of his affliction.' 'O Vizier,' replied Shehriman, enough is that which has befallen my son through thee and on thine account. Belike, if thou rescue this drowning man, he will look on my son and come to know our affairs and exult over me; but I swear by Allah, that, if he come hither and see my son and after go out and speak of our secrets to any, I will assuredly strike off thy head before his; for thou art the cause of all that hath befallen us, first and last. Now do as thou wilt.' The Vizier rose and opening the postern, descended to the causeway; then walked on twenty steps and came to the sea, where he saw Merzewan nigh unto death. So he put out his hand to him and catching him by the hair of his head, drew him ashore, in a state of unconsciousness, with belly full of water and eyes starting from his head. The Vizier waited till he came to himself, when he pulled off his wet clothes and clad him in a fresh suit, covering his head with one of his servants' turbans; after which he said to him, 'I have been the means of saving thee from drowning: do not thou requite me by causing my death and thine own.' 'How so?' asked Merzewan; and the Vizier answered, 'Thou art now about to go up and pass among Amirs and Viziers, all silent and speaking not, because of Kemerezzeman, the King's son.' When Merzewan heard the name of Kemerezzeman, he knew that this was he of whom he came in search, but he feigned ignorance and said to the Vizier, 'And who is Kemerezzeman?' Quoth the Vizier, 'He is the King's son and lies sick on his couch, restless, eating not nor drinking neither sleeping night nor day; indeed he is nigh upon death and we have lost hope of his recovery. Beware lest thou look too long on him or on any place other than that where thou settest thy feet: else thou art a lost man and I also.' 'O Vizier,' said Merzewan, 'I conjure thee by Allah, tell me of thy favour, the cause of this youth's malady.' 'I know none,' answered the Vizier, 'save that, three years ago, his father pressed him to marry, but he refused; whereat the King was wroth and imprisoned him. On the morrow, he would have it that he had had, for a bedfellow, the night before, a young lady of surpassing beauty, beggaring description, with whom he had exchanged rings; but we know not the meaning of all this. So by Allah, O my son, when thou comest up into the palace, look not on the prince, but go thy way; for the King's heart is full of anger against me.' 'By Allah,' said Merzewan in himself, 'this is he whom I sought!' Then he followed the Vizier up to the palace, where the latter seated himself at the prince's feet; but Merzewan must needs go up to Kemerezzeman and stand before him, gazing on him. At this, the Vizier was like to die

of affright and signed to Merzewan to go his way; but he feigned not to see him and gave not over gazing upon Kemerezzeman, till he was assured that it was indeed he of whom he was in search. Then, 'Glory be to God,' cried he, 'who hath made his shape even as her shape and his complexion as her complexion and his cheek as her cheek!' At this Kemerezzeman opened his eyes and gave ear to his speech; and when Merzewan saw him listening, he repeated the following verses:

I see thee full of song and plaint and ecstasy amain,
And to the setting forth in words of charms I find thee fain.
Can it be love hath wounded thee or art thou shot with shafts?
For sure these fashions but belong unto a smitten swain.
Ho, pour me out full cups of wine and sing me eke, in praise Of
Tenam, Suleyma, Rebäb, a glad and lovesome strain!
Yea, let the grape-vine's sun go round, whose mansion is its jar,
Whose East the cupbearer and West my thirsty mouth I feign.
I'm jealous of the very clothes she dights upon her side,
For that upon her body soft and delicate they've lain;
And eke I'm envious of the cups that touch her dainty lips,
When to the kissing-place she sets them ever and again.
Think not that I in anywise with sword am done to death;
'Tis by the arrows of a glance, alack! that I am slain.
Whenas we met again, I found her fingers dyed with red,
As 'twere the juice of tragacanth had steeped them in its stain.
Said I to her, "Thou'st dyed thy palms, whilst I was far away.
This then is how the slave of love is 'quited for his pain."
Quoth she (and cast into my heart the flaming fires of love,
Speaking as one who hath no care love's secret to contain),
"No, by thy life, this is no dye I've used! So haste thou not
To heap accusings on my head and slander me in vain.
For, when I saw thee get thee gone upon our parting day,
My eyes, for very dreariment, with tears of blood did rain.
I wiped them with my hand, and so my fingers with my blood
Were all to-reddened and do yet their ruddy tint retain."
Had I for very passion wept, or e'er my mistress did,
I should, before repentance came, have solaced heart and brain;
But she before my weeping wept; her tears drew mine and so
Quoth I, "Unto the precedent the merit doth pertain."
Chide not at me for loving her, for by Love's self I swear,
My heart with anguish for her sake is well-nigh cleft in twain.
I weep for one whose face is decked by Beauty's self; there's none,
Arab or foreigner, to match with her, in hill or plain.
The lore of Locman hath my love and Mary's chastity, with
Joseph's loveliness to boot and David's songful vein;
Whilst Jacob's grief to me belongs and Jonah's dreariment,
Ay, and Job's torment and despite and Adam's plight of bane.

Slay ye her not, although I die for love of her, but ask,
How came it lawful unto her to shed my blood in vain.

When Kemerezzeman heard these verses, they brought refreshment and healing to his heart, and he sighed and turning his tongue in his mouth, said to the King, 'O my father, let this young man come and sit by my side.' The King, hearing these words from his son, rejoiced exceedingly, though at the first he had been wroth with Merzewan and thought in himself to have stricken off his head: but when he heard Kemerezzeman speak, his anger left him and he arose and drawing Merzewan to him, made him sit down by his son and said to him, 'Praised be God for thy safety!' 'May God bless thee,' answered Merzewan, 'and preserve thy son to thee!' Then said the King, 'From what country comest thou?' 'From the Islands of the Inland Sea,' replied he, 'the kingdom of King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the seas and the Seven Palaces.' Quoth the King, 'Maybe thy coming shall be blessed to my son and God vouchsafe to heal him of his malady.' 'God willing,' rejoined Merzewan, 'all shall yet be well.' Then turning to Kemerezzeman, he said to him in his ear, unheard of the King and his court, 'Be of good cheer, O my lord, and take heart and courage. As for her for whose sake thou art thus, ask not of her condition on thine account. Thou keptest thy secret and fellest sick, but she discovered hers and they said she was mad; and she is now in prison, with an iron chain about her neck, in most piteous case; but, God willing, the healing of both of you shall be at my hand.' When Kemerezzeman heard this, his life returned to him and he took heart and courage and signed to his father to help him sit up; at which the King was like to lose his reason for joy and lifting him up, set two pillows for him to lean upon. Then, of his fear for his son, he shook the handkerchief of dismissal and all the Amirs and Viziers withdrew; after which he bade perfume the palace with saffron and decorate the city, saying to Merzewan, 'By Allah, O my son, thou hast a lucky and a blessed aspect!' And he made much of him and called for food, which when they brought, Merzewan said to the prince, 'Come, eat with me.' So he obeyed him and ate with him, while the King called down blessings on Merzewan and said, 'How auspicious is thy coming, O my son!' When he saw Kemerezzeman eat, his joy redoubled and he went out and told the prince's mother and the people of the palace. Then he let call abroad the good news of the prince's recovery and proclaimed the decoration of the city: so the people rejoiced and decorated the city and it was a day of high festival. Merzewan passed the night with Kemerezzeman, and the King also slept with them, in the excess of his joy for his son's recovery. Next morning, when the King had gone away and the two young men were left alone, Kemerezzeman told Merzewan his story from first to last and the latter said to him, 'I know her with whom thou didst foregather; her name is the princess Budour and she is daughter to King Ghaïour.' Then he told him all that had befallen the princess and acquainted him with the excessive love she bore him, saying, 'All that befell thee with thy father hath befallen her with hers, and thou art without doubt her beloved, even as she is thine; so brace up thy resolution and take heart, for I will bring thee to her and unite you both anon and deal with you even as saith the poet:

Though to the lover adverse be the fair
And drive him with her rigours to despair,

Yet will I soon unite them, even as I
The pivot of a pair of scissors were.

And he went on to comfort and hearten Kemerezzeman and urged him to eat and drink, cheering him and diverting him with talk and song and stories, till he ate food and drank wine and life and strength returned to him. In good time he became free of his disorder and stood up and sought to go to the bath. So Merzewan took him by the hand and carried him to the bath, where they washed their bodies and made them clean. When his father heard of this, in his joy he freed the prisoners and gave alms to the poor; moreover he bestowed splendid dresses of honour upon his grandees and let decorate the city seven days. Then said Merzewan to Kemerezzeman, 'Know, O my lord, that the sole object of my journey hither was to deliver the princess Budour from her present strait; and it remains but for us to devise how we may get to her, since thy father cannot brook the thought of parting with thee. So it is my counsel that tomorrow thou ask his leave to go a-hunting, saying, "I have a mind to divert myself with hunting in the desert and to see the open country and pass the night there." Then do thou take with thee a pair of saddle-bags full of gold and mount a swift hackney and I will do the like; and we will take each a spare horse. Suffer not any servant to follow us, for as soon as we reach the open country, we will go our ways.' Kemerezzeman rejoiced mightily in this plan and said, 'It is good.' Then he took heart and going in to his father, sought his leave to go out to hunt, saying as Merzewan had taught him. The King consented and said, 'O my son, a thousandfold blessed be the day that restores thee to health! I will not gainsay thee in this; but pass not more than one night in the desert and return to me on the morrow; for thou knowest that life is not good to me without thee, and indeed I can hardly as yet credit thy recovery, because thou art to me as he of whom quoth the poet:

Though Solomon his carpet were mine both day and night,
Though the Choeroës' empire, yea, and the world were mine,
All were to me in value less than a midge's wing,
Except mine eyes still rested upon that face of thine.'

Then he equipped the prince and Merzewan for the excursion, bidding make them ready four horses, together with a dromedary to carry the money and a camel for the water and victuals; and Kemerezzeman forbade any of his attendants to follow him. His father bade him farewell and pressed him to his breast and kissed him, saying, 'I conjure thee by Allah, be not absent from me more than one night, wherein sleep will be denied me, for I am even as saith the poet:

Thy presence with me is my heaven of delight
And my hell of affliction the loss of thy sight.
My soul be thy ransom! If love be my crime
For thee, my offence, of a truth, is not light.
Doth passion blaze up in thy heart like to mine?
I suffer the torments of hell day and night.'

'O my father,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'God willing, I will lie but one night abroad.' Then he took leave of him, and he and Merzewan mounted and taking with them the dromedary and camel, rode out into the open country. They drew not bridle

from the first of the day till nightfall, when they halted and ate and drank and fed their beasts and rested awhile; after which they again took horse and fared on three days, till they came to a spacious wooded tract. Here they alighted and Merzewan, taking the camel and one of the horses, slaughtered them and cut the flesh off their bones. Then he took from Kemerezzeman his shirt and trousers and cassock and tearing them in shreds, smeared them with the horse's blood and cast them down in the fork of the road. Then they ate and drank and taking horse set forward again. 'O my brother,' said Kemerezzeman, 'what is this thou hast done and how will it profit us?' 'Know,' answered Merzewan, 'that thy father, when he finds that we have outstayed the night for which we had his leave, will mount and follow in our track till he comes hither; and when he sees the blood and thy clothes torn and bloodied, he will deem thee to have been slain of highway robbers or wild beasts; so he will give up hope of thee and return to his city, and by this devise we shall gain our end.' 'By Allah,' said Kemerezzeman, 'this is indeed a rare device! Thou hast done well.' Then they fared on days and nights and Kemerezzeman did nought but weep and complain, till they drew near their journey's end, when he rejoiced and repeated the following verses:

Wilt thou be harsh to a lover, who's never unmindful of thee,
And wilt thou now cast him away to whom thou wast fain heretofore?
May I forfeit the favour of God, if I ever was false to thy love!
Abandonment punish my crime, if I've broken the vows that I swore!
But no, I've committed no crime, that calleth for rigour from thee;
Or, if in good sooth I'm at fault, I bring thee repentance therefor.
Of the marvels of Fortune it is that thou shouldst abandon methus;
But Fortune to bring to the light fresh marvels will never give o'er.

When he had made an end of these verses, Merzewan said to him, 'See, yonder are King Ghaïour's Islands.' Whereat Kemerezzeman rejoiced with an exceeding joy and thanked him for what he had done and strained him to his bosom and kissed him between the eyes. They entered the city and took up their lodging at a khan, where they rested three days from the fatigues of the journey; after which Merzewan carried Kemerezzeman to the bath and clothing him in a merchant's habit, provided him with a geomantic tablet of gold, a set of astrological instruments and an astrolabe of silver, plated with gold. Then he said to him, 'Go, O my lord, stand before the King's palace and cry out, "I am the mathematician, I am the scribe, I am he that knows the Sought and the Seeker, I am the skilled physician, I am the accomplished astrologer. Where then is he that seeketh?" When the King hears this, he will send after thee and carry thee in to his daughter the princess Budour, thy mistress: but do thou say to him, "Grant me three days' delay, and if she recover, give her to me to wife, and if not, deal with me as with those who came before me." If he agree to this, as soon as thou art alone with her, discover thyself to her; and when she knows thee, her madness will cease from her and she will be made whole in one night. Then do thou give her to eat and drink, and her father, rejoicing in her recovery, will marry thee to her and share his kingdom with thee, according to the condition he hath imposed on himself: and so peace be on thee.' 'May I never lack thine excellence!' replied Kemerezzeman, and taking the instruments aforesaid, sallied forth of the khan and took up his station before King Ghaïour's palace, where he began to cry out, saying, 'I am the scribe, I am

the mathematician, he that knows the Sought and the Seeker, I am he who makes calculations for marriage contracts, who draws horoscopes, interprets dreams and traces the magical characters by which hidden treasures are discovered! Where then is the seeker?' When the people of the city heard this, they flocked to him, for it was long since they had seen a scribe or an astrologer, and stood round him, wondering at his beauty and grace and perfect symmetry. Presently one of them accosted him and said, 'God on thee, O fair youth with the eloquent tongue, cast not thyself into perdition, in thy desire to marry the princess Budour! Do but look on yonder heads hung up; they are all those of men who have lost their lives in this same venture.' He paid no heed to them, but cried out at the top of his voice, saying, 'I am the doctor, the scribe! I am the astrologer, the mathematician!' And all the townsfolk forbade him from this, but he heeded them not, saying in himself, 'None knoweth desire save he who suffereth it.' Then he began again to cry his loudest, saying, 'I am the scribe, I am the mathematician, I am the astrologer!' till all the townsfolk were wroth with him and said to him, 'Thou art but a silly self-willed boy! Have pity on thine own youth and tender years and beauty and grace.' But he cried all the more, 'I am the astrologer, I am the mathematician! Is there any one that seeketh?' As he was thus crying and the people remonstrating with him, King Ghaïour heard his voice and the clamour of the folk and said to his Vizier, 'Go down and bring me yon astrologer.' So the Vizier went down and taking Kemerezzeman from the midst of the crowd, carried him up to the King, before whom he kissed the earth, repeating the following verses:

Eight elements of high renown are all comprised in thee;
By them may Fortune never cease thy bounder slave to be!
Munificence and knowledge sure, glory and piety,
Fair fluent speech and eloquence and might and victory.

When the King saw him, he made him sit down by his side and said to him, 'By Allah, O my son, an thou be not an astrologer, venture not thy life nor submit thyself to my condition; for I have bound myself to strike off the head of whoso goeth in to my daughter and healeth her not of her disorder; but him who healeth her I will marry to her. So let not thy beauty and grace delude thee; for, by Allah, if thou cure her not, I will assuredly cut off thy head!' 'I knew of this condition before I came hither,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'and am ready to abide by it.' Then King Ghaïour took the Cadis to witness against him and delivered him to an eunuch, saying, 'Carry this fellow to the lady Budour.' So the eunuch took him by the hand and led him along the gallery; but Kemerezzeman out-went him and pushed on before, whilst the eunuch ran after him, saying, 'Out on thee! Hasten not to destroy thyself. By Allah, never yet saw I astrologer so eager for his own destruction: thou knowest not the calamities that await thee.' But Kemerezzeman turned away his face and repeated the following verses:

A learnéd man, I'm ignorant before thy beauties bright;
Indeed, I know not what I say, confounded at thy sight.
If I compare thee to the sun, thou passest not away,
Whilst the sun setteth from the sky and fails anon of light.
Perfect, indeed, thy beauties are; they stupefy the wise
Nor ev'n the eloquent avail to praise thy charms aright.

The eunuch stationed Kemerezzeman behind the curtain of the princess's door and the prince said to him, 'Whether of the two wilt thou liefer have me do, cure thy lady from here or go in and cure her within the curtain?' The eunuch marvelled at his words and answered, 'It were more to thine honour to cure her from here.' So Kemerezzeman sat down behind the curtain and taking out pen and inkhorn and paper, wrote the following: 'This is the letter of one whom passion torments and whom desire consumes and sorrow and misery destroy; one who despairs of life and looks for nothing but death, whose mourning heart has neither comforter nor helper, whose sleepless eyes have none to succour them against affliction, whose day is passed in fire and his night in torment, whose body is wasted for much emaciation and there comes to him no messenger from his beloved:

I write with a heart devoted to thee and the thought of thee
And an eyelid, wounded for weeping tears of the blood of me.
And a body that love and affliction and passion and long desire
Have clad with the garment of leanness and wasted utterly.
I plain me to thee of passion, for sore hath it baffled me
Nor is there a corner left me where patience yet may be.
Wherefore, have mercy, I prithee, show favour unto me,
For my heart, my heart is breaking for love and agony.

The cure of hearts is union with the beloved and whom his love maltreateth, God is his physician. If either of us have broken faith, may the false one fail of his desire! There is nought goodlier than a lover who is faithful to a cruel beloved one.' Then, for a subscription, he wrote, 'From the distracted and despairing lover, him whom love and longing disquiet, from the captive of passion and transport, Kemerezzeman, son of Shehriman, to the peerless beauty, the pearl of the fair Houris, the Lady Budour, daughter of King Ghaïour. Know that by night I am wakeful and by day distraught, consumed with ever-increasing wasting and sickness and longing and love, abounding in sighs, rich in floods of tears, the prisoner of passion, the slain of desire, the debtor of longing, the boon-companion of sickness, he whose heart absence hath seared. I am the sleepless one, whose eyes close not, the slave of love, whose tears run never dry, for the fire of my heart is still unquenched and the flaming of my longing is never hidden.' Then in the margin he wrote this admired verse:

Peace from the stores of the grace of my Lord be rife On her in whose hand are my heart and soul and life!

And also these:

Vouchsafe thy converse unto me some little, so, perchance,
Thou mayst have ruth on me or else my heart be set at ease.
Yea, for the transport of my love and longing after thee,
Of all I've suffered I make light and all my miseries.
God guard a folk whose dwelling-place is far removed from mine,
The secret of whose love I've kept in many lands and seas!
But fate, at last, hath turned on me a favourable face
And on my loved one's threshold-earth hath cast me on my knees.

Budour beside me in the bed I saw and straight my moon,
Lit by her sun, shone bright and blithe upon my destinies.

Then by way of subscription, he wrote the following verses:

Ask of my letter what my pen hath written, and the scroll
Will tell the passion and the pain that harbour in my soul.
My hand, what while my tears rain down, writes and desire makes moan
Unto the paper by the pen of all my weary dole.
My tears roll ever down my cheeks and overflow the page;
Nay, I'd ensue them with my blood, if they should cease to roll.

And at the end he added this other verse:

I send thee back herewith the ring I took whilere of thee, Whenas we companied; so send me that thou hadst of me.

Then he folded up Budour's ring inside the letter and sealing it, gave it to the eunuch, who went in with it to the princess. She took it from him and opening it, found in it her own ring. Then she read the letter and when she understood its purport and knew that her beloved stood behind the curtain, her reason fled and her breast dilated for joy; and she repeated the following verses:

Long, long have I bewailed the sev'rance of our loves,
With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain,
And vowed that, if the days should reunite us two,
My lips should never speak of severance again.
Joy hath o'erwhelmed me so that, for the very stress
Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become to you a habit, O my eyes,
So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Then she rose and setting her feet to the wall, strained with all her might upon the iron collar, till she broke it from her neck and snapped the chains; then going forth, she threw herself on Kemerezzeman and kissed him on the mouth, like a pigeon billing. And she embraced him with all the stress of her love and longing and said to him, 'O my lord, do I wake or sleep and has God indeed vouchsafed us reunion after separation? Praised be He who hath reknit our loves, after despair!' When the eunuch saw this, he ran to King Ghaïour and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O my lord, know that this is indeed the prince and paragon of astrologers; for he hath cured thy daughter from behind the curtain, without going in to her.' 'Look to it well,' said the King; 'is this news true?' 'O my lord,' answered the eunuch, 'come and see for thyself how she hath found strength to break the iron chains and is come forth to the astrologer, kissing and embracing him.' So the King arose and went in to his daughter, who, when she saw him, rose and covered her face, reciting the following verses:

I love not the toothstick; 'tis hateful to me,
For I, when I name it, say, "Other than thee."
But I love, notwithstanding, the capparis-tree,
For, whenas I name it I say, "Thee I see."

The King was transported for joy at her recovery and kissed her between the eyes, for he loved her very dearly; then turning to Kemerezzeman, he asked him who he was and whence he came. The prince told him his name and rank and that he was the son of King Shehriman, and related to him the whole story from beginning to end; whereat Ghaïour marvelled and said, 'Verily, your story deserves to be recorded in books and read after you, generation after generation.' Then he summoned Cadis and witnesses forthright and married the two lovers; after which he bade decorate the city seven days long. So they decorated the city and held high festival, and all the troops donned their richest clothes, whilst the drums beat and the criers announced the glad tidings. Then they spread the tables with all manner meats and unveiled the princess before Kemerezzeman, and behold, each was like unto the other in beauty and elegance and amorous grace. So the King rejoiced in the issue of her affair and in her marriage and praised God for that He had made her to fall in love with a goodly youth of the sons of the kings. Then Kemerezzeman went in to her and lay with her that night and took his will of her, whilst she in like manner fufilled her desire of him and enjoyed his beauty and grace; and they clipped each other till the morning. On the morrow, the King made a banquet and spreading the tables with the richest meats, kept open house a whole month to all comers from the Islands of the Inner and the Outer Seas. Now, when Kemerezzeman had thus attained his desire and had tarried awhile with the princess Budour, he bethought him of his father and saw him in a dream, saying, 'O my son, is it thus thou dealest with me?' and reciting the following verses:

The moon o' the dark by his neglect my spirit doth appal
And to the watching of his stars hath made my eyelids thrall.
But soft, my heart! It may be yet he will return to thee;
And patience, soul, beneath the pain he's smitten thee withal!

Kemerezzeman awoke in the morning, afflicted and troubled at what he had seen, whereupon the princess questioned him and he told her his dream. Then they both went in to King Ghaïour and telling him what had passed, besought his leave to depart. He gave the prince the leave he sought; but the princess said, 'O my father, I cannot endure to be parted from him.' Quoth Ghaïour, 'Then go thou with him,' and gave her leave to be absent a whole year, charging her to visit him once in every year thereafterward. So she kissed his hand and Kemerezzeman did the like; after which he proceeded to equip them for the journey, furnishing them with horses and dromedaries of choice and a litter for his daughter, besides mules and camels laden with victual and all manner of travelling gear. Moreover, he gave them slaves and eunuchs to serve them and bestowed on Kemerezzeman ten splendid suits of cloth of gold, embroidered with jewels, together with a treasury of money and ten riding horses and as many she-camels. When the day of departure arrived, the King accompanied them to the farthest limits of his islands, where, going in to his daughter Budour in the litter, he kissed her and strained her to his bosom, weeping and repeating the following verses:

O thou that seekest parting, stay thy feet,
For sure embraces are a lover's right.
Softly, for fortune's nature is deceit
And parting is the end of love-delight.

Then, leaving her, he kissed her husband and commended his daughter to his care; after which he bade him farewell and giving the signal for departure, returned to his capital with his troops. The prince and princess and their suite fared on without stopping a whole month, at the end of which time they came to a spacious champaign, abounding in pasturage, where they alighted and pitched their tents. They ate and drank and rested, and the princess Budour lay down to sleep. Presently, Kemerezzeman went in to her and found her lying asleep, in a shift of apricot-coloured silk, that showed all it should have covered, and a coif of cloth of gold embroidered with pearls and jewels. The breeze raised her shift and showed her breasts and navel and a belly whiter than snow, each one of whose dimples contained an ounce of benzoin ointment. At this sight, his love and passion for her redoubled, and he recited the following verses:

If, whilst within my entrails the fires of hell did stir
And flames raged high about me, 'twere spoken in my ear,
"Which wilt thou have the rather, a draught of water cold
Or sight of her thou lovest?" I'd say, "The sight of her."

Then he put his hand to the ribbon of her trousers and drew it and loosed it, for that his soul lusted after her, when he saw a jewel, red as dragon's blood, made fast to the band. He untied and examined it and seeing two lines of writing graven thereon, in a character not to be read, marvelled and said in himself, 'Except she set great store by this, she had not tied it to the ribbon of her trousers nor hidden it in the most private place about her person, that she might not be parted from it. I wonder what she doth with it and what is the secret that is in it.' So saying, he took it and went without the tent to look at it in the light; but as he was examining it, a bird swooped down on him and snatching it from his hand, flew off with it and lighted on the ground at a little distance. Fearing to lose the talisman, he ran after the bird; but it flew on before him, keeping just out of his reach, and drew him on from place to place and from hill to hill, till the night came on and the air grew dark, when it roosted on a high tree. Kemerezzeman stopped under the tree, confounded and faint for hunger and weariness, and giving himself up for lost, would have turned back, but knew not the way, for the darkness had overtaken him. So he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' and lying down under the tree, slept till the morning, when he awoke and saw the bird also awake and fly away. He arose and walked after it, and it flew on little by little before him, after the measure of his going; at which he smiled and said, 'By Allah, this is a strange thing! Yesterday, the bird flew before me as fast as I could run; and to-day, knowing that I am tired and cannot run, it flieth after the measure of my walking. By Allah, this is wonderful! But, whether it lead me to my death or to my life, I must needs follow it, wherever it goeth, for it will surely not abide save in some inhabited land. So he followed the bird, eating of the fruits of the earth and drinking of its waters, for ten days' space, and every night the bird roosted on a tree. At the end of this time, he came in sight of an inhabited city, whereupon the bird darted off like the glance of the eye and entering the town, was lost to view: and Kemerezzeman marvelled at this and exclaimed, 'Praised be God, who hath brought me hither in safety!' Then he sat down by a stream and washed his hands and feet and face and rested awhile: and recalling his late easy and pleasant life of

union with his beloved and contrasting it with his present plight of trouble and weariness and hunger and strangerhood and severance, the tears streamed from his eyes and he repeated the following cinquains:

I strove to hide the load that love on me did lay;
In vain, and sleep for me is changed to wake alway.
Whenas wanhope doth press my heart both night and day,
I cry aloud, "O Fate, hold back thy hand, I pray.
For all my soul is sick with dolour and dismay!"
If but the Lord of Love were just indeed to me,
Sleep had not fled mine eyes by his unkind decree.
Have pity, sweet, on one that is for love of thee
Worn out and wasted sore; once rich and great was he,
Now beggared and cast down by love from his array.
The railers chide at thee full sore; I heed not,
I, But stop my ears to them and give them back the lie.
"Thou lov'st a slender one," say they; and I reply,
"I've chosen her and left all else beneath the sky."
Enough; when fate descends, the eyes are blinded aye.

As soon as he was rested, he rose and walked on, little by little, till he came to the city-gate and entered, knowing not whither he should go. He traversed the city from end to end, without meeting any of the townsfolk, entering by the land-gate and faring on till he came out at the sea-gate, for the city stood on the sea-shore. Presently, he found himself among the orchards and gardens of the place and passed among the trees, till he came to a garden-gate and stopped before it, whereupon the keeper came out to him and saluted him. The prince returned his greeting and the other bade him welcome, saying, 'Praised be God that thou hast come off safe from the people of the city! Quick, come into the garden, ere any of the townsfolk see thee.' So Kemerezzeman entered the garden, amazed, and said to the keeper, 'Who and what then are the people of this city?' 'Know,' answered the other,' that the people of this city are all Magians: but, God on thee, tell me how and why thou camest hither.' Accordingly, Kemerezzeman told him all that had befallen him, at which the gardener marvelled greatly and said, 'Know, O my son, that from this place to the cities of Islam is four months' journey by sea and a whole year by land. We have a ship that sails yearly hence with merchandise to the Ebony Islands, which are the nearest Muslim country, and thence to the Khalidan Islands, the dominions of King Shehriman.' Kemerezzeman considered awhile and concluding that he could not do better than abide with the gardener and become his assistant, said to him, 'Wilt thou take me into thy service, to help thee in this garden?' 'Willingly,' answered the gardener and clothing him in a short blue gown, that reached to his knees, taught him to lead the water to the roots of the trees. So Kemerezzeman abode with him, watering the trees and hoeing up the weeds and weeping floods of tears; for he had no rest day or night, by reason of his strangerhood and separation from his beloved, and he ceased not to repeat verses upon her, amongst others the following:

Ye made us a promise of yore; will ye not to your promise be true?
Ye spoke us a word aforetime; as ye spoke to us, will ye not do?
We waken, whilst ye are asleep, according to passion's decree;
So have ye the vantage of us, for watchers and sleepers are two.
We vowed to each other, whilere, that we would keep secret our loves;
But the breedbate possessed you to speak, and you spoke and revealed what none knew.
Belovéd in pleasure and pain, chagrin and contentment alike,
Whate'er may betide, ye alone are the goal that my wishes ensue.
There's one that still holdeth a heart, a heart sore tormented of mine;
Ah, would she'd have ruth on my plight and pity the soul that she slew!
Not every one's eye is as mine, worn wounded and cankered with tears,
And hearts that are, even as mine, the bondslaves of passion, are few.
Ye acted the tyrant with me, saying, "Love is a tyrant, I trow."
Indeed, ye were right, and the case has proved what ye said to be true.
Alack! They've forgotten outright a passion-distraught one, whose faith
Time 'minisheth not, though the fires in his entrails rage ever anew.
If my foeman in love be my judge, to whom shall I make my complaint?
To whom of injustice complain, to whom for redress shall I sue?
Were it not for my needing of love and the ardour that burns in my breast,
I had not a heart love-enslaved and a soul that for passion must rue.

To return to the princess Budour. When she awoke, she sought her husband and found him not: then she saw the ribbon of her trousers undone and the talisman missing and said to herself, 'By Allah, this is strange! Where is my husband? It would seem as if he had taken the talisman and gone away, knowing not the secret that is in it. Whither can he have gone? It must have been some extraordinary matter that drew him away, for he cannot brook to leave me an hour. May God curse the talisman and its hour!' Then she considered awhile and said in herself, 'If I go out and tell the servants that my husband is lost, they will covet me: I must use stratagem.' So she rose and donned some of her husband's clothes and boots and spurs and a turban like his, drawing the loose end across her face for a chin-band. Then setting a slave-girl in her litter, she went forth the tent and called to the servants, who brought her Kemerezzeman's horse; and she mounted and bade load the beasts and set forward. So they bound on the burdens and departed, none doubting but she was Kemerezzeman, for she resembled him in face and form; nor did they leave journeying, days and nights, till they came in sight of a city overlooking the sea, when they halted to rest and pitched their tents without the walls. The princess asked the name of the place and was told, 'It is called the City of Ebony: its king is named Armanous, and he hath a daughter called Heyat en Nufous.' Presently, the King sent to learn who it was that had encamped without his city; so the messenger, coming to the tents, enquired of Budour's servants and was told that she was a king's son, bound for the Khalidan Islands, who had strayed from his road; whereupon he returned and told the King, who straightway took horse and rode out, with his nobles, to meet the strange prince. As he drew near the tents, the princess came to meet him on foot, whereupon the King alighted and they saluted each other. Then he carried her into the city and bringing her to the palace, let spread a banquet and bade transport her company and baggage to the guest-

house, where they abode three days; at the end of which time the King came in to Budour (Now she had that day gone to the bath and her face shone as the moon at its full, enchanting all beholders, and she was clad in robes of silk, embroidered with gold and jewels) and said to her, 'Know, O my son, that I am a very old man and am grown unable for the conduct of the state. Now God has blessed me with no child save one daughter, who resembles thee in beauty and grace; so, O my son, if this my country please thee and thou be willing to make thine abode here, I will marry thee to my daughter and give thee my kingdom and so be at rest.' When Budour heard this, she bowed her head and her forehead sweated for shame, and she said to herself, 'How shall I do, and I a woman? If I refuse and depart, I cannot be safe but that he may send after me troops to kill me; and if I consent, belike I shall be put to shame. I have lost my beloved Kemerezzeman and know not what is come of him; wherefore I see nothing for it but to hold my peace and consent and abide here, till God accomplish what is to be.' So she raised her head and made submission to King Armanous, saying, 'I hear and obey,' whereat he rejoiced and bade make proclamation, throughout the Ebony Islands, to hold high festival and decorate the houses. Then he assembled his chamberlains and Amirs and Viziers and other officers of state and the Cadis of the city, and putting off the kingship, invested Budour therewith and clad her in the royal robes. Moreover, the Amirs and grandees went in to her and did her homage, nothing doubting but that she was a young man, and all who looked on her berayed their hose for the excess of her beauty and grace; then, after the lady Budour had been made Sultan and the drums had been beaten, in announcement of the joyful event, Armanous proceeded to equip his daughter for marriage, and in a few days, they brought Budour in to her, when they seemed as it were two moons risen at one time or two suns foregathering. So they entered the bridal-chamber and the doors were shut and the curtains let down upon them, after the attendants had lighted the candles and spread the bed for them. When Budour found herself alone with the princess Heyat en Nufous, she called to mind her beloved Kemerezzeman and grief was sore upon her. So she wept for his loss and absence and repeated the following verses:

O ye who went and left my heart to pine alone fore'er,
No spark of life remains in me, since ye away did fare!
I have an eye that doth complain of sleeplessness alway;
Tears have consumed it; would to God that sleeplessness would spare!
When ye departed, after you the lover did abide;
But question of him what of pain in absence he doth bear.
But for the ceaseless flood of tears my eyes pour forth, the world
Would at my burning all catch fire, yea, seas and lands and air.
To God Most High I make my moan of dear ones loved and lost,
That on my passion have no ruth nor pity my despair.
I never did them wrong, except my love for them were such;
But into blest and curst in love men aye divided were.

When she had finished, she sat down beside the princess Heyat en Nufous and kissed her on the mouth. Then, rising abruptly, she made the ablution and betook herself to her devotions, nor did she leave praying till Heyat en Nufous was asleep, when she slipt into bed and lay with her back to her till morning; then rose and went

out. Presently, the old king and queen came in to their daughter and asked her how she did, whereupon she told them what had passed and repeated to them the verses she had heard.

Meanwhile, Budour seated herself upon the throne and all the Amirs and captains and officers of state came in to her and wished her joy of the kingship, kissing the earth before her and calling down blessings upon her. She smiled on them and clad them in robes of honour, augmenting the fiefs of the Amirs and giving largesse to the troops; wherefore all the people loved her and offered up prayers for the continuance of her reign, doubting not but that she was a man. She sat all day in the hall of audience, ordering and forbidding and dispensing justice, releasing those who were in prison and remitting the customs dues, till nightfall, when she withdrew to the apartment prepared for her. Here she found Heyat en Nufous seated; so she sat down by her and clapping her on the back, caressed her and kissed her between the eyes, repeating the following verses:

The secret that I cherished my tears have public made;
The wasting of my body my passion hath bewrayed.
I hid my love and longing; but on the parting-day
My plight, alas! revealed it to spies; 'twas open laid.
O ye who have departed the camp, ye've left behind
My body worn with languor and spirit all decayed.
Within my heart's recesses ye have your dwelling-place;
My tears are ever running and lids with blood berayed.
For ever will I ransom the absent with my soul;
Indeed, for them my yearnings are patent and displayed.
I have an eye, whose pupil, for love of them, rejects
Sleep and whose tears flow ever, unceasing and unstayed.
My foes would have me patient for him; but God forbid
That ever of my hearing should heed to them be paid!
I baulked their expectation. Of Kemerezzeman Sometime
I did accomplish the joys for which I prayed.
He doth, as none before him, perfections all unite;
No king of bygone ages was in the like arrayed.
His clemency and bounty Ben Zaïdeh's largesse
And Muawiyeh's mildness have cast into the shade.
But that it would be tedious and verse sufficeth not
To picture forth his beauties, I'd leave no rhyme unmade.

Then she wiped away her tears and making the ablution, stood up to pray; nor did she give over praying, till drowsiness overcame Heyat en Nufous and she slept, whereupon Budour came and lay beside her till the morning. At daybreak, she arose and prayed the morning-prayer; then, going forth, seated herself on the throne and passed the day in ordering and forbidding and administering justice. Meanwhile, King Armanous went in to his daughter and asked her how she did; so she told him all that had passed and repeated to him the verses that Budour had recited, adding, 'O my father, never saw I one more abounding in sense and modesty than my husband, save

that he doth nothing but weep and sigh.' 'O my daughter,' answered her father, 'have patience with him yet this third night, and if he go not in to thee and do away thy maidenhead, we will take order with him and oust him from the throne and banish him the country.' When the night came, the princess Budour rose from the throne and betaking herself to the bride-chamber, found the candles lighted and the princess Heyat en Nufous sitting awaiting her; whereupon she bethought her of her husband and recalling the early severance of their loves, wept and sighed and groaned groan upon groan, repeating the following verses:

I swear the tidings of my woes fills all the country-side,
Like the sun shining on the hills of Nejed far and wide.
His gesture speaks, but hard to tell the meaning of it is,
And thus my yearning without end is ever magnified.
I hate fair patience since the hour I fell in love with thee.
Hast seen a lover hating love at any time or tide?
One, in whose glances sickness lies, hath smitten me to death,
For looks are deadliest of the things, wherein doth sickness bide.
He shook his clustered ringlets down and laid his chin-band by,
And beauty thus in him, at once both black and white, I spied.
Sickness and cure are in his hands; for, to the sick of love,
By him alone who caused their dole can healing be applied.
The softness of his waist hath made his girdle mad for love
And of his hips, for jealousy, to rise he is denied.
His forehead, covered with his curls, is as a mirky night;
Unveiled, 'tis as a shining moon that thrusts the dark aside.

When she had finished, she would have risen to pray, but Heyat en Nufous caught her by the skirt, saying, 'O my lord, art thou not ashamed to neglect me thus, after all the favour my father hath done thee?' When Budour heard this, she sat down again and said, 'O my beloved, what is this thou sayest?' 'What I say,' answered Heyat en Nufous, 'is that I never saw any so self-satisfied as thou. Is every fair one so disdainful? I say not this to incline thee to me, but only of my fear for thee from King Armanous; for he purposes, an thou go not in to me to-night and do away my maidenhead, to strip thee of the kingship on the morrow and banish thee the realm; and belike his much anger may lead him to kill thee. But I, O my lord, have compassion on thee and give thee fair warning; and it is thine to decide.' At this, Budour bowed her head in perplexity and said in herself, 'If I refuse, I am lost, and if I obey, I am shamed. I am now queen of all the Ebony Islands and they are under my rule and I shall never again foregather with Kemerezzeman except it be in this place; for there is no way for him to his native land but through the Ebony Islands. Verily, I know not what to do, for I am no man that I should arise and open this virgin girl; but I commit my case to God, who orders all for the best.' Then she said to Heyat en Nufous, 'O my beloved, it is in my own despite that I have neglected thee and abstained from thee.' And she discovered herself to her and told her her whole story, saying, 'I conjure thee by Allah to keep my counsel, till God reunite me with my beloved Kemerezzeman, and then let what will happen.' Her story moved Heyat en Nufous to wonder and pity, and she prayed God to reunite her with her beloved, saying, 'Fear nothing, O my sister, but

have patience till God accomplish that which is to be.' And she repeated the following verses:

None keepeth counsel saving those who're trusty and discreet.
A secret's ever safely placed with honest folk and leal;
And secrets trusted unto me are in a locked-up house,
Whose keys are lost and on whose door is set the Cadi's seal.

'O my sister,' continued she, 'the breasts of the noble are the graves of secrets, and I will not discover thine.' Then they toyed and embraced and kissed and slept till near the call to morning-prayer, when Heyat en Nufous arose and slaughtering a young pigeon, besmeared herself and besprinkled her shift with its blood. Then she put off her trousers and cried out, whereupon her waiting-women hastened to her and raised cries of joy. Presently, her mother came in to her aad asked her how she did and tended her and abode with her till evening; whilst the lady Budour repaired to the bath and after washing herself, proceeded to the hall of audience, where she sat down on her throne and dispensed justice among the folk. When King Armanous heard the cries, he asked what was the matter and was informed of the consummation of his daughter's marriage; whereat he rejoiced and his breast dilated and he made a great banquet.

To return to King Shehriman. When Kemerezzeman and Merzewan returned not at the appointed time, he passed the night without sleep, restless and consumed with anxiety. The night was long upon him and he thought the day would never dawn. He passed the forenoon of the ensuing day in expectation of his son's coming, but he came not; whereat his heart forebode separation and he was distraught with fears for Kemerezzeman. He wept till his clothes were drenched, crying out, 'Alas, my son!' and repeating the following verses from an aching heart:

Unto the votaries of love I still was contrary,
Till of its bitter and its sweet myself perforce must taste.
I quaffed its cup of rigours out, yea, even to the dregs,
And to its freemen and its slaves myself therein abased.
Fortune aforetime made a vow to separate our loves;
Now hath she kept her vow, alack! and made my life a waste.

Then he wiped away his tears and bade his troops make ready for a long journey. So they all mounted and set forth, headed by the Sultan, whose heart burnt with grief and anxiety for his son. He divided the troops into six bodies, whom he despatched in as many directions, giving them rendezvous for the morrow at the cross-roads. Accordingly they scoured the country diligently all that day and night, till at noon of the ensuing day they joined company at the cross-roads. Here four roads met and they knew not which the prince had followed, till they came to the torn clothes and found shreds of flesh and blood scattered by the way on all sides. When the King saw this, he cried out from his inmost heart, saying, 'Alas, my son!' and buffeted his face and tore his beard and rent his clothes, doubting not but his son was dead. Then he gave himself up to weeping and wailing, and the troops also wept for his weeping, being assured that the prince had perished. They wept and lamented and threw dust on their heads till they were nigh upon death, and the night surprised them whilst they were

thus engaged. Then the King repeated the following verses, with a heart on fire for the torment of his despair:

Blame not the mourner for the grief to which he is a prey,
For yearning sure sufficeth him, with all its drear dismay.
He weeps for drearіment and grief and stress of longing pain,
And eke his transport doth the fires, that rage in him, bewray.
Alas, his fortune who's Love's slave, whom languishment hath bound
Never to let his eyelids stint from weeping night and day!
He mourns the loss of one was like a bright and brilliant moon,
That shone out over all his peers in glorious array.
But Death did proffer to his lips a brimming cup to drink,
What time he left his native land, and now he's far away.
He left his home and went from us unto calamity;
Nor to his brethren was it given to him farewell to say.
Indeed, his loss hath stricken me with anguish and with woe;
Yea, for estrangement from his sight my wits are gone astray.
Whenas the Lord of all vouchsafed to him His Paradise,
Upon his journey forth he fared and passed from us for aye.

Then he returned with the troops to his capital, giving up his son for lost and deeming that wild beasts or highwaymen had set on him and torn him in pieces, and made proclamation that all in the Khalidan Islands should don black in mourning for him. Moreover, he built a pavilion in his memory, naming it House of Lamentations, and here he was wont to spend his days, (with the exception of Mondays and Thursdays, which he devoted to the business of the state), mourning for his son and bewailing him with verses, of which the following are some:

My day of bliss is that whereon thou drawest near to me,
And that, whereon thou turn'st away, my day of death and fear.
What though I tremble all the night and go in dread of death,
Yet thine embraces are to me than safety far more dear.

And again:

My soul redeem the absent, whose going cast a blight
On hearts and did afflict them with anguish and affright!
Let gladness then accomplish its purification-time,
For, by a triple divorcement, I've put away delight.

Meanwhile, the princess Budour abode in the Ebony Islands, whilst the folk would point to her and say, 'Yonder is King Armanous's son-in-law;' and every night she lay with Heyat en Nufous, to whom she made moan of her longing for her husband Kemerezzeman, weeping and describing to her his beauty and grace and yearning to enjoy him, though but in a dream. And bytimes she would repeat these verses:

God knows that, since my severance from thee, full sore
I've wept, So sore that needs my eyes must run for very tears in debt.

"Have patience," quoth my censurer, "and thou shalt win them yet,"
And I, "O thou that blamest me, whence should I patience get?"

All this time, Kemerezzeman abode with the gardener, weeping and repeating verses night and day, bewailing the seasons of enjoyment and the nights of delight, whilst the gardener comforted him with the assurance that the ship would set sail for the land of the Muslims at the end of the year. One day, he saw the folk crowding together and wondered at this; but the gardener came in to him and said, 'O my son, give over work for to-day neither water the trees; for it is a festival day, on which the folk visit one another. So rest and only keep thine eye on the garden, whilst I go look after the ship for thee; for yet but a little while and I send thee to the land of the Muslims.' So saying, he went out, leaving Kemerezzeman alone in the garden, who fell to musing upon his condition, till his courage gave way and the tears streamed from his eyes. He wept till he swooned away, and when he recovered, he rose and walked about the garden pondering what fate had done with him and bewailing his long estrangement from those he loved. As he went thus, absorbed in melancholy thought, his foot stumbled and he fell on his face, striking his forehead against the stump of a tree. The blow cut it open and his blood ran down and blent with his tears. He rose and wiping away the blood, dried his tears and bound his forehead with a piece of rag; then continued his melancholy walk about the garden. Presently, he saw two birds quarrelling on a tree, and one of them smote the other on the neck with its beak and cut off its head, with which it flew away, whilst the slain bird's body fell to the ground before Kemerezzeman. As it lay, two great birds flew down and alighting, one at the head and the other at the tail of the dead bird, drooped their wings over it and bowing their heads towards it, wept; and when Kemerezzeman saw them thus bewail their mate, he called to mind his wife and father and wept also. Then he saw them dig a grave and bury the dead bird; after which they flew away, but presently returned with the murderer and alighting on the grave, stamped on him till they killed him. Then they rent his belly and tearing out his entrails, poured the blood on the grave. Moreover, they stripped off his skin and tearing his flesh in pieces, scattered it hither and thither. All this while Kemerezzeman was watching them and wondering; but presently, chancing to look at the dead bird's crop, he saw therein something gleaming. So he opened it and found the talisman that had been the cause of his separation from his wife. At this sight, he fell down in a swoon for joy; and when he revived, he said, 'Praised be God! This is a good omen and a presage of reunion with my beloved.' Then he examined the jewel and passed it over his eyes; after which he bound it to his arm, rejoicing in coming good, and walked about, awaiting the gardener's return, till nightfall; when, as he came not, he lay down and slept in his wonted place. At daybreak he rose and girding himself with a cord of palm-fibre, took hoe and basket and went out to his work in the garden. Presently, he came to a carob-tree and struck the hoe into its roots. The blow resounded [as if it had fallen on metal]; so he cleared away the earth and discovered a trap-door of brass. He raised the trap and found a winding stair, which he descended and came to an ancient vault of the time of Aad and Themoud, hewn out of the rock. Round the vault stood many brazen vessels of the bigness of a great oil-jar, into one of which he put his hand and found it full of red and shining gold; whereupon he said to himself, 'Verily, the days of weariness are past and joy and solace are come!' Then he returned to the garden and replacing the trap-door, busied

himself in tending the trees till nightfall, when the gardener came back and said to him, 'O my son, rejoice in a speedy return to thy native land, for the merchants are ready for the voyage and in three days' time the ship will set sail for the City of Ebony, which is the first of the cities of the Muslims; and thence thou must travel by land six months' journey till thou come to the Islands of Khalidan, the dominions of King Shehriman.' At this Kemerezzeman rejoiced and repeated the following verses:

Forsake not a lover unused aversion from thee,
Nor punish the guiltless with rigour and cruelty.
Another, when absence was long, had forgotten thee
And changed from his faith and his case; not so with me.

Then he kissed the gardener's hand, saying, 'O my father, even as thou hast brought me glad tidings, so I also have great good news for thee,' and told him of his discovery in the garden; whereat the gardener rejoiced and said, 'O my son, fourscore years have I dwelt in this garden and have never chanced on aught; whilst thou, who hast not sojourned with me a year, hast discovered this thing; wherefore it is God's gift to thee, for the cesser of thine ill fortune, and will aid thee to rejoin thy folk and foregather with her thou lovest.' 'Not so,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'it must be shared between us.' Then he carried him to the underground chamber and showed him the gold, which was in twenty jars. So he took ten and the gardener ten, and the latter said to him, 'O my son, fill thyself jars with the olives that grow in the garden, for they are not found but in our land and are sought after; the merchants carry them to all parts and they are called Asafiri olives. Lay the gold in the jars and cover it with olives: then stop them and cover them and take them with thee in the ship.' So Kemerezzeman took fifty jars and laying in each somewhat of the gold, filled it up with olives. At the bottom of one of the jars he laid the talisman, then stopped and covered the jars and sat down to talk with the gardener, making sure of speedy reunion with his own people and saying in himself, 'When I come to the Ebony Islands, I will journey thence to my father's country and enquire for my beloved Budour. I wonder whether she turned back to her own land or journeyed on to my father's country or whether there befell her any accident by the way.' And he repeated the following verses:

Love in my breast they lit and passed away forthright:
Far distant is the land that holds my soul's delight.
Far, far from me the camp and those that dwell therein;
No visitation-place again shall us unite.
Patience and reason fled from me, when they fared forth;
Sleep failed me and despair o'ercame me, like a blight.
They left me, and with them departed all my joy;
Tranquillity and peace with them have taken flight.
They made mine eyes run down with tears of love laid waste;
My lids for lack of them brim over day and night.
Whenas my sad soul longs to see them once again
And waiting and desire are heavy on my spright,
Midmost my heart of hearts their images I trace,
Love and desireful pain and yearning for their sight.

Then he told the gardener what he had seen pass between the birds, whereat he wondered; and they both lay down and slept till the morning. The gardener awoke sick and abode thus two days; but on the third day, his sickness increased on him, till they despaired of his life and Kemerezzeman grieved sore for him. Meanwhile, the captain and sailors came and enquired for the gardener. Kemerezzeman told them that he was sick, and they said, 'Where is the young man that is minded to go with us to the Ebony Islands?' 'He is your servant,' answered the prince and bade them carry the jars of olives to the ship. So they transported them to the ship, saying, 'Make haste, for the wind is fair;' and he answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then he carried his victual on board and returning, to bid the gardener farewell, found him in the agonies of death. So he sat down at his head and closed his eyes, and his soul departed his body; whereupon he laid him out and committed him to the earth to the mercy of God the Most High. Then he went down to the port, to embark, but found that the ship had already weighed anchor and set sail; nor did she cease to cleave the waters, till she disappeared from his sight. So he returned to the garden, sorrowful and heavy-hearted, and sitting down, threw dust on his head and buffeted his face. Then he rented the garden of its owner and hired a man to help him tend the trees. Moreover, he went down to the underground chamber and bringing up the rest of the gold, stowed it in other fifty jars, which he filled up with olives. Then he enquired of the ship and was told that it sailed but once a year; at which his affliction redoubled and he mourned sore for that which had befallen him, above all for the loss of the princess Budour's talisman, and spent his nights and days weeping and repeating verses.

Meanwhile, the ship sailed with a favouring wind, till it reached the Ebony Islands. As fate would have it, the princess Budour was sitting at a window overlooking the sea and saw the ship cast anchor in the port. At this sight, her heart throbbed and she mounted and riding down to the port, with her officers, halted by the ship, whilst the sailors broke out the cargo and transported the goods to the storehouses; after which she called the captain and asked what he had with him. 'O King,' answered he, 'I have with me drugs and cosmetics and powders and ointments and plasters and rich stuffs and Yemen rugs and other costly merchandise, not to be borne of mule or camel, and all manner essences and spices and perfumes, civet and ambergris and camphor and Sumatra aloes-wood, and tamarinds and Asafiri olives to boot, such as are rare to find in this country.' When she heard talk of Asafiri olives, her heart yearned for them and she said to the captain, 'How much olives hast thou?' 'Fifty jars full,' answered he. 'Their owner is not with us, but the King shall take what he will of them.' Quoth she, 'Bring them ashore, that I may see them.' So he called to the sailors, who brought her the fifty jars; and she opened one and looking at the olives, said to the captain, 'I will take the whole fifty and pay you their value, whatever it may be.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered he, 'they have no value in our country and the fifty jars may be worth some hundred dirhems; but their owner tarried behind us, and he is a poor man.' 'And what are they worth here?' asked she. 'A thousand dirhems,' replied he. 'I will take them at that price,' quoth she and bade carry the fifty jars to the palace. When it was night, she called for a jar of olives and opened it, there being none present but herself and the princess Heyat en Nufous. Then, taking a dish, she turned into it the contents of the jar, when behold there fell out into the dish with the olives a heap of red gold and she said to Heyat en Nufous, 'This is nought but gold!' So she sent for the rest of the jars

and found each one full of gold and scarce enough olives in the whole fifty to fill one jar. Moreover, she sought among the gold and found the talisman, which she took and examined and knew for that which Kemerezzeman had taken from off the riband of her trousers; whereupon she cried out for joy and fell down in a swoon. When she revived, she said in herself, 'Verily, this talisman was the cause of my separation from my beloved Kemerezzeman; but now it is an omen of good.' Then she showed it to Heyat en Nufous and said to her, 'This was the cause of separation and now, please God, it shall be the cause of reunion.' As soon as it was day, she seated herself on her throne and sent for the captain, who came and kissed the ground before her. Quoth she, 'Where didst thou leave the owner of these olives?' 'O King of the age,' answered he, 'we left him in the land of the Magians and he is a gardener there.' 'Except thou bring him to me,' said she, 'thou knowest not the harm that awaits thee and thy ship.' Then she bade seal up the merchants' storehouses and said to them, 'The owner of these olives is my debtor; and an ye bring him not to me, I will without fail put you all to death and confiscate your goods.' So they all went to the captain and promised him the hire of the ship, if he would go and return a second time, saying, 'Deliver us from this masterful tyrant.' Accordingly, the captain set sail and God decreed him a prosperous voyage, till he came to the city of the Magians, and landing by night, went up to the garden. Now the night was long upon Kemerezzeman, and he sat, bethinking him of his beloved and weeping over what had befallen him and repeating the following verses:

Full many a night I've passed, whose stars their course did stay,
A night that seemed of those that will not pass away,
That was, as 'twere, for length the Resurrection-morn,
To him that watched therein and waited for the day!

At this moment, the captain knocked at the garden-gate, and Kemerezzeman opened and went out to him, whereupon the sailors seized him and carrying him on board the ship, weighed anchor forthright. They sailed on without ceasing days and nights, whilst Kemerezzeman knew not why they dealt thus with him; but when he questioned them, they replied, 'Thou hast offended against the lord of the Ebony Islands, the son-in-law of King Armanous, and hast stolen his good, unhappy wretch that thou art!' 'By Allah,' said he, 'I know not the country nor was I ever there in all my life!' However, they fared on with him, till they made the Ebony Islands and landing, carried him up to the princess Budour, who knew him at sight and said, 'Leave him with the eunuchs, that they may take him to the bath.' Then she relieved the merchant of the embargo and gave the captain a dress of honour and ten thousand dinars; after which, she went in that night to the princess Heyat en Nufous and told her what had passed, saying, 'Keep thou my counsel, till I accomplish my purpose and do a thing that shall be recorded and told to kings and commoners after us.' Meanwhile, they carried Kemerezzeman to the bath and clad him in a royal habit, so that, when he came forth, he resembled a willow-wand or a star whose aspect put to shame both sun and moon, and his life returned to him. Then he went in to the princess Budour, who, when she saw him, schooled her heart to patience, till she should have accomplished her purpose, and bestowed on him slaves and servants, black and white, and camels and mules. Moreover, she gave him a treasury of money and

advanced him from dignity to dignity, till she made him treasurer and committed to his charge all the treasures of the state; nor did she leave day by day to increase his allowances and afford him fresh marks of her favour. As for Kemerezzeman, he was at a loss for the reason of all the honour and favour she showed him and gave gifts and largesse out of the abundance of the wealth he owed to her munificence, devoting himself in particular to the service of King Armanous, so that he and all the Amirs and people, great and small, loved him and were wont to swear by his life. Nevertheless, he ceased not to marvel at the favour shown him by Budour and said in himself, 'By Allah, there must be a reason for this affection! Peradventure, this king favours me thus excessively with some ill purpose and needs must I therefore crave leave of him to depart his realm.' So he went in to Budour and said to her, 'O King, thou hast overwhelmed me with favours, but it will fulfil the measure of thy bounties if thou wilt take from me all thou hast given and let me depart.' She smiled and said, 'What makes thee seek to depart and plunge into new perils, whenas thou art in the enjoyment of the greatest favour and prosperity?' 'O King,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'this favour, if there be no reason for it, is indeed a wonder of wonders, more by token that thou hast advanced me to dignities such as befit graybeards, albeit I am but a child.' 'The reason is,' answered she, 'that I love thee for thine exceeding grace and thy surpassing beauty; and so thou wilt but grant me my desire of thee, I will advance thee yet further in honour and favour and largesse and make thee Vizier, for all thy tender age, even as the folk made me Sultan and I no older than thou; so that nowadays there is nothing strange in the headship of children, and gifted of God was he who said:

Our time is, meseems, of the lineage of Lot; It craves the advancement of younglings, God wot.'

When Kemerezzeman heard this, he was confounded and his cheeks flushed till they seemed on fire; and he said, 'I reck not of favours that involve the commission of sin; I will live poor in wealth but rich in virtue and honour.' Quoth she, 'I am not the dupe of thy scruples, arising from prudery and coquetry: and God bless him who says:

I mentioned to him the pact of fruition, and he,
"How long with vexatious discourse wilt thou set upon me?"
I showed him a dinar and straightway he sang out and said,
"O whither shall one from Fate irresistible flee!"

'O King,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'I have not the wont of these doings, nor have I strength, who am but of tender years, to bear these heavy burdens, for which elder than I have proved unable.' She smiled and rejoined, 'Indeed, it is wonderful how error springs from the disorder of the wit. Since thou art but a boy, why standest thou in fear of sin or the doing of forbidden things, seeing that thou art not yet come to years of discretion and the offences of a child incur neither punishment nor reproof? Verily, thou committest thyself to an argument advanced but for the sake of contention, and it behoves thee to bow to the ordinance of fruition, which has been given against thee. Wherefore, henceforward, give over denial and coyness, for the commandment of God is a foreordained decree: indeed, I have more reason than thou to fear falling into error; and well-inspired was he who said:

My pintle is big and the little one said unto me,
"Tilt boldly therewith at my inwards and quit thee thy need."
Quoth I, "'Tis unlawful;" but he, "It is lawful with me;"
So to it I fell, supporting myself by his rede.'

When Kemerezzeman heard these words, the light in his eyes became darkness and he said, 'O King, thou hast in thy palace women and female slaves, that have not their like in this age: may not these suffice thee without me? Do thy will with them and leave me.' 'Thou speakest truth,' answered she; 'but it is not with them that one who loves thee can heal himself of torment and fever; for when tastes and inclinations are corrupted, they hearken to other than good counsel. So leave arguing and hear what the poet says:

Seest not the fruits of the market, how of two kinds they be? Some are for figs, but more for the fruit of the sycamore-tree.

And what another says:

Full many an one, whose ankle-rings are dumb, her girdle sounds;
So this one is content and that a tale of need must tell.
Thou'dst have me, foolwise, in her charms forget thee.
God forfend I, that a true believer am, should turn an infidel!
No, by a whisker that makes mock of all her curls, I swear,
Nor maid nor strumpet from thy side shall me by guile compel!

And a third:

O pearl of loveliness, to love thee is my faith;
Yea, and my choice of all the faiths that have been aye.
Women I have forsworn, indeed, for thy sweet sake,
So that the folk avouch I'm grown a monk to-day

And a fourth:

Compare not a wench with a boy and to the spy,
Who says to thee, "This is wrong," pay thou no heed.
'Twixt a woman whose feet one's lips kiss and a smooth-faced fawn,
Who kisses the earth, the diff'rence is great indeed.

And a fifth:

My soul be thy ransom! Indeed, I've chosen thee out with intent,
Because thou layest no eggs and dost not menstruate.
For, am I inclined to foregather with harlots, upon my faith,
The wide, wide world for the brats I should get would prove too strait.

And a sixth:

Quoth she to me, – and sore enraged for wounded pride was she,
For she in sooth had bidden me to that which might not be, –
"An if thou swive me not forthright, as one should swive his
wife, If thou be made a cuckold straight, reproach it not to me.

Meseems thy yard is made of wax, for very flaccidness;
For, when I rub it with my hand, it softens instantly."

And a seventh:

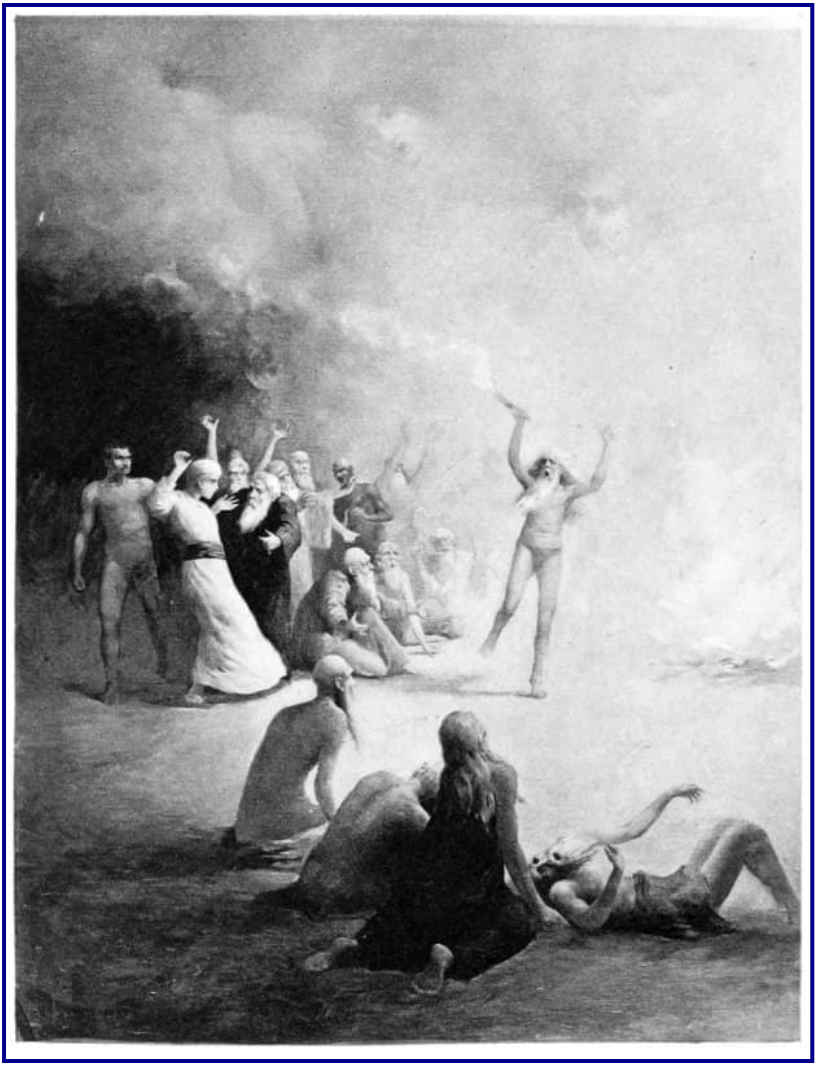
Quoth she (for I to lie with her would not consent),
"O fool, that followest on thy folly to the extent,
If thou reject my kaze for Kibleh to thy yard,
We'll show thee one wherewith thou shalt be sure content."

And an eighth:

She proffered me a tender kaze;
But I, "I will not swive," replied.
She drew back, saying, "From the truth
Needs must he turn who's turned aside;
And swiving frontwise in our day
Is all abandoned and decried;"
Then turned and showed me, as it were
A lump of silver, her backside.
"Well done, O mistress mine! No more
Am I in pain for thee," I cried,
"Whose poke of all God's openings
Is sure the amplest and most wide!"

And a ninth:

Men crave forgiveness with uplifted hands;
But women pray with lifted legs, I trow.
Out on it for a pious piece of work!
God shall exalt it to the deeps below.



When Kemerezzeman heard these verses and was certified that there was no escaping compliance with her will, he said, 'O King, if thou must needs have it so, swear to me that thou wilt use me thus but once, though it avail not to stay thy debauched appetite; and that thou wilt never again require me of this to the end of time; so it may be God will purge me of the sin.' 'I promise thee that,' replied she, 'hoping that God of His favour will relent towards us and blot out our mortal sins; for the compass of the Divine forgiveness is not indeed so strait, but it may altogether embrace us and absolve us of the excess of our transgressions and bring us to the light of righteousness out of the darkness of error. As most excellent well saith the poet:

The folk imagine of us twain an evil thing, I ween,
And with their hearts and souls, indeed, they do persist therein.
Come, let us justify their thought and free them thus from guilt,
This once, 'gainst us; and then will we repent us of our sin.'

Then she swore to him a solemn oath, by Him whose existence is unconditioned, that this thing should befall betwixt them but once and never again for all time, and vowed to him that the desire of him was driving her to death and perdition. So he went with her, on this condition, to her privy closet, that she might quench the fire of her passion, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! This is the ordinance of the All-powerful, the All-wise!' And did off his trousers, in the utmost confusion, with the tears running from his eyes for stress of affright; whereat she smiled and carrying him on to a couch, said to him, 'After this night, thou shalt see nought that will displease thee.' Then she turned to him, kissing and clipping him and twining leg with leg, and said to him, 'Put thy hand, between my thighs, to that thou wottest of, so haply it may be won to stand up after prostration.' He wept and said, 'I am not good at aught of this.' But she said, 'As I live, an thou do as I bid thee, it shall profit thee!' So he put out his hand, with a heart on fire for confusion, and found her thighs fresher than cream and softer than silk. The touching of them pleasured him and he moved his hand hither and thither, till he came to a dome abounding in benedictions and movements and said in himself, 'Belike this king is a hermaphrodite, nor male nor female.' So he said to her, 'O King, I cannot find that thou hast any manly gear, even as other men; what then moved thee to do thus?' When the princess heard this, she laughed till she fell backward, and said, 'O my beloved, how quickly thou hast forgotten the nights we have lain together!' Then she made herself known to him and he knew her for his wife, the Lady Budour, daughter of King Ghaïour. So he embraced her and she embraced him and they kissed each other; then they lay down on the bed of delight, repeating the words of the poet:

Whenas the softness of a shape did bid him to my arms,
That, as it were a trailing vine with twinings did him ply
And on the hardness of his heart its very softness shed,
He yielded, though at first he feigned reluctance to comply,
And came, provided with a stock of caution safe and sure,
Fearing lest, when he did appear, the railers should him spy.
His waist of buttocks maketh moan, that lay upon his feet
A very camel's load, what time he would a-walking hie.

Girt with his glances' trenchant swords and cuirassed with the mail
Of his bright locks, as 'twere the dusk new fallen from the sky,
His fragrance brought me from afar the news of his approach,
And forth, as bird let out from cage, to meet my love fled I.
I laid my cheek within his way, beneath his sandal-soles,
And lo, their dust's collyrium healed the ailment of mine eye!
With an embrace I hoisted up the flag of loves new linked
And loosed the knot of my delight, that made as 'twould deny.
Then let I call high festival, and gladness, all unmixed
With any thought of troublousness, came flocking in reply.
The full moon handselled with the stars the teeth, like grains of pearl,
That on the laughing face of wine now dance, now stirless lie.
So in the niche of their delight I gave me up to joys,
The veriest sinner would repent if he their like might try.
The morning-glories of his face be pledge I'll ne'er, in him,
Forget the writ that biddeth us One only glorify!

Then they told one another all that had befallen them since their separation, after which he began to upbraid her, saying, 'What moved thee to deal with me as thou hast done this night?' 'Do not reproach me,' replied she; 'for I did this but by way of jest and for increase of pleasure and gladness.' When it was morning and the day arose with its light and shone, she sent to King Armanous and acquainted him with the truth of the case and that she was wife to Kemerezzeman. Moreover, she told him their story and the manner of their separation and how his daughter Heyat en Nufous was yet a maid. He marvelled greatly at their story and bade record it in letters of gold. Then he turned to Kemerezzeman and said, 'O king's son, art thou minded to marry my daughter and become my son-in-law?' 'I must consult the princess Budour,' answered he; 'for I owe her favour without stint.' So he took counsel with her and she said, 'This is well seen; marry her and I will be her handmaid, for I am her debtor for kindness and favour and good offices, more by token that we are here in her place and that the king her father has loaded us with benefits.' When he saw that she inclined to this and was not jealous of Heyat en Nufous, he agreed with her thereupon and told King Armanous what she had said, whereat he rejoiced greatly. Then he went out and seating himself in his chair of estate, assembled all the Viziers and Amirs and chamberlains and grandees, to whom he related the whole story and acquainted them with his desire to marry his daughter to Kemerezzeman and make him king in the stead of the princess Budour. Whereupon said they all, 'Since he is the husband of the princess Budour, who hath been our Sultan till now, whilst we deemed her King Armanous's son-in-law, we are all content to have him to Sultan over us and will be his servants, nor will we swerve from his allegiance.' At this Armanous rejoiced and summoning Cadis and witnesses and the chief officers of state, let draw up the contract of marriage between Kemerezzeman and his daughter, the princess Heyat en Nufous. Then he held high festival, giving sumptuous banquets and bestowing costly dresses of honour upon the Amirs and captains; moreover, he gave alms to the poor and needy and freed the prisoners. All the folk rejoiced in the coming of Kemerezzeman to the throne, wishing him abiding glory and prosperity and happiness and renown, and as

soon as he became king, he remitted the customs-dues and released all that remained in prison. Thus he abode a long while, ordering himself worthily towards his subjects, and lived with his wives in peace and happiness and content, lying the night with each of them in turn. And indeed all his troubles and afflictions were blotted out from him and he forgot his father King Shehriman and his former estate of honour and worship with him.

After awhile, God the Most High blessed him with two sons, as they were two shining moons, the elder, whose name was prince Amjed, by Queen Budour, and the younger, whose name was prince Asaad and who was comelier than his brother, by Queen Heyat en Nufous. They were reared in splendour and delight and were instructed in penmanship and science and the arts of government and horsemanship and other polite arts and accomplishments, till they attained the extreme of perfection and the utmost limit of beauty and grace, and both men and women were ravished by their charms. They grew up together, till they reached the age of seventeen, and loved one another so dear that they were never apart, eating and drinking together and sleeping in one bed; and all the people envied them their beauty and concord. When they came to man's estate and were endowed with every perfection, their father was wont, as often as he went on a journey, to make them sit in his stead by turns in the place of judgment, and each did justice among the folk one day at a time. Now, as unalterable fate and foreordained destiny would have it, Queen Budour fell in love with Asaad, son of Queen Heyat en Nufous, and the latter became enamoured of Amjed; and each of them used to sport and play with the other's son, kissing him and straining him to her bosom, whilst each thought that the other's behaviour arose but from motherly affection. On this wise, passion got the mastery of the two women's hearts and they became madly enamoured of the two youths, so that when the other's son came in to either of them, she would press him to her bosom and long for him never to be parted from her; till, at last, when waiting grew tedious to them and they found no way to enjoyment, they refused meat and drink and forewent the solace of sleep. Presently, the King went out to hunt, bidding his sons sit to do justice in his stead, each one day in turn, according to their wont. So prince Amjed sat on the throne the first day, ordering and forbidding, appointing and deposing, giving and denying; and Queen Heyat en Nufous took a scroll and wrote to him the following letter, suing for his favour and discovering to him her passion, in fine, altogether putting off the mask and giving him to know that she desired to enjoy him. 'From the wretched lover, the sorrowful severed one, whose youth is wasted in the love of thee and whose torment for thee is prolonged. Were I to recount to thee the extent of my affliction and what I suffer for sadness, the passion that is in my breast and all that I endure for weeping and groaning and the rending of my sorrowful heart, my unremitting cares and my ceaseless griefs and all my suffering for severance and sadness and the ardour of desire, no letter could contain it nor calculation compass it. Indeed, earth and heaven are straitened upon me, and I have no hope and no trust but in thee. I am come nigh upon death and suffer the horrors of dissolution; burning is sore upon me, and the pangs of separation and estrangement. Were I to set out the yearnings that possess me, no scrolls would suffice thereto: and of the excess of my affliction and wasting away, I have made the following verses:

Were I to set down all I feel of heart-consuming dole
And all the transport and unease that harbour in my soul,
Nor ink nor pen in all the world thereafter would remain,
Nor aught from east to west were left of paper or of scroll.'

Then she folded up the silken tresses of her hair, whose cost swallowed up treasures, in the letter, and wrapping it in a piece of rich silk, scented with musk and ambergris, laid it in a handkerchief; after which she gave it to an eunuch and bade him carry it to prince Amjed. The eunuch took it, knowing not what the future hid for him, (for He who knoweth the hidden things ordereth events according to His will,) and going in to the prince, kissed the earth before him and gave him the letter. He opened it and reading it, was ware that his father's wife was in intent an adulteress and a traitress to her husband; whereat he was exceeding wroth and railed at women and their works, saying, 'May God curse women, the traitresses, that lack reason and religion!' Then he drew his sword and said to the eunuch, 'Out on thee, thou wicked slave! Dost thou carry adulterous messages for thy lord's wife? By Allah, there is no good in thee, O black of hue and heart, O foul of face and nature!' So saying, he smote him on the neck and severed his head from his body; then, folding the letter in the handkerchief, he thrust it into his pocket and went in to his own mother and told her what had passed, reviling and reproaching her and saying, 'Each one of you is worse than the other; and by God the Great, did I not fear to transgress against the rights of my father and my brother Asaad, I would assuredly go in to her and cut off her head, even as I cut off that of her eunuch!' Then he went out in a great rage; and when the news reached Queen Heyat en Nufous of what he had done with her messenger, she reviled him and cursed him and plotted perfidy against him. He passed the night, sick with anger and disgust and concern, nor was meat nor drink nor sleep sweet to him. Next morning, prince Asaad went out in his turn to rule the folk in his father's stead and sat in the audience-chamber, judging and administering justice, appointing and deposing, ordering and forbidding, giving and bestowing, till near the time of afternoon-prayer, when Queen Budour sent for a crafty old woman and discovering to her what was in her heart, wrote a letter to prince Asaad, complaining of the excess of her love and longing for him, as follows: 'From her who perisheth for passion and love-longing to the goodliest of mankind in form and nature, him who is conceited of his own loveliness and glories in his amorous grace, who turneth away from those that seek to enjoy him and refuseth to show favour unto the lowly and the self-abasing, him who is cruel and disdainful; from the despairing lover to prince Asaad, lord of surpassing beauty and excelling grace, of the moon-bright face and the flower-white brow and dazzling splendour. This is my letter to him whose love consumes my body and rends my skin and my bones. Know that my patience fails me and I am at a loss what to do: longing and wakefulness weary me and sleep and patience deny themselves to me; but mourning and watching stick fast to me and desire and passion torment me, and the extremes of languor and sickness. Yet may my life be thy ransom, though it be thy pleasure to slay her who loveth thee, and may God prolong thy life and preserve thee from every ill!' After this, she wrote the following verses:

Fate hath so ordered it that I must needs thy lover be,
O thou whose charms shine as the moon, when at the full is she!

All beauty and all eloquence thou dost in thee contain
And over all the world of men thou'rt bright and brave to see.
That thou my torturer shouldst be, I am indeed content,
So but thou wilt one glance bestow, as almous-deed, on me.
Happy, thrice happy is her lot who dieth for thy love!
No good is there in any one that doth not cherish thee.

And these also:

To thee, O Asaad, of the pangs of passion I complain;
Have pity on a slave of love, that burns for longing pain.
How long, I wonder, shall the hands of passion sport with me
And love and dole and sleeplessness consume me, heart and brain?
Whiles do I plain me of a sea within my heart and whiles
Of flaming; surely, this is strange, O thou my wish and bane!
Give o'er thy railing, censor mine, and set thyself to flee
From love that maketh eyes for aye with burning tears to rain.
How oft, for absence and desire, I cry, "Alas, my grief!"
But all my crying and lament in this my case are vain.
Thou hast with rigours made me sick, that passed my power to bear:
Thou'rt the physician; do thou me with what befits assain.
O thou my censurer, forbear to chide me for my case,
Lest, of Love's cruel malady, perdition thee attain.

Then she scented the letter with odoriferous musk and winding it in the tresses of her hair, which were of Irak silk, with tassels of oblong emeralds, set with pearls and jewels, delivered it to the old woman, bidding her carry it to prince Asaad. She undertook the errand, to pleasure her, and going in straightway to the prince, found him in his closet and delivered him the letter; after which she stood waiting for the answer. When Asaad had read the letter and knew its purport, he wrapped it up again in the tresses and put it in his pocket, cursing false women; then, for he was beyond measure wroth, he sprang up and drawing his sword, smote the old woman on the neck and cut off her head. Then he went in to his mother, Queen Heyat en Nufous, whom he found lying on her bed, sick for that which had betided her with prince Amjed, and railed at her and cursed her; after which he left her and betook himself to his brother, to whom he related what had befallen him with Queen Budour, adding, 'By Allah, O my brother, but that I feared to grieve thee, I had gone in to her forthright and smitten her head off her shoulders!' 'By Allah, O my brother,' replied Amjed, 'the like of what hath befallen thee befell me also yesterday with thy mother Queen Heyat en Nufous.' And he told him what had passed, adding, 'By Allah, O my brother, nought but respect for thee withheld me from going in to her and dealing with her even as I dealt with the eunuch!' They passed the rest of the night in trouble and affliction, conversing and cursing false women, and agreed to keep the matter secret, lest their father should hear of it and kill the two women.

On the morrow, the King returned with his suite from hunting and sat awhile in his chair of estate; after which he dismissed the Amirs and went up to his harem, where he found his two wives lying on the bed, exceeding sick. Now they had made a plot

against the two princes and concerted to do away their lives, for that they had exposed themselves before them and feared to be at their mercy. When Kemerezzeman saw them on this wise, he said to them, 'What ails you?' Whereupon they rose and kissing his hands, answered, perverting the case and saying, 'Know, O King, that thy sons, who have been reared in thy bounty, have played thee false and outraged thee in the persons of thy wives.' When he heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and his reason fled for the excess of his rage; then said he to them, 'Expound this thing to me.' 'O King of the age,' answered Budour, 'know that these many days past thy son Asaad has been wont to send me letters and messages to solicit me to lewdness, and I still forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden. When thou wentest forth to hunt, he rushed in on me, drunk and with a drawn sword in his hand, and smiting my eunuch, slew him. Then he mounted on my breast, still holding the sword, and I feared lest he should slay me even as he had slain my eunuch, if I gainsaid him; so he took his will of me by force; and now an thou do me not justice on him, O King, I will slay myself with my own hand, for I reck not of life in the world after this foul deed.' Queen Heyat en Nufous, choking with tears, told him a like story respecting prince Amjed, after which she fell a- weeping and wailing and said, 'Except thou avenge me on him, I will tell my father, King Armanous.' Then they both wept sore before King Kemerezzeman, who, when he saw their tears and heard their words, concluded that their story was true and waxing beyond measure wroth, went out, thinking to fall upon his two sons and put them to death. On his way he met his father-in-law King Armanous, who hearing of his return from the chase, had come to salute him and seeing him with the naked sword in his hand and the blood dripping from his nostrils, for excess of rage, enquired what ailed him. Kemerezzeman told him what his sons Amjed and Asaad had done and added, 'I am now going in to them, to slay them on the foulest wise and make of them the most shameful of examples.' 'O my son,' said King Armanous, (and indeed he too was wroth with them,) 'thou dost well, and may God not bless them nor any sons that offend thus against their father's honour! But, O my son, the proverb says, "Whoso looks not to the issues, Fortune is no friend to him." In any case, they are thy sons, and it befits not that thou put them to death with thine own hand, lest thou drink of their agony and after repent of having slain them, whenas repentance will avail thee nothing. Rather do thou send one of thine officers with them into the desert and let him kill them there, out of thy sight, for, as says the adage, "When the eye sees not, the heart grieves not."' Kemerezzeman saw his father-in-law's words to be just, so he sheathed his sword and turning back, sat down upon his throne and called his treasurer, a very old man, versed in affairs and in the shifts of fortune, to whom he said, 'Go in to my sons Amjed and Asaad; bind fast their hands behind them and lay them in two chests and set them on a mule. Then take horse and carry them into the mid-desert, where do thou put them to death and fill two vials with their blood and bring them to me in haste.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the treasurer and went out forthright to do his bidding. On his way, he met the princes coming out of the palace-vestibule, for they had donned their richest clothes and were on their way to salute their father and give him joy of his safe return from the chase. When he saw them, he laid hands on them, saying, 'O my sons, know that I am but a slave commanded and that your father hath laid a commandment on me: will ye obey his commandment?' 'Yes,' answered they; whereupon he bound their hands and laying

them in the chests, set the latter on the back of a mule, with which he left the city and rode into the open country, till near midday, when he halted in a waste and desert spot and dismounting, set down the two chests. He opened them and took out Amjed and Asaad; whom when he saw, he wept sore for their beauty and grace; then drawing his sword, he said to them, 'O my lords, indeed it irks me to deal so foully by you; but I am to be excused in this, being but a slave commanded, for that your father King Kemerezzeman hath bidden me strike off your heads.' 'O Amir,' answered they, 'do the King's bidding, for we submit with patience to that which God (to whom be ascribed might and majesty) hath decreed to us; and thou art quit of our blood.' Then they embraced and bade each other farewell, and Asaad said to the treasurer, 'God on thee, O uncle, spare me the sight of my brother's agony and make me not drink of his anguish, but kill me first, that it may be the easier for me.' Amjed said the like and entreated the treasurer to kill him before Asaad, saying, 'My brother is younger than I; so make me not taste of his anguish.' And they both wept sore, whilst the treasurer wept for their weeping, and they said to each other, 'All this comes of the malice of those traitresses, our mothers; and this is the reward of our forbearance towards them. But there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, we are His and unto Him we return.' And Asaad embraced his brother, sobbing and repeating the following verses:

O Thou to whom the sad complain, to whom the fearful flee,
Thou that art evermore prepared for all that is to be,
Lord, there is left me no resource but at Thy door to knock;
Yea, at whose portal shall I knock, if Thou be deaf to me?
O Thou, the treasures of whose grace are in the one word "Be,"
Be favourable, I beseech, for all good is with Thee!

When Amjed heard his brother's weeping, he wept also and pressed him to his bosom, repeating the following verses:

O Thou, whose bounties unto me are more than one, I trow,
Whose favours lavished on my head are countless as the sand,
No blow of all the blows of fate has ever fall'n on me,
But I have found Thee ready still to take me by the hand.

Then said he to the treasurer, 'I conjure thee by the One God the Omnipotent King and Protector, kill me before my brother Asaad and allay the fire of my heart!' But Asaad wept and exclaimed, 'Not so: I will die first;' whereupon said Amjed, 'It were best that we embrace each other, so the sword may fall upon us and kill us both at one stroke.' So they embraced, face to face, and clipped each other straitly, whilst the treasurer bound them fast with cords, weeping the while. Then he drew his sword and said to them, 'By Allah, O my lords, it is indeed hard to me to kill you! But have ye no last wishes or injunctions that I may fulfil or message that I may carry?' 'We have no wish,' replied Amjed, 'and my only injunction to thee is that thou set my brother undermost, that the blow may fall on me first; and when thou hast slain us and returnest to the King and he asks thee, "What said they before their death?" do thou answer, "Thy sons salute thee and say to thee, 'Thou knewest not if we were innocent

or guilty, yet hast thou put us to death and hast not certified thyself of our guilt nor looked into our case.'" Then do thou repeat to him these verses:

Women are very devils, made to work us dole and death;
Refuge I seek with God Most High from all their craft and scaith.
Prime source are they of all the ills that fall upon mankind,
Both in the fortunes of this world and matters of the faith.

'We desire of thee nought but this,' continued Amjed, 'except that thou have patience with us, whilst I repeat other two lines to my brother.' Then he wept sore and recited the following verses:

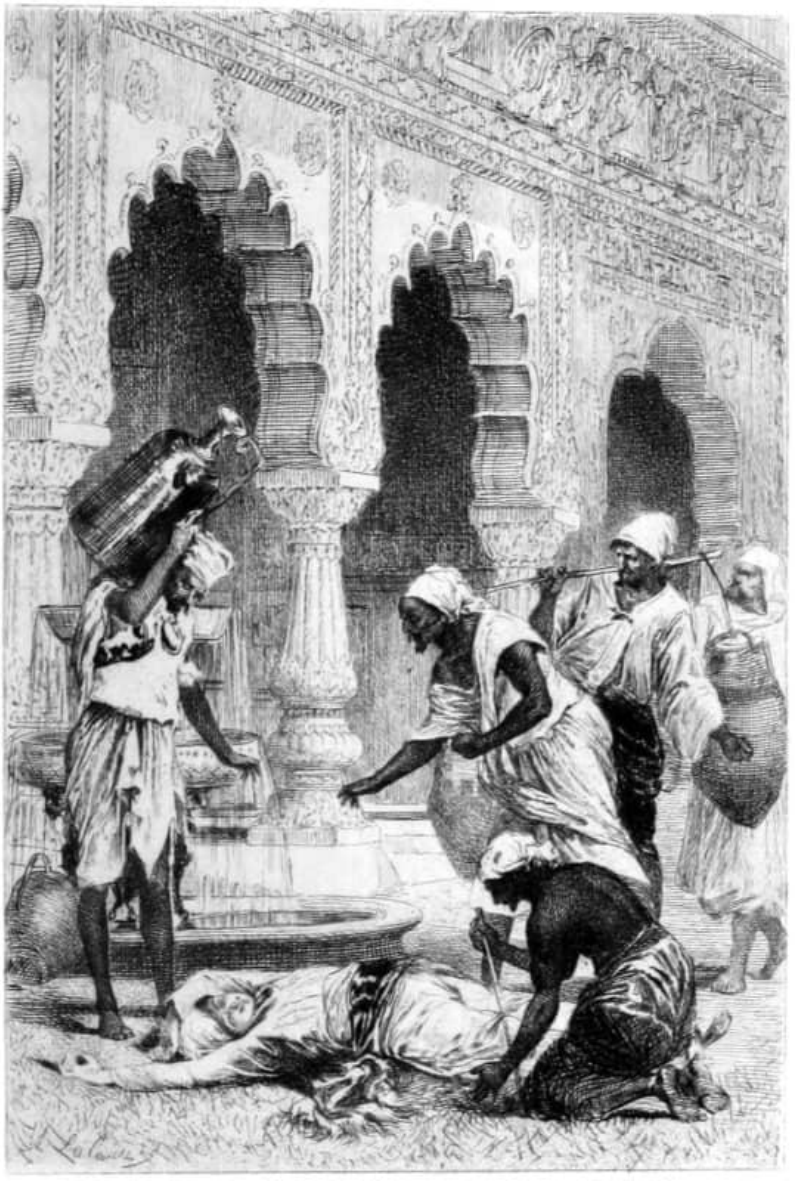
Examples many, thou and I, We have in kings of days gone by, How many, alack, have trod this road, Of great and small and low and high!

At this the treasurer wept, till his beard was wet, whilst Asaad's eyes filled with tears and he in turn repeated these verses:

Fate, when the thing itself is past, afflicteth with the trace,
And weeping is not, of a truth, for body or form or face.
What ails the nights? May God blot out our error from the nights
And may the hand of change bewray and bring them to disgrace!
They wreaked their malice to the full on Ibn ez Zubeir erst,
And on the House and Sacred Stone his safeguard did embrace.
Would God, since Kharijeh they took for Amrou's sacrifice,
They'd ransomed Ali with whome'er they would of all our race!

Then, with cheeks stained with thick-coming tears, he recited these also:

The days and nights are fashioned for treachery and despite;
Yea, they are full of perfidy and knavish craft and sleight.
The mirage is their lustre of teeth, and to their eyes
The horror of all darkness the kohl that keeps them bright.
My crime against them (hateful their nature is!) is but
The sword's crime, when the sworder sets on into the fight.



Then he sobbed and said:

O thou that seeketh the worthless world, give ear to me and know
The very net of ruin it is and quarry of dole and woe;
A stead, whom it maketh laugh to-day, to-morrow it maketh weep:
Out on it then for a dwelling-place, since it is even so!
Its raids and its onsets are never done, nor can its bondsman win
To free himself from its iron clutch by dint of stress and throe.
How many an one in its vanities hath gloried and taken pride,
Till froward and arrogant thus he grew and did all bounds o'ergo!
Then did she turn him the buckler's back and give him to drink therein
Full measure and set her to take her wreak of the favours she did show.
For know that her blows fall sudden and swift and unawares, though long
The time of forbearance be and halt the coming of fate and slow.
So look to thyself, lest life in the world pass idle and profitless by,
And see that thou fail not of taking thought to the end of all below.
Cast loose from the chains of the love and the wish of the world and thou shalt find
Guidance and help unto righteousness and peace of heart, I trow.

When he had made an end of these verses, he clipped his brother in his arms, till they seemed as it were one body, and the treasurer, raising his sword, was about to strike them, when, behold, his horse took fright at the wind of his upraised hand and breaking its tether, fled into the desert. Now the horse was worth a thousand dinars and on his back was a splendid saddle, worth much money: so the treasurer threw down his sword, in great concern, and ran after him, to catch him. The horse galloped on, snorting and neighing and pawing the earth in his fright, till he raised a cloud of dust, and presently coming to a wood, fled into the midst of it, whither the treasurer followed him. Now there was in this wood a terrible lion, foul of face, with eyes that cast forth sparks; his look was grim and his aspect struck terror into men's souls. He heard the noise made by the horse and came out to see what was to do. Presently the treasurer turned and saw the lion making towards him; but found no way of escape, nor had he his sword with him. So he said in himself, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! This stress is come upon me because of Amjed and Asaad; and indeed this journey was unblest from the first!' Meanwhile Amjed and Asaad were grievously oppressed by the heat and grew sore athirst, so that their tongues hung out and they cried for succour; but none came to their relief and they said, 'Would God we were dead and at peace from this torment! But we know not whither the treasurer's horse hath fled, that he has gone and left us bound. If he would but come back and kill us, it were easier to us than to suffer this torture.' 'O my brother,' said Asaad, 'be patient and the relief of God (blessed and exalted be He) will surely come to us; for the horse ran not away save of His favour towards us, and nought irks us but this thirst.' So saying, he stretched himself and strained right and left, till he burst his bonds; then he unbound his brother and taking up the Amir's sword, said, 'By Allah, we will not go hence, till we know what is come of him!' So they followed the track, till it led them to the wood and they said to one another, 'Of a surety, the horse and the treasurer have not overgone this wood.' Quoth Asaad, 'Stay thou here, whilst I enter the wood and search it.' 'I will not let thee go in alone,' answered Amjed.

'We will both go in; so if we escape, we shall escape together, and if we perish, we shall perish together.' So they entered both and found the lion standing over the treasurer, who lay like a sparrow in his grip, calling upon God for help and lifting his hands to heaven. When Amjed saw this, he took the sword and running to the lion, smote him between the eyes and laid him dead on the ground. The Amir arose, marvelling at this, and seeing Amjed and Asaad his lord's sons, standing there, cast himself at their feet and exclaimed, 'By Allah, O my lords, it were foul wrong in me to put you to death! May the man never be who would kill you! Indeed, I will ransom you with my life.' Then he rose and embracing them, enquired how they had loosed their bonds and come thither, whereupon they told him how the bonds of one of them had fallen loose and he had unbound the other, that they might quit their intent, and how they had followed his track till they came upon him. He thanked them for their deed and went with them forth of the wood, where they said to him, 'O uncle, do our father's bidding.' 'God forbid,' answered he, 'that I should draw near to you with hurt! I mean to take your clothes and clothe you with mine; then will I fill two vials with the lion's blood and go back to the King and tell him I have put you to death. But as for you, fare ye forth into the lands, for God's earth is wide; and know, O my lords, that it irks me to part from you.' At this, they all fell a-weeping; then the two youths put off their clothes and the treasurer covered them with his own. Moreover, he filled two vials with the lion's blood and making two parcels of the princes' clothes, set them before him on his horse's back. Then he took leave of them and making his way back to the city, went in to King Kemerezzeman and kissed the earth before him. The King saw him pale and troubled and deeming this came of the slaughter of the two princes (though in truth it came of his adventure with the lion) rejoiced and said to him, 'Hast thou done the business?' 'Yes, O our lord,' answered the treasurer and gave him the two parcels of clothes and the two vials of blood. 'How bore they themselves,' asked the King, 'and did they give thee any charge?' 'I found them patient and resigned to their fate,' answered the treasurer; 'and they said to me, "Verily, our father is excusable; bear him our salutation and say to him, 'Thou art quit of our blood;' and repeat to him the following verses:

Women are very devils, made to work us dole and death;
Refuge I seek with God Most High from all their craft and scaith.
Prime source are they of all the ills that fall upon mankind,
Both in the fortunes of this world and matters of the faith."'

When the King heard this, he bowed his head a long while and knew this to mean that they had wrongfully been put to death. Then he bethought himself of the perfidy of women and the calamities brought about by them, and opening the two parcels fell to turning over his sons' clothes and weeping. Presently, he found in the pocket of his son Asaad's clothes a letter in Queen Budour's hand, enclosing the tresses of her hair, and reading it, knew that the prince had been falsely accused. Then he searched Amjed's clothes and found in his pocket a letter in the handwriting of Queen Heyat en Nufous, enclosing the tresses of her hair; so he opened and read it and knew that Amjed also had been wronged; whereupon he beat hand upon hand and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! I have slain my sons unjustly.' And he buffeted his face, crying out, 'Alas, my sons! Alas, my long grief!' Then he bade build

two tombs in one house, which he styled 'House of Lamentations,' and let grave thereon his sons' names; and he threw himself on Amjed's tomb, weeping and groaning and lamenting, and repeated these verses:

O moon, that hast set beneath the earth for aye,
For whose loss weep the shining stars of the sky,
O wand, after whom no more shall the flexile grace
Of the willow-like bending shape enchant the eye,
My sight I've bereft of thee, of my jealousy,
And ne'er shall I see thee again, till I come to die.
I'm drowned in the sea of my tears, for sheer unrest;
Indeed, for sleepless sorrow in hell am I.

Then he threw himself on Asaad's tomb and recited the following verses, whilst the tears poured from his eyes:

Fain had I shared with thee, dear heart, in death and ill;
But God, that ordereth all, willed other than my will.
All that I see, my dole makes black, whilst from my eyes
All black I've blotted out with weeping all my fill.
I weep and never stint; mine eyes run never dry;
My entrails ulcered are and blood and tears distil.
Sore, sore it irketh me to see thee in a place
Where slaves and kings alike foregather, will or nill.

Then he forsook his friends and intimates, and denying himself to his women and his family, shut himself up in the House of Lamentations, where he passed his time in weeping for his sons.

Meanwhile, Amjed and Asaad fared on into the desert a whole month's journey, eating of the fruits of the earth and drinking of the rain-pools, till their travel brought them to a mountain of black stone, where the road divided in two, one skirting the foot of the mountain and the other leading to its summit. They took the former way, for fear of thirst, and followed it five days, but saw no end to it and were overcome with weariness, being unused to walking in mountains or elsewhere. At last, despairing of coming to the end of the road, they retraced their steps and taking the other, that led over the mountain, followed it all that day, till nightfall, when Asaad, weary with much travel, said to Amjed, 'O my brother, I can go no farther, for I am exceeding weak.' 'Courage,' replied Amjed; 'may be God will send us relief.' So they walked on part of the night, till the darkness closed in upon them, when Asaad became beyond measure weary and saying, 'O my brother, I am worn out and spent with walking,' threw himself on the ground and wept. Amjed took him in his arms and fared on with him, halting bytimes to rest, till break of day, when they came to the mountain-top and found there a stream of running water and by it a pomegranate-tree and a prayer-niche. They could hardly believe their eyes, but, sitting down by the spring, drank of its water and ate of the fruit of the tree; after which they lay down and slept till sunrise, when they washed in the spring and eating of the pomegranates, slept again till the time of afternoon-prayer. Then they thought to continue their journey, but Asaad could not

walk, for his feet were swollen. So they abode there three days, till they were rested, after which they set out again and fared on over the mountain days and nights, well-nigh perished for thirst, till they came in sight of a city afar off, at which they rejoiced and made towards it. When they drew near it, they thanked God the Most High and Amjed said to Asaad, 'O my brother, sit here, whilst I go to yonder city and see what and whose it is and where we are in God's wide world, that we may know through what lands we have passed in crossing this mountain, whose skirts if we had followed, we had not reached this city in a whole year: so praised be God for safety!' 'By Allah,' replied Asaad, 'none shall go but myself, and may I be thy ransom! If thou leave me, I shall imagine a thousand things and suffer tortures of anxiety on thine account, for I cannot brook thine absence from me.' 'Go then,' rejoined Amjed, 'and do not tarry.' So Asaad took money and leaving his brother awaiting him, descended the mountain and fared on, till he entered the city. As he passed through the streets, he met an old man, with a beard that flowed down upon his breast and was parted in twain; he bore a walking-staff in his hand and was richly clad, with a great red turban on his head. When Asaad saw him, he wondered at his mien and habit; nevertheless, he went up to him and saluting him, enquired the way to the market. The old man smiled in his face and said, 'O my son, meseems thou art a stranger?' 'Yes,' answered Asaad; 'I am a stranger.' 'O my son,' rejoined the other, 'verily, thou gladdenest our country with thy presence and makest thine own land desolate by reason of thine absence. What wantest thou of the market?' 'O uncle,' replied Asaad, 'I have an elder brother, with whom I have journeyed these three months, for we come from a far country. When we sighted this city, I left my brother in the mountain and came hither, purposing to buy food and what else and return therewith to him, that we might feed thereon.' 'Rejoice in all good, O my son!' said the old man. 'Know that to-day I give a marriage-feast, to which I have bidden many guests, and I have made ready great plenty of the best and most delicious meats that the heart can desire. So, if thou wilt come home with me, I will give thee freely all thou lackest, without price. Moreover, I will teach thee the ways of the city; and praised be God, O my son, that thou hast fallen in with me and none other!' 'As thou wilt,' answered Asaad; 'but make haste, for my brother awaits me and his whole heart is with me.' So the old man took Asaad by the hand, smiling in his face and saying, 'Glory be to Him who hath delivered thee from the people of this city!' Then he carried him to a narrow lane and entering a spacious house, brought him into a saloon, wherein were forty old men, seated in a circle about a lighted fire, to which they were doing worship and prostrating themselves. When Asaad saw this he was confounded and his flesh quaked, though he knew not what they were; and the old man said to them, 'O elders of the fire, how blessed is this day!' Then he cried out, saying, 'Ho, Ghezban!' Whereupon there came out to him a tall black slave of forbidding aspect, grim-visaged and flat-nosed. The old man made a sign to him, and he bound Asaad straitly; after which the old man said to him, 'Bear him to the dungeon under the earth and bid my slave-girl Kewam torture him day and night and give him a cake of bread to eat morning and evening, against the time come of the voyage to the Blue Sea and the Mountain of Fire, when we will slaughter him on the mountain as a sacrifice.' So the black carried him out at another door and raising a flag in the floor, discovered a flight of twenty steps leading to a chamber under the earth, into which he descended with him and laying his feet in irons, committed him to the

slave-girl and went away. Meanwhile, the old men said to one another, 'When the day of the Festival of the Fire comes, we will sacrifice him on the mountain, as a propitiatory offering to the Fire.' Presently the damsel went down to him and beat him grievously, till the blood streamed from his sides and he fainted away; after which she set at his head a cake of bread and a cruse of brackish water and went away and left him. In the middle of the night, he revived and found himself bound and sore with beating: so he wept bitterly and recalling his former estate of ease and honour and lordship and dominion, groaned and lamented and repeated the following verses:

Halt by the ruins of the house and question of our fate
Nor think we sojourn in the land, as in our first estate.
Fortune, the sunderer, hath wrought the severance of our loves;
Yet doth our enemies' despite against us nought abate.
A filthy cockatrice is set to torture me with whips,
Whose breast against me is fulfilled with rancour and with hate.
But haply God shall yet reknit our severed loves again
And turn our enemies from us with vengeance stern and strait.

Then he put out his hand and finding the bread and water at his head, ate enough to keep life in him and drank a little water, but could get no sleep for the swarms of bugs and lice. As soon as it was day, the slave-girl came down to him and changed his clothes, which were drenched with blood and stuck to him, so that his skin came off with the shirt; wherefore he shrieked aloud and cried, 'Alas!' and said, 'O my God, if this be Thy pleasure, increase it upon me! O Lord, verily Thou art not unmindful of him that oppresses me: do Thou then avenge me upon him!' And he groaned and repeated the following verses:

Lord, I submit myself to that Thou dost decree,
Contented to endure, if but it pleasure Thee;
To suffer at Thy will with patience nor complain,
Though I be cast to burn on coals of tamarisk-tree.
Mine enemies oppress and torture me; but Thou
With benefits belike shall 'quite and comfort me.
Far be 't from Thee to let th' oppressor go unscathed;
Thou art my hope and stay, O Lord of Destiny!

And what another says:

Avert thy face from thought-taking and care
And trust to fate to order thine affair;
For many a weary and a troublous thing
Is, in its issue, solaceful and fair.
That which was strait is oftentimes made wide
And straitened that, which easy was whilere.
God orders all, according to His will;
Gainsay Him not in what He doth prepare,
But trust in happy fortune near at hand,
Wherein thou shalt forget the woes that were.

Then the slave-girl beat him till he fainted away and throwing him a cake of bread and a cruse of brackish water, went away and left him sad and lonely, bound in chains of iron, with the blood streaming from his sides and far from those he loved. So he called to mind his brother and his former high estate and repeated the following verses, shedding floods of tears the while:

How long wilt thou wage war on me, O Fate, and bear away
My brethren from me? Hold thy hand and spare awhile, I pray!
Is it not time, O thou whose heart is as the rock, that thou
My long estrangement and my dole shouldst pity and allay?
Ill hast thou wrought to those I love and made my foes exult
With all that thou hast wreaked on me of ruin and dismay.
Yea, for the pains he sees me brook of exile and desire
And loneliness, my foeman's heart is solaceful and gay.
Thou'rt not content with what is fallen on me of bitter dole,
Of loss of friends and swollen eyes, affliction and affray.
But I must lie and rot, to boot, in prison strait and dour,
Where nought but gnawing of my hands I have for help and stay,
And tears that shower in torrents down, as from the rain-charged clouds,
And fire of yearning, never quenched, that rages night and day,
And memory and longing pain and melancholy thought
And sobs and sighs and groans and cries of "Woe!" and "Wellaway!"
Passion and soul-destroying grief I suffer, and unto
Desire, that knoweth not relent nor end, am fallen a prey.
No kindly soul is found to have compassion on my case
And with his visits and his grace my misery allay.
Lives there a true and tender friend, who doth compassionate
My sickness and my long unrest, that unto him I may
Make moan of all that I endure for dole and drearihead
And of my sleepless eyes, oppressed of wakefulness alway?
My night in torments is prolonged; I burn, without reprieve,
In flames of heart-consuming care that rage in me for aye.
The bug and flea do drink my blood, even as one drinks of wine,
Poured by the hand of damask-lipped and slender-waisted may.
The body of me, amongst the lice, is as an orphan's good,
That in an unjust Cadi's hands doth dwindle and decay.
My dwelling-place is in a tomb, three scanty cubits wide,
Wherein in shackles and in bonds I languish night and day.
My tears my wine are and my chains my music: my dessert
Woeworthy thought and cares the bed whereon myself I lay.

Meanwhile his brother abode, awaiting him, till mid-day, but he returned not: whereupon Amjed's heart fluttered and the tears welled from his eyes. The pangs of severance were sore upon him and he wept sore, exclaiming, 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my companion! Alas, my grief! I fear me we are separated!' Then he descended the mountain, with the tears running down his cheeks, and entering the city, made for the

market. He asked the folk the name of the city and of its people, and they said, 'This is called the City of the Magians, and its people serve the Fire, not the Omnipotent King.' Then he enquired of the City of Ebony and they answered, 'It is a year's journey thither by land and six months' by sea: it was governed erst by a King called Armanous, but he took to son-in-law a prince called Kemerezzeman, distinguished for justice and loyalty, munificence and benevolence, and made him king in his stead.' When Amjed heard tell of his father, he groaned and wept and lamented and knew not whither to go. However, he bought food and carried it with him, till he came to a retired spot, where he sat down, thinking to eat: but, recalling his brother, he fell a-weeping and ate but a morsel to stay his stomach, and that against his will. Then he rose and walked about the city, seeking news of his brother, till he saw a Muslim, a tailor, sitting in his shop; so he sat down by him and told him his story; whereupon quoth the tailor, 'If he have fallen into the hands of any of the Magians, thou shalt hardly see him again: yet it may be God will reunite you. But thou, O my brother,' added he, 'wilt thou lodge with me?' 'Yes,' answered Amjed, and the tailor rejoiced at this. So Amjed abode with him many days, what while the tailor comforted him and exhorted him to patience and taught him his craft, till he became expert. One day, he went forth to the sea-shore and washed his clothes; after which he entered the bath and put on clean raiment. Then he walked about the streets, to divert himself, and presently fell in with a woman of surpassing beauty and symmetry, unequalled for grace and loveliness. When she saw him, she raised her face-veil and winked to him and ogled him, reciting the following verses:

Afar, I saw thee coming and cast mine eyes down straight,
As if, loveling slender, thou wert the very sun.
Indeed, thou art the fairest of all beholden; yea,
Even than thyself thou'rt fairer, since yesterday was done.
Were beauty but allotted, to every one his due,
One-fifth of it were Joseph's or but a part of one,
And all the rest were surely thine own and only thine;
May all men be thy ransom, yea, every mother's son!

When he heard this, his heart inclined to her and the hands of love sported with him: so he winked to her in answer and repeated the following verses:

Over the rose of the cheek, the thorns of the eyelashes rise;
So who shall adventure himself to gather the flowery prize?
Lift not your hands to the rose, for long have the lashes waged war
And poured on us battle, because we lifted to it-ward our eyes.
Tell her the tyrant who plays and yet is temptation itself,
(Though still more seductive she'd be, if she dealt but in loyaller wise),
I see that, for beauty like thine, exposure's the surest of guards,
For the veiling thy face but augments its seductions and adds to our sighs;
Like the sun, on whose visage undimmed the eye still refuses to look,
And yet we may gaze at our ease, when the thinnest of clouds o'er it lies.
The honey's protected, forsooth, by the sting of the bees of the hive:
So question the guards of the camp why they stay us in this our emprise.

If my slaughter be what they desire, let them put off their rancours and stand
From between us and leave her to deal with me and my life at her guise;
For, I wot, not so deadly are they, when they set on a foe with their swords,
As the eyes of the fair with the mole, when her glances upon us she plies.

At this she sighed deeply and signing to him again, repeated the following verses:

'Tis thou that hast trodden the road of aversion and coyness; not
I Vouchsafe me the promised delight, for the time of fulfilment draws nigh.
O thou that mak'st morning to dawn with the lustre and light of thy brows
And eke, with thy brow-locks unloosed, the night to sink down from the sky,
Thou hast, with an idol's aspéct, seduced me and made me thy slave
And hast stirred me up troubles galore in many a season past by.
And yet it is just that my heart with the ardour of passion should burn,
For the fire is their due who adore aught other than God the Most High.
Thou sellest the like of myself for nothing, yea, free, without price;
If needs thou must sell, and no help, take a price, then, of those that would buy.

When he heard this, he said to her, 'Wilt thou come to my lodging or shall I go with thee to thine?' At this, she hung her head bashfully and repeated the words of the Most High, 'Men shall have precedence over women, for that God hath preferred these over those.' By this, Amjed understood that she wished to go with him and felt himself bounden to find a place wherein to receive her, but was ashamed to carry her to the house of his host, the tailor. So he walked on and she followed him from street to street, till she was tired and said to him, 'O my lord, where is thy house?' 'But a little way before us,' answered he. Then he turned aside into a handsome street, followed by the young lady, and walked on, till he came to the end, when he found it had no issue and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then, raising his eyes, he saw, at the upper end of the street, a great door, with two stone benches; but it was locked. So he sat down on one of the benches and the lady on the other; and she said to him, 'O my lord, wherefore waitest thou?' He bowed his head awhile, then raised it and answered, 'I am waiting for my servant, who has the key: for I bade him make me ready meat and drink and flowers for the wine-service against my return from the bath.' But he said in himself, 'Belike she will grow tired of waiting and go about her business, leaving me here, when I will go my own way.' However, when she was weary of waiting, she said, 'O my lord, thy servant tarries long; and here are we waiting in the street.' And she took a stone and went up to the lock. 'Be not in haste,' said Amjed; 'but have patience till the servant comes.' However, she hearkened not to him, but smote the lock with the stone and broke it in half, whereupon the door opened. Quoth he, 'What possessed thee to do this?' 'Pooh, pooh, my lord!' answered she. 'What matters it? Is not the house thine?' 'Yes,' said he; 'but there was no need to break the lock.' Then she entered, leaving Amjed confounded and knowing not what to do for fear of the people of the house; but she said to him, 'Why dost thou not enter, O light of mine eyes and darling of my heart?' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; 'but my servant tarries long upon me and I know not if he have done aught of what I bade him or not.' So saying, he entered, sore in fear of the people of the house, and found himself in a handsome saloon, full of buffets and niches and settles, furnished with stuffs of silk and brocade. It had four raised recesses, each facing other, and in the midst was a fountain of costly fashion, on whose margin stood a covered tray (of meats), with a leather table-cloth hanging up and dishes set with jewels, full of fruits and sweet-scented flowers. Hard by stood drinking vessels and a candlestick with a candle therein. The place was full of precious stuffs, and therein were chests and stools set, on each of which latter lay a parcel of clothes and a purse full of gold and silver. The floor was paved with marble and the house bore witness in every part to its owner's fortune. When Amjed saw all this, he was confounded and said in himself, 'I am a lost man! Verily, we are God's and to God we return!' As for the lady, she was transported at what she saw and said to him, 'By Allah, O my lord, thy servant has not failed of his duty; for see, he has swept the place and cooked the meat and set on the fruit; and indeed I come at the best of times.' But he paid no heed to her, his heart being taken up with fear of the people of the house; and she said, 'Fie, O my lord, O my heart! What ails thee to stand thus?' Then she sighed and giving him a kiss, that sounded like the cracking of a walnut, said, 'O my lord, and thou have bidden other than me, I will gird my middle and serve her and thee.' Amjed laughed from an angerful heart and sat down, panting and saying in himself, 'Alack, how I shall smart

for it, when the owner of the house returns!' She seated herself by him and fell to jesting and laughing, whilst he sat careful and frowning, thinking a thousand thoughts and saying in himself, 'The master of the house will surely come and what shall I say to him? He will assuredly kill me without mercy.' Presently, she rose and tucking up her sleeves, took a table, on which she laid the cloth and the tray of food; then set it before Amjed and began to eat, saying, 'Eat, O my lord.' So he came forward and ate; but the food was not pleasant to him and he ceased not to look towards the door, till the lady had eaten her fill, when she took away the meats and setting on the dessert, fell to eating of the dried fruits. Then she brought the wine-service and opening the jar, filled a cup and gave it to Amjed, who took it, saying in himself, 'Alas! what will become of me, when the master of the house comes and sees me!' Presently, as he sat, with the cup in his hand and his eyes fixed on the vestibule, in came the master of the house, who was one of the chief men of the city, being Master of the Horse to the King. He had fitted up this house for his privy pleasures, that he might make merry therein and be private with whom he would, and had that day bidden one whom he loved and had made this entertainment for him. When, therefore, this man (whose name was Behadir and who was a kindly, liberal and open- handed man) came thither and found the door open and the lock broken, he entered softly and putting in his head at the door of the saloon, saw Amjed and the lady sitting, with the dish of fruit and the wine-jar before them. Amjed at that moment had the cup in his hand and his face turned to the door; and when his eyes met Behadir's, he turned pale and trembled in every nerve. Behadir, seeing his trouble, signed to him, with his finger on his lips, as who should say, 'Be silent and come hither to me.' So he set down the cup and rose, whereupon quoth the lady, 'Whither away?' He shook his head and signing to her that he wished to make water, went out into the corridor, barefoot. When he saw Behadir, he knew him for the master of the house; so he hastened to him and kissing his hands, said to him, 'God on thee, O my lord, before thou do me any hurt, hear what I have to say.' Then he told him who he was and what caused him leave his native land and royal state, and how he had not entered his house of his free will, but that it was the lady who had broken the lock and done all this. When Behadir heard his story and knew that he was a king's son, he inclined to him and taking compassion on him, said to him, 'O Amjed, hearken to me and do what I bid thee, and I will ensure thee safety from that thou fearest; but, if thou cross me, I will kill thee.' 'Command me as thou wilt,' answered Amjed. 'I will not gainsay thee in aught, for I am the freedman of thy bounty.' 'Then go back forthright into the saloon,' rejoined Behadir, 'and sit down in thy place and take thine ease. I will presently come in to thee, and when thou seest me (now my name is Behadir) do thou revile me and rail at me, saying, "Why hast thou tarried till now?" And accept no excuse from me, but rise and beat me; and if thou spare me, I will do away thy life. Enter now and make merry and whatsoever thou seekest of me, I will bring thee forthwith. So pass the night as thou wilt and on the morrow go thy way. This in honour of thy strangerhood, for I love strangers and hold myself bounden to do them honour.' So Amjed kissed his hand and returning to the saloon, with his face clad in its native white and red, said to the lady, 'O my mistress, the place is gladdened by thy presence, and this is indeed a blessed night.' 'Verily,' said she, 'this is a wonderful change in thee, that thou now welcomest me so cordially!' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered he, 'methought my servant Behadir had robbed me of some necklaces

of jewels, worth ten thousand dinars each; however, when I went out but now, in concern for this, I sought for them and found them in their place. I know not why the knave tarries thus, and needs must I punish him for it.' She was satisfied with his answer, and they drank and sported and made merry, till near upon sundown, when Behadir came in to them, having changed his clothes and girt his middle and put on shoes, such as are worn of servants. He saluted and kissed the earth, then clasped his hands behind him and stood, with his head hanging down, as one who confesses to a fault. Amjed looked at him with angry eyes and said, 'Why hast thou tarried till now, O most pestilent of slaves?' 'O my lord,' answered Behadir, 'I was busy washing my clothes and knew not of thy being here; for thou hadst appointed me for nightfall and not for the daytime.' But Amjed cried out at him, saying, 'Thou liest, O vilest of slaves! By Allah, I must beat thee!' So he rose and laying Behadir on the ground, took a stick and beat him gingerly: but the lady sprang up and snatching the stick from his hand, laid on to Behadir so lustily, that the tears ran from his eyes and he ground his teeth together and called out for succour; whilst Amjed cried out to the lady to hold her hand and she answered, 'Let me stay my anger on him;' till at last he snatched the stick from her hand and pushed her away. Behadir arose and wiping away his tears, waited upon them awhile; after which he swept the hall and lighted the lamps; but, as often as he went in and out, the lady railed at him and cursed him, till Amjed was wroth with her and said, 'For God's sake, leave my servant; he is not used to this.' Then they sat eating and drinking, whilst Behadir waited upon them, till midnight, when the latter, weary with service and beating, fell asleep in the midst of the hall and snored and snorted; whereupon the lady, who was heated with wine, said to Amjed, 'Arise, take the sword that hangs yonder and cut off this slave's head, or I will be the death of thee.' 'What possesses thee to kill my slave?' asked Amjed; and she answered, 'Our delight will not be fulfilled but by his death. If thou wilt not kill him, I will do it myself.' 'For God's sake,' cried Amjed, 'do not this thing!' 'It must be,' replied she and taking down the sword, drew it and made at Behadir to kill him; but Amjed said in himself, 'This man hath entreated us courteously and sheltered us and done us kindness and made himself my servant: and shall we requite him by killing him? This shall never be. Then he said to the lady, 'If my slave must be killed, better I should do it than thou.' So saying, he took the sword from her and raising his hand, smote her on the neck and made her head fly from her body. It fell upon Behadir, who awoke and sitting up, saw Amjed standing by him, with the bloodstained sword in his hand, and the damsel lying dead. He enquired what had passed, and Amjed told him what she had said, adding, 'Nothing would serve her but she must kill thee; and this is her reward.' Behadir rose and kissing the prince's hand, said to him, 'Would God thou hadst spared her! But now there is nothing for it but to rid us of her forthright, before the day break.' So saying, he wrapped the body in a mantle and laying it in a basket, said to Amjed, 'Thou art a stranger here and knowest no one: so sit thou here and await my return. If I come back, I will assuredly do thee great good service and use my endeavour to have news of thy brother; but if I return not by sunrise, know that all is over with me; in which case the house and all it contains are thine, and peace be on thee.' Then he shouldered the basket and going forth, made for the sea, thinking to throw it therein: but as he drew near the shore, he turned and found himself surrounded by the chief of the police and his officers. They knew him and wondered

and opened the basket, in which they found the slain woman. So they seized him and laid him in irons till the morning, when they carried him and the basket to the King and acquainted the latter with the case. The King was sore enraged and said to Behadir, 'Out on thee! This is not the first time thou hast slain folk and cast them into the sea and taken their goods. How many murders hast thou done ere this?' Behadir hung his head, and the King cried out at him, saying, 'Woe to thee! Who killed this young lady?' 'O my lord,' answered Behadir, 'I killed her, and there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' At this the King's anger redoubled and he commanded to hang him. So the hangman and the chief of the police went down with him, by the King's commandment, and paraded him through the streets and markets of the town, whilst a crier forewent them, bidding all the folk to the execution of Behadir, the King's Master of the Horse.

Meanwhile, Amjed awaited his host's return till the day broke and the sun rose, and when he saw that he came not, he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what is come of him?' As he sat musing, he heard the crier proclaiming aloud Behadir's sentence and bidding the people to his hanging at midday; whereat he wept and exclaimed, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! He means to sacrifice himself unjustly for my sake, when it was I killed her. By Allah, this shall never be!' Then he went out and shutting the door after him, hurried through the streets, till he overtook Behadir, when he accosted the chief of the police and said to him, 'O my lord, put not Behadir to death, for he is innocent. By Allah, none killed her but I.' When the Master of the Police heard this, he took them both and carrying them before the King, told him what Amjed had said; whereupon he looked at the prince and said to him, 'Didst thou kill the young lady?' 'Yes,' answered he, and the King said, 'Tell me why thou killedst her, and speak the truth.' 'O King,' replied Amjed, 'indeed, it is a rare event and a strange matter that hath befallen me: were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as a lesson to whoso can profit by admonition.' Then he told him his whole story and all that had befallen him and his brother, first and last; whereat the King wondered greatly and said to him, 'O youth, I know thee now to be excusable. Wilt thou be my Vizier?' 'I hear and obey,' answered Amjed; whereupon the King bestowed magnificent dresses of honour on him and Behadir and gave him a handsome house, with servants and officers and all things needful, appointing him stipends and allowances and bidding him make search for his brother Asaad. So Amjed sat down in the seat of office and governed and did justice and invested and deposed and gave and took. Moreover, he sent out a crier to cry his brother throughout the city, and he made proclamation in the streets and markets many days, but heard no news of Asaad nor happened on any trace of him.

Meanwhile, the Magians ceased not to torture Asaad, night and day, for a whole year's space, till the day of their festival drew near, when the old man (whose name was Behram) made ready for the voyage and fitted out a ship for himself. When all was ready, he laid Asaad in a chest and locking it, transported it to the ship. As fate would have it, Amjed was at that very time standing looking upon the sea; and when he saw the men carrying the chest and other gear on board the ship, his heart throbbed and he called to his servants to bring him his horse. Then, mounting with a company of

his officers, he rode down to the port and halted before the Magian's ship, which he commanded his men to search. So they boarded the vessel and searched it in every part, but found nothing and returned and told Amjed, who mounted again and rode back to his palace, with a troubled mind. As he entered, he cast his eyes on the wall and saw written thereon the following verses, which when he read, he called to mind his brother and wept:

Belovéd ones, for all you're absent from my sight,
Yet in my heart and thought you have your sojourn still.
You leave me here to pine and languish for desire;
You rob mine eyes of sleep and sleep yourselves your fill.

Meanwhile, Behram embarked and shouted to his crew to make sail in all haste. So they loosed the sails and departing, fared on without ceasing many days and nights; and every other day, Behram took out Asaad and gave him a little bread and water, till they drew near the Mountain of Fire, when there came out on them a contrary wind and the sea rose against them, so that they were driven out of their course into strange waters and came in sight of a city builded upon the shore, with a citadel whose windows overlooked the sea. Now the ruler of this city was a queen called Merjaneh, and the captain said to Behram, 'O my lord, we have strayed from our course and come to the island of Queen Merjaneh, who is a devout Muslim; and if she know that we are Magians, she will take our ship and slay us to the last man. Yet needs must we put in here to rest [and refit].' Quoth Behram, 'Let us clothe this Muslim we have with us in a slave's habit and carry him ashore with us, so that, when the queen sees him, she will think and say, "This is a slave." As for me, I will tell her that I am a dealer in white slaves and that I had with me many, but have sold all but this one, whom I have retained to keep my accounts, for he can read and write.' And the captain said, 'This device should serve well.' Presently they reached the city and slackening sail, cast anchor; when, behold, Queen Merjaneh came down to them, attended by her guards, and halting before the ship, called out to the captain, who landed and kissed the earth before her. Quoth she, 'What is the lading of thy ship and whom hast thou with thee?' 'O queen of the age,' answered he, 'I have with me a merchant who deals in slaves.' And she said, 'Bring him to me;' whereupon Behram came ashore to her, followed by Asaad in a slave's habit, and kissed the earth before her. 'What is thy condition?' asked the queen; and Behram answered, 'I am a slave-dealer.' Then she looked at Asaad and taking him for a slave, said to him, 'What is thy name?' Quoth he, 'Dost thou ask my present or my former name?' 'Hast thou then two names?' asked she, and he answered (and indeed his voice was choked with tears), 'Yes; my name aforetime was Asaad, but now it is Muterr.' Her heart inclined to him and she said, 'Canst thou write?' 'Yes,' answered he; and she gave him inkhorn and pen and paper and said to him, 'Write somewhat, that I may see it.' So he wrote the following verses:

Harkye, O thou that judgest, what can a mortal do,
When fate, in all conditions, doth him to death ensue?
It casts him in the ocean, bound hand and foot, and says,
"Beware lest with the water you wet yourself, look you!"

When she read this, she had compassion upon him and said to Behram, 'Sell me this slave.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I cannot sell him, for he is the only slave I have left.' Quoth she, 'I must have him of thee, either by purchase or as a gift.' But Behram said, 'I will neither sell him nor give him.' Whereat she was wroth and taking Asaad by the hand, carried him up to the palace and sent to Behram, saying, 'Except thou set sail and depart our city this very night, I will seize all thy goods and break up thy ship.' When the message reached the Magian, he was sore troubled and said, 'Verily, this voyage is every way unfortunate.' Then he made ready and took all he needed and awaited the coming of the night, to resume his voyage, saying to the sailors, 'Provide yourselves and fill the waterskins, that we may set sail at the last of the night.' So the sailors did their occasions and awaited the coming of the night.

To return to Queen Merjaneh. When she had brought Asaad into the palace, she opened the windows overlooking the sea and bade her handmaids bring food. Accordingly, they set food before Asaad and herself, and they ate, after which the queen called for wine and fell to drinking with him. Now God (may He be exalted and glorified!) filled her heart with love for Asaad and she plied him with wine, till his reason fled and presently he rose and left the hall, to do an occasion. Seeing a door open, he went out and walked on, till he came to a vast garden full of all manner fruits and flowers and sitting down under a tree, did his occasion. Then he went up to a fountain in the garden and made the ablution and washed his hands and face, after which he would have risen to go away; but the air smote him and he fell back, with his clothes undone, and slept, and night overcame him thus.

Meanwhile, Behram, the night being come, cried out to the sailors to spread sail and depart. 'We hear and obey,' answered they; 'but give us time to fill our water-skins.' Then they landed with their water-skins and coasting the palace, found nothing but walls: so they climbed over into the garden and followed the track of feet, that led them to the fountain, where they found Asaad lying on his back, asleep. They knew him and taking him up, climbed the wall again with him, after they had filled their skins, and carried him back in haste to Behram, to whom said they, 'Beat thy drums and sound thy pipes; for we have found thy prisoner, whom Queen Merjaneh took from thee by force, and have brought him back to thee.' And they threw Asaad down before him. When Behram saw him, his heart leapt for joy and his breast dilated with gladness. Then he bestowed largesse on the sailors and bade them weigh anchor in haste. So they set sail forthright, intending for the Mountain of Fire, and stayed not their course till the morning.

As for Queen Merjaneh, she abode awhile, awaiting Asaad's return; and when she saw that he came not, she rose and sought him, but found no trace of him. Then she bade her women light flambeaux and search for him, whilst she herself went forth and seeing the garden-door open, knew that he had gone thither. So she went out and finding his slippers lying by the fountain, searched the garden in every part, but found no sign of him. Nevertheless, she gave not over the search till morning, when she enquired for the Magian's ship and was told that it had set sail in the first watch of the night; wherefore she knew that they had taken Asaad with them and this was grievous to her and she was angry. So she bade equip ten great ships forthwith and arming herself, embarked in one of them, with her guards and women and troops, richly

accoutred and armed for war. They spread the sails and she said to the captain, 'If you overtake the Magian's ship, ye shall have of me dresses of honour and largesse; but if ye let it escape, I will kill you all.' Whereat fear and great hope fell upon the seamen, and they sailed three days and nights, till, on the fourth day, they sighted Behram's ship. Ere ended day, they came up with it and surrounded it on all sides, even as Behram had taken Asaad forth of the chest and was beating and torturing him, whilst the prince cried out for succour and relief, but found neither helper nor deliverer; and indeed he was sorely tormented with much beating. Presently Behram chanced to look up and seeing himself encompassed by the queen's ships, as the white of the eye encompasses the black, gave himself up for lost and groaned and said to Asaad, 'Out on thee, O Asaad! This is all thy doing; but, by Allah, I will kill thee ere I die myself.' Then he bade the sailors throw him overboard; so they took him by the hands and feet and cast him into the sea and he sank. But God (may He be exalted and glorified!) willed that his life should be saved and that his last day should be deferred; so He caused him to rise again and he struck out with his hands and feet, till the Almighty gave him ease and relief and the waves bore him far from the Magian's ship and threw him ashore. He landed, scarce crediting his escape, and putting off his clothes, wrung them and spread them out to dry, whilst he sat, naked and weeping over his misfortunes and desolate and forlorn condition and repeating the following verses:

My fortitude fails me for travail and pain;
My patience is spent, my endeavour in vain;
My sinews are sundered; O Lord of all lords,
To whom but his Lord shall the wretched complain?

Then, rising, he donned his clothes and set out at a venture, knowing not whither he went. He fared on day and night, eating of the herbs of the earth and the fruits of the trees and drinking of the streams, till he came in sight of a city; whereupon he rejoiced and hurried on; but before he reached it, the night overtook him and the gates were shut. Now, as chance would have it, this was the very city in which he had been a prisoner and to whose king his brother Amjed was vizier. When he saw the gate was shut, he turned back and made for the burial-ground, where finding a tomb without a door, he entered and lay down and fell asleep, with his face in his sleeve.

Meanwhile, Queen Merjaneh, coming up with Behram's ship, questioned him of Asaad; but he swore to her that he was not with him and that he knew nothing of him. She searched the ship, but found no trace of Asaad, so took Behram and carrying him back to her castle, would have put him to death; but he ransomed himself from her with all his good and his ship and she released him and his men. They went forth from her, hardly believing in their escape, and fared on ten days' journey, till they came to their own city and found the gate shut, it being eventide. So they made for the burial-ground, thinking to lie the night there, and going round about the tombs, as fate would have it, saw that, in which Asaad lay, open; whereat Behram marvelled and said,' I must look into this tomb.' Then he entered and found Asaad lying asleep, with his head on his sleeve; so he raised his head and looking in his face, knew him for him on whose account he had lost his goods and his ship, and said, 'Art thou yet alive?' Then he bound him and gagged him, without further parley, and carried him to his house, where he clapped heavy shackles on his feet and lowered him into the underground

dungeon aforesaid, affected to the tormenting of Muslims, bidding a daughter of his, by name Bustan, torture him night and day, till the next year, when they would again visit the Mountain of Fire and offer him up as a sacrifice there. Then he beat him grievously and locking the dungeon door upon him, gave the keys to his daughter. By and by, she opened the door and went down to beat him, but finding him a comely sweet-faced youth, with arched brows and melting black eyes, fell in love with him and said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Assad,' answered he. 'Mayst thou indeed be happy,' exclaimed she, 'and happy be thy days! Thou deservest not torture and blows, and I see thou hast been unjustly entreated.' And she comforted him with kind words and loosed his bonds. Then she questioned him of the faith of Islam, and he told her that it was the true and orthodox faith and that our lord Mohammed had approved himself by surpassing miracles and manifest signs and that the [worship of] fire was not profitable, but harmful; and he went on to expound to her the tenets of Islam, till she was persuaded and the love of the True Faith entered her heart. Then (for God the Most High had filled her with love of Asaad), she made profession of the faith and became of the people of felicity. After this, she brought him meat and drink and talked with him and they prayed together: moreover, she made him chicken-broths and fed him therewith, till he regained strength and his sickness left him and he was restored to health. One day, as she stood at the door of the house, she heard the crier proclaiming aloud and saying, 'Whoso hath with him a handsome young man, whose favour is thus and thus, and bringeth him forth, shall have all he seeketh of wealth; but if any have him and discover it not, he shall be hanged over his own door and his goods shall be confiscated and his blood go for nought.' Now Asaad had acquainted her with his whole history: so, when she heard the crier, she knew that it was he who was sought for and going down to him, told him the news. Then she went forth with him to the palace of the Vizier, whom when Asaad saw, he exclaimed, 'By Allah, this is my brother Amjed!' And threw himself upon him; whereupon Amjed also knew him and they embraced each other and lay awhile insensible, whilst the Vizier's officers stood round them. When they came to themselves, Amjed took his brother and carried him to the Sultan, to whom he related the whole story, and the Sultan charged him to plunder Behram's house and take himself. So Amjed despatched thither a company of men, who sacked the house and took Behram and brought his daughter to the Vizier, who received her with all honour, for Asaad had told his brother all the torments he had suffered and the kindness that she had done him. Moreover, Amjed, in his turn, related to Asaad all that had passed between the lady and himself and how he had escaped hanging and become Vizier; and they made moan, each to the other, of the anguish they had suffered for separation. Then the Sultan sent for Behram and bade strike off his head; but he said, 'O most mighty King, art thou indeed resolved to put me to death?' 'Yes,' replied the King, 'except thou save thyself by becoming a Muslim.' And Behram said, 'O King, have patience with me a little.' Then he bowed his head awhile and presently raising it again, made profession of the faith and avowed himself a Muslim at the hands of the Sultan. They all rejoiced at his conversion and Amjed and Asaad told him all that had befallen them, whereat he wondered and said, 'O my lords, make ready for the journey and I will depart with you and carry you back to your father's court in a ship.' At this they rejoiced and wept sore; but he said, 'O my lords, weep not for your departure, for ye shall be re-united [with those you love], even

as were Nimeh and Num.' 'And what befell Nimeh and Num?' asked they. 'It is told,' replied Behram, '(but God alone is all-knowing), that

Story of Nimeh Ben Er Rebya and Num His Slave-girl

There lived once in the city of Cufa a man called Er Rebya ben Hatim, who was one of the chief men of the town, rich in goods and prosperous, and God had vouchsafed him a son, whom he named Nimet Allah. One day, being in the slave-dealers' mart, he saw a female slave exposed for sale, with a little girl of wonderful beauty and grace in her hand. So he beckoned to the broker and said to him, "What is the price of this woman and her child?" "Fifty dinars," answered he. "Write the contract of sale," said Er Rebya, "and take the money and give it to her owner." Then he gave the broker the price and his brokerage and taking the woman and her child, carried them to his house. When his wife saw the slave, she said to her husband (who was the son of her father's brother), "O my cousin, what is this damsel?" Quoth he, "I bought her for the sake of the little one on her arm, for know that, when she grows up, there will not be her like for beauty, either in the land of the Arabs or elsewhere." "It was well seen of thee," answered his wife. Then said she to the woman, "What is thy name?" "O my lady," replied she, "my name is Taufic." "And what is thy daughter's name?" asked she. "Saad," answered the slave. "Thou sayst sooth," rejoined her mistress. "Thou art indeed happy, and happy is he who hath bought thee." Then said she to her husband, "O my cousin, what wilt thou call her?" "What thou choosest," answered he. "Then let us call her Num," quoth she, and he said, "Good." The little Num was reared with Er Rebya's son Nimeh in one cradle and each grew up handsomer than the other. They were wont to call each other brother and sister, till they came to the age of ten, when Er Rebya said to Nimeh, "O my son, Num is not thy sister, but thy slave. I bought her in thy name, whilst thou wast yet in the cradle; so call her no more 'sister' from this day forth." "If that be so," quoth Nimeh, "I will take her to wife." Then he went to his mother and told her of this, and she said to him, "O my son, she is thy handmaid." So he went in to Num and loved her and two years passed over them, whilst Num grew up, nor was there in all Cufa a fairer or sweeter or more graceful girl than she. She learnt the Koran and all manner of knowledge and excelled in music and singing and playing upon all kinds of instruments, so that she surpassed all the folk of her time. One day, as she sat with her husband in the wine-chamber, she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

Since thou'rt my lord, by whose good grace I live in fair estate,
A sword wherewith I smite in twain the neck of adverse fate,
No need is mine to have recourse to Amr or to Zeid,
Nor any but thyself, an if the ways on me grow strait.

Nimeh was charmed with these verses and said to her, "I conjure thee, by my life, O Num, sing to us with the tambourine and other instruments!" So she sang the following verses to a lively air:

By him whose hand possesses the reins of my affair,
On passion's score, I swear it, my enviers I'll dare.
Yea, I will vex my censors and thee alone obey
And sleep and ease and solace, for thy sweet sake, forswear

And dig midmost my entrails, to hold the love of thee,
A grave, of which not even my heart shall be aware.

And Nimeh exclaimed, "Gifted of God art thou, O Num!"

But whilst they led thus the most delightsome life, El Hejjaj, [the governor of Cufa, heard of Num and] said in himself, "Needs must I make shift to take this girl Num and send her to the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan, for he hath not in his palace her like for beauty and sweet singing." Then, calling an old woman, one of his body-servants, he said to her, "Go to Er Rebya's house and foregather with the girl Num and cast about to steal her away, for her like is not to be found on the face of the earth." She promised to do his bidding; so next morning she donned clothes of wool and threw round her neck a rosary of thousands of beads; then, taking in her hand a staff and water-bottle of Yemen make, went forth, exclaiming, "Glory be to God! Praised be God! There is no god but God! God is most great! There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" Nor did she leave making devout ejaculations, whilst her heart was full of craft and fraud, till she came to Nimeh's house, at the hour of noonday-prayer, and knocked at the door. The doorkeeper opened and said to her, "What dost thou want?" Quoth she, "I am a poor pious woman, whom the time of noonday-prayer hath overtaken, and I would fain pray in this blessed place." "O old woman," answered the porter, "this is no mosque nor oratory, but the house of Nimeh ben er Rebya." "I know there is neither mosque nor oratory like the house of Nimeh ben er Rebya," rejoined she. "I am a chamberwoman of the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and am come out upon a pilgrimage of devotion." But the porter replied, "Thou canst not enter;" and many words passed between them, till at last she caught hold of him, saying, "Shall the like of me, who have free access to the houses of Amirs and grandees, be denied admission to the house of Nimeh ben er Rebya?" Presently, out came Nimeh and hearing their dispute, laughed and bade the old woman enter. So she followed him into the presence of Num, whom she saluted after the goodliest fashion; and when she looked on her, she was confounded at her exceeding beauty and said to her, "O my lady, I commend thee to the safeguard of God, who made thee and thy lord to accord in beauty and grace!" Then she stood up in the prayer-niche and betook herself to inclination and prostration and prayer, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness, when Num said to her, "O my mother, rest thy feet awhile." "O my lady," answered the old woman, "whoso seeketh the world to come must weary himself in this world, and whoso wearieth not himself in this world shall not attain the dwellings of the just in the world to come." Then Num brought her food and said to her, "O my mother, eat of my victual and pray that God may relent towards me and have mercy on me." But she replied, "O my lady, I am fasting. As for thee, thou art but a girl and it befits thee to eat and drink and make merry. May God be indulgent to thee! Quoth the Most High, '(None shall be saved) except those that repent and believe and work the works of righteousness.'" Num sat awhile, conversing with the old woman, and presently said to Nimeh, "O my lord, conjure this old woman to sojourn with us awhile, for piety is imprinted on her face." Quoth he, "Set apart for her a chamber, where she may do her devotions, and let none go in to her: peradventure God (glorified and exalted be He!) shall prosper us by the blessing of her presence and part us not."

The old woman passed the night in prayer and recitation, till daybreak, when she went in to Nimeh and Num and giving them good morning, said to them, "I pray God to have you in His holy keeping!" "Whither away, O my mother?" said Num. "My lord hath bidden me set apart for thee a chamber, where thou mayst retire for thy devotions." "God give him long life," replied the old woman, "and continue His favour to you both! I would have you charge the doorkeeper not to stay my coming in to you, and (God willing) I will go the round of the Holy Places and pray for you at the end of my devotions every day and night." Then she went out (whilst Num wept for parting with her, knowing not the purpose of her coming) and returned to El Hejjaj, who said to her, "What news?" She answered, "I have seen the girl, and indeed never bore woman of her day a lovelier than she." And El Hejjaj said to her, "So thou do my bidding, thou shalt have of me abundant good." Quoth she, "I ask of thee a month's time." And he replied, "It is well." Then she fell to paying frequent visits to Nimeh and Num, who redoubled in honour and kindness to her, and she used to go in to them morning and evening, and all in the house welcomed her, till, one day, being alone with Num, she said to her, "By Allah, O my lady, when I go to the Holy Places, I will pray for thee; but I should love thee to go thither with me, that thou mightest look on the Elders of the Faith that resort thither, and they should pray for thee, according to thy desire." "O my mother," said Num, "I conjure thee by Allah, take me with thee!" "Ask leave of thy mother-in-law," replied the old woman, "and I will take thee." So Num said to her mother-in-law, "O my lady, ask my master to let us go, thee and me, one day, with this my old mother, to pray and worship with the fakirs in the Holy Places." Presently, Nimeh came in and sat down, whereupon the old woman went up to him and would have kissed his hand, but he forbade her; so she called down blessings on him and left the house. Next day, she came again, in the absence of Nimeh, and said to Num, "We prayed for thee yesterday; but arise now and divert thyself and return ere thy lord come home." So Num said to her mother-in-law, "I beseech thee, for God's sake, let me go with this pious woman, that I may look upon the friends of God in the Holy Places and return speedily, ere my lord come." Quoth Nimeh's mother, "I fear lest thy lord know." "By Allah," said the old woman, "I will not let her sit down; but she shall look, standing on her feet, and not tarry." So on this wise she took the damsel by guile and carrying her to El Hejjaj's palace, bestowed her in a privy chamber and told him of her coming; whereupon he went in to her and looking upon her, saw her to be the loveliest of the people of the day, never had he beheld her like. When Num saw him, she veiled her face from him; but he left her not till he had called his chamberlain, whom he commanded to take fifty horsemen and mounting the damsel on a swift dromedary, carry her to Damascus and there deliver her to the Commander of the Faithful, Abdulmelik ben Merwan. Moreover, he gave him a letter for the Khalif, saying, "Bear him this letter and bring me his answer in all haste." So the chamberlain took the damsel, all tearful for separation from her lord, and setting out with her for Syria, gave not over journeying till he reached Damascus and sought an audience of the Commander of the Faithful, to whom he delivered the damsel and the letter. The Khalif appointed her a separate apartment and going into his harem, said to his wife, "El Hejjaj has bought me a female slave of the daughters (descendants) of the (ancient) Kings of Cufa, for ten thousand dinars, and has sent her to me with this letter." "May God increase thee of his favour!" answered she. Then the Khalif's sister went into Num

and when she saw her, she said, "By Allah, happy the man who hath thee in his house, were thy cost a hundred thousand dinars!" "O fair-faced one," said Num, "what King's palace is this?" "This is the city of Damascus," answered the princess, "and the palace of my brother, the Commander of the Faithful, Abdulmelik ben Merwan. Didst thou not know this?" "By Allah, O my lady," said Num, "I had no knowledge of this!" "And he who sold thee and took thy price," asked the princess, "did he not tell thee that the Khalif had bought thee?" When Num heard this, she wept and said in herself, "I have been cozened; but, if I speak, none will credit me; so I will hold my peace and take patience, knowing that the relief of God is near." Then she bent her head for shame, and indeed her cheeks were tanned with the journey and the sun. So the Khalif's sister left her that day and returned to her on the morrow with clothes and necklaces of jewels and dressed her; after which the Khalif came in to her and sat down by her side, and his sister said to him, "Look on this damsel, in whom God hath united every perfection of beauty and grace." So he said to Num, "Draw back the veil from thy face;" but she would not unveil, and he beheld not her face. However, he saw her wrists and love of her entered his heart; and he said to his sister, "I will not go in to her for three days, till she be cheered by thy converse." Then he left her, but Num ceased not to brood over her case and sigh for her separation from Nimeh, till, at eventide, she fell sick of a fever and ate not nor drank; and her face grew pale and her charms faded. They told the Khalif of this, and it grieved him; so he visited her with physicians and men of skill, but none could come at a cure for her.

As for Nimeh, when he returned home, he sat down on his bed and cried, "Ho, Num!" But she answered not; so he rose in haste and called out, but none came to him, for all the women in the house had hidden themselves, for fear of him. Then he went in to his mother, whom he found sitting with her cheek on her hand, and said to her, "O my mother, where is Num?" "O my son," answered she, "she is with one who is worthier than I to be trusted with her, namely, the devout old woman; she went forth with her to visit the fakirs and return." "Since when has this been her wont," asked Nimeh, "and at what hour went she forth?" Quoth his mother, "She went out early in the morning." "And how camest thou to give her leave for this?" said he, and she replied, "O my son, it was she persuaded me." "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" exclaimed Nimeh and going forth, in a state of distraction, repaired to the chief of the police, to whom said he, "Dost thou practice on me and steal my slave-girl away from me? I will assuredly complain of thee to the Commander of the Faithful." "Who has taken her?" asked the chief of the police, and Nimeh answered, "An old woman of such and such a favour, clad in woollen raiment and carrying a rosary of thousands of beads." "Find me the old woman," rejoined the other, "and I will get thee back thy slave-girl." "Who knows the old woman?" said Nimeh. "And who knows the hidden things save God, may He be glorified and exalted?" replied the official, who knew her for El Hejjaj's agent. Quoth Nimeh, "I look to thee for my slave-girl, and El Hejjaj shall judge between thee and me." And the master of police answered, "Go to whom thou wilt." Now Nimeh's father was one of the chief men of Cufa; so he went to the palace of the governor, whose chamberlain went in to him and told him what was to do. El Hejjaj bade admit him and enquired his business. Quoth Nimeh, "Such and such things have befallen me." And the governor said, "Bring me the chief of the police, and we will bid him seek for the old

woman." Now he knew that the chief of the police knew her; so, when he came, he said to him, "I wish thee to make search for the slave-girl of Nimeh ben er Rebya." And he answered, "None knoweth the hidden things save God the Most High." "Thou must send out horsemen," rejoined El Hejjaj, "and look for the damsel in all the roads and towns." Then he turned to Nimeh and said to him, "An thy slave-girl return not, I will give thee ten slave-girls from my house and ten from that of the chief of the police." And he said to the latter, "Go and seek for the girl." So he went out and Nimeh returned home, full of trouble and despairing of life. He had now reached the age of fourteen and there was yet no hair on his cheeks. He shut himself up from his household and ceased not to weep and lament, he and his mother, till the morning, when his father came in to him and said, "O my son, El Hejjaj hath put a cheat on the damsel and stolen her away; but from hour to hour God giveth relief." But grief redoubled on Nimeh, so that he knew not what he said nor who came in to him, and indeed his charms were changed and he was in sorry case. In this plight he abode three months, till his father despaired of him, and the physicians visited him and said, "There is no cure for him but the damsel." One day, Er Rebya heard tell of a skilful Persian physician, whom the folk gave out for accomplished in medicine and astrology and geomancy. So he sent for him and seating him by his side, entreated him with honour and said to him, "Look into my son's case." So he said to Nimeh, "Give me thy hand." Accordingly, the young man gave him his hand and he felt his pulse and his joints and looked in his face; then he laughed and turning to Er Rebya, said, "Thy son's only ailment is in his heart." "Thou sayst sooth, O sage," answered Er Rebya; "but apply thy skill to the consideration of his state and case and acquaint me with the whole thereof and hide nought from me." Quoth the Persian, "He is enamoured of a girl, who is either in Bassora or Damascus; and there is no cure for him but reunion with her." "An thou bring them together," said Er Rebya, "thou shalt have of me what will rejoice thee and shalt live all thy life in wealth and delight." "This is an easy matter," answered the Persian, "and soon brought about;" and he turned to Nimeh and said to him, "Fear not; no hurt shall befall thee; so take heart and be of good cheer." Then said he to Er Rebya, "Give me four thousand dinars of your money." So he gave them to him, and he said, "I wish to carry thy son with me to Damascus, and God willing, we will not return thence but with the damsel." Then said he to the youth, "What is thy name?" And he answered, "Nimeh." "O Nimeh," said the Persian, "sit up and be of good heart, for God will reunite thee with the damsel. So put thy trust in Him and eat and drink and be cheerful and fortify thyself for travel, for we set out for Damascus this very day." So he sat up whilst the Persian made his preparations and took of Er Rebya, in all, the sum of ten thousand dinars, together with horses and camels and beasts of burden such as he needed for the journey. Then Nimeh took leave of his father and mother and journeyed with the physician to Aleppo. They could get no news of Num there, so fared on to Damascus, where they abode three days, after which the Persian took a shop and adorned its shelves with gilding and stuffs of price and stocked them with vessels of costly porcelain, with covers of silver. Moreover, he set before himself vases and flagons of glass full of all manner ointments and syrups, surrounded by cups of crystal, and donning a physician's habit, took his seat in the shop, with his astrolabe and geomantic tablet before him. Then he clad Nimeh in a shirt and gown of silk and girding his middle with a silken kerchief embroidered with

gold, made him sit before himself, saying to him, "O Nimeh, henceforth thou art my son; so call me nought but father and I will call thee son." And he replied, "I hear and obey." The people of Damascus flocked to gaze on the youth's goodliness and the beauty of the shop and its contents, whilst the physician spoke to Nimeh in Persian and he answered him in the same tongue, for he knew the language, after the wont of the sons of the notables. The Persian soon became known among the townsfolk and they began to resort to him and acquaint him with their ailments, for which he prescribed. Moreover, they brought him the water of the sick in phials, and he would examine it and say, "He, whose water this is, is suffering from such and such a disease." And the patient would say, "Verily, this physician says sooth." So he continued to do the occasions of the folk and they to flock to him, till his fame spread throughout the city and into the houses of the great. One day, as he sat in his shop, there came up an old woman riding on an ass with housings of brocade, embroidered with jewels, and drawing bridle before his shop, beckoned to him, saying, "Take my hand." So he took her hand, and she alighted and said to him, "Art thou the Persian physician from Irak?" "Yes," answered he, and she said, "Know that I have a sick daughter." Then she brought out to him a phial and he looked at it and said to her, "Tell me thy daughter's name, that I may calculate her horoscope and learn the hour in which it will befit her to take medicine." "O brother of the Persians," answered she, "her name is Num." When he heard this, he fell to calculating and writing on his hand and presently said to her, "O my lady, I cannot prescribe for the girl, till I know what countrywoman she is, because of the difference of climate: so tell me where she was brought up and what is her age." "She is fourteen years old," replied the old woman, "and was brought up in Cufa of Irak." "And how long," asked he, "has she sojourned in this country?" "But a few months," answered she. When Nimeh heard the old woman's words and the name of his slave-girl, his heart fluttered and he was like to swoon. Then said the Persian to the old woman, "Such and such medicines will suit her case;" and she rejoined, "Then make them up and give them to me, with the blessing of God the Most High!" So saying, she threw him ten dinars, and he bade Nimeh prepare the necessary drugs; whereupon she looked at the youth and exclaimed, "God have thee in His holy keeping, O my son! Verily, she is like thee in age and favour." Then said she to the physician, "O brother of the Persians, is this thy slave or thy son?" "He is my son," answered he. So Nimeh made up the medicine and laying it in a little box, took a piece of paper and wrote thereon the following verses:

So Num but vouchsafe me a glance, to gladden my heart and my mind,
Let Suada unfavouring prove and Juml, an't please her, unkind.
"Forget her," quoth they unto me, "And thou shalt have twenty like her."
I will not forget her, I swear, for never her like should I find.

He put the paper in the box and sealing it up, wrote on the cover the following words in the Cufic character, "I am Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa." Then he gave it to the old woman, who bade them farewell and returning to the Khalif's palace, went in to Num, to whom she delivered the box, saying, "O my lady, know that there is lately come to our town a Persian physician, than whom I never saw a more skilful nor a better versed in matters of sickness. I showed him the phial and told him thy name, and he knew thine ailment and prescribed a remedy. Then, by his order, his son made

thee up this medicine; and there is not in Damascus a comelier or more elegant youth than this son of his nor hath any the like of his shop." Num took the box and seeing the names of her lord and his father written thereon, changed colour and said to herself, "Doubtless, the owner of this shop is come in search of me." So she said to the old woman, "Describe this youth to me." "His name is Nimeh," answered the old woman; "he is richly clad and perfectly handsome and has a mole on his right eyebrow." "Give me the medicine," cried Num, "and may the blessing and help of God the Most High attend it!" So she drank off the potion and said, laughing, "Indeed, it is a blessed medicine." Then she sought in the box and finding the paper, read it and knew that this was indeed her lord, whereat her heart was solaced and she rejoiced. When the old woman saw her laughing, she exclaimed, "This is indeed a blessed day!" And Num said, "O nurse, I have a mind to eat and drink." So the old woman said to the serving-women, "Bring a tray of dainty viands for your mistress;" whereupon they set food before her and she sat down to eat. Presently, in came the Khalif and seeing her sitting eating, rejoiced; and the old woman said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I give thee joy of thy slave's recovery! Know that there is lately come to our city a physician, than whom I never saw a better versed in diseases and their cure. I fetched her medicine from him and she has taken of it but once and is restored to health." Quoth he, "Take a thousand dinars and provide for her treatment, till she be completely recovered." And he went away, rejoicing in the damsel's recovery, whilst the old woman betook herself to the physician, to whom she delivered the thousand dinars and a letter that Num had written, giving him to know that she was become the Khalif's slave. He gave the letter to Nimeh, who knew her hand and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he opened the letter and found these words written therein: "From the slave despoiled of her delight, her whose reason hath been beguiled and who is separated from the beloved of her heart. Thy letter hath reached me and hath dilated my bosom and rejoiced my heart, even as saith the poet:

The letter reached me, never may the fingers fail thee aught,
That traced its characters, until with sweetest scent they're fraught!
'Twas as unto his mother's arms when Moses was restored
Or as to blind old Jacob's hands when Joseph's coat was brought."

When he read these verses, his eyes ran over with tears and the old woman said to him, "What ails thee to weep, O my son? May God never make thine eye to shed tears!" "O my lady," answered the Persian, "how should my son not weep, seeing that this is his slave-girl and he her lord Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa? Indeed, her recovery depends on her seeing him, for nought ails her but the love of him. So, O my lady, take these thousand dinars to thyself (and thou shalt have of me yet more than this) and look on us with eyes of compassion; for we know not how to bring this affair to a happy issue but through thee." Then she said to Nimeh, "Art thou indeed her lord?" "Yes," answered he, and she, "Thou sayst truly; for she ceases not to name thee." Then he told her all that had passed from first to last, and she said, "O youth, thou shalt owe thy reunion with her to none but me." So she mounted at once and returning to Num, looked in her face and smiled, saying, "O my daughter, it is just that thou weep and fall sick for thy separation from thy master Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa." Quoth Num, "Verily, the veil has been withdrawn for thee and the truth revealed to thee." "Be of

good cheer," rejoined the old woman, "and take heart, for I will surely bring you together, though it cost me my life." Then she returned to Nimeh and said to him, "I have seen thy slave-girl and find that she longs for thee yet more than thou for her; for the Commander of the Faithful is minded to foregather with her, but she refuses herself to him. But if thou be stout of heart and firm of courage, I will bring you together and venture myself for you and make shift to bring thee to her in the Khalif's palace; for she cannot come forth." And Nimeh answered, "God requite thee with good!" Then she went back to Num and said to her, "Thy lord is indeed dying of love for thee and would fain see thee and foregather with thee. What sayst thou?" "And I also," answered Num, "am dying for his sight." So the old woman took a parcel of women's clothes and ornaments and repairing to Nimeh, said to him, "Come apart with me into a privy place." So he brought her into the room behind the shop, where she painted him and decked his wrists and plaited his hair, after which she clad him in a slave-girl's habit and adorned him after the fairest fashion of woman's adornment, till he was as one of the houris of Paradise; and when she saw him thus, she exclaimed, "Blessed be God, the most excellent Creator! By Allah, thou art handsomer than the damsel! Now, walk with thy left shoulder forward and swing thy buttocks." So he walked before her, as she bade him; and when she saw he had caught the trick of women's gait, she said to him, "Expect me to-morrow night, when, God willing, I will come and carry thee to the palace. When thou seest the chamberlains and the eunuchs, fear not, but bow thy head and speak not with any, for I will ward thee from their speech; and with God is success." Accordingly, on the morrow she returned at the appointed hour and carrying him to the palace, entered and he after her. The chamberlain would have stayed him, but the old woman said to him, "O most ill-omened of slaves, this is the handmaid of Num, the Khalif's favourite. How darest thou stay her?" Then said she, "Enter, O damsel!" And they went on, till they drew near the door leading to the inner court of the palace, when the old woman said to him, "O Nimeh, take courage and enter and turn to the left. Count five doors and enter the sixth, for it is that of the place prepared for thee. Fear nothing, and if any speak to thee, answer not neither stop." Then she went up with him to the door, and the chamberlain on guard hailed her, saying, "What damsel is that?" Quoth the old woman, "Our lady hath a mind to buy her." And he said, "None may enter save by leave of the Commander of the Faithful; so go thou back with her. I cannot let her pass, for thus am I commanded." "O chief chamberlain," replied the old woman, "use thy reason. Thou knowest that Num, the Khalif's slave-girl, of whom he is enamoured, is but now restored to health and the Commander of the Faithful hardly yet credits her recovery. Now she is minded to buy this girl; so oppose thou not her entrance, lest it come to Num's knowledge and she be wroth with thee and suffer a relapse and this bring thy head to be cut off." Then said she to Nimeh, "Enter, O damsel; pay no heed to what he says and tell not the princess that he opposed thine entrance." So Nimeh bowed his head and entered, but mistook and turned to his right, instead of his left, and meaning to count five doors and enter the sixth, counted six and entering the seventh, found himself in a place carpeted with brocade and hung with curtains of gold-embroidered silk. Here and there stood censers of aloes-wood and ambergris and sweet-scented musk, and at the upper end was a couch covered with brocade, on which he seated himself, marvelling at the exceeding magnificence of the place and knowing

not what was appointed to him in the secret purpose of God. As he sat musing on his case, the Khalif's sister entered, followed by her handmaid, and seeing him seated there took him for a slave-girl and said to him, "What art thou, O damsel, and who brought thee hither?" He made no reply and she continued, "If thou be one of my brother's favourites and he be wroth with thee, I will intercede with him for thee." But he answered her not a word; so she said to her maid, "Stand at the door and let none enter." Then she went up to Nimeh and looking at him, was amazed at his beauty and said to him, "O lady, tell me who thou art and how thou camest here; for I have never seen thee in the palace." Still he answered not, whereat she was angered and putting her hand to his bosom, found no breasts and would have unveiled him, that she might know who he was; but he said to her, "O my lady, I am thy slave and cast myself on thy protection; do thou protect me." "No harm shall come to thee," said she; "but tell me who thou art and who brought thee into this my lodging." "O princess," answered he, "I am known as Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa, and I have ventured my life for my slave-girl Num, whom El Hejjaj took by sleight and sent hither." "Fear not," rejoined the princess; "no harm shall befall thee." Then, calling her maid, she said to her, "Go to Num's chamber and bid her to me."

Meanwhile, the old woman went to Num's bed-chamber and said to her, "Has thy lord come to thee?" "No, by Allah!" answered Num, and the other said, "Belike he hath gone astray and entered some chamber other than thine." "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" exclaimed Num. "Our last hour is come and we are all lost." As they sat, pondering, in came the princess's maid and saluting Num, said to her, "My lady bids thee to her entertainment." "I hear and obey," answered the damsel, and the old woman said, "Belike thy lord is with the Khalif's sister and the veil has been done away." So Num rose and betook herself to the princess, who said to her, "Here is thy lord sitting with me; it seems he has gone astray; but, please God, neither thou nor he has any cause for fear." When Num heard this, she took heart and went up to Nimeh, who rose to meet her, and they embraced and fell down in a swoon. As soon as they came to themselves, the princess said to them, "Sit down and let us take counsel for your deliverance from this your strait." And they answered, "O our lady, we hear and obey: it is thine to command." "By Allah," quoth she, "no harm shall befall you from us!" Then she called for meat and drink, and they sat down and ate till they had enough, after which they sat drinking. The cup went round amongst them and their cares ceased from them; but Nimeh said, "Would I knew how this will end!" "O Nimeh," quoth the princess, "dost thou love thy slave Num?" "O my lady," answered he, "it is my passion for her that has brought me thus in peril of my life." Then she said to the damsel, "O Num, dost thou love thy lord Nimeh?" And she replied, "O my lady, it is the love of him that has wasted my body and brought me to evil case." "By Allah," rejoined the princess, "since ye love each other thus, may he not live who would sunder you! Take heart and be of good cheer." At this they both rejoiced, and Num, calling for a lute, tuned it and preluded enchantingly, then sang the following verses:

Whenas, content with nothing less, the spies our sev'rance sought,
Allbe no debt of blood they had 'gainst me or thee in aught,
Whenas they poured upon our ears the hurtling din of war,

Whilst helpers and protectors failed and succour came there nought,
I fought the railers with my tears, my spirit and thine eyes;
Yea, with the torrent, fire and sword, to fend them off I wrought.

Then she gave the lute to Nimeh, saying, "Sing thou to us." So he took it and playing a lively measure, sang these verses:

The moon were like thee at its full, were it of freckles free,
And did it never brook eclipse, the sun would favour thee.
Indeed, I marvel, (but in love how many a marvel is!
Therein are passion and desire and cares and ecstasy,)
Short seems the distance, when I fare towards my love's abode;
But when I journey from her sight, the way is long to me.

When he had made an end of his song, Num filled the cup and gave it to him, and he drank it off; then she filled again and gave the cup to the princess, who took it and emptied it; after which she in her turn took the lute and sang as follows:

Mourning and grief possess my heart and in my breast
The ardour of desire abideth as a guest.
The wasting of my frame, alas! is manifest
And all my soul is sick with passion and unrest.

Then she filled the cup and gave it to Num, who drank it off and taking the lute, sang the following verses:

O thou, upon whom I bestowed my soul and thou rack'dst it to death
And I would have ta'en it again, but could not release it i' faith,
Relent to a lover forlorn; vouchsafe him, I pray, ere he die,
What may from perdition redeem, for this is the last of his breath.

They ceased not to sing and make merry and drink to the sweet sound of the strings, full of mirth and joyance and good cheer, till, behold, in came the Commander of the Faithful. When they saw him, they rose and kissed the ground before him; and he, seeing Num with the lute in her hand, said to her, "O Num, praised be God who hath done away from thee pain and affliction!" Then he looked at Nimeh (who was still disguised as a woman) and said to the princess, "O my sister, what damsel is this by Num's side?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "she is one of thy slave-girls and the bosom friend of Num, who will neither eat nor drink without her." And she repeated the words of the poet:

Two opposites, dissevered still in charms and straitly knit, And each one's beauty brightlier shows against its opposite.

"By the Great God," said the Khalif, "she is as handsome as Num, and to-morrow, I will appoint her a separate chamber beside that of Num and send her furniture and linen and all that befits her, in honour of Num." Then, the princess called for food and set it before her brother, who ate and filling a cup, signed to Num to sing. So she took the lute, after drinking two cups, and sang the following verses:

Whenas my cup-companion hath poured me out of wine
Three foaming cups, brimmed over with nectar from the vine,
I trail my skirts in glory all night, as if o'er thee,
Commander of the Faithful, the empery were mine.

The Khalif was delighted and filling another cup, gave it to Num and bade her sing again. So she drank off the cup, and sweeping the strings of the lute, sang as follows:

O thou, the noblest man of men that live in this our day,
Whose equal none may boast himself in power and mightiness,
O all unpeered in pride of place, to whom munificence
Is as a birthright, Lord and King, whom all in all confess,
Thou, that dost lord it, sovran-wise, o'er all the kings of earth
And without grudging or reproach, giv'st bountiful largesse,
God have thee ever in His guard, despite thine every foe,
And be thy fortune ever bright with victory and success!

When the Khalif heard this, he exclaimed, "By Allah, it is good! By Allah, it is excellent! Verily, God hath been good to thee, O Num! How sweet is thy voice and how clear thy speech!" They passed the time thus in mirth and good cheer, till midnight, when the Khalif's sister said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, give ear to a tale I have read in books of a certain man of rank." "And what is this tale?" asked he. "Know," said she, "that there lived once in the city of Cufa, a youth called Nimeh ben er Rebya, and he had a slave-girl whom he loved and who loved him. They had been reared in one bed; but when they grew up and mutual love took possession of them, fate smote them with its calamities and decreed separation unto them. For designing folk enticed her by sleight forth of his house and stealing her away from him, sold her to one of the Kings for ten thousand dinars. Now the girl loved her lord even as he loved her; so he left house and home and fortune and setting out in quest of her, made shift, at the peril of his life, to gain access to her; but they had not been long in company, when in came the King, who had bought her of her ravisher, and hastily bade put them to death, without waiting to enquire into the matter, as was just. What sayest thou, O Commander of the Faithful, of this King's conduct?" "This was indeed a strange thing," answered the Khalif; "it behoved the King to use his power with clemency, and he should have considered three things in their favour; first, that they loved one another; secondly, that they were in his house and under his hand; and thirdly, that it behoves a King to be deliberate in judging between the folk, and how much more so when he himself is concerned! Wherefore the King in this did unkingly." Then said his sister, "O my brother by the Lord of heaven and earth, I conjure thee, bid Num sing and give ear to that she shall sing!" And he said, "O Num, sing to me." So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

Fortune hath played the traitor; indeed, 'twas ever so,
Transpiercing hearts and bosoms and kindling care and woe
And parting friends in sunder, that were in union knit,
So down their cheeks thou seest the tears in torrents flow.
They were, and I was with them, in all delight of life,

And fortune did unite us full straitly whiles ago.
So gouts of blood, commingled with tears, both night and day
I'll weep, my sore affliction for loss of thee to show.

When he heard this, he was moved to great delight, and his sister said to him, "O my brother, he who decideth in aught against himself, it behoveth him to abide by it and do according to his word; and thou hast by this judgment decided against thyself." Then said she, "O Nimeh, stand up, and do thou likewise, O Num!" So they stood up and she continued, "O Commander of the Faithful, she who stands before thee is Num, whom El Hejjaj ben Yousuf eth Thekefi stole and sent to thee, falsely pretending in his letter to thee that he had bought her for ten thousand dinars. This other is her lord, Nimeh ben er Rebya; and I beseech thee, by the honour of thy pious forefathers and by Hemzeh and Akil and Abbes, to pardon them and bestow them one on the other, that thou mayst earn the recompense in the next world of thy just dealing with them; for they are under thy hand and have eaten of thy meat and drunken of thy drink; and behold, I make intercession for them and beg of thee the boon of their lives." "Thou sayst sooth," replied the Khalif, "I did indeed give judgment as thou sayst, and I use not to go back on my word." Then said he, "O Num, is this thy lord?" And she answered, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful." "No harm shall befall you," said he; "I give you to one another." Then he said to the young man, "O Nimeh, who told thee where she was and taught thee how to get at her?" "O Commander of the Faithful," replied he, "give ear to my story; for by the virtue of thy pious forefathers, I will hide nothing from thee!" And he told him all that had passed between himself and the Persian physician and the old woman and how she had brought him into the palace and he had mistaken one door for another; whereat the Khalif wondered exceedingly and said, "Fetch me the Persian." So they fetched him and he made him one of his chief officers. Moreover, he bestowed on him robes of honour and ordered him a handsome present, saying, "Him, who has shown such good sense and skill in his ordinance, it behoves us to make one of our chief officers." He also loaded Nimeh and Num with gifts and honours and rewarded the old woman; and they abode with him in joy and content and all delight of life seven days; at the end of which time Nimeh craved leave to return to Cufa with his slave-girl. The Khalif gave leave and they departed accordingly and arrived in due course at Cufa, where Nimeh foregathered with his father and mother, and they abode in the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.'

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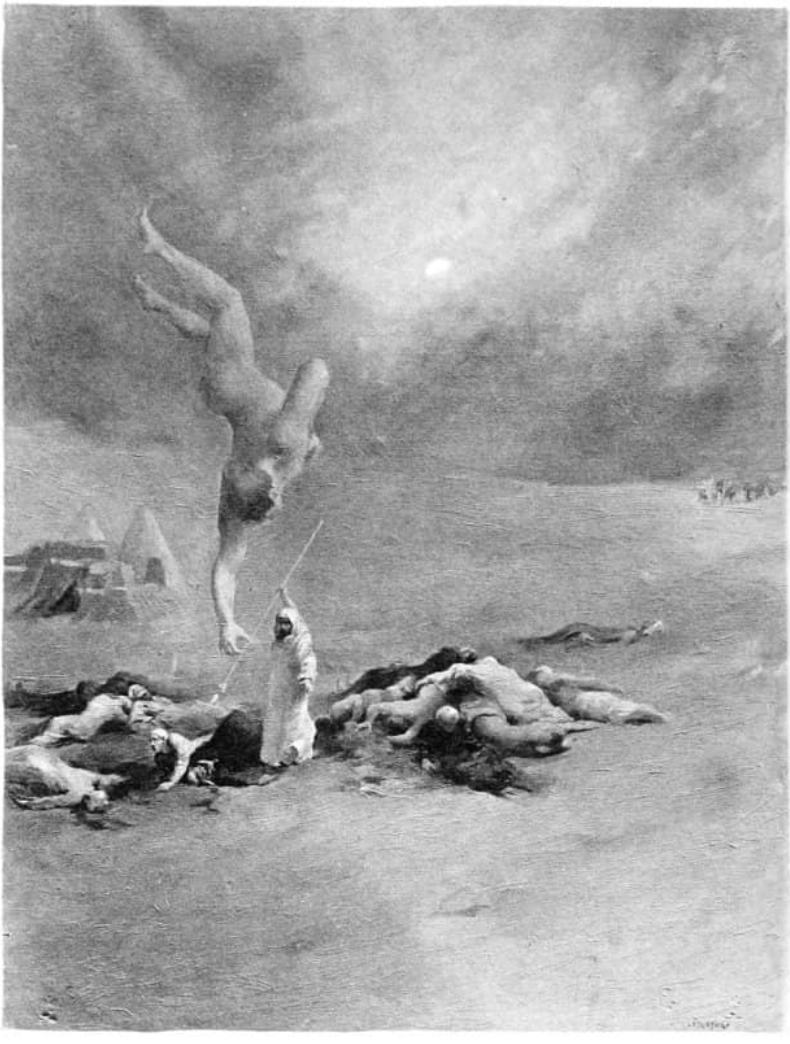
The princes wondered mightily at Behram's story and said, 'By Allah, this is indeed a rare story!' They passed the night thus, and next morning, Amjed and Asaad mounted and riding to the palace, sought an audience of the King, who received them with honour. As they sat talking, of a sudden they heard the townsfolk crying aloud and shouting to one another and calling for help, and the chamberlain came in to the King and said to him, 'Some King hath encamped before the city, he and his army, with arms displayed, and we know not who they are nor what they seek.' The King took counsel with his Vizier and Asaad, and Amjed said, 'I will go out to him and

learn the cause of his coming.' So he took horse and riding forth the city, repaired to the stranger's camp, where he found the King and with him many soldiers and mounted officers. When the guards saw him, they knew him for an ambassador from the King of the city; so they took him and brought him to their King. Amjed kissed the ground before him; but lo, the King was a queen, who wore a chin-band over her face, and she said to Amjed, 'Know that I have no design on your city and am only come hither in quest of a beardless slave of mine, whom if I find with you, I will do you no hurt; but if I find him not, then shall there befall sore battle between you and me.' 'O Queen,' asked Amjed, 'what is thy slave's name and what like is he?' Said she, 'His name is Asaad and he is of such and such a favour. My name is Merjaneh, and this slave came to my town in company of Behram, a Magian, who refused to sell him to me; so I took him by force, but the Magian fell upon him by night and took him away by stealth.' When Amjed heard this he knew that it was his brother Asaad whom she sought and said to her, 'O Queen of the age, praised be God who hath brought us relief! Know that he whom thou seekest is my brother.' Then he told her their story and all that had befallen them in the land of exile, and acquainted her with the cause of their departure from the Islands of Ebony, whereat she marvelled and rejoiced to have found Asaad. So she bestowed a dress of honour upon Amjed, and he returned to the King and told him what had passed, at which they all rejoiced and the King and the two princes went forth to meet Queen Merjaneh. They were admitted to her presence and sat down to converse with her, but as they were thus engaged, behold, a cloud of dust arose and grew, till it covered the landscape. Presently, it lifted and discovered an army, in numbers like the swollen sea, armed cap-a-pie, who, making for the city with naked swords, encompassed it as the ring encompasses the little finger. When Amjed and Asaad saw this, they exclaimed, 'We are God's and to Him we return. What is this great army? Doubtless, these are enemies; and except we agree with this Queen Merjaneh to resist them, they will take the town from us and slay us. There is nothing for us but to go out to them and see who they are.' So Amjed mounted and passing through Queen Merjaneh's camp, came to the approaching army and was admitted to the presence of their King, to whom he delivered his message, after kissing the earth before him. Quoth the King, 'I am called King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the Seas and the Seven Castles, and am come out in quest of my daughter Budour, of whom fortune hath bereft me; for she left me and returned not to me, nor have I heard any news of her or her husband Kemerezzeman. Have ye any tidings of them?' When Amjed heard this, he knew that this King was none other than his grandfather, his mother's father, and kissing the earth before him, told him that he was the son of his daughter Budour; whereupon Ghaïour threw himself upon him and they both fell a-weeping. Then said Ghaïour, 'Praised be God, O my son, for safety, since I have foregathered with thee!' And Amjed told him that his daughter Budour and her husband Kemerezzeman were well and abode in a city called the City of Ebony. Moreover, he related to him how his father, being wroth with him and his brother, had commanded his treasurer to put them to death, but that the latter had taken pity on them and let them go with their lives. Quoth King Ghaïour, 'I will go back with thee and thy brother to your father and make your peace with him.' Amjed kissed the ground before him and the King bestowed a dress of honour upon him, after which he returned, smiling, to the King of the city of the Magians and told him what he had

learnt, at which he wondered exceedingly. Then he despatched guest-gifts of sheep and horses and camels and provender and so forth to King Ghaïour and the like to Queen Merjaneh and told her what had chanced, whereupon quoth she, 'I too will accompany you with my troops and will do my endeavour to make peace [between the princes and their father.]' At this moment, there arose another cloud of dust and spread, till it covered the prospect and darkened the day; and under it, they heard shouts and cries and neighing of horses and saw the sheen of swords and the glint of lance-points. When this new host drew near the city and saw the two other armies, they beat their drums and the King of the Magians exclaimed, 'This is indeed a blessed day! Praised be God who hath made us of accord with these two armies! If it be His will, He will give us peace with yon other also.' Then said he to Amjed and Asaad, 'Go forth and bring us news of them, for they are a mighty host, never saw I a mightier.' So they opened the city gates, which the King had shut for fear of the surrounding troops, and Amjed and Asaad went forth and coming to the new host, found that it was the army of the King of the Ebony Islands, led by their father, King Kemerezzeman in person. When they came before him, they kissed the earth and wept; but, when he saw them, he threw himself upon them, weeping sore, and strained them long to his breast. Then he excused himself to them and told them how sore desolation he had suffered for their loss; and they acquainted him with King Ghaïour's arrival, whereupon he mounted with his chief officers and proceeded to the King of China's camp, he and his sons. As they drew near, one of the princes rode forward and informed King Ghaïour of Kemerezzeman's coming, whereupon he came out to meet him and they joined company, marvelling at these things and how Fortune had ordered their encounter in that place. Then the townsfolk made them banquets of all manner of meats and confections and brought them sheep and horses and camels and fodder and other guest-gifts and all that the troops needed. Presently, behold, yet another cloud of dust arose and spread till it covered the landscape, whilst the earth shook with the tramp of horse and the drums sounded like the storm-winds. After awhile, the dust lifted and discovered an army clad in black and armed cap-a-pie, and in their midst rode a very old man clad also in black, whose beard flowed down over his breast. When the King of the city saw this great host, he said to the other Kings, 'Praised be God the Most High, by whose leave ye are met here, all in one day, and proved all known one to the other! But what vast army is this that covers the country?' 'Have no fear of them,' answered they; 'we are here three Kings, each with a great army, and if they be enemies, we will join thee in doing battle with them, were three times their number added to them.' As they were talking, up came an envoy from the approaching host, making for the city. They brought him before the four Kings and he kissed the earth and said, 'The King my master comes from the land of the Persians; many years ago he lost his son and is seeking him in all countries. If he find him with you, well and good; but if he find him not, there will be war between him and you, and he will lay waste your city.' 'That shall he not,' rejoined Kemerezzeman; 'but how is thy master called in the land of the Persians?' 'He is called King Shehriman, lord of the Khalidan Islands,' answered the envoy; 'and he hath levied these troops in the lands traversed by him, whilst seeking his son.' When Kemerezzeman heard his father's name, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon; then, presently coming to himself, he wept sore and said to Amjed and Asaad, 'Go, O my sons, with the messenger: salute your grandfather,

King Shehriman, and give him glad tidings of me, for he mourns my loss and even now wears black for my sake.' Then he told the other Kings all that had befallen him in his youth, at which they all wondered and mounting with him, repaired to his father, whom he saluted, and they embraced and fell down in a swoon, for excess of joy. When they revived, Kemerezzeman acquainted his father with all his adventures, and the other Kings saluted Shehriman. Then they married Merjaneh to Asaad and sent her back to her kingdom, charging her not to leave them without news of her. Moreover, Amjed took Bustan, Behram's daughter, to wife, and they all set out for the City of Ebony. When they arrived there, Kemerezzeman went in to his father-in-law, King Armanous, and told him all that had befallen him and how he had found his sons; whereat Armanous rejoiced and gave him joy of his safe return. Then King Ghaïour went in to his daughter, Queen Budour, and satisfied his longing for her company, and they all abode a month's space in the City of Ebony; after which the King of China and his daughter returned to their own country with their company, taking prince Amjed with them, whom, as soon as Ghaïour was settled again in his kingdom, he made king in his stead. Moreover, Kemerezzeman made Asaad king in his room over the Ebony Islands, with the consent of his grandfather, King Armanous, and set out himself, with his father, King Shehriman, for the Islands of Khalidan. The people of the capital decorated the city in their honour and they ceased not to beat the drums for glad tidings a whole month; nor did Kemerezzeman leave to govern in his father's room, till there overtook them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies."

"O Shehrzad," said King Shehriyar, "this is indeed a right wonderful story!" "O King," answered she, "it is not more wonderful than that of Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat." "What is that?" asked he, and she said, "I have heard tell, O august King, that



Alaeddin Abou Esh Shamat.

THERE lived once in Cairo, of old time, a merchant named Shemseddin, who was of the best and truest-spoken of the traders of the city and had great store of money and goods and slaves and servants, white and black and male and female. Moreover, he was Provost of the Merchants of Cairo and had a wife, whom he loved and who loved him; but he had lived with her forty years, yet had not been blessed with son or daughter by her. One Friday, as he sat in his shop, he noted that each of the merchants had a son or two or more, sitting in shops like their fathers. Presently, he entered the bath and made the Friday ablution; after which he came out and took the barber's glass, saying, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His Apostle!' Then he looked at his beard and seeing that the white hairs in it outnumbered the black, bethought himself that hoariness is the harbinger of death. Now his wife knew the time of his coming and had washed and made ready for him; so when he came in to her, she said, 'Good even;' but he replied, 'I see no good.' Then she called for the evening meal and said to her husband, 'Eat, O my lord.' Quoth he, 'I will eat nothing,' and pushing the table away with his foot, turned his back to her. 'Why dost thou thus?' said she. 'What has vexed thee?' And he answered, 'Thou art the cause of my vexation.' 'How so?' asked she. 'This morning,' replied he, 'when I opened my shop, I saw that each of the other merchants had a son or two or more, and I said to myself, "He who took thy father will not spare thee." Now the night I wedded thee, thou madest me swear that I would never take a second wife nor a concubine, Abyssinian or Greek or other, nor would lie a night from thee: and behold, thou art barren, and swiving thee is like boring into the rock.' 'God is my witness,' rejoined she, 'that the fault lies with thee, for that thy seed is thin.' 'And how is it with him whose seed is thin?' asked he, and she, 'He cannot get women with child nor beget children.' 'What thickens seed?' asked he. 'Tell me and I will try it: haply, it will thicken mine.' Quoth she, 'Enquire for it of the druggists.' They slept that night and arose on the morrow, repenting each of having spoken angrily to the other. Then he went to the market and accosting a druggist, said to him, 'Hast thou wherewithal to thicken the seed?' 'I had it, but am spent of it,' answered the druggist; 'ask my neighbour.' So Shemseddin made the round of the bazaar, till he had asked every one; but they all laughed at him and he returned to his shop and sat down, troubled. Now there was in the market a man called Sheikh Mohammed Semsem, who was syndic of the brokers and was given to the use of opium and bang and hashish. He was poor and used to wish Shemseddin good morrow every day; so he came to him according to his wont and saluted him. The merchant returned his salute, and the other, seeing him vexed, said to him, 'O my lord, what hath crossed thee?' Quoth Shemseddin, 'These forty years have I been married to my wife, yet hath she borne me neither son nor daughter; and I am told that the cause of my failure to get her with child is the thinness of my seed; so I have been seeking wherewithal to thicken it, but found it not.' 'I have a thickener,' said Sheikh Mohammed; 'but what wilt thou say to him who makes thy wife conceive by thee, after forty years' barrenness? 'An thou do this,' answered the merchant, 'I will largely reward thee.' 'Then give me a dinar,' rejoined the broker, and Shemseddin said, 'Take these two dinars.' He took them and said, 'Give me also yonder

bowl of porcelain.' So he gave it him, and the broker betook himself to a hashish-seller, of whom he bought two ounces of concentrated Turkish opium and equal parts of Chinese cubebs, cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms, white pepper, ginger and mountain lizard and pounding them all together, boiled them in sweet oil; after which he added three ounces of frankincense and a cupful or coriander-seed and macerating the whole, made it into a paste with Greek honey. Then he put the electuary in the bowl and carried it to the merchant, to whom he delivered it, saying, 'This is the seed-thickener, and the manner of using it is this. Make the evening-meal of mutton and house-pigeon, plentifully seasoned and spiced; then take of this electuary with a spoon and wash it down with a draught of boiled date-wine.' So the merchant bought mutton and pigeons and sent them to his wife, bidding her dress them well and lay up the electuary till he should call for it. She did as he bade her and he ate the evening-meal, after which he called for the bowl and ate of the electuary. It liked him well, so he ate the rest and lay with his wife. That very night she conceived by him and after three months, her courses ceased and she knew that she was with child. When the days of her pregnancy were accomplished, the pangs of labour took her and they raised cries of joy. The midwife delivered her with difficulty [of a son], then, taking the new- born child, she pronounced over him the names of Mohammed and Ali and said, 'God is Most Great!' Moreover, she called in his ear the call to prayer; then swathed him and gave him to his mother, who took him and put him to her breast; and he sucked his full and slept. The midwife abode with them three days, till they had made the mothering-cakes and sweetmeats; and they distributed them on the seventh day. Then they sprinkled salt and the merchant, going in to his wife, gave her joy of her safe delivery and said, 'Where is the gift of God?' So they brought him a babe of surpassing beauty, the handiwork of the Ever-present Orderer of all things, whoever saw him would have deemed him a yearling child, though he was but seven days old. Shemseddin looked on his face and seeing it like a shining full moon, with moles on both cheeks, said to his wife, 'What hast thou named him?' 'If it were a girl,' answered she, 'I had named her; but it is a boy, so none shall name him but thou.' Now the people of that time used to name their children by omens; and whilst the merchant and his wife were taking counsel of the name, they heard one say to his friend, 'Harkye, my lord Alaeddin!' So the merchant said, 'We will call him Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' Then he committed the child to the nurses, and he drank milk two years, after which they weaned him and he grew up and throve and walked upon the earth. When he came to seven years old, they put him in a chamber under the earth, for fear of the evil eye, and his father said, 'He shall not come out, till his beard grows.' And he gave him in charge to a slave-girl and a black slave; the former dressed him his meals and the latter carried them to him. Then his father circumcised him and made him a great feast; after which he brought him a doctor of the law, who taught him to write and repeat the Koran and other parts of knowledge, till he became an accomplished scholar. One day, the slave, after bringing him the tray of food, went away and forgot to shut the trap-door after him: so Alaeddin came forth and went in to his mother, with whom was a company of women of rank. As they sat talking, in came he upon them, as he were a drunken white slave, for the excess of his beauty; and when they saw him, they veiled their faces and said to his mother, 'God requite thee, O such an one! How canst thou let this strange slave in upon us? Knowest thou not that modesty is a point of the Faith?' 'Pronounce the name

of God,' answered she. 'This is my son, the darling of my heart and the son of the Provost Shemseddin.' Quoth they, 'We never knew that thou hadst a son:' and she, 'His father feared the evil eye for him and shut him up in a chamber under the earth, nor did we mean that he should come out, before his beard was grown; but it would seem as if the slave had unawares left the door open, and he hath come out.' The women gave her joy of him, and he went out from them into the courtyard, where he seated himself in the verandah. Presently, in came the slaves with his father's mule, and he said to them, 'Whence comes this mule?' Quoth they, 'Thy father rode her to the shop, and we have brought her back.' 'And what is my father's trade?' asked he. And they replied, 'He is Provost of the merchants of Cairo and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs.' Then he went in to his mother and said to her, 'O my mother, what is my father's trade?' Said she, 'He is a merchant and Provost of the merchants of Cairo and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs. His slaves consult him not in selling aught whose price is less than a thousand dinars, but sell it at their own discretion; nor doth any merchandise, little or much, enter or leave Cairo, without passing through his hands; for, O my son, God the Most Great hath given thy father wealth past count.' 'Praised be God,' exclaimed he, 'that I am son of the Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs and that my father is Provost of the merchants! But why, O my mother, did you put me in the underground chamber and leave me prisoner there?' 'O my son,' answered she, 'we did this for fear of (men's) eyes, for it is true that the evil eye hath power to harm and the most part of the sojourners in the tombs are of its victims.' 'O my mother,' rejoined he, 'where is a place of refuge against destiny? Verily, taking care estoppeth not fate nor is there any escape from that which is written. He who took my grandfather will not spare myself nor my father; for, though he live to-day, he shall not live to-morrow. And when my father dies and I come forth and say, "I am Alaeddin, son of Shemseddin the merchant," none of the people will believe me, but the aged will say, "Never in our lives saw we a son or a daughter of Shemseddin." Then the Treasury will come down and take my father's estate; and may Allah have mercy on him who saith, "The noble dies and his wealth passes away and the meanest of men take his women." So do thou, O my mother, speak to my father, that he take me with him to the market and set me up in a shop with merchandise and teach me to buy and sell and give and take.' 'O my son,' answered his mother, 'when thy father returns, I will tell him this.' So when the merchant came home, he found his son sitting with his mother and said to her, 'Why hast thou brought him forth of the underground chamber?' 'O my cousin,' answered she, 'it was not I that brought him out; but the servants forgot to shut the door and left it open; so he came forth and came in to me, as I sat with a company of women of rank.' And she went on to repeat to him what the boy had said; and Shemseddin said to the latter, 'O my son, to- morrow, God willing, I will take thee with me to the market; but I would have thee know that the commerce of the markets and the shops demands good manners and an accomplished carriage in all conditions.' So Alaeddin passed the night, rejoicing in his father's promise; and on the morrow the merchant carried him to the bath and clad him in a suit worth much money. As soon as they had broken their fast and drunken sherbets, Shemseddin mounted his mule and rode to the market, followed by his son; but when the market-folk saw their Provost making towards them, followed by a youth as he were a piece of the moon on its fourteenth night, they said, one to another, 'See yonder boy behind the Provost of the merchants.

Verily, we thought well of him; but he is like the leek, grayheaded and green at the heart.' And Sheikh Mohammed Semsem before mentioned, the Deputy of the market, said, 'O merchants, never will we accept the like of him for our chief.' Now it was the custom, when the Provost came from his house and sat down in his shop of a morning, for the Deputy of the market and the rest of the merchants to go in a body to his ship and recite to him the opening chapter of the Koran, after which they wished him good morrow and went away, each to his shop. Shemseddin seated himself in his shop as usual, but the merchants come not to him as of wont; so he called the Deputy and said to him, 'Why come not the merchants together as usual?' 'I know not how to tell thee,' answered Mohammed Semsem; 'for they have agreed to depose thee from the headship of the market and to recite the first chapter to thee no more.' 'And why so?' asked Shemseddin. 'What boy is this that sits beside thee,' asked the Deputy, 'and thou a man of years and chief of the merchants? Is he a slave or akin to thy wife? Verily, I think thou lovest him and inclinest [unlawfully] to the boy.' With this, the Provost cried out at him, saying, 'God confound thee, hold thy peace! This is my son.' 'Never knew we that thou hadst a son,' rejoined the Deputy; and Shemseddin answered, 'When thou gavest me the seed-thickener, my wife conceived and bore this youth, whom I reared in a chamber under the earth, for fear of the evil eye, nor was it my purpose that he should come forth, till he could take his beard in his hand. However, his mother would not agree to this, and he would have me bring him to the market and stock him a shop and teach him to sell and buy.' So the Deputy returned to the other merchants and acquainted them with the truth of the case, whereupon they all arose and going in a body to Shemseddin's shop, stood before him and recited the first chapter of the Koran to him; after which they gave him joy of his son and said to him, 'God prosper root and branch! But even the poorest of us, when son or daughter is born to him, needs must he make a pot of custard and bid his friends and acquaintances; yet thou hast not done this.' Quoth he, 'This is your due from me; be our rendezvous in the garden.' So next morning, he sent the carpet- layer to the pavilion in the garden and bade him furnish it. Moreover, he sent thither all that was needful for cooking, such as sheep and butter and so forth, and spread two tables, one in the saloon and another in the upper chamber. Then he and his son girded themselves, and he said to the latter, 'O my son, when a graybeard enters, I will meet him and carry him into the upper chamber and seat him at the table; and do thou, in like manner, receive the beardless youths and seat them at the table in the saloon.' 'O my father,' asked Alaeddin, 'why dost thou spread two tables, one for men and another for youths?' 'O my son,' answered Shemseddin, 'the beardless boy is ashamed to eat with men.' And his son was content with this answer. So when the merchants arrived, Shemseddin received the men and seated them in the upper chamber, whilst Alaeddin received the youths and seated them in the saloon. Then the servants set on food and the guests ate and drank and made merry, whilst the attendants served them with sherbets and perfumed them with the fragrant smoke of scented woods; and the elders fell to conversing of matters of science and tradition. Now there was amongst them a merchant called Mehmoud of Balkh, a Muslim by profession but at heart a Magian, a man of lewd life, who had a passion for boys. He used to buy stuffs and merchandise of Alaeddin's father; and when he saw the boy, one look at his face cost him a thousand sighs and Satan dangled the jewel before his eyes, so that he was taken with

desire and mad passion for him and his heart was filled with love of him. So he arose and made for the youths, who rose to receive him. At this moment, Alaeddin, being taken with an urgent occasion, withdrew to make water; whereupon Mehmoud turned to the other youths and said to them, 'If ye will incline Alaeddin's mind to journeying with me, I will give each of you a dress worth much money.' Then he returned to the men's party; and when Alaeddin came back, the youths rose to receive him and seated him in the place of honour. Presently, one of them said to his neighbour, 'O my lord Hassan, tell me how thou camest by the capital on which thou tradest.' 'When I came to man's estate,' answered Hassan, 'I said to my father, "O my father, give me merchandise." "O my son," answered he, "I have none by me: but go thou to some merchant and take of him money and traffic with it and learn to buy and sell and give and take." So I went to one of the merchants and borrowed of him a thousand dinars, with which I bought stuffs and carrying them to Damascus, sold them there at a profit of two for one. Then I bought Syrian stuffs and carrying them to Aleppo, disposed of them there at a like profit; after which I bought stuffs of Aleppo and repaired with them to Baghdad, where I sold them with the same result; nor did I cease to buy and sell, till I was worth nigh ten thousand dinars.' Each of the others told a like tale, till it came to Alaeddin's turn, when they said to him, 'And thou, O my lord Alaeddin?' Quoth he, 'I was brought up in a chamber underground and came forth from it but this week and I do but go to the shop and return home.' 'Thou art used to abide at home,' rejoined they, 'and knowest not the delight of travel, for travel is for men only.' 'I reck not of travel,' answered he, 'and value ease above all things.' Whereupon quoth one to the other, 'This youth is like the fish: when he leaves the water he dies.' Then they said to him, 'O Alaeddin, the glory of the sons of the merchants is not but in travel for the sake of gain.' Their talk angered him and he left them, weeping-eyed and mourning-hearted, and mounting his mule, returned home. When his mother saw him thus, she said to him, 'What ails thee to weep, O my son?' And he answered, 'All the sons of the merchants made mock of me and said to me, "There is no glory for a merchant's son save in travel for gain."' 'O my son,' rejoined she, 'hast thou a mind for travel?' 'Yes,' said he. 'And whither wilt thou go?' asked she. 'To the city of Baghdad,' answered he; 'for there folk make a profit of two to one on their goods.' 'O my son,' said she, 'thy father is a very rich man, and if he provide thee not with merchandise, I will do so of my own monies.' Quoth he, 'The best of favours is that which is quickly bestowed; if it is to be, now is the time for it.' So she called the servants and sent them for packers; then opening a store-house, brought out ten loads of stuffs, which the packers made up into bales for him. Meanwhile Shemseddin missed his son and enquiring after him, was told that he had mounted and gone home; so he too mounted and followed him. When he entered the house, he saw the bales packed ready and asked what they were; whereupon his wife told him what had passed between Alaeddin and the young merchants and he said, 'O my son, may God curse foreign travel! Verily, the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) hath said, "It is of a man's good fortune that he have his livelihood in his own land;" and it was said of the ancients, "Leave travel, though but for a mile."' Then he said to his son, 'Art thou indeed resolved to travel and wilt thou not turn back from it?' 'Needs must I journey to Baghdad with merchandise,' answered Alaeddin, 'else will I put off my clothes and don a dervish's habit and go a-wandering over the world.' Quoth Shemseddin, 'I am no lackgood, but have great

plenty of wealth and with me are stuffs and merchandise befitting every country in the world.' Then he showed him his goods and amongst the rest, forth bales ready packed, with the price, a thousand dinars, written on each, and said to him, 'Take these forty loads, together with those thy mother gave thee, and set out under the safeguard of God the Most High. But, O my son, I fear for thee a certain wood in thy way, called the Lion's Copse, and a valley called the Valley of Dogs, for there lives are lost without mercy.' 'How so?' asked Alaeddin. 'Because of a Bedouin highwayman, hight Ajlan,' answered his father, 'who harbours there.' Quoth Alaeddin, 'Fortune is with God; if any part in it be mine, no harm will befall me.' Then they rode to the cattle market, where a muleteer alighted from his mule and kissing the Provost's hand, said to him, 'O my lord, by Allah, it is long since thou hast employed me to carry merchandise for thee!' 'Every time hath its fortune and its men,' answered Shemseddin; 'and may God have mercy on him who said:

An old man went walking the ways of the world,
So bowed and so bent that his beard swept his knee.
"What makes thee go doubled this fashion?" quoth I.
He answered (and spread out his hands unto me),
"My youth hath escaped me; 'tis lost in the dust,
And I bend me to seek it, where'er it may be."

O captain,' added he, 'it is not I, but this my son that is minded to travel.' 'God preserve his to thee!' said the muleteer. Then Shemseddin made a contract between Alaeddin and the muleteer, appointing that the former should be to the latter as a son, and gave him into his charge, saying, 'Take these hundred dinars for thy men.' Moreover, he bought his son threescore mules and a lamp and covering of honour for the tomb of Sheikh Abdulcadir el Jilani and said to him, 'O my son, I am leaving thee, and this is thy father in my stead: whatsoever he biddeth thee, do thou obey him.' So saying, he returned home with the mules and servants and they made recitations of the Koran and held a festival that night in honour of the Sheikh Abdulcadir. On the morrow, Shemseddin gave his son ten thousand dinars, saying, 'O my son, when thou comest to Baghdad, if thou find stuffs brisk of sale, sell them; but if they be dull, spend of these dinars.' Then they loaded the mules and taking leave of their friends, set out on their journey.

Now Mehmoud of Balkh had made ready his own venture for Baghdad and set up his tents without the city, saying in himself, 'I shall not enjoy this youth but in the desert, where there is neither spy not spoil-sport to trouble me.' It chanced that he had in hand a thousand dinars of Shemseddin's monies, the balance of a dealing between them; so he went to the Provost and bade him farewell; and he said to him, 'Give the thousand dinars to my son Alaeddin,' and commended the latter to his care, saying, 'He is as it were thy son.' Accordingly, Alaeddin joined company with Mehmoud, who charged the youth's cook to dress nothing for him, but himself provided him and his company with meat and drink. Now he had four houses, one at Cairo, another at Damascus, a third at Aleppo and a fourth at Baghdad. So they set out and journeyed over deserts and plains, till they drew near Damascus, when Mehmoud sent his servant to Alaeddin, whom he found reading. He went up to him and kissed his hands, and Alaeddin asked him what he sought. 'My master salutes thee,' answered the slave, 'and

craves thy company to a banquet in his house.' Quoth the youth, 'I must consult my father Kemaleddin, the captain of the caravan.' So he consulted the muleteer, who said, 'Do not go.' Then they left Damascus and journeyed on till they came to Aleppo, where Mehmoud made a second entertainment and sent to bid Alaeddin; but the muleteer again forbade him. Then they departed Aleppo and fared on, till they came within a day's journey of Baghdad. Here Mehmoud repeated his invitation a third time and Kemaleddin once more forbade Alaeddin to accept it; but the latter said, 'I must needs go.' So he rose and girding on a sword under his clothes, repaired to the tent of Mehmoud of Balkh, who came to meet him and saluted him. Then he set a sumptuous repast before him, and they ate and drank and washed their hands. Presently, Mehmoud bent towards Alaeddin, to kiss him, but the youth received the kiss on his hand and said to him, 'What wilt thou do?' Quoth Mehmoud, 'I brought thee hither that I might do delight with thee in this jousting-ground, and we will comment the words of him who saith:

Can't be thou wilt with us a momentling alight,
Like to an ewekin's milk or what not else of white,
And cat what liketh thee of dainty wastel-bread
And take what thou mayst get of silver small and bright
And bear off what thou wilt, sans grudging or constraint,
Spanling or full-told span or fistling filled outright?'

Then he would have laid hands on Alaeddin; but he rose and drawing his sword, said to him, 'Shame on thy gray hairs! Hast thou no fear of God, and He of exceeding great might? May He have mercy on him who saith:

Look thou thy hoariness preserve from aught that may it stain,
For whiteness still to take attaint is passing quick and fain.

This merchandise,' added he, 'is a trust from God and may not be sold. If I sold it to other than thee for gold, I would sell it thee for silver: but, by Allah, O filthy one, I will never again company with thee!' Then he returned to Kemaleddin and said to him, 'Yonder man is a lewd fellow and I will no longer consort with him nor suffer his company by the way.' 'O my son,' replied the muleteer, 'did I not forbid thee to go with him? But if we part company with him, I fear destruction for ourselves; so let us still make one caravan.' But Alaeddin said, 'It may not be: I will never again travel with him.' So he loaded his beasts and journeyed onward, he and his company, till they came to a valley, where Alaeddin would have halted, but the muleteer said to him, 'Do not halt here; rather let us fare forward and quicken our pace, so haply we may reach Baghdad before the gates are closed, for they open and shut them with the sun, for fear the schismatics should take the city and throw the books of learning into the Tigris.' 'O my father,' replied Alaeddin, 'I came not to Baghdad with this merchandise, for the sake of traffic, but to divert myself with the sight of foreign lands.' And Kemaleddin rejoined, 'O my son, we fear for thee and for thy goods from the wild Arabs.' But he answered, 'Harkye, sirrah, art thou master or servant? I will not enter Baghdad till the morning, that the townsfolk may see my merchandise and know me.' 'Do as thou wilt,' said the muleteer; 'I have given thee good counsel, and thou must judge for thyself.' Then Alaeddin bade them unload the mules and pitch the tent; so they did his bidding

and abode there till the middle of the night, when the youth went out to do an occasion and seeing something gleaming afar off, said to Kemaleddin, 'O captain, what is yonder glittering?' The muleteer sat up and considering it straitly, knew it for the glint of spear-heads and Bedouin swords and harness. Now this was a troop of Bedouins under a chief called Ajlan Abou Naib, Sheikh of the Arabs, and when the neared the camp and saw the baggage, they said, one to another, 'O night of booty!' Quoth Kemaleddin, 'Avaunt, O meanest of Arabs!' But Abou Naib smote him with his javelin in the breast, that the point came out gleaming from his back, and he fell down dead at the tent-door. Then cried the water-carrier, 'Avaunt, O foulest of Arabs!' and one of them smote him with a sword upon the shoulder, that it issued shining from the tendons of the throat and he also fell slain. Then the Bedouins fell upon the caravan from all sides and slew the whole company except Alaeddin, after which they loaded the mules with the spoil and made off. Quoth Alaeddin to himself, 'Thy dress and mule will be the death of thee.' So he put off his cassock and threw it over the back of a mule, remaining in his shirt and drawers alone; after which he went to the door of the tent and finding there a pool of blood from the slain, rolled himself in it, till he was as a slain man, drowned in his blood. Meanwhile Ajlan said to his men, 'O Arabs, was this caravan bound from Egypt for Baghdad or from Baghdad for Egypt?' 'It was bound from Egypt for Baghdad,' answered they. 'Then,' said he, 'return to the slain, for methinks the owner of the caravan is not dead.' So they turned back and fell to larding the slain with lance and sword-thrusts, [lest any life were left in them,] till they came to Alaeddin, who had laid himself among the dead bodies. Quoth they, 'Thou dost but feign thyself dead, but we will make an end of thee.' So one of the Bedouins drew his javelin and should have plunged it into his breast. But he cried out, 'Save me, O my lord Abdulcadir!' and behold, he saw a hand turn the lance away from his breast to that of the muleteer, so that it pierced the latter and spared himself. Then the Bedouins made off; and when Alaeddin saw that the birds were flown with their purchase, he rose and set off running; but Abou Naib looked back and said, 'O Arabs, I see somewhat moving.' So one of the Bedouins turned back and spying Alaeddin running, called out to him, saying, 'Flight shall not avail thee, and we after thee;' and he smote his mare with his fist and pricked after him. Then Alaeddin, seeing before him a watering tank and a cistern beside it, climbed up into a niche in the cistern and stretching himself along, feigned sleep and said, 'O gracious Protector, cover me with the veil of Thy protection, that may not be torn away!' Presently, the Bedouin came up to the cistern and standing in his stirrups put out one hand to lay hold of Alaeddin; but he said 'Save me, O my lady Nefiseh! Now is thy time!' And behold, a scorpion stung the Bedouin in the palm and he cried out, saying, 'Help, O Arabs! I am stung;' and fell off his mare. His comrades came up to him and set him on horseback again, saying, 'What hath befallen thee?' Quoth he, 'A scorpion stung me.' And they departed, leaving Alaeddin in the niche.

Meanwhile, Mehmoud of Balkh loaded his beasts and fared on till he came to the Valley of Dogs, where he found Alaeddin's men lying slain. At this he rejoiced and went on till he reached the reservoir. Now his mule was athirst and turned aside to drink, but took fright at Alaeddin's shadow in the water and started; whereupon Mehmoud raised his eyes and seeing Alaeddin lying in the niche, stripped to his shirt and trousers, said to him, 'Who hath dealt thus with thee and left thee in this ill

plight?' 'The Bedouins,' answered Alaeddin, and Mehmoud said, 'O my son, the mules and the baggage were thy ransom; so do thou comfort thyself with the saying of the poet:

So but a man may win to save his soul alive from death, But as the paring of his nail his wealth he reckoneth.

But now, O my son,' continued he, 'come down and fear no hurt.' So he came down from the niche and Mehmoud mounted him on a mule and fared on with him, till they reached Baghdad, where he brought him to his own house and bade his servants carry him to the bath, saying to him, 'O my son, the goods and money were the ransom of thy life; but, if thou wilt harken to me, I will give thee the worth of that thou hast lost, twice told.' When he came out of the bath, Mehmoud carried him into a saloon with four estrades, decorated with gold, and let bring a tray of all manner meats. So they ate and drank and Mehmoud turned to Alaeddin and would have taken a kiss of him; but he received it upon his hand and said, 'Dost thou persist in thy evil designs upon me? Did I not tell thee that, were I wont to sell this merchandise to other than thee for gold, I would sell it thee for silver?' Quoth Mehmoud, 'I will give thee neither mule nor clothes nor merchandise save at this price; for I am mad for love of thee, and God bless him who said:

Abou Bilal his saw of an object of love,
Which from one of his elders himself did derive
"The lover's not healed of the pangs of desire
By clips nor by kisses, excepting he swive."

'This may never be,' replied Alaeddin. 'Take back thy dress and thy mule and open the door, that I may go out.' So he opened the door, and Alaeddin went forth and walked on, with the dogs yelping at his heels, till he saw the door of a mosque open and going in, took shelter in the vestibule. Presently, he espied a light approaching and examining it, saw that it came from a pair of lanterns borne by two slaves before two merchants, an old man of comely aspect and a youth. He heard the latter say to the other, 'O my uncle, I conjure thee by Allah, give me back my wife!' The old man replied, 'Did I not warn thee, many a time, when the oath of divorce was always in thy mouth, as it were thy Koran?' Then he turned and seeing Alaeddin, as he were a piece of the moon, said to him, 'Who art thou, O my son?' Quoth he, 'I am Alaeddin, son of Shemseddin, Provost of the merchants at Cairo. I besought my father for merchandise; so he packed me fifty loads of goods and gave me ten thousand dinars, wherewith I set out for Baghdad; but when I came to the Lion's Copse, the Bedouins fell upon me and took all I had. So I entered this city, knowing not where to pass the night, and seeing this place, I took shelter here.' 'O my son,' said the old man, 'what sayst thou to a thousand dinars and a suit of clothes and a mule worth other two thousand?' 'To what end wilt thou give me this?' asked Alaeddin, and the other answered, 'This young man, whom thou seest, is the only son of my brother and I have an only daughter called Zubeideh the Lutanist, who is endowed with beauty and grace. I married her to him and he loves her, but she hates him. Now he took an oath of triple divorcement and broke it. As soon as she heard of this, she left him, and he egged on all the folk to intercede with me to restore her to him; but I told him that this

could not lawfully be done but by an intermediate marriage, and we have agreed to make some stranger the intermediary, so none may taunt him with this affair. So, as thou art a stranger, come with us and we will marry thee to her; thou shalt lie with her to-night and on the morrow divorce her, and we will give thee what I said.' 'By Allah,' quoth Alaeddin to himself, 'it were better to pass the night with a bride on a bed in a house, than in the streets and vestibules!' So he went with them to the Cadi, who, as soon as he saw Alaeddin, was moved to love of him and said to the old man, 'What is your will?' Quoth he, 'We wish to marry this young man to my daughter, as an intermediary, and the contract is to be for ten thousand dinars, dowry precedent, for which he shall give us a bond. If he divorce her in the morning, we will give him a thousand dinars and a mule and dress worth other two thousand; but if he divorce her not, he shall pay down the ten thousand dinars, according to the bond.' The Cadi drew up the marriage contract to this effect and the lady's father took a bond for the dowry. Then he took Alaeddin and clothing him anew, carried him to his daughter's house, where he left him at the door, whilst he himself went in to the young lady and gave her the bond, saying, 'Take the bond of thy dowry, for I have married thee to a handsome youth by name Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat; so do thou use him with all consideration.' Then he left her and went to his own lodging. Now the lady's cousin had an old waiting- woman, to whom he had done many a kindness and who used to visit Zubeideh; so he said to her, 'O my mother, if my cousin Zubeideh see this handsome young man, she will never after accept of me; so I would fain have thee contrive to keep them apart.' 'By thy youth,' answered she, 'I will not suffer him to approach her!' Then she went to Alaeddin and said to him, 'O my son, I have a warning to give thee, for the love of God the Most High, and do thou follow my advice, for I fear for thee from this damsel: let her lie alone and handle her not nor draw near to her.' 'Why so?' asked he, and she answered, 'Because her body is full of elephantiasis and I fear lest she infect thy fair youth.' Quoth he, 'I have no need of her.' Moreover, she went to the lady and said the like to her of Alaeddin; and she replied, 'I have no need of him, but will let him lie alone, and on the morrow he shall go his way.' Then she called a slave-girl and said to her, 'Take him the tray of food, that he may sup.' So the maid carried him the tray of food and set it before him, and he ate his fill; after which he sat down and fell to reciting the chapter called Ya-sin in a sweet voice. The lady listened to him and found his voice as melodious as the psalms of David, which when she heard, she exclaimed, 'Beshrew the old hag that told me that he was affected with leprosy! Surely, that is a lie against him, for this is not the voice of one who hath such a disease.' Then she took a lute of Indian workmanship and tuning it, sang the following verses, in a voice, whose music would stay the birds in mid-heaven:

I am enamoured of a fawn with black and languorous eyes;
The willow-branches, as he goes, are jealous of him still.
Me he rejects and others 'joy his favours in my stead.
This is indeed the grace of God He gives to whom He will.

As soon as he had finished his recitation, he sang the following verse in reply:

My salutation to the shape that through the wede doth show
And to the roses in the cheeks' full-flowering meads that blow!

When she heard this, her inclination for him redoubled and she rose and lifted the curtain; and Alaeddin, seeing her, repeated these verses:

She shineth forth, a moon, and bends, a willow-wand,
And breathes out ambergris and gazes, a gazelle.
Meseems as if grief loved my heart and when from her
Estrangement I abide, possession to it fell.

Thereupon she came forward, swinging her hips and swaying gracefully from side to side with a shape the handiwork of Him whose bounties are hidden, and each of them stole a glance at the other, that cost them a thousand regrets. Then, for that the arrows of her glances overcame his heart, he repeated the following verses:

The moon of the heavens she spied and called to my thought
The nights of our loves in the meadows under her shine.
Yea, each of us saw a moon, but, sooth to say,
It was her eyes that I saw and she saw mine.

Then she drew near him, and when there remained but two paces between them, he repeated these verses:

She took up three locks of her hair and spread them out one night
And straight three nights discovered at once unto my sight.
Then did she turn her visage up to the moon of the sky
And showed me two moons at one season, both burning clear and bright.

Then said he to her, 'Keep off from me, lest thou infect me.' Whereupon she uncovered her wrist to him, and he saw that it was cleft [like a peach] and its whiteness was as the whiteness of silver. Then said she, 'Hold off from me, thou, for thou art stricken with leprosy, and belike thou wilt infect me.' 'Who told thee I was a leper?' asked he, and she said, 'The old woman.' Quoth he, 'It was she told me that thou wast afflicted with elephantiasis.' So saying, he bared his arms and showed her that his skin was like virgin silver, whereupon she pressed him to her bosom and they clipped one another. Then she took him and lying down on her back, did off her trousers, whereupon that which his father had left him rose up [in rebellion] against him and he said, 'To it, O elder of yards, O father of nerves!' And putting his hands to her flanks, set the nerve of sweetness to the mouth of the cleft and thrust on to the wicket-gate. His passage was by the gate of victories [or openings] and after this he entered the Monday market and those of Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and finding the carpet after the measure of the estrade, he plied [or turned] the box within its sheath [or cover] till he came to [the end of] it. When it was morning, he exclaimed, 'Alas for delight that is not fulfilled! The raven takes it and flies away!' 'What means this saying?' asked she, and he answered, 'O my lady, I have but this hour to abide with thee.' Quoth she, 'Who saith so?' and he, 'Thy father made me give him a bond to pay ten thousand dinars to thy dowry; and except I pay it this very day, they will lay me in prison therefor in the Cadi's house; and now my hand lacketh one para of the sum.' 'O my lord,' said she, 'is the marriage bond in thy hand or in theirs?' 'In mine,' answered he, 'but I have nothing.' Quoth she, 'The matter is easy; fear nothing. Take these hundred dinars; if I had more, I would give thee what thou lackest; but my father, for

his love of my cousin, hath transported all his good, even to my trinkets, from my lodging to his. But when they send thee a serjeant of the court and the Cadi and my father bid thee divorce, answer thou, "By what code is it right that I should marry at nightfall and divorce in the morning?" Then kiss the Cadi's hand and give him a present, and in like manner kiss the Assessors' hands and give each of them half a score dinars. So they will all speak with thee and if they say to thee, "Why dost thou not divorce her and take the thousand dinars and the mule and suit of clothes, according to contract?" do thou answer, "Every hair of her head is worth a thousand dinars to me and I will never put her away, neither will I take a suit of clothes nor aught else." If the Cadi say to thee, "Then pay down the dowry," do thou reply, "I am straitened at this present;" whereupon he and the Assessors will deal friendly with thee and allow thee time to pay.' Whilst they were talking, the Cadi's officer knocked at the door; so Alaeddin went down and the man said to him, 'The Cadi cites thee to answer thy father-in-law's summons.' Alaeddin gave him five dinars and said to him, 'O serjeant, by what code am I bound to marry at night and divorce next morning?' 'By none of ours,' answered the serjeant; 'and if thou be ignorant of the law, I will act as thine advocate.' Then they went to the court and the Cadi said to Alaeddin, 'Why dost thou not divorce the woman and take what falls to thee by the contract?' With this he went up to the Cadi and kissing his hand, put in it fifty dinars and said, 'O our lord the Cadi, by what code is it right that I should marry at night and divorce in the morning in my own despite?' 'Divorce on compulsion,' replied the Cadi, 'is sanctioned by no school of the Muslims.' Then said the lady's father, 'If thou wilt not divorce, pay me the ten thousand dinars, her dowry.' Quoth Alaeddin, 'Give me three days' time.' But the Cadi said, 'Three days is not enough; he shall give thee ten.' So they agreed to this and bound him to pay the dowry or divorce after ten days. Then he left them and taking meat and rice and butter and what else of food he needed, returned to his wife and told her what had passed; whereupon she said, 'Between night and day, wonders may happen: and God bless him who saith:

Be mild what time thou'rt ta'en with anger and despite
And patient, if there fall misfortune on thy head.
Indeed, the nights are quick and great with child by time
And of all wond'rous things are hourly brought to bed.

Then she rose and made ready food and brought the tray, and they ate and drank and made merry awhile. Presently, Alaeddin besought her to let him hear some music; so she took the lute and played a measure, that would have made the very rock dance for delight, and the strings cried out, in ecstasy, 'O Loving One!' after which she passed into a livelier measure. As they were thus passing the time in mirth and delight, there came a knocking at the door and Zubeideh said to Alaeddin, 'Go and see who is at the door.' So he went down and finding four dervishes standing without, said to them, 'What do you want?' 'O my lord,' answered they, 'we are foreign dervishes, the food of whose souls is music and dainty verse, and we would fain take our pleasure with thee this night. On the morrow we will go our way, and with God the Most High be thy reward; for we adore music and there is not one of us but hath store of odes and songs and ballads.' 'I must consult [my wife],' answered he and returned and told Zubeideh, who said, 'Open the door to them.' So he went down again and bringing them up,

made them sit down and welcomed them. Then he brought them food, but they would not eat and said, 'O my lord, our victual is to magnify God with out hearts and hear music with our ears: and God bless him who saith:

We come for your company only, and not for your feasts; For eating for eating's sake is nought but a fashion of beasts.

Just now,' added they, 'we heard pleasant music here; but when we knocked, it ceased; and we would fain know whether the player was a slave-girl, white of black, or a lady.' 'It was this my wife,' answered he and told them all that had befallen him, adding, 'My father-in-law hath bound me to pay a dowry of ten thousand dinars for her and they have given me ten days' time.' 'Have no care and think nought but good,' said one of the dervishes; 'for I am head of the convent and have forty dervishes under my hand. I will gather thee from them the ten thousand dinars and thou shalt pay thy father-in-law the dowry. But now bid thy wife make us music, that we may be heartened and solaced, for to some music is food, to others medicine and to others refreshment.' Now these four dervishes were none other than the Khalif Haroun er Reshid and his Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide and Abou Nuwas ben Hani and Mesrour the headsman; and the reason of their coming thither was that the Khalif, being heavy at heart, had called his Vizier and signified to him his wish to go forth and walk about the city, to divert himself. So they all four donned dervish habits and went out and walked about, till they came to Zubeideh's house and hearing music, were minded to know the cause. They spent the night in mirth and harmony and discourse, till the morning, when the Khalif laid a hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet and taking leave of Alaeddin, went his way, he and his companions. Presently, Zubeideh lifted the carpet and finding the hundred dinars, gave them to her husband, saying, 'Take these hundred dinars that I have found under the prayer-carpet; the dervishes must have laid them there, without our knowledge.' So he took the money and repairing to the market, bought meat and rice and butter and so forth. When it was night, he lighted the candled and said to Zubeideh, 'The dervishes have not brought the ten thousand dinars that they promised me: but indeed they are poor men.' As they were talking, the dervishes knocked at the door and she said, 'Go down and open to them.' So he went down and bringing them up, said to them, 'Have you brought me the ten thousand dinars?' 'We have not been able to get aught thereof as yet,' answered they, 'but fear nothing: to-morrow, God willing, we will make an alchymic operation for thee. But now bid thy wife play her best to us and gladden our hearts, for we love music.' So she made them music, that would have caused the very rocks to dance; and they passed the night in mirth and converse and good cheer, till the morning appeared with its light and shone, when they took leave of Alaeddin and went their way, after laying other hundred dinars under the carpet. They continued to visit him thus every night for nine nights, and each morning the Khalif put a hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet, till the tenth night, when they came not. Now the reason for their failure to come was that the Khalif had sent to a great merchant, saying to him, 'Bring me fifty loads of stuffs, such as come from Cairo, each worth a thousand dinars, and write on each bale its price; and bring me also a male Abyssinian slave.' The merchant did the bidding of the Khalif, who write a letter to Alaeddin, as from his father Shemseddin, and committed it to the slave, together with the fifty loads and a basin and ewer of gold and other presents, saying to him,

'Take these bales and what else and go to such and such a quarter and enquire for Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, at the house of the Provost of the merchants.' So the slave took the letter and the goods and went out on his errand.

Meanwhile the lady's first husband went to her father and said to him, 'Come, let us go to Alaeddin and make him divorce my cousin.' So they set out, and when they came to the street in which Zubeideh's house stood, they found fifty mules, laden with stuffs, and a black slave riding on a she-mule. So they said to him, 'Whose goods are these?' 'They belong to my lord Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat,' answered he. 'His father equipped him with merchandise and sent him on a journey to Baghdad; but the Bedouins fell on him and took all he had. So when the news of his despoilment reached his father, he despatched me to him with these fifty loads, in place of those he had lost, besides a mule laden with fifth thousand dinars and a parcel of clothes worth much money and a cloak of sables and a basin and ewer of gold.' When the old merchant heard this, he said, 'He whom thou seekest is my son-in-law and I will show thee his house.' Now Alaeddin was sitting in great concern, when one knocked at the door, and he said, 'O Zubeideh, God is all-knowing! Thy father hath surely sent me an officer from the Cadi or the Chief of the Police.' 'Go down,' said she, 'and see what it is.' So he went down and opening the door, found his father-in-law, with an Abyssinian slave, dusky-hued and pleasant of favour, riding on a mule. When the slave saw him, he alighted and kissed his hands: and Alaeddin said, 'What dost thou want?' Quoth he, 'I am the slave of my load Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, son of Shemseddin, Provost of the merchants of Cairo, who has sent me to him with this charge.' Then he gave him the letter and Alaeddin, opening it, read what follows:

Harkye, my letter, when my beloved sees thee,
Kiss thou the earth before him and his shoes.
Look thou go softly and hasten not nor hurry,
For in his hands are my life and my repose.

Then after the usual salutations from Shemseddin to his son, the letter proceeded thus: 'Know, O my son, that news hath reached me of the slaughter of thy men and the plunder of thy baggage; so I send thee herewith fifty loads of Egyptian stuffs, together with a suit of clothes and a cloak of sables and an ewer and basin of gold. Fear no evil and be not anywise troubled, for, O my son, the goods thou hast lost were the ransom of thy life. Thy mother and the people of the house are well and in good case and send thee many greetings. Moreover, O my son, I hear that they have married thee, by way of intermediation, to the lady Zubeideh the Lutanist and have imposed on thee a dowry of ten thousand dinars; wherefore I send thee also fifty thousand dinars by thy slave Selim, the bearer of these presents, whereout thou mayest pay the dowry and provide thyself with the rest.' When Alaeddin had made an end of reading the letter, he took possession of the goods and turning to the old merchant, said to him, 'O my father-in-law, take the ten thousand dinars, thy daughter's dowry, and take also the loads of goods and dispose of them, and thine be the profit; only return me the cost-price.' 'Nay, by Allah,' answered he, 'I will take nothing; and as for thy wife's dowry, do thou settle it with her.' Then they went in to Zubeideh, after the goods had been brought in, and she said to her father, 'O my father, whose goods are these?' 'They belong to thy husband Alaeddin,' answered he; 'his father hath sent them to him in

place of those of which the Bedouins spoiled him. Moreover, he hath sent him fifty thousand dinars and a parcel of clothes and a cloak of sables and a riding mule and an ewer and basin of gold. As for the dower, that is thine affair.' Thereupon Alaeddin rose and opening the chest [of money] gave her her dowry. Then said the lady's cousin, 'O my uncle, let him divorce to me my wife;' but the old man replied, 'This may never be now, for the marriage-tie is in his hand.' With this the young man went out, sore afflicted, and returning home, fell sick, for he had received his death-blow; so he took to his bed and presently died. But as for Alaeddin, he went to the market and buying what victual he needed, made a banquet as usual against the night, saying to Zubeideh, 'See these lying dervishes; they promised us and broke their promise.' Quoth she, 'Thou art the son of a Provost of the merchants yet did thy hand lack of a para; how then should it be with poor dervishes?' 'God the Most High hath enabled us to do without them,' answered Alaeddin; 'but never again will I open the door to them.' 'Why so,' asked she, 'seeing that their coming brought us good luck, and moreover, they put a hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet for us every night? So needs must thou open to them, if they come.' So when the day departed with its light and the night came, they lighted the candles and he said to her, 'Come, Zubeideh, make us music.' At this moment some one knocked at the door, and she said, 'Go and see who is at the door.' So he went down and opened it and seeing the dervishes, said, 'Welcome to the liars! Come up.' Accordingly, they went up with him, and he made them sit down and brought them the tray of food. So they ate and drank and made merry and presently said to him, 'O my lord, our hearts have been troubled for thee: what hath passed between thee and thy father-in-law?' 'God hath compensated us beyond our desire,' answered he. 'By Allah,' rejoined they, 'we were in fear for thee and nought kept us from thee but our lack of money.' Quoth he, 'My Lord hath vouchsafed me speedy relief; for my father hath sent me fifty thousand dinars and fifty loads of stuffs, each worth a thousand dinars, besides an Abyssinian slave and a riding mule and a suit of clothes and a basin and an ewer of gold. Moreover, I have made my peace with my father-in- law and my wife is confirmed to me; so praised be God for this!' Presently the Khalif rose to do an occasion; whereupon Jaafer turned to Alaeddin and said to him, 'Look to thy manners, for thou art in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'How have I failed in good breeding before the Commander of the Faithful,' asked he, 'and which of you is he?' Quoth Jaafer, 'He who went out but now is the Commander of the Faithful and I am the Vizier Jaafer: this is Mesrour the headsman, and this other is Abou Nuwas ben Hani. And now, O Alaeddin, use thy reason and bethink thee how many days' journey it is from Cairo hither.' 'Five-and-forty days' journey,' answered he, and Jaafer rejoined, 'Thy baggage was stolen but ten days ago; so how could the news have reached thy father, and how could he pack thee up other goods and send them to thee five-and-forty days' journey in ten days' time?' 'O my lord,' said Alaeddin, 'and whence then came they?' 'From the Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'of his much affection for thee.' As he spoke, the Khalif entered and Alaeddin, rising, kissed the ground before him and said, 'God keep thee, O Commander of the Faithful, and give thee long life, so the folk may not lack thy bounty and beneficence!' 'O Alaeddin,' replied the Khalif, 'let Zubeideh play us an air, by way of thank-offering for thy deliverance.' So she played him the rarest of measures on the lute, till the very stones shook for delight and the strings cried out for ecstasy, 'O Loving One!' They spent the

night after the merriest fashion, and in the morning, the Khalif said to Alaeddin, 'Come to the Divan to-morrow.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'so it please God and thou be well and in good case.' So on the morrow he took ten trays and putting a costly present on each, went up with them to the palace. As the Khalif was sitting on the throne, Alaeddin appeared at the door of the Divan, repeating the following verses:

Good fortune and glory still wait on thy days
And rubbed in the dust be thine envier's nose!
May the days never stint to be white unto thee
And black with despite be the days of thy foes!

'Welcome, O Alaeddin!' sad the Khalif, and he replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) accepted presents; and these ten trays, with what is on them, are my present to thee.' The Khalif accepted his gift and ordering him a robe of honour, made him Provost of the merchants and gave him a seat in the Divan. Presently, his father-in-law came in, and seeing Alaeddin seated in his place and clad in a robe of honour, said to the Khalif, 'O King of the age, why is this man sitting in my place and wearing this robe of honour?' Quoth the Khalif, 'I have made him Provost of the merchants, and thou art deposed; for offices are by investiture and not in perpetuity.' 'Thou hast done well, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the merchant; 'for he is art and part of us. May God make the best of us the orderers of our affairs! How many a little one hath become great!' Then the Khalif wrote Alaeddin a patent [of investiture] and gave it to the Master of Police, who gave it to the crier and the latter made proclamation in the Divan, saying, 'None is Provost of the merchants but Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, and it behoves all to give heed to his words and pay him respect and honour and consideration!' Moreover, when the Divan broke up, the Master of the Police took Alaeddin and carried him through the thoroughfares of Baghdad, whilst the crier went before him, making proclamation of his dignity. Next day, Alaeddin opened a shop for his slave Selim and set him therein, to buy and sell, whilst he himself rode to the palace and took his place in the Khalif's Divan.

One day, as he sat in his place, one said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, may thy head survive such an one the boon-companion! He is gone to the mercy of God the Most High, but may thy life be prolonged!' Quoth the Khalif, 'Where is Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat?' So he went up to the Commander of the Faithful, who clad him in a splendid dress of honour and made him his boon-companion in the dead man's room, appointing him a monthly wage of a thousand dinars. He continued to fill his new office till, one day, as he sat in the Divan, according to his wont, an Amir came up with a sword and shield in his hand and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, mayst thou outlive the Chief of the Sixty, for he is this day dead;' whereupon the Khalif ordered Alaeddin a dress of honour and made him Chief of the Sixty, in place of the dead man, who had neither wife nor child. So Alaeddin laid hands on his estate, and the Khalif said to him, 'Bury him in the earth and take all he hath left of wealth and slaves, male and female.' Then he shook the handkerchief and dismissed the Divan, whereupon Alaeddin went forth, attended by Ahmed ed Denef, captain of the right hand, and Hassan Shouman, captain of the left hand troop of the Khalif's guard, riding at his either stirrup, each with his forty men.

Presently, he turned to Hassan Shouman and his men and said to them, 'Plead ye for me with Captain Ahmed ed Denef, that he accept me as his son before God.' And Ahmed ed Denef assented, saying, 'I and my forty men will go before thee to the Divan every day.'

After this, Alaeddin abode in the Khalif's service many days; till one day it chanced that he left the Divan and returning home, dismissed Ahmed ed Denef and his men and sat down with his wife, who lighted the candles and went out of the room upon an occasion. Presently, he heard a great cry and running in haste to see what was the matter, found that it was his wife who had cried out. She was lying prone on the groudn and when he put his hand to her breast, he found her dead. Now her father's house faced that of Alaeddin, and he, hearing her cry out, came in and said, 'What is the matter, O my lord Alaeddin?' 'O my father,' answered he, 'may thy head outlive thy daughter Zubeideh! But the honour we owe the dead is to bury them.' So, on the morrow, they buried her in the earth and her husband and father condoled with each other. Moreover, Alaeddin put on mourning apparel and absented himself from the Divan, abiding tearful-eyed and sorrowful- hearted. After awhile, the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'O Vizier, what is the cause of Alaeddin's absence from the Divan?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'he is in mourning for his wife Zubeideh;' and the Khalif said, 'It behoves us to pay him a visit of condolence.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Jaafer. So they took horse and riding to Alaeddin's house, came in upon him with their attendants, as he sat at home; whereupon he rose to receive them and kissed the earth before the Khalif, who said to him, 'May God abundantly make good thy loss to thee!' 'May He preserve thee to us, O Commander of the Faithful!' answered Alaeddin. Then said the Khalif, 'O Alaeddin, why hast thou absented thyself from the Divan?' And he replied, 'Because of my mourning for my wife Zubeideh, O Commander of the Faithful.' 'Put away grief from thee,' rejoined the prince. 'She is dead and gone to the mercy of God the Most High, and mourning will avail thee nothing.' But Alaeddin said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I shall never leave mourning for her till I die and they bury me by her side.' Quoth Haroun, 'With God is compensation for every loss, and neither wealth nor device can deliver from death. God bless him who said:

Every son of woman, how long soe'er his life be,
Must one day be carried upon the bulging bier.
How shall he have pleasure in life or hold it goodly,
He unto whose cheeks the dust must soon adhere?'

Then, when he had made an end of condoling with him, he charged him not to absent himself from the Divan and returned to his palace. On the morrow, Alaeddin mounted and riding to the court, kissed the ground before the Khalif, who rose from the throne, to greet and welcome him, and bade him take his appointed place in the Divan saying, 'O Alaeddin, thou art my guest to-night.' So presently he carried him into his seraglio and calling a slave- girl named Cout el Culoub, said to her, 'Alaeddin had a wife called Zubeideh, who used to sing to him and solace him of care and trouble; but she is gone to the mercy of God the Most High, and now I desire that thou play him an air of thy rarest fashion on the lute, that he may be diverted from his grief and mourning.' So she rose and made rare music; and the Khalif said to Alaeddin,

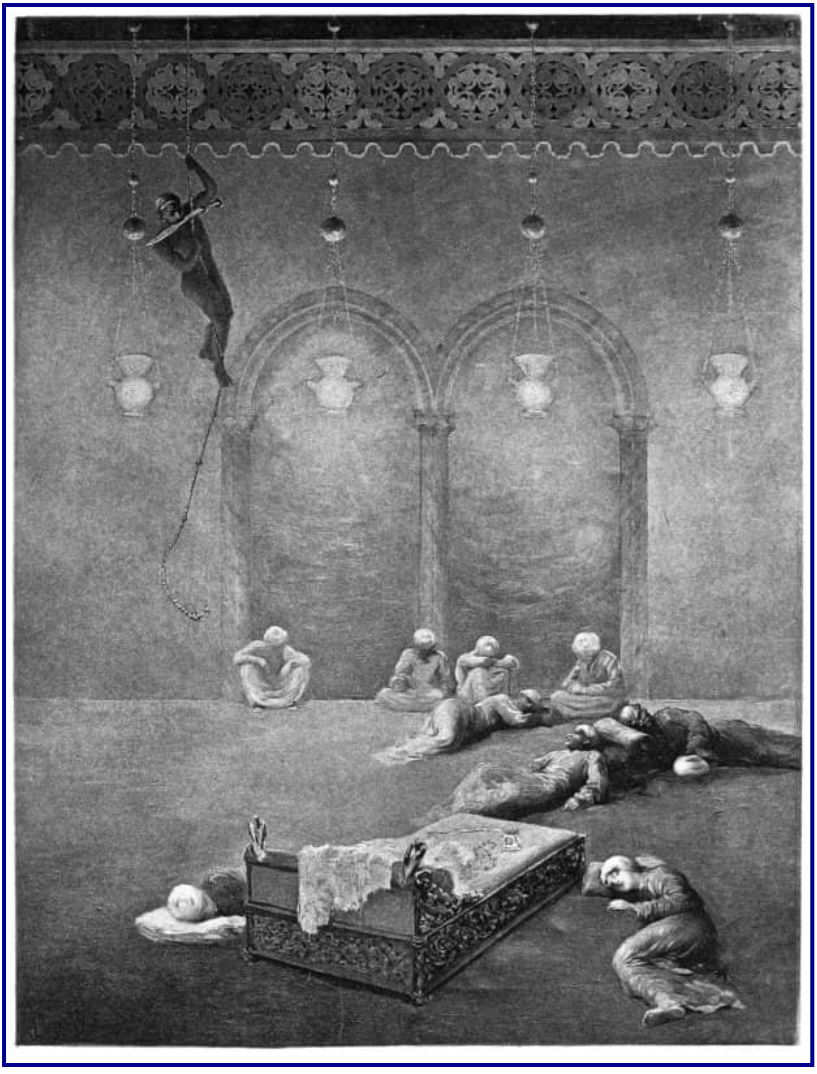
'What sayst thou of this damsel's voice?' 'O Commander of the Faithful', answered he, 'Zubeideh's voice was the finer; but she is rarely skilled in touching the lute, and her playing would make a rock dance.' 'Doth she please thee?' asked the Khalif. 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Alaeddin, and Haroun said, 'By the life of my head and the tombs of my forefathers, she is a gift from me to thee, she and her waiting-women!' Alaeddin thought that the Khalif was jesting with him; but, on the morrow, he went in to Cout el Culoub and said to her, 'I have given thee to Alaeddin;' whereat she rejoiced, for she had seen and loved him. Then the Khalif returned to the Divan and calling porters, said to them, 'Set Cout el Culoub and her waiting-women in a litter and carry them, together with her goods, to Alaeddin's house.' So they did as he bade them and left her in the upper chamber of Alaeddin's house, whilst the Khalif sat in the hall of audience till the close of the day, when the Divan broke up and he retired to his harem.

Meanwhile, Cout el Culoub, having taken up her lodging in Alaeddin's house, with her women, forty in all, besides eunuchs, called two of the latter and said to them, 'Sit ye on stools, one on the right and another on the left hand of the door; and when Alaeddin comes home, kiss his hands and say to him, "Our mistress Cout el Culoub bids thee to her in the upper chamber, for the Khalif hath given her to thee, her and her women."' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and did as she bade them. So, when Alaeddin returned, he found two of the Khalif's eunuchs sitting at the door and was amazed and said to himself, 'Surely, this is not my own house; or else what can have happened?' When the eunuchs saw him, they rose and kissing his hands, said to him, 'We are of the Khalif's household and servants to Cout el Culoub, who salutes thee, giving thee to know that the Khalif hath bestowed her on thee, her and her women, and craves thy company.' Quoth Alaeddin, 'Say ye to her, "Thou art welcome; but so long as thou abidest with me, I will not enter thy lodging, for it befits not that what was the master's should become the servant's;" and ask her also what was the sum of her day's expense in the Khalif's palace.' So they went in to her and did his errand to her, and she replied, 'A hundred dinars a day;' whereupon quoth he in himself, 'There was no need for the Khalif to give me Cout el Culoub, that I should be put to such an expense for her; but there is no help for it.' So she abode with him awhile and he assigned her daily a hundred dinars for her maintenance, till, one day, he absented himself from the Divan and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'O Vizier, I gave Cout el Culoub unto Alaeddin, that she might console him for his wife; but why doth he still hold aloof from us?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'he spoke sooth who said, "Whoso findeth his beloved, forgetteth his friends."' 'Belike he hath excuse for his absence,' rejoined the Khalif; 'but we will pay him a visit.' (Now some days before this, Alaeddin had said to Jaafer, 'I complained to the Khalif of my grief for the loss of my wife Zubeideh, and he gave me Cout el Culoub.' And Jaafer replied, 'Except he loved thee, he had not given her to thee.' Hast thou gone in to her?' 'No, by Allah! answered Alaeddin. 'I know not her length from her breadth.' 'And why?' asked Jaafer. 'O Vizier,' replied Alaeddin, 'what befits the master befits not the servant.') Then the Khalif and Jaafer disguised themselves and went privily to visit Alaeddin; but he knew them and rising to them, kissed the hands of the Khalif, who looked at him and read trouble in his face. So he said to him, 'O Alaeddin, whence cometh this trouble in which I see thee? Hast thou gone in to Cout el Culoub?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered

he, 'what befits the master befits not the servant. No, I have not gone in to her nor do I know her length from her breadth; so do thou quit me of her.' Quoth the Khalif, 'I would fain see her and question her of her case.' And Alaeddin replied, 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful.' So the Khalif went in to Cout el Culoub, who rose and kissed the ground before him, and said to her, 'Hath Alaeddin gone in to thee?' 'No, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she; 'I sent to bid him to me, but he would not come.' So he bade carry her back to the harem and saying to Alaeddin, 'Do not absent thyself from us,' returned to his palace. Accordingly, next morning, Alaeddin mounted and rode to the Divan, where he took his seat as Chief of the Sixty. Presently the Khalif bade his treasurer give the Vizier Jaafer ten thousand dinars and said to the latter, 'I charge thee to go down to the slave-market and buy Alaeddin a slave-girl with this sum.' So Jaafer took Alaeddin and went down with him to the bazaar. As change would have it, that very day, the Amir Khalid, Chief of the Baghdad Police, had gone down to the market to buy a slave-girl for his son Hebezlem Bezazeh. Now this son he had by his wife Khatoun, and he was foul of favour and had reached the age of twenty, without learning to ride, albeit his father was a valiant cavalier and a doughty champion and delighted in battle and adventure. One night, he had a dream of dalliance in sleep and told his mother, who rejoiced and told his father, saying, 'Fain would I find him a wife, for he is now apt for marriage.' Quoth Khalid, 'He is so foul of favour and withal so evil of odour, so sordid and churlish, that no woman would accept of him.' And she answered, 'We will buy him a slave- girl.' So it befell, for the accomplishment of that which God the Most High had decreed, that the Amir and his son went down, on the same day as Jaafer and Alaeddin, to the market, where they saw a beautiful girl, full of grace and symmetry, in the hands of a broker, and the Vizier said to the latter, 'O broker, ask her owner if he will take a thousand dinars for her.' The broker passed by the Amir and his son with the slave and Hebezlem took one look of her, that cost him a thousand sighs; and he fell passionately in love with her and said, 'O my father, buy me yonder slave-girl.' So the Amir called the broker, who brought the girl to him, and asked her her name. 'My name is Jessamine,' replied she; and he said to Hebezlem, 'O my son, an she please thee, bid for her.' Then he asked the broker what had been bidden for her and he replied, 'A thousand dinars.' 'She is mine for a thousand and one,' said Hebezlem, and the broker passed on to Alaeddin, who bid two thousand dinars for her; and as often as Hebezlem bid another dinar, Alaeddin bid a thousand. The Amir's son was vexed at this and said to the broker, 'Who is it that bids against me for the slave-girl?' 'It is the Vizier Jaafer,' answered the broker, 'who is minded to buy her for Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' Alaeddin continued to bid for her till he brought her price up to ten thousand dinars, and her owner sold her to him for that sum. So he took the girl and said to her, 'I give thee thy freedom for the love of God the Most High.' Then he married her and carried her to his house. When the broker returned, after having delivered the girl and received his brokerage, Hebezlem called him and said to him, 'Where is the girl?' Quoth he, 'She was bought for ten thousand dinars by Alaeddin, who hath set her free and married her.' At this the young man was greatly cast down and heaving many a sigh, returned home, sick for love of the damsel. He threw himself on his bed and refused food, and passion and love-longing were sore upon him. When his mother saw him in this plight, she said to him, 'God keep thee, O my son! What ails thee?' And he answered, 'Buy me Jessamine, O

my mother.' 'When the flower-seller passes,' said she, 'I will buy thee a basketful of jessamine.' Quoth he, 'It is not the jessamine one smells I want, but a slave girl named Jessamine, whom my father would not buy for me.' So she said to her husband, 'Why didst thou not buy him the girl?' And he replied, 'What is fit for the master is not fit for the servant, and I have no power to take her; for no less a man bought her than Alaeddin, Chief of the Sixty.' Then the youth's weakness redoubled upon him, till he could neither sleep nor eat, and his mother bound her head with the fillets of mourning. Presently, as she sat at home, lamenting over her son, there came in to her an old woman, known as the mother of Ahmed Kemakim the arch-thief, a knave who would bore through the stoutest wall and scale the highest and steal the very kohl from the eye. From his earliest years he had been given to these foul practices, till they made him captain of the watch, when he committed a robbery and the Chief of the Police, taking him in the act, carried him to the Khalif, who bade put him to death. But he sought protection of the Vizier, whose intercession the Khalif never rejected; so he pleaded for him with the Commander of the Faithful, who said, 'How canst thou intercede for a wretch who is the pest of the human race?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'do thou imprison him; he who built the [first] prison was a sage, seeing that a prison is the sepulchre of the live and a cause for their enemies to exult.' So the Khalif bade lay him in chains and write thereon, 'Appointed to remain until death and not to be loosed but on the bench of the washer of the dead.' And they fettered him and cast him into prison. Now his mother was a frequent visitor to the house of the Master of the Police and used to go in to her son in prison and say to him, 'Did I not warn thee to turn from thy wicked ways?' 'God decreed this to me,' would he answer; 'but, O my mother, when thou visitest the Amir's wife, make her intercede for me with her husband.' So when the old woman came in to the Lady Khatoun, she found her bound with the fillets of mourning and said to her, 'Wherefore dost thou mourn?' 'For my son Hebezlem Bezazeh,' answered she, and the old woman exclaimed, 'God keep thy son! What hath befallen him?' So Khatoun told her the whole story, and she said, 'What wouldst thou say of him who should find means to save thy son?' 'And what wilt thou do?' asked the lady. Quoth the old woman, 'I have a son called Ahmed Kemakim the arch-thief, who lies chained in prison, and on his fetters is written, "Appointed to remain till death." So do thou don thy richest clothes and trinkets and present thyself to thy husband with an open and smiling favour; and when he seeks of thee what men use to seek of women, put him off and say, "By Allah, it is a strange thing! When a man desires aught of his wife, he importunes her till she satisfies him; but if a wife desire aught of her husband, he will not grant it to her." Then he will say, "What dost thou want?" And do thou answer, "First swear to grant my request." If he swear to thee by his head or by Allah, say to him, "Swear to me the oath of divorce," and so not yield to him, except he do this. Then, if he swear to thee the oath of divorce, say to him, "Thou hast in prison a man called Ahmed Kemakim, and he has a poor mother, who is instant with me to urge thee to intercede for him with the Khalif, that he may relent towards him and thou earn a reward from God."' 'I hear and obey,' answered Khatoun. So when her husband came in to her, she did as the old woman had taught her and extorted the required oath from him, before she would yield to his wishes. He lay with her that night and on the morrow, after he had made his ablutions and prayed the morning prayers, he repaired to the prison and

said to Ahmed Kemakim, 'Harkye, O arch-thief, dost thou repent of thy ill deeds?' 'I do indeed repent and turn to God,' answered he, 'and say with heart and tongue, "I ask pardon of Allah."' So he carried him, still chained, to the Divan and kissed the earth before the Khalif, who said to him, 'O Amir Khalid, what seekest thou?' Then he brought forward Ahmed Kemakim, shuffling in his fetters, and the Khalif said to him, 'O Kemakim, art thou yet alive?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'the wretched are long-lived.' Then said the Khalif to the Amir, 'Why have thou brought him hither?' And he replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he hath a poor, desolate mother, who hath none but him, and she hath had recourse to thy slave, imploring him to intercede with thee to set him free and make him Captain of the Watch as before; for he repenteth of his evil courses.' Quoth the Khalif to Ahmed, 'Dost thou repent of thy sins?' 'I do indeed repent to God, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he; whereupon the Khalif called for the blacksmith and made him strike off his irons on the bench of the washer of the dead. Moreover, he restored him to his former office and charged him to walk in the way of good and righteousness. So he kissed the Khalif's hands and donning the captain's habit, went forth, whilst they made proclamation of his appointment.



He abode awhile in the exercise of his office, till, one day, his mother went in to the wife of the Chief of the Police, who said to her, 'Praised be God who hath delivered thy son from prison and restored him to health and safety! But why dost thou not bid him cast about to get the girl Jessamine for my son Hebezlem Bezazeh?' 'That will I,' answered she and going out from her, repaired to her son. She found him drunken and said to him, 'O my son, none was the cause of thy release from prison but the wife of the Master of Police, and she would have thee go about to kill Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat and get his slave-girl Jessamine for her son Hebezlem Bezazeh.' 'That will be the easiest of things,' answered he, 'and I will set about it this very night.' Now this was the first night of the new month, and it was the Khalif's wont to pass that night with the Princess Zubeideh, for the setting free of a male or female slave or what not else of the like. On this occasion, he used to doff his royal habit and lay it upon a chair in the sitting-chamber, together with his rosary and dagger and royal signet and a golden lantern, adorned with three jewels strung on a wire of gold, by which he set great store, committing all these things to the charge of the eunuchs, whilst he sent into the Lady Zubeideh's apartment. So Ahmed Kemakim waited till midnight, when Canopus shone and all creatures slept, whilst the Creator covered them with the curtain [of the dark]. Then he took his naked sword in one hand and his grappling iron in the other, and repairing to the Khalif's pavilion, cast his grapnel on to the roof. It caught there and he fixed his rope-ladder and climbed up to the roof; then, raising the trap-door, let himself down into the saloon, where he found the eunuchs asleep. So he drugged them with henbane and taking the Khalif's dress and dagger and rosary and handkerchief and signet-ring and lantern, returned whence he came and betook himself to the house of Alaeddin, who had that night celebrated his wedding festivities with Jessamine and had gone in to her and gotten her with child. Ahmed climbed over into his saloon and raising one of the marble slabs of the floor, dug a hole under it and laid the stolen things therein, all save the lantern, which he kept, saying in himself, 'I will set it before me, when I sit at wine, and drink by its light.' Then he plastered down the marble slab, as it was, and returning whence he came, went back to his own house. As soon as it was day, the Khalif went out into the sitting-chamber, and finding the eunuchs drugged with henbane, aroused them. Then he put his hand to the chair and found neither dress nor signet nor rosary nor dagger nor lantern; whereat he was exceeding wroth and donning the habit of anger, which was red, sat down in the Divan. So the Vizier Jaafer came forward and kissing the earth before him, said, 'May God avert the wrath of the Commander of the Faithful!' 'O Vizier,' answered the Khalif, 'I am exceeding wroth!' 'What has happened?' asked Jaafer; so he told him what had happened and when the Chief of the Police appeared, with Ahmed Kemakim at his stirrup, he said to him, 'O Amir Khalid, how goes Baghdad?' And he answered, 'It is safe and quiet.' 'Thou liest!' rejoined the Khalif. 'How so, O Commander of the Faithful?' asked the Amir. So he told him the case and added, 'I charge thee to bring me back all the stolen things.' 'O Commander of the Faithful', replied the Amir, 'the vinegar-worm is of and in the vinegar, and no stranger can get at this place.' But the Khalif said, 'Except thou bring me these things, I will put thee to death.' Quoth Khalid, 'Ere thou slay me, slay Ahmed Kemakim, for none should know the robber and the traitor but the captain of the watch.' Then came forward Ahmed Kemakim and said to the Khalif, 'Accept my intercession for the Master of Police, and I will be responsible to thee for the thief and

will follow his track till I find him; but give me two Cadis and two Assessors, for he who did this thing feareth thee not, nor doth he fear the Chief of the Police nor any other.' 'Thou shalt have what thou seekest,' answered the Khalif; 'but let search be made first in my palace and then in those of the Vizier and the Chief of the Sixty.' 'Thou sayst well, O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Ahmed; 'most like the thief is one who had been reared in thy household or that of one of thy chief officers.' 'As my head liveth,' said Haroun, 'whosoever shall appear to have done the deed, I will put him to death, be it my very own son!' Then Ahmed Kemakim received a written warrant to enter and search the houses and taking in his hand a [divining] rod made of equal parts of bronze, copper, iron and steel, went forth, attended by the Cadis and Assessors and the Chief of the Police. He first searched the palace of the Khalif, then that of the Vizier Jaafer; after which he went the round of the houses of the chamberlains and officers, till he came to that of Alaeddin. When the latter heard the clamour before his house, he left his wife and opening the door, found the Master of Police without, with a crowd of people. So he said, 'What is the matter, O Amir Khalid?' The Chief of the Police told him the case and Alaeddin said, 'Enter my house and search it.' 'Pardon, O my lord,' replied the Amir; 'thou art a man in authority, and God forbid that such should be guilty of treason!' Quoth Alaeddin, 'Needs must my house be searched. So they entered, and Ahmed Kemakim went straight to the saloon and let the rod fall upon the slab, under which he had buried the stolen goods, with such force that the marble broke in sunder and discovered something that glistened underneath. Then said he, 'In the name of God! what He willeth! Thanks to our coming, we have lit upon a treasure. Let us go down into this hiding-place and see what is therein.' So the Cadis and Assessors looked down into the hole and finding there the stolen goods, drew up a statement of how they had discovered them in Alaeddin's house, to which they set their seals. Then they bade seize upon Alaeddin and took his turban from his head, and making an inventory of all his property and effects, [sealed them up]. Meanwhile, Ahmed Kemakim laid hands on Jessamine, who was with child by Alaeddin, and committed her to his mother, saying, 'Deliver her to the Lady Khatoun.' So the old woman took her and carried her to the wife of the Master of Police. As soon as Hebezlem saw her, health and strength returned to him and he arose forthright, rejoicing greatly, and would have drawn near her: but she pulled a dagger from her girdle and said, 'Keep off from me, or I will kill thee and myself after.' 'O strumpet,' exclaimed his mother, 'let my son have his will of thee!' But Jessamine answered, 'O bitch, by what code is it lawful for a woman to marry two husbands, and how shall the dog take the lion's place?' With this Hebezlem's passion redoubled and he sickened for unfulfilled desire and refusing food, took to his bed again. Then said his mother to her, 'O harlot, how canst thou make me thus to sorrow for my son? Needs must I punish thee, and as for Alaeddin, he will assuredly be hanged.' 'And I will die for love of him,' answered Jessamine. Then Khatoun stripped her of her jewels and silken raiment and clothing her in sackcloth drawers and a shift of hair-cloth, sent her down into the kitchen and made her a scullery-wench, saying, 'Thy punishment shall be to split wood and peel onions and set fire under the cooking pots.' Quoth she, 'I am willing to brook all manner of hardship and servitude, but not thy son's sight.' But God inclined the hearts of the slave-girls to her and they used to do her service in the kitchen.

Meanwhile, they carried Alaeddin to the Divan and brought him, together with the stolen goods, before the Khalif, who said, 'Where did ye find them?' 'Amiddleward Alaeddin's house,' answered they; whereat the Khalif was filled with wrath and took the things, but found not the lantern among them, and said to Alaeddin, 'Where is the lantern?' 'I know nought of it,' answered he; 'it was not I that stole it.' 'O traitor,' said the Khalif, 'how comes it that I brought thee near unto me and thou hast cast me out, and I trusted in thee and thou hast betrayed me?' And he commanded to hang him. So the Chief of the Police took him and went down with him into the city, whilst the crier forewent them, proclaiming aloud and saying, 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of him who doth treason against the orthodox Khalifs!' And the folk flocked to the gallows.

Meanwhile, Ahmed ed Denef, Alaeddin's adopted father, was sitting, making merry with his followers in a garden, when in came one of the water-carriers of the Divan and kissing Ahmed's hand, said to him, 'O Captain, thou sittest at thine ease, with water running at thy feet, and knowest not what has happened.' 'What is to do?' asked Ahmed, and the other answered, 'They have gone down with thine adopted son, Alaeddin, to the gallows.' 'O Hassan Shouman,' said Ahmed, 'What sayst thou of this?' 'Assuredly, Alaeddin is innocent' replied his lieutenant; 'and this is some enemy's practice against him.' Quoth Ahmed, 'What counsellest thou?' And Hassan said, 'God willing, we must rescue him.' Then he went to the prison and said to the gaoler, 'Give us some one deserving of death.' So he gave him one that was likest to Alaeddin and they covered his head and carried him to the place of execution between Ahmed ed Denef and Ali ez Zibec of Cairo. Now they had brought Alaeddin to the gibbet, to hang him, but Ahmed ed Denef came forward and set his foot on that of the hangman, who said, 'Give me room to do my office.' 'O accursed one,' replied Ahmed, 'take this man and hang him in Alaeddin's stead; for he is innocent and we will ransom him with this fellow, even as Abraham ransomed Ishmael with the ram.' So the hangman took the man and hanged him in Alaeddin's room. Then Ahmed and Ali took Alaeddin and carried him to the house of the former, to whom said he, 'O my father, may God abundantly requite thee!' 'O Alaeddin,' said Ahmed, 'what is this thou hast done? God's mercy on him who said, "Whoso trusteth in thee, betray him not, though thou be a traitor." Now the Khalif set thee in high place about him and styled thee "Trusty" and "Faithful;" how then couldst thou deal thus with him and steal his goods?' 'By the Most Great Name, O my father,' replied Alaeddin, 'I had no hand in this, nor do I know who did it.' Quoth Ahmed, 'Of a surety none did this but a manifest enemy and whoso doth aught shall be requited for his deed; but, O Alaeddin, thou canst tarry no longer in Baghdad, for kings, O my son, may not be bought off and longsome is his travail whom they pursue.' 'Whither shall I go, O my father?' asked Alaeddin. 'O my son,' answered Ahmed, 'I will bring thee to Alexandria, for it is a blessed place; its environs are green and its sojourn pleasant.' And Alaeddin said, 'I hear and obey, O my father.' So Ahmed said to Hassan Shouman, 'Be mindful and when the Khalif asks for me, say I am gone on a circuit of the provinces.' Then, taking Alaeddin, he went forth of Baghdad and stayed not till they came to the vineyards and gardens, where they met two Jews of the Khalif's tax-gatherers, riding on mules, and Ahmed said to them, 'Give me the guard-money.' 'Why should we give thee guard-money?' asked they. 'Because,' answered he, 'I am the patrol of this valley.' So they gave

him each a hundred dinars, after which he slew them and took their mules, one of which he mounted, whilst Alaeddin bestrode the other. Then they rode on, till they came to the city of Ayas and put up for the night at an inn. Next morning, Alaeddin sold his own mule and committed that of Ahmed to the charge of the doorkeeper of the inn, after which they took ship from the port of Ayas and sailed to Alexandria. Here they landed and proceeded to the Bazaar, where they found a broker crying a shop and a chamber behind it for sale. The last bidding for the premises (which belonged to the Treasury) was nine hundred and fifty dirhems; so Alaeddin bid a thousand and his offer being accepted, took the keys and opened the shop and room, which latter he found furnished with carpets and cushions. Moreover, he found there a storehouse full of sails and masts and ropes and chests and bags of beads and shells and stirrups and axes and maces and knives and scissors and what not else, for the last owner of the shop had been a dealer in second-hand goods. So he took his seat in the shop and Ahmed ed Denef said to him, 'O my son, the shop and room and that which is therein are become thine; so abide thou here and buy and sell and grudge not, neither repine; for God the Most High blesseth trade.' After this he abode with him three days and on the fourth he took leave of him, saying, 'O my son, abide here till I bring thee the Khalif's pardon and learn who hath played thee this trick.' Then he took ship for Ayas, where he took the mule from the inn and returning to Baghdad, foregathered with Hassan Shouman, to whom said he, 'Has the Khalif asked for me?' 'No,' answered Hassan, 'nor hath thou come to his thought.' So he resumed his service about the Khalif's person and set himself to seek news of Alaeddin's case, till one day he heard the Khalif say to the Vizier, 'See, O Jaafer, how Alaeddin dealt with me!' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'thou hast requited him with hanging, and it was what he deserved.' Quoth Haroun, 'I have a mind to go down and see him hanging.' And the Vizier answered, 'As thou wilt, O Commander of the Faithful.' So the Khalif and Jaafer went down to the place of execution, and the former, raising his eyes, saw the hanged man to be other than Alaeddin and said to the Vizier, 'This is not Alaeddin.' 'How knowest thou that it is not he?' asked the Vizier, and the Khalif answered, 'Alaeddin was short and this fellow is tall.' Quoth Jaafer, 'Hanging stretches a man.' 'But,' rejoined the Khalif, 'Alaeddin was fair and this man's face is black.' 'Knowest thou not, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'that death (by hanging) causes blackness?' Then the Khalif bade take down the body and they found the names of he first two Khalifs, Abou Bekr and Omar, written on his heels; whereupon quoth the Khalif, 'O Vizier, Alaeddin was a Sunnite, and this fellow is a Shiyaite.' 'Glory be to God who knowest the hidden things!' answered Jaafer. 'We know not whether this was he or another.' Then the Khalif bade bury the body and Alaeddin became altogether forgotten.

As for Hebezlem Bezazeh, the Amir Khalid's son, he ceased not to languish for passion and desire, till he died and they buried him; whilst Jessamine accomplished the months of her pregnancy and being taken with the pains of labour, gave birth to a male child like the moon. The serving-women said to her, 'What wilt thou name him?' And she answered, 'Were his father alive, he had named him; but now I will name him Aslan.' She gave him suck two years, then weaned him, and he crawled and walked. One day, whilst his mother was busied with the service of the kitchen, the child went out and seeing the stairs, mounted to the guest- chamber, where the Amir Khalid was

sitting. When the latter saw him, he took him in his lap and glorified his Lord for that which He had created and fashioned forth; then eyeing him straitly, he saw that he was the likest of all creatures to Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat; and God informed his heart with love of the boy. Presently, his mother Jessamine sought for him and finding him not, mounted to the guest-chamber, where she saw the Amir seated, with the child playing in his lap. The latter, spying his mother, would have thrown himself upon her: but the Amir held him back and said to Jessamine, 'Come hither, O damsel.' So she came to him, and he said to her, 'Whose son is this?' Quoth she, 'He is my son and the darling of my heart.' 'Who is his father?' asked the Amir; and she answered, 'His father was Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, but now he is become thy son.' Quoth Khalid, 'Alaeddin was a traitor.' 'God deliver him from treason!' replied she. 'God forbid that the Faithful should be a traitor!' Then said he, 'When the boy grows up and says to thee, "Who is my father?" say thou to him, "Thou art the son of the Amir Khalid, Chief of the Police."' And she answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then he circumcised the boy and reared him after the goodliest fashion, bringing him a tutor, who taught him to read and write; so he read (and commented) the Koran twice and learnt it by heart and grew up, calling the Amir father. Moreover, the latter used to go down with him to the tilting-ground and assemble horsemen and teach the lad warlike exercises and the use of arms, so that, by the time he was fourteen years old, he became a valiant and accomplished cavalier and gained the rank of Amir.

It chanced one day that he fell in with Ahmed Kemakim and clapping up an acquaintance with him, accompanied him to the tavern, where Ahmed took out the lantern he had stolen from the Khalif and fell to plying the wine-cup by its light, till he became drunken. Presently Aslan said to him, 'O Captain, give me yonder lantern;' but he replied, 'I cannot give it thee.' 'Why not?' asked Aslan. 'Because,' answered Ahmed, 'lives have been lost for it.' 'Whose life?' asked Aslan; and Ahmed said, 'There came hither a man named Alaeddin Abou est Shamat, who was made Captain of the Sixty and lost his life through this lantern.' Quoth Aslan, 'And how was that?' 'Know,' replied Ahmed Kemakim, 'that thou hadst an elder brother by name Hebezlem Bezazeh, for whom, when he became apt for marriage, thy father would have bought a slave-girl named Jessamine.' And he went on to tell him the whole story of Hebezlem's illness and what befell Alaeddin, undeserved. When Aslan heard this, he said in himself, 'Most like this slave-girl was my mother Jessamine and my father was no other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' So he went out from him, sorrowful, and met Ahmed ed Denef, who exclaimed at sight of him, 'Glory be to Him to whom none is like!' 'At what dost thou marvel, O my chief?' asked Hassan Shouman. 'At the make of yonder boy Aslan,' replied Ed Denef; 'for he is the likest of all creatures to Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' Then he called Aslan and said to him, 'What is thy mother's name?' 'She is called the damsel Jessamine,' answered Aslan; and Ed Denef said, 'Harkye, Aslan, take heart and be of good cheer, for thy father was none other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat: but, O my son, go thou in to thy mother and question her of thy father.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he, and going in to his mother, said to her, 'Who is my father?' Quoth she, 'The Amir Khalid is thy father.' 'Not so,' rejoined he, 'my father was none other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' At this, she wept and said, 'Who told thee this?' 'Ahmed ed Denef, the Captain of the Guard,' answered he; so she told him the whole story, saying, 'O my son, the truth can no longer be hidden: know

that Alaeddin was indeed thy father, but it was the Amir Khalid who reared thee and adopted thee as his son. And now, O my son, when thou seest Ahmed ed Denef, so thou say to him, "I conjure thee, by Allah, O my chief, avenge me on the murderer of my father Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat!"' So he went out from her and betaking himself to Ahmed ed Denef, kissed his hand. Quoth Ed Denef, 'What ails thee, O Aslan?' And he answered, 'I know now for certain that I am the son of Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat and I would have thee avenge me of my father's murderer.' 'And who was thy father's murderer?' asked Ed Denef. 'Ahmed Kemakim the arch- thief,' replied Aslan. 'Who told thee this?' said Ed Denef, and Aslan answered, 'I saw in his hand the lantern hung with jewels, that was lost with the rest of the Khalif's gear, and asked him to give it me; but he refused, saying, "Lives have been lost on account of this," and told me how it was he who had broken into the palace and stolen the goods and hidden them in my father's house.' Then said Ed Denef, 'When thou seest the Amir Khalid don his harness of war, beg him to equip thee like himself and take thee with him. Then do thou some feat of prowess before the Khalif and he will say to thee, "Ask a boon of me, O Aslan." And do thou answer, "I ask of thee that thou avenge me of my father's murderer." If he say, "Thy father is alive and is the Amir Khalid, the Chief of the Police," answer thou, "My father was Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, and the Amir Khalid is only my father by right of fosterage and adoption." Then tell him all that passed between thee and Ahmed Kemakim and say, "O Commander of the Faithful, order him to be searched and I will bring the lantern forth of his bosom."' 'I hear and obey,' answered Aslan and returning to the Amir Khalid, found him making ready to repair to the Divan and said to him, 'I would fain have thee arm and harness me like thyself and carry me to the Divan.' So he equipped him and carried him to the Divan, with Ahmed Kemakim at his stirrup. Then the Khalif sallied forth of Baghdad with his retinue and let pitch tents and pavilions without the city; whereupon the troops divided into two parties and fell to playing at ball and striking it with the mall from one to the other. Now there was among the troops a spy, who had been hired to kill the Khalif; so he took the ball and smiting it with the mall, drove it straight at the Khalif's face; but Aslan interposed and catching it in mid-volley, drove it back at him who smote it, so that it struck him between the shoulders and he fell to the ground. The Khalif exclaimed, 'God bless thee, O Aslan!' and they all dismounted and sat on chairs. Then the Khalif bade bring the smiter of the ball before him and said to him, 'Who moved thee to do this thing and art thou friend or foe?' Quoth he, 'I am a foe and it was my purpose to kill thee.' 'And wherefore?' asked the Khalif. 'Art thou not an (orthodox) Muslim?' 'No,' replied the spy; 'I am a Shiyaite.' So the Khalif bade put him to death and said to Aslan, 'Ask a boon of me.' Quoth he, 'I ask of thee that thou avenge me of my father's murderer.' 'Thy father is alive,' answered the Khalif; 'and there he stands.' 'And who is he?' asked Aslan. The Khalif replied, 'He is the Amir Khalid, Chief of the Police.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Aslan, 'he is no father of mine, save by right of fosterage; my father was none other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' 'Then thy father was a traitor,' said the Khalif. 'God forbid, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Aslan, 'that the Faithful should be a traitor! But how did he wrong thee?' Quoth the Khalif, 'He stole my royal habit and what was therewith.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Aslan, 'God forfend that my father should be a traitor! But, O my lord, didst thou ever recover the lantern that was stolen from thee?' 'No,' answered the

Khalif, 'we never got it back.' And Aslan said, 'I saw it in the hands of Ahmed Kemakim and begged it of him; but he refused to give it me, saying, "Lives have been lost on account of this." Then he told me of the sickness of Hebezlem Bezazeh, son of the Amir Khalid, by reason of his passion for the damsel Jessamine, and how he himself was released from prison and that it was he who stole the lamp and robe and so forth. Do thou then, O Commander of the Faithful, avenge me of my father on him who murdered him.' So the Khalif caused Ahmed Kemakim to be brought before him and sending for Ahmed ed Denef, bade him search him; whereupon he put his hand into the thief's bosom and pulled out the lamp. 'Harkye, traitor,' said the Khalif, 'whence hadst thou this lantern?' And Kemakim replied, 'I bought it, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'Where didst thou buy it?' said the Khalif, 'and who could come by its like to sell it to thee?' Then they beat him, till he confessed that he had stolen the lantern and the rest, and the Khalif said, 'O traitor, what moved thee to do this thing and ruin Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, the Trusty and Well-beloved?' Then he bade lay hands on him and on the Chief of the Police, but the latter said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, indeed I am unjustly entreated; thou badest me hang him, and I had no knowledge of this plot, for the thing was contrived between Ahmed Kemakim and his mother and my wife. I crave thine intercession, O Aslan.' So Aslan interceded for him with the Khalif, who said, 'What hath God done with this lad's mother?' 'She is with me,' answered Khalid, and the Khalif said, 'I command thee to bid thy wife dress her in her own clothes and ornaments and restore her to her former rank; and do thou remove the seals from Alaeddin's house and give his son possession of his estate.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Khalid, and going forth, carried the Khalif's order to his wife, who clad Jessamine in her own apparel; whilst he himself removed the seals from Alaeddin's house and gave Aslan the keys. Then said the Khalif to Aslan, 'Ask a boon of me;' and he replied, 'I beseech thee to unite me with my father.' Whereat the Khalif wept and said, 'Most like it was thy father that was hanged and is dead; but by the life of my forefathers, whoso bringeth me the glad news that he is yet in the bonds of life, I will give him all he seeketh!' Then came forward Ahmed ed Denef and kissing the earth before the Khalif, said, 'Grant me indemnity, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'Thou hast it,' answered the Khalif; and Ed Denef said, 'I give thee the good news that Alaeddin is alive and well.' Quo the Khalif, 'What is this thou sayest?' 'As thy head liveth,' answered Ed Denef, 'I speak sooth; for I ransomed him with another, of those who deserved death, and carried him to Alexandria, where I set him up as a dealer in second-hand goods.' Then said Er Reshid, 'I charge thee fetch him to me;' and Ed Denef replied, 'I hear and obey;' whereupon the Khalif bade give him ten thousand dinars and he set out for Alexandria.

Meanwhile Alaeddin sold all that was in his shop, till he had but a few things let and amongst the rest a bag. So he shook the bag and there fell out a jewel, big enough to fill the palm of the hand, hanging to a chain of gold and having five faces, whereon were names and talismanic characters, as they were ant-tracks. 'God is All-knowing!' quoth he. 'Belike this is a talisman.' So he rubbed each face; but nothing came of it and he said to himself, 'Doubtless it is a piece of [naturally] variegated onyx,' and hung it up in the shop. Presently, a Frank passed along the street and seeing the jewel hanging up, seated himself before the shop and said to Alaeddin, 'O my lord, is yonder jewel for sale?' 'All I have is for sale,' answered Alaeddin; and the Frank said, 'Wilt thou

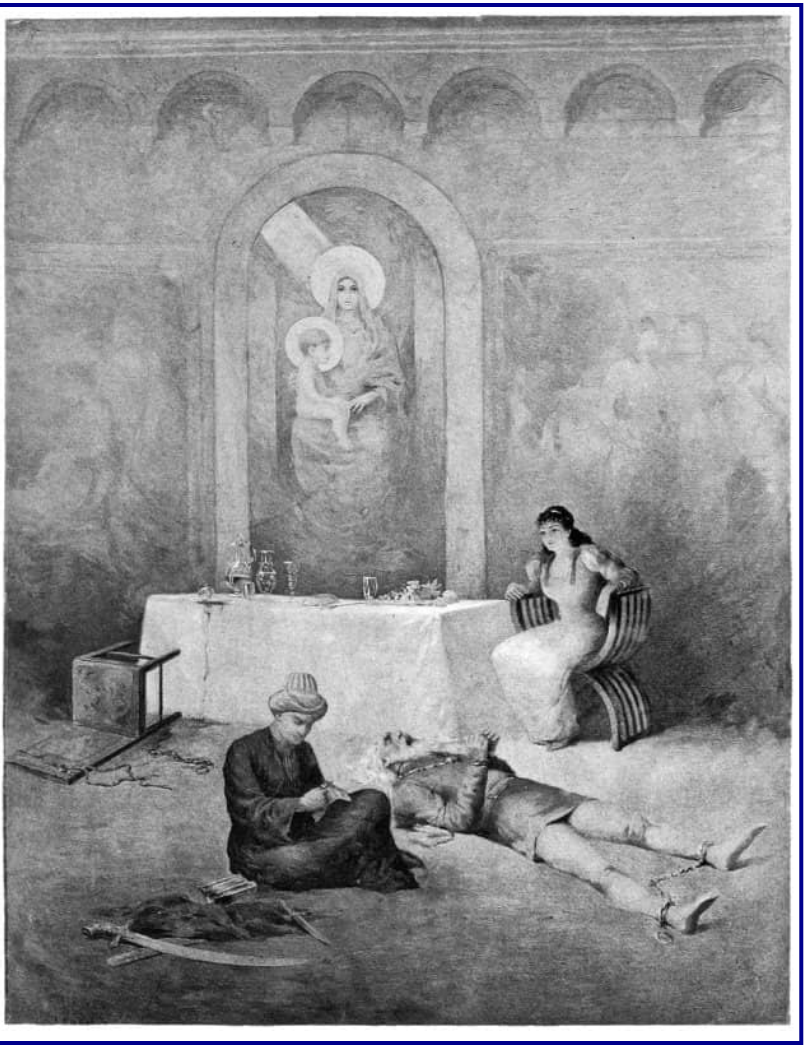
sell it me for fourscore thousand dinars?' 'May God open!' replied Alaeddin. 'Wilt thou sell it for a hundred thousand dinars?' asked the Frank, and he answered, 'I sell it to thee for a hundred thousand dinars; pay me down the money.' Quoth the Frank, 'I cannot carry such a sum about me, for there are thieves and sharpers in Alexandria; but come with me to my ship and I will pay thee the money and give thee to boot a bale of Angora wool, a bale of satin, a bale of velvet and a bale of broadcloth.' So Alaeddin rose and giving the jewel to the Frank, locked up his shop and committed the keys to his neighbour, saying, 'Keep these keys for me, whilst I go with this Frank to his ship and take the price of my jewel. If I be long absent and there come to thee Captain Ahmed ed Denef, — he who set me up in this shop, — give him the keys and tell him where I am.' Then he went with the Frank to his ship, where the latter set him a stool and making him sit down, said [to his men], 'Bring the money.' So [they brought it and] he paid him the price of the jewel and gave him the four bales he had promised him; after which he said to him, 'O my lord, honour me by taking a morsel or a draught of water.' And Alaeddin answered, 'If thou have any water, give me to drink.' So the Frank called for drink, and they brought sherbets, drugged with henbane, of which no sooner had Alaeddin drunk, than he fell over on his back; whereupon they weighed anchor and shoving off, shipped the poles and made sail. The wind blew fair and they sailed till they lost sight of land, when the Frank bade bring Alaeddin up out of the hold and made him smell to the counter-drug, whereupon he opened his eyes and said, 'Where am I?' 'Thou art bound and in my power,' answered the Frank; 'and if thou hadst refused to take a hundred thousand dinars for the jewel, I would have bidden thee more.' 'What art thou?' asked Alaeddin, and the other replied, 'I am a sea- captain and mean to carry thee to my mistress.' As they were talking, a ship hove in sight, with forty Muslim merchants on board; so the Frank captain gave chase and coming up with the vessel, made fast to it with grappling-irons. Then he boarded it with his men and took it and plundered it; after which he sailed on with his prize, till he reached the city of Genoa, where he repaired to the gate of a palace, that gave upon the sea, and there came forth to him a veiled damsel, who said, 'Hast thou brought the jewel and its owner?' 'I have brought them both,' answered he; and she said, 'Then give me the jewel.' So he gave it to her and returning to the port, fired guns to announce his safe return; whereupon the King of the city, being notified of his arrival, came down to receive him and said to him, 'What manner of voyage hast thou had?' 'A right prosperous one,' answered the captain, 'and I have made prize of a ship with one- and-forty Muslim merchants.' Being them ashore,' said the King. So he landed the merchants in irons, and Alaeddin among the rest; and the King and the captain mounted and made the captives walk before them, till they reached the palace, where the King sat down in the audience-chamber and making the prisoners pass before him, one by one, said to the first, 'O Muslim, whence comest thou?' 'From Alexandria,' answered he; whereupon the King said, 'O headsman, put him to death.' So the headsman smote him with the sword and cut off his head: and thus it fared with the second and the third, till forty were dead and there remained but Alaeddin, who drank the cup of his comrades' anguish and said to himself, 'God have mercy on thee, O Alaeddin! Thou art a dead man.' Then said the King to him, 'And thou, what countryman art thou?' 'I am of Alexandria,' answered Alaeddin, and the King said, 'O headsman, strike off his head.' So the headsman raised his arm and was about to strike,

when an old woman of venerable aspect presented herself before the King, who rose to do her honour, and said to him, 'O King, did I not bid thee remember, when the captain came back with captives, to keep one or two for the convent, to serve in the church?' 'O my mother, answered the King, 'would thou hadst come a while earlier! But take this one that is left.' So she turned to Alaeddin and said to him, 'Wilt thou serve in the church, or shall I let the King kill thee?' Quoth he, 'I will serve in the church.' So she took him and carried him forth of the palace to the church, where he said to her, 'What service must I do?' And she answered, 'Thou must arise in the morning and take five mules and go with them into the forest and there cut dry firewood and split it and bring it to the convent-kitchen. Then must thou take up the carpets and sweep and wipe the stone and marble pavements and lay the carpets down again, as they were; after which thou must take two bushels and a half of wheat and sift it and grind it and knead it and make it into cracknels for the convent; and thou must take also a bushel of lentils and sift and crush and cook them. Then must thou fetch water in barrels and fill the four fountains; after which thou must take three hundred and threescore and six wooden platters and crumble the cracknels therein and pour of the lentil pottage over each and carry every monk and patriarch his platter.' 'Take me back to the King and let him kill me,' said Alaeddin; 'it were easier to me than this service.' 'If thou do the service that is due from thee,' replied the old woman, 'thou shalt escape death; but, if thou do it not, I will let the King kill thee.' Then she went away, leaving Alaeddin heavy at heart. Now there were in the church ten blind cripples, and one of them said to him, 'Bring me a pot.' So he brought it him and he did his occasion therein and said, 'Throw away the ordure.' He did do, and the blind man said, 'The Messiah's blessing be upon thee, O servant of the church!' Presently, the old woman came in and said to him, 'Why hast thou not done thy service?' 'How many hands have I,' answered he, 'that I should suffice for all this work?' 'Thou fool!' rejoined she.' 'I brought thee not hither but to work. But,' added she, giving him a wand of brass with a cross at the top, 'take this rod and go forth into the highway, and whomsoever thou meetest, were he governor of the ciy, say to him, "I summon thee to the service of the church, in the name of the Messiah." And he will not refuse thee. Then make him sift the wheat and grind it and bolt it and knead it and bake it into cracknels; and if any gainsay thee, beat him and fear none.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and did as she said, pressing great and small into his service; nor did he leave to do thus for the space of seventeen years, till, one day, the old woman came to him, as he sat in the church, and said to him, 'Go forth of the convent.' 'Whither shall I go?' asked he, and she said, 'Thou canst pass the night in a tavern or with one of thy friends.' Quoth he, 'Why dost thou send me forth of the church?' and she replied, 'The princess Husn Meryem, daughter of Youhenna, King of the city, purposes this night to pay a visit to the church, and it befits not that any abide in her way.' So he rose and made a show of obeying her and of leaving the church; but he said in himself, 'I wonder whether the princess is like our women or fairer than they! Algates, I will not go till I have had a sight of her.' So he hid himself in a closet with a window looking into the church, and as he watched, in came the King's daughter. He cast one glance at her, that cost him a thousand sighs, for she was like the full moon, when it emerges from the clouds; and with her was a damsel, to whom he heard her say, 'O Zubeideh, thy company is grateful to me.' So he looked straitly at the damsel and found her to be

none other than his wife, Zubeideh the Lutanist, whom he thought dead. Then the princess said to Zubeideh, 'Play us an air on the lute.' But she answered, 'I will make no music for thee, till thou grant my wish and fulfil thy promise to me.' 'And what did I promise thee?' asked the princess. 'That thou wouldst reunite me with my husband Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat,' said Zubeideh. 'O Zubeideh,' rejoined the princess, 'be of good cheer and play us an air, as a thank-offering for reunion with thy husband.' 'Where is he?' asked Zubeideh, and Meryem replied, 'He is in yonder closet, listening to us.' So Zubeideh played a measure on the lute, that would have made a rock dance; which when Alaeddin heard, his entrails were troubled and he came forth and throwing himself upon his wife, strained her to his bosom. She also knew him and they embraced and fell down in a swoon. Then came the princess and sprinkled rose-water on them, till they revived, when she said to them, 'God hath reunited you.' 'By thy kind offices, O my lady,' replied Alaeddin and turning to his wife, said to her, 'O Zubeideh, thou didst surely die and we buried thee: how then camest thou to life and to this place?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'I did not die; but a Marid of the Jinn snatched me up and flew with me hither. She whom thou buriedst was a Jinniyeh, who took my shape and feigned herself dead, but presently broke open the tomb and returned to the service of this her mistress, the princess Husn Meryem. As for me, I was in a trance, and when I opened my eyes, I found myself with the princess; so I said to her, "Why hast thou bought me hither?" "O Zubeideh," answered she, "know that I am predestined to marry thy husband Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat: wilt thou then accept of me to fellow-wife, a night for me and a night for thee?" "I hear and obey, O my lady," rejoined I; "but where is my husband?" Quoth she, "Upon his forehead is written what God hath decreed to him; as soon as what is there written is fulfilled to him he must needs come hither, and we will beguile the time of our separation from him with songs and smiting upon instruments of music, till it please God to unite us with him." So I abode with her till God brought us together in this church.' Then the princess turned to him and said, 'O my lord Alaeddin, wilt thou accept of me to wife?' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'I am a Muslim and thou art a Nazarene; so how can I marry thee?' 'God forbid,' rejoined she, 'that I should be an infidel! Nay, I am a Muslim; these eighteen years have I held fast the Faith of Submission and I am pure of any faith other than that of Islam.' Then said he, 'O my lady, I would fain return to my native land.' And she answered, 'Know that I see written on thy forehead things that thou must needs fulfil and thou shalt come to thy desire. Moreover, I give thee the glad tidings, O Alaeddin, that there hath been born to thee a son named Aslan, who is now eighteen years old and sitteth in thy place with the Khalif. Know also that God hath shown forth the truth and done away the false by withdrawing the curtain of secrecy from him who stole the Khalif's goods, that is, Ahmed Kemakim the arch-thief and traitor; and he now lies bound and in prison. It was I who caused the jewel to be put in the bag where thou foundest it and who sent the captain to thee; for thou must know that he is enamoured of me and seeketh my favours, but I refused to yield to his wishes, till he should being me the jewel and its owner. So I gave him a hundred purses and despatched him to thee, in the habit of a merchant; and it was I also who sent the old woman to save thee from being put to death with the other captives.' 'May God requite thee for us with all good!' said he. 'Indeed, thou hast done well.' Then she renewed her profession of the Mohammedan faith at his hands, and when he was assured of the

truth of her speech, he said to her, 'O my lady, tell me what are the virtues of the jewel and whence cometh it?' 'It came from an enchanted treasure,' answered she, 'and has five virtues, that will profit us in time of need. The princess my grandmother, my father's mother, was an enchantress and skilled in solving mysteries and winning at hidden treasures, and from one of the latter came the jewel into her hands. When I grew up and reached the age of fourteen, I read the Evangel and other books and found the name of Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) in four books, the Evangel, the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Koran; so I believed in Mohammed and became a Muslim, being assured that none is worship-worth save God the Most High and that to the Lord of all creatures no faith is acceptable save that of Submission. When my grandmother fell sick, she gave me the jewel and taught me its virtues. Moreover, before she died, my father said to her, 'Draw me a geomantic figure and see the issue of my affair and what will befall me.' And she foretold him that he should die by the hand of a captive from Alexandria. So he swore to kill every captive from that place and told the captain of this, saying, "Do thou fall on the ships of the Muslims and seize them and whomsoever thou findest of Alexandria, kill him or bring him to me." The captain did his bidding and he slew as many in number as the hairs of his head. Then my grandmother died and I took a geomantic tablet, being minded to now who I should marry, and drawing a figure, found that none should be my husband save one called Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, the Trusty and Well-beloved. At this I marvelled and waited till the times were accomplished and I foregathered with thee.' So Alaeddin took her to wife and said to her, 'I desire to return to my own country.' 'If it be so,' replied she, 'come with me.' Then she carried him into the palace and hiding him in a closet there, went in to her father, who said to her, 'O my daughter, my heart is exceeding heavy to-day; let us sit down and make merry with wine, thou and I.' So he called for a table of wine, and she sat down with him and plied him with wine, till he lost his wits, when she drugged a cup with henbane, and he drank it off and fell backward. Then she brought Alaeddin out of the closet and said to him, 'Come; thine enemy is laid prostrate, for I made him drunk and drugged him; so do thou with him as thou wilt.' Accordingly Alaeddin went to the King and finding him lying drugged and helpless, bound him fast, hand and foot. Then he gave him the counter-drug and he came to himself and finding his daughter and Alaeddin sitting on his breast, said to her, 'O my daughter, dost thou deal thus with me?' 'If I be indeed thy daughter,' answered she, 'become a Muslim, even as I have done; for the truth was shown to me, and I embraced it, and the false, and I renounced it. I have submitted myself unto God, the Lord of all creatures, and am pure of all faiths contrary to that of Islam in this world and the next. Wherefore, if thou wilt become a Muslim, well and good; if not, thy death were better than thy life.' Alaeddin also exhorted him to embrace the true faith; but he refused and was obstinate: so Alaeddin took a dagger and cut his throat from ear to ear. Then he wrote a scroll, setting forth what had happened and laid it on the dead man's forehead, after which they took what was light of weight and heavy of worth and returned to the church. Here the princess took out the jewel and rubbed the face whereon was figured a couch, whereupon a couch appeared before her and she mounted upon it with Alaeddin and Zubeideh, saying, 'O couch, I conjure thee by the virtue of the names and talismans and characters of art engraven on this jewel, rise up with us!' And it rose with them into the air and flew, till I came to a desert valley, when

the princess turned the face on which the couch was figured towards the earth, and it sank with them to the ground. Then she turned up the face whereon was figured a pavilion and tapping it, said, 'Let a pavilion be pitched in this valley.' And immediately there appeared a pavilion, in which they seated themselves. Now this valley was a desert waste, without grass or water; so she turned a third face of the jewel towards the sky and said, 'By the virtue of the names of God, let trees spring up here and a river run beside them!' And immediately trees sprang up and a river ran rippling and splashing beside them. They made their ablutions and prayed and drank of the stream; after which the princess turned up a fourth face of the jewel, on which was figured a table of food, and said, 'By the virtue of the names of God, let the table be spread!' And immediately there appeared before them a table, spread with all manner rich meats, and they ate and drank and made merry.



Meanwhile, the King's son went in to waken his father, but found him slain and seeing the scroll, took it and read. Then he sought his sister and finding her not, betook himself to the old woman in the church, of whom he enquired of her, but she said, 'I have not seen her since yesterday.' So he returned to the troops and cried out, saying, 'To horse, cavaliers!' Then he told them what had happened, and they mounted and rode after the fugitives, till they drew near the pavilion. Presently, Husn Meryem looked up and saw a cloud of dust, which spread till it covered the prospect, then lifted and discovered her brother and his troops, crying aloud and saying, 'Whither will ye fly, and we on your track!' Then said she to Alaeddin, 'Art thou steadfast in battle?' 'Even as the stake in bran,' answered he; 'I know not war nor battle, neither swords nor spears.' So she pulled out the jewel and rubbed the fifth face, that on which were depictured a horse and his rider, and straightway a horseman appear out of the desert and driving at the pursuing host, ceased not to do battle with them and smite them with the sword, till he routed them and put them to flight. Then said the princess to Alaeddin, 'Wilt thou go to Cairo or to Alexandria?' And he answered, 'To Alexandria.' So they mounted the couch and she pronounced over it the conjuration, whereupon it set off with them and brought them to Alexandria in the twinkling of an eye. They alighted without the city and Alaeddin hid the women in a cavern, whilst he went into Alexandria and fetched them veils and outer clothing, wherewith he covered them. Then he carried them to his ship and leaving them in the room behind it, went forth to fetch them the morning meal, when he met Ahmed ed Denef coming from Baghdad. He saw him in the street and received him with open arms, embracing him and welcoming him. Ed Denef gave him the good news of his son Aslan and how he was now come to the age of twenty; and Alaeddin, in his turn, told the captain of the guard all that had befallen him, whereat he marvelled exceedingly. Then he brought him to his lodging, where they passed the night; and next day he sold his shop and laid its price with his other monies. Now Ed Denef had told him that the Khalif sought him; but he said, 'I am bound first for Cairo, to salute my father and mother and the people of my house.' So they all mounted the couch and it carried them to Cairo the Happy, where they alighted in the street called Yellow, where stood Shemseddin's house. Alaeddin knocked at the door, and his mother said, 'Who is at the door, now that we have lost our beloved?' 'It is I, Alaeddin,' replied he; whereupon they came down and embraced him. Then he sent his wives and baggage into the house and entering himself with Ahmed ed Denef, rested there three days, after which he was minded to set out for Baghdad and his father said, 'O my son, abide with me.' But he answered, 'I cannot brook to be parted from my son Aslan.' So he took his father and mother and set out for Baghdad. When they came thither, Ahmed ed Denef went in to the Khalif and gave him the glad tidings of Alaeddin's arrival and told him his story; whereupon the Prince went forth to meet him, accompanied by his son Aslan, and they met and embraced each other. Then the Khalif sent for Ahmed Kemakim and said to Alaeddin, 'Up and avenge thee of thine enemy!' So he drew his sword and smote off Ahmed's head. Then the Khalif held festival for Alaeddin and summoning the Cadis and the witnesses, married him to the princess Husn Meryem; and he went in to her and found her an unpierced pearl. Moreover, the Khalif made Aslan Chief of the Sixty and bestowed upon him and his father sumptuous dresses of honour; and they abode in the

enjoyment of all the comforts and pleasures of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

Hatim Et Taï: His Generosity After Death.

IT is told of Hatim et Taï, that when he died, they buried him on the top of a mountain and set over his grave two boughs hewn out of two rocks and stone figures of women with dishevelled hair. At the foot of the hill was a stream of running water, and when wayfarers camped there, they heard loud crying in the night, from dark till daybreak; but when they arose in the morning, they found nothing but the girls carved in stone. Now when Dhoulkeraa, King of Himyer, going forth of his tribe, came to the valley, he halted to pass the night there and drawing near the mountain, heard the crying and said, 'What lamenting is that on yonder hill?' They answered him, saying, 'This is the tomb of Hatim et Taï, over which are two troughs of stone and stone figures of girls with dishevelled hair; and all who camp in this place by night hear this crying and lamenting.' So he said jestingly, 'O Hatim et Taï, we are thy guests this night, and we are lank with hunger.' Then sleep overcame him, but presently he awoke in affright and cried out, saying, 'Help, O Arabs! Look at my beast!' So they came to him and finding his she-camel struggling in the death-agony, slaughtered it and roasted its flesh and ate. Then they asked him what had happened and he said, 'When I closed my eyes, I saw in my sleep Hatim et Taï, who came to me with a sword in his hand and said to me, "Thou comest to us and we have nothing by us." Then he smote my she-camel with his sword, and she would have died, though ye had not come to her and cut her throat.' Next morning the prince mounted the beast of one of his companions and taking the latter up behind him, set out and fared on till midday, when they saw a man coming towards them, mounted on a camel and leading another, and said to him, 'Who art thou?' 'I am Adi, son of Hatim et Taï,' answered he. 'Where is Dhoulkeraa, prince of Himyer?' 'This is he,' replied they, and he said to the prince, 'Take this camel in place of thine own, which my father slaughtered for thee.' 'Who told thee of this?' asked Dhoulkeraa, and Adi answered, 'My father appeared to me in a dream last night and said to me, "Harkye, Adi; Dhoulkeraa, King of Himyer, sought hospitality of me and I, having nought to give him, slaughtered him his she-camel, that he might eat: so do thou carry him a she-camel to ride, for I have nothing."' And Dhoulkeraa took her, marvelling at the generosity of Hatim et Taï, alive and dead.

Maan Ben Zaïdeh and the Three Girls.

IT is told of Maan ben Zaïdeh that, being out one day a-hunting, he became athirst and would have drunk, but his men had no water with them. Presently, he met three damsels, bearing three skins of water; so he begged drink of them, and they gave him to drink. Then he sought of his men somewhat to give the damsels; but they had no money; so he gave each girl ten golden-headed arrows from his quiver. Whereupon quoth one of them to her mates, 'Harkye! These fashions pertain to none but Maan ben Zaïdeh; so let each of us recite somewhat of verse in his praise.' Then said the first:

He heads his shafts with gold and shooting at his foes,
Dispenses thus largesse and bounties far and wide,
Giving the wounded man wherewith to get him cure
And grave-clothes unto him must in the tombs abide.

And the second:

A warrior, for the great excess of his magnificence,
Both friends and foes enjoy the goods his liberal hands dispense.
His arrowheads are forged of gold, that so his very wars
May not stop his generous soul from its munificence.

And the third:

With arrows he shoots at his foes, of his generosity
Whose heads are fashioned and forged of virgin gold, in steel's room;
That those whom he wounds may spend the price of the gold for their cure
And those that are slain of his shafts may buy them the wede of the tomb.

Maan Ben Zaïdeh and the Bedouin.

IT is told also of Maan ben Zaïdeh that he went forth one day to the chase with his company, and they came upon a herd of gazelles. So they separated in pursuit of them and Maan was left alone in chase of one of the gazelles. When he had made prize of it, he alighted and slaughtered it; and as he was thus engaged, he espied a man coming towards him on an ass. So he remounted and riding up to the new-comer, saluted him and asked him whence he came. Quoth he, 'I come from the land of Cuzaäh, where we have had a two years' dearth; but this year it was a season of plenty and I sowed cucumbers. They came up before their time, so I gathered the best of them and set out to carry them to the Amir Maan ben Zaïdeh, because of his well-known generosity and notorious munificence.' 'How much cost thou hope to get of him?' asked Maan, and the Bedouin answered, 'A thousand diners.' 'What if he say, "This is too much"?' quoth Maan. 'Then I will ask five hundred diners,' said the Bedouin. 'And if he say, "Too much"?' said Maan. 'Then three hundred,' replied the other. 'And if he say yet, "Too much"?' 'Then two hundred.' 'And yet, "Too much"?' 'Then one hundred.' 'And yet, "Too much"?' 'Then fifty.' 'And yet, "Too much"?' 'Then thirty.' 'And if he still say, "Too much"?' said Maan ben Zaïdeh. 'Then,' answered the Bedouin, 'I will make my ass set his feet in his sanctuary and return to my people, disappointed and empty-handed.' Maan laughed at him and spurring his horse, rode on till he came up with his suite and returned home, when he said to his chamberlain, 'If there come a man with cucumbers, riding on an ass, admit him.' Presently up came the Bedouin and was admitted to Maan's presence, but knew him not for the man he had met in the desert, by reason of the gravity and majesty of his aspect and the multitude of his servants and attendants, for he was seated on his chair of estate, with his officers about him. So he saluted him and Maan said to him, 'O brother of the Arabs, what brings thee?' 'I hoped in the Amir,' answered the Bedouin, 'and have brought him cucumbers out of season.' 'And how much cost thou expect of us?' asked Maan. 'A thousand diners,' answered the Bedouin. 'Too much,' said Maan. Quoth the Bedouin, 'Five hundred;' but Maan repeated, 'Too much.' 'Then three hundred,' said the Bedouin. 'Too much,' said Maan. 'Two hundred.' 'Too much' 'One hundred.' 'Too much' 'Fifty.' 'Too much.' At last the Bedouin came down to thirty diners; but Maan still replied, 'Too much.' 'By Allah,' cried the Bedouin, 'the man I met in the desert brought me ill luck! But I will not go lower than thirty diners.' The Amir laughed and said nothing; whereupon the Bedouin knew that it was he whom he had met and said, 'O my lord, except thou bring the thirty diners, there is the ass tied ready at the door and here sits Maan.' At this, Maan laughed, till he fell backward, and calling his steward, said to him, 'Give him a thousand diners and five hundred and three hundred and two hundred and one hundred and fifty and thirty and leave the ass where he is.' So the Bedouin, to his amazement, received two thousand and nine score diners, and may God have mercy on them both!

The City of Lebtait.

THERE was once a city in the land of the Franks, called the City of Lebtait. It was a royal city and in it stood a tower which was always shut. Whenever a King died and another King of the Franks took the Kingship after him, he set a new and strong lock on the tower, till there were four-and-twenty locks upon the gate. After this time, there came to the throne a man who was not of the old royal house, and he had a mind to open the locks, that he might see what was within the tower. The grandees of his kingdom forbade him from this and were instant with him to desist, offering him all that their hands possessed of riches and things of price, if he would but forego his desire; but he would not be baulked and said, 'Needs must I open this tower.' So he did off the locks and entering, found within figures of Arabs on their horses and camels, covered with turbans with hanging ends, girt with swords and bearing long lances in their hands. He found there also a scroll, with these words written therein: 'Whenas this door is opened, a people of the Arabs, after the likeness of the figures here depictured, will conquer this country; wherefore beware, beware of opening it.' Now this city was in Spain, and that very year Tarik ibn Ziyad conquered it, in the Khalifate of Welid ben Abdulmelik of the sons of Umeyyeh, slaying this King after the sorriest fashion and sacking the city and making prisoners of the women and boys therein. Moreover, he found there immense treasures; amongst the rest more than a hundred and seventy crowns of pearls and rubies and other gems, and a saloon, in which horsemen might tilt with spears, full of vessels of gold and silver, such as no description can comprise. Moreover, he found there also the table of food of the prophet of God, Solomon son of David (on whom be peace), which is extant even now in a city of the Greeks; it is told that it was of green emerald, with vessels of gold and platters of chrysolite; likewise, the Psalms written in the [ancient] Greek character, on leaves of gold set with jewels, together with a book setting forth the properties of stones and herbs and minerals, as well as the use of charms and talismans and the canons of the art of alchemy, and another that treated of the art of cutting and setting rubies and other [precious] stones and of the preparation of poisons and antidotes. There found he also a representation of the configuration of the earth and the seas and the different towns and countries and villages of the world and a great hall full of hermetic powder, one drachm of which would turn a thousand drachms of silver into fine gold; likewise a marvellous great round mirror of mixed metals, made for Solomon son of David (on whom be peace), wherein whoso looked might see the very image and presentment of the seven divisions of the world, and a chamber full of carbuncles, such as no words can suffice to set forth, many camel-loads. So he despatched all these things to Welid ben Abdulmelik, and the Arabs spread all over the cities of Spain, which is one of the finest of lands. This is the end of the story of the City of Lebtait.

The Khalif Hisham and the Arab Youth.

THE Khalif Hisham ben Abdulmelik ben Merwan was hunting one day, when he sighted an antelope and pursued it with his dogs. As he was following the chase, he saw an Arab youth pasturing sheep and said to him, 'Ho, boy, up and stop yonder antelope, for it escapeth me!' The youth raised his head and replied, 'O ignorant of the worth of the worthy, thou lookest on me with disdain and speakest to me with contempt; thy speech is that of a tyrant and thy conduct that of an ass.' 'Out on thee,' cried Hisham. 'Dost thou not know me?' 'Verily,' rejoined the youth, 'thine unmannerliness hath made thee known to me, in that thou spokest to me, without beginning by the salutation." 'Out on thee!' repeated the Khalif. 'I am Hisham ben Abdulmelik.' 'May God not favour thy dwellings,' replied the Arab, 'nor guard thine abiding-place! How many are thy words and how few thy generosities!' Hardly had he spoken, when up came the troops from all sides and surrounded him, saying, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth Hisham, 'Leave this talk and seize me yonder boy.' So they laid hands on him; and when he saw the multitude of chamberlains and viziers and officers of state, he was in nowise concerned and questioned not of them, but let his chin fall on his breast and looked where his feet fell, till they brought him to the Khalif, when he stood before him, with head bowed down, and saluted him not neither spoke. So one of the attendants said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs, what ails thee that thou salutest not the Commander of the Faithful?' The youth turned to him angrily and replied, 'O packsaddle of an ass, the length of the way it was that hindered me from this and the steepness of the steps and sweat.' Then said Hisham (and indeed he was exceeding wroth), 'O boy, thou art come to thy last hour; thy hope is gone from thee and thy life is past.' 'By Allah, O Hisham,' answered the Arab, 'if the time be prolonged and its cutting short be not ordained of destiny, thy words irk me not, be they much or little.' Then said the (chief) chamberlain to him, 'O vilest of the Arabs, what art thou to bandy words with the Commander of the Faithful?' He answered promptly, 'Mayest thou meet with adversity and may woe and mourning never depart from thee! Hast thou not heard the saying of God the Most High? "One day, every soul shall come to give an account of itself."' "At this, Hisham rose, in great wrath, and said, 'O headsman, bring me his head; for indeed he multiplies talk, such as passes conception, and fears not reproach.' So the headsman took him and making him kneel on the carpet of blood, drew his sword and said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, shall I smite off the head of this thy misguided slave, who is on the way to his grave, and be quit of his blood?' 'Yes,' replied Hisham. He repeated his question and the Khalif again replied in the affirmative. Then he asked leave a third time, and the youth, knowing that, if the Khalif assented yet once more, it would be the signal of his death, laughed till his wang-teeth appeared; at which Hisham's wrath redoubled and he said to him, 'O boy, meseems thou art mad; seest thou not that thou art about to depart the world? Why then dost thou laugh in mockery of thyself?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the young Arab, 'if my life is to be prolonged, none can hurt me, great or small; but I have bethought me of some verses, which do thou hear, for my death cannot escape thee.' 'Say on and be brief,' replied Hisham; so the Arab repeated the following verses: A hawk once seized a

sparrow, so have I heard men say, A sparrow of the desert, that fate to him did throw; And as the hawk was flying to nestward with his prize, The sparrow in his clutches did thus bespeak his foe: "There's nought in me the stomach of such as thou to stay; Indeed, I'm all too paltry to fill thy maw, I trow." The hawk was pleased and flattered with pride and self conceit; He smiled for self-contentment and let the sparrow go. At this Hisham smiled and said, 'By my kinship to the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), had he spoken thus at first, I had given him all he asked, except the Khalifate!' Then he bade his servants stuff his mouth with jewels and entreat him courteously; so they did as he bade them and the Arab went his way.

Ibrahim Ben El Mehdi and the Barber-surgeon.

WHEN the Khalifate fell to El Mamoun the son of Haroun er Reshid, the latter's brother Ibrahim, son of El Mehdi, refused to acknowledge his nephew and betook himself to Er Rei, where he proclaimed himself Khalif and abode thus a year and eleven months and twelve days. Meanwhile Mamoun remained awaiting his return to allegiance, till, at last, despairing of this, he mounted with his horsemen and footmen and repaired to Er Rei in quest of him. When the news came to Ibrahim, he found nothing for it but to flee to Baghdad and hide there, fearing for his life; and Mamoun set a price of a hundred thousand dinars upon his head.

(Quoth Ibrahim) 'Now when I heard of this price being set upon my head, I feared for myself and knew not what to do: so I disguised myself and went forth of my house at midday, knowing not whither I should go. Presently, I entered a street that had no issue and said in myself, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! I have exposed myself to destruction. If I retrace my steps, I shall arouse suspicion." Then I espied, at the upper end of the street, a negro standing at his door; so I went up to him and said to him, "Hast thou a place where I may abide awhile of the day?" "Yes," answered he, and opening the door, admitted me into a decent house, furnished with carpets and mats and cushions of leather. Then he shut the door on me and went away; and I misdoubted me he had heard of the reward offered for me and said in myself, "He has gone to inform against me." But, as I sat pondering my case and boiling like the pot over the fire, my host came back, followed by a porter loaded with meat and bread and new cooking-pots and goblets and a new jar and other needful gear. He took them from the porter and dismissing him, said to me, "I make myself thy ransom! I am a barber-surgeon, and I know it would mislike thee to eat with me, because of the way in which I get my living; so do thou shift for thyself with these things whereon no hand hath fallen." Now I was anhungred; so I cooked me a pot of meat, whose like I mind me not ever to have eaten; and when I had done my desire, he said to me, "O my lord, God make me thy ransom! Art thou for wine? Indeed, it gladdens the soul and does away care." "I have no objection," replied I, being desirous of his company; so he brought me new flagons of glass, that no hand had touched, and a jar of excellent wine, and said to me, "Mix for thyself, to thy liking." So I cleared the wine and mixed myself a most pleasant draught. Then he brought me a new cup and fruits and flowers in new vessels of earthenware; after which he said to me, "Wilt thou give me leave to sit apart and drink of wine of my own by myself, of my joy in thee and for thee?" "Do so." answered I. So we drank, he and I, till the wine began to take effect upon us, when he rose and going to a closet, took out a lute of polished wood and said to me, "O my lord, it is not for the like of me to ask thee to sing, but it behoves thine exceeding generosity to render my respect its due; so, an thou see fit to honour thy slave, thine is the august decision." Quoth I (and indeed I thought not that he knew me), "How knowest thou that I excel in song?" "Glory be to God!" answered he. "Our lord is too well renowned for that! Thou art my lord Ibrahim, son of El Mehdi, our Khalif of yesterday, he on whose head Mamoun hath set a price of a hundred thousand dinars: but thou art in safety with me." When I heard him say this, he was magnified in my

eyes and his loyalty was certified to me; so I complied with his wish and took the lute and tuned it. Then I bethought me of my severance from my children and my family and sang the following verses:

It may be that He, who restored his folk to Joseph of old
And raised him to high estate from the prison where in bonds he lay,
Will hear our prayer and unite us; for Allah, the Lord of the
worlds, All-powerful is, and His puissance knows neither let nor stay.

When the barber heard this, exceeding delight took possession of him and he was of great good cheer; (for it is said that when Ibrahim's neighbours heard him [but] say, "Ho, boy, saddle the mule!" they were filled with delight). Then, being overborne by mirth, he said to me (continues Ibrahim), "O my lord, wilt thou give me leave to say what is come to my mind, for all I am not of the folk of the craft?" "Do so," answered I; "this is of thy great courtesy and kindness." So he took the lute and sang the following verses:

Unto our loved ones we made our moan of our nights so long and drear;
And lo, "How short is the night with us!" quoth they we hold so dear.
This is because quick-coming sleep closes their happy eyes,
But slumber comes not to close our lids, that burn with many a tear.
When the night approaches, the night so dread and drear to those that love,
We are oppressed with grief; but they rejoice, when the night draws near.
Had they but drunken our bitter cup and suffered of our dole,
Then were their nights as ours, as long and full of heavy cheer.

"Thou hast acquitted thee rarely, O my friend," said I, "and hast done away from me the pangs of sorrow. Let me hear more trifles of thy fashion." So he sang these verses:

So a man's honour be unstained and free of all impair,
Lo, every garment that he dights on him is fit and fair.
She taunted me, because, forsooth, our numbers were but few;
But I "The noble," answer made, "are ever few and rare."
It irks us nought that we are few and eke our neighbour great,
For all the neighbours of most folk are scant and mean elsewhere;
For we're a folk, that deem not death an evil nor reproach,
Albeit Aamir and Seloul so deem, of their despair.
The love of death that is in us brings near our ends to us,
But theirs, who loathe and rail at it, are long and far to fare.
We, an it like us, give the lie to others of their speech;
But, when we speak, no man on earth to gainsay us doth dare.

When I heard this, I was filled with delight and marvelled exceedingly. Then I slept and awoke not till past nightfall, when I washed my face, with a mind full of the high worth of this barber-surgeon; after which I aroused him and taking out a purse I had with me, containing a considerable sum of money, threw it to him, saying, "I commend thee to God, for I am about to go forth from thee, and beg thee to spend what is in this purse on thine occasions; and thou shalt have an abounding reward of

me, when I am quit of my fear." But he returned it to me, saying, "O my lord, poor wretches like myself are of no value in thine eyes; but how, for mine own dignity's sake, can I take a price for the boon which fortune hath vouchsafed me of thy favour and company? By Allah, if thou repeat thy words and throw the purse to me again, I will kill myself." So I put the purse in my sleeve (and indeed its weight was irksome to me) and would have gone away; but when I came to the door of the house, he said to me, "O my lord, this is a safer hiding-place for thee than another, and thy keep is no burden to me; so do thou abide with me, till God grant thee relief." So I turned back, saying, "On condition that thou spend of the money in this purse." He let me believe that he consented to this, and I abode with him some days in the utmost comfort; but, perceiving that he spent none of the contents of the purse, I revolted at the idea of abiding at his charge and thought shame to be a burden on him; so I disguised myself in women's apparel, donning walking-boots and veil, and left his house.

When I found myself in the street, I was seized with excessive fear, and going to pass the bridge, came to a place sprinkled with water, where a trooper, who had been in my service, saw me and knowing me, cried out, saying, "This is he whom Mamoun seeks!" Then he laid hold of me, but the love of life lent me strength and I gave him a push, which threw him and his horse down in that slippery place, so that he became an example to those who will take warning and the folk hastened to him. Meanwhile, I hurried on over the bridge and entered a street, where I saw the door of a house open and a woman standing in the vestibule. So I said to her, "O my lady, have pity on me and save my life; for I am a man in fear." Quoth she, "Enter and welcome;" and carried me into an upper chamber, where she spread me a bed and brought me food, saying, "Calm thy fear, for not a soul shall know of thee." As she spoke, there came a loud knocking at the door; so she went and opened, and lo, it was my friend whom I had thrown down on the bridge, with his head bound up, the blood running down upon his clothes and without his horse. "O so and so," said she, "what hath befallen thee?" Quoth he, "I made prize of the man [whom the Khalif seeks] and he escaped from me." And told her the whole story. So she brought out tinder and applying it to his head, bound it up with a piece of rag; after which she spread him a bed and he lay sick. Then she came up to me and said, "Methinks thou art the man in question?" "I am," answered I, and she said, "Fear not: no harm shall befall thee," and redoubled in kindness to me.

I abode with her three days, at the end of which time she said to me, "I am in fear for thee, lest yonder man happen upon thee and betray thee to what thou dreadest; so save thyself by flight." I besought her to let me tarry till nightfall, and she said, "There is no harm in that." So, when the night came, I put on my woman's attire and taking leave of her, betook me to the house of a freed woman, who had once been mine. When she saw me, she wept and made a show of affliction and praised God the Most High for my safety. Then she went forth, as if she would go to the market, in the interests of hospitality, and I thought no harm; but, ere long, I espied Ibrahim el Mausili making for the house, with his servants and troopers, led by a woman whom I knew for the mistress of the house. She brought them to my hiding-place and delivered me into their hands, and I saw death face to face. They carried me, in my woman's attire, to Mamoun, who called a general council and let bring me before him. When I

entered I saluted him by the title of Khalif, saying, "Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful!" and he replied, "May God neither give thee peace nor bless thee!" "At thy leisure, O Commander of the Faithful!" rejoined I. "It is for him in whose hand is revenge to decree retaliation or forgiveness; but forgiveness is nigher to the fear of God, and God hath set thy forgiveness above all other, even as He hath made my sin to excel all other sin. So, if thou punish, it is of thy right, and if thou pardon, it is of thy bounty." And I repeated the following verses:

Great is my sin, in sooth, 'gainst thee,
But thou art greater still, perdie.
So take thy due of me, or else
Remit it of thy clemency.
If of the noble I've not been
Indeed, yet do thou of them be.

At this he raised his head to me and I hastened to add these verses:

Indeed, I've offended full sore,
But thou art disposed to forgive.
'Twere justice to punish my crime
And grace to allow me to live.

Then he bowed his head and repeated the following verses:

Whenas a friend against me doth grievously offend
And maketh me with anger to choke, yet in the end,
I pardon his offending and take him back again
Into my favour, fearing to live without a friend.

When I heard this, I scented the odour of mercy, knowing his disposition to clemency. Then he turned to his son El Abbas and his brother Abou Ishac and other his chief officers there present and said to them, "What deem ye of his case!" They all counselled him to slay me, but differed as to the manner of my death. Then said he to Ahmed ibn Ali Khalid, "And what sayst thou, O Ahmed?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered he, "if thou put him to death, we find thy like who hath slain the like of him; but, if thou pardon him, we find not the like of thee that hath pardoned the like of him." At this Mamoun bowed his head and repeated the following verse:

The people of my tribe, they have my brother slain; But, an I shoot, my shaft reverts to me again.

And also these:

Use not thy brother with despite,
Although he mingle wrong with right,
And still be kind to him, all be
With thanklessness he thee requite;
And if he go astray and err
One day, revile thou not the wight.
Seest not that loved and loathed at once
In every way of life unite?

That by the annoy of hoary hairs
Embittered is long life's delight,
And that the bristling thorns beset
The branch with pleasant fruits bedight?
Who is it doth good deeds alone
And who hath never wrought unright?
Prove but the age's sons, thou'lt find
The most have fallen from the light.

When I heard this, I uncovered my head and cried out, saying, "God is most great! By Allah, the Commander of the Faithful pardons me!" Quoth he, "No harm shall come to thee, O uncle." And I, "O Commander of the Faithful, my offence is too great for me to attempt to extenuate it and thy pardon is too great for me to speak a word of thanks for it." And I chanted the following verses:

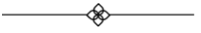
Sure, He, who made the virtues all, stored them in Adam's loins
For His high-priest, the seventh prince of Abbas' royal seed!
The hearts of all the folk are filled with reverence for thee,
And thou, with meek and humble heart, dost keep them all and lead.
Error-deluded as I was, against thee I rebelled,
Intent on covetise alone and base ambitious greed;
Yet hast thou pardon giv'n to one, the like of whom before
Was never pardoned, though for him no one with thee did plead,
And on a mother's bleeding heart hadst ruth and little ones,
Like to the desert-grouse's young, didst pity in their need.

Quoth Mamoun, "I say, like our lord Joseph (on whom and on our Prophet be peace and blessing), 'There shall be no reproach on thee this day. God will forgive thee, for He is the Most Merciful of the Merciful ones.' Indeed, I pardon thee, O uncle, and restore thee thy goods and lands, and no harm shall befall thee." So I offered up devout prayers for him and repeated the following verses:

My wealth thou hast given me again and hast not begrudged it to me;
Yea, and to boot, before this, my life and my blood thou didst spare.
So if, thine approval to win, I lavish my blood and my wealth
And e'en to the shoe off my foot, in thy service, I strip myself bare,
'Twere but the restoring to thee of the loans that I owe to thy grace
Which none might reproach thee nor blame, I trow, hadst thou chos'n to forbear.
Ungrateful henceforth if I prove for the favours vouchsafed me by thee,
Still worthier of blame than thyself of honour and reverence I were.

Then Mamoun showed me honour and favour and said to me, "O uncle, Abou Ishac and Abbas counselled me to put thee to death." "And they counselled thee right loyally, O Commander of the Faithful," answered I; "but thou hast done after thine own nature and hast put away what I feared with what I hoped." "O uncle," rejoined he, "thou didst extinguish my rancour with the humbleness of thine excuse, and I pardon thee without making thee drink the bitterness of obligation to intercessors." Then he prostrated himself in prayer a long while, after which he raised his head and

said to me, "O uncle, knowest thou why I prostrated myself?" "Haply," answered I, "thou didst this in thanksgiving to God, for that He hath given thee the mastery over thine enemy." "Not so," rejoined he, "but to thank Him for having inspired me to pardon thee and purified my mind towards thee. Now tell me thy story." So I told him all that had befallen me and he sent for the freed-woman, who was in her house, expecting the reward. When she came, he said to her, "What moved thee to deal thus with thy lord?" And she answered, "Lust of money." "Hast thou a child or a husband?" asked the Khalif; and she said, "No." So he bade give her a hundred blows with a whip and imprisoned her for life. Then he sent for the soldier and his wife and the barber-surgeon and asked the former what had moved him to do thus. "Lust of money," answered he; whereupon quoth the Khalif, "It befits that thou be a barber-surgeon," and committed him to one whom he charged to place him in a barber's shop, where he might learn the craft. But his wife he entreated with honour and lodged in his palace, saying, "This is a woman of sense and apt for matters of moment." Then said he to the barber-surgeon, "Verily, what has come to light of thy worth and generosity calls for extraordinary honour." So he commanded the trooper's house and all that was therein to be given him and bestowed on him a dress of honour and fifteen thousand dinars.'



The City of Irem.

IT is related that Abdallah ben Abou Kilabeh went forth in quest of a camel that had strayed from him; and as he was wandering in the deserts of Yemen and Sebaa, he came upon a great city in whose midst was a vast citadel compassed about with pavilions, that rose high into the air. He made for the place, thinking to find there inhabitants, of whom he might enquire concerning his camel; but, when he reached it, he found it deserted, without a living soul in it. So (quoth Abdallah), 'I alighted and hobbling my she-camel, took courage and entered the city. When I came to the citadel, I found it had two vast gates, never in the world was seen their like for size and loftiness, inlaid with all manner jewels and jacinths, white and red and yellow and green. At this I marvelled greatly and entering the citadel, trembling and dazed with wonder and affright, found it long and wide, as it were a city for bigness; and therein were lofty storied pavilions, builded of gold and silver and inlaid with many-coloured jewels and jacinths and chrysolites and pearls. The leaves of their doors were even as those of the citadel for beauty and their floors strewn with great pearls and balls, as they were hazel-nuts, of musk and ambergris and saffron. When I came within the city and saw no human being therein, I had nigh- well swooned and died for fear. Moreover, I looked down from the summit of the towers and balconies and saw rivers running under them; in the streets were fruit-laden trees and tall palms, and the manner of the building of the city was one brick of gold and one of silver. So I said to myself, "Doubtless this is the Paradise promised for the world to come." Then I took of the jewels of its gravel and the musk of its dust as much as I could bear and returned to my own country, where I told the folk what I had seen.

After awhile, the news reached Muawiyeh ben Abou Sufyan, who was then Khalif in the Hejaz; so he wrote to his lieutenant in Senaa of Yemen to send for the teller of the story and question him of the truth of the case. Accordingly the lieutenant sent for me and questioned me, and I told him what I had seen; whereupon he despatched me to Muawiyeh, to whom I repeated my story; but he would not credit it. So I brought out to him some of the pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron, in which latter there was still some sweet smell; but the pearls were grown yellow and discoloured. The Khalif wondered at this and sending for Kaab el Ahbar,, said to him, "O Kaab el Ahbar, I have sent for thee to learn the truth of a certain matter and hope that thou wilt be able to certify me thereanent." "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful?" asked Kaab, and Muawiyeh said, "Wottest thou of a city builded of gold and silver, the pillars whereof are of rubies and chrysolites and its gravel pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron?" "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful," answered Kaab. "It is Irem of the Columns, the like of which was never made in the lands,' and it was Sheddad son of Aad the Great that built it." Quoth the Khalif, "Tell us of its history," and Kaab said, "Aad the Great had two sons, Shedid and Sheddad. When their father died, they ruled in his stead, and there was no king of the kings of the earth but was subject to them. After awhile Shedid died and his brother Sheddad reigned over the earth alone. Now he was fond of reading in old books, and happening upon the description of the world to come and of Paradise, with its pavilions and

galleries and trees and fruits and so forth, his soul moved him to build the like thereof in this world, after the fashion aforesaid. Now under his hand were a hundred thousand kings, each ruling over a hundred thousand captains, commanding each a hundred thousand warriors; so he called these all before him and said to them, 'I find in old books and histories a description of Paradise, as it is to be in the next world, and I desire to build its like in this world. Go ye forth therefore to the goodliest and most spacious tract in the world and build me there a city of gold and silver, whose gravel shall be rubies and chrysolites and pearls and the columns of its vaults beryl. Fill it with palaces, whereon ye shall set galleries and balconies, and plant its lanes and thoroughfares with all manner of trees bearing ripe fruits and make rivers to run through it in channels of gold and silver.' 'How can we avail to do this thing,' answered they, 'and whence shall we get the chrysolites and rubies and pearls whereof thou speakest?' Quoth he, 'Know ye not that all the kings of the word are under my hand and that none that is therein dare gainsay my commandment?' 'Yes,' answered they; 'we know that.' 'Get ye then,' rejoined he, 'to the mines of chrysolites and rubies and gold and silver and to the pearl-fisheries and gather together all that is in the world of jewels and metals of price and leave nought; and take also for me such of these things as be in men's hands and let nothing escape you: be diligent and beware of disobedience.'

Then he wrote letters to all the [chief] kings of the world (now the number of kings then reigning [in chief] over the earth was three hundred and threescore kings) and bade them gather together all of these things that were in their subjects' hands and get them to the mines of precious stones and metals and bring forth all that was therein, even from the abysses of the seas. This they accomplished in the space of twenty years, and Sheddad then assembled from all lands and countries builders and men of art and labourers and handicraftsmen, who dispersed over the world and explored all the wastes and deserts thereof, till they came to a vast and fair open plain, clear of hills and mountains, with springs welling and rivers running, and said, 'This is even such a place as the King commanded us to find.' So they busied themselves in building the city even as Sheddad, King of the whole earth in its length and breadth, had commanded them, laying the foundations and leading the rivers therethrough in channels after the prescribed fashion. Moreover, all the Kings of the earth sent thither jewels and precious stones and pearls large and small and cornelian and gold and silver upon camels by land and in great ships over the waters, and there came to the builders' hands of all these things so great a quantity as may neither be told or imagined. They laboured at the work three hundred years; and when they had wrought it to end, they went to King Sheddad and acquainted him therewith. Then said he, 'Depart and make thereto an impregnable citadel, rising high into the air, and round it a thousand pavilions, each builded on a thousand columns of chrysolite and ruby and vaulted with gold, that in each pavilion may dwell a Vizier.' So they returned and did this in other twenty years; after which they again presented themselves before the King and informed him of the accomplishment of his will. Then he commanded his Viziers, who were a thousand in number, and his chief officers and such of his troops and others as he put trust in, to prepare for departure and removal to Many-Columned Irem, at the stirrup of Sheddad son of Aad, king of the world; and he bade also such as he would of his women and of his female slaves and eunuchs make them ready for the journey. They spent twenty years preparing for departure, at the end of which time

Sheddad set out with his host, rejoicing in the attainment of his wish, and fared forward till there remained but one day's journey between him and Item. Then God sent down on him and on the stubborn unbelievers with him a thunderblast from the heavens of His power, which destroyed them all with a mighty clamour, and neither he nor any of his company set eyes on the city. Moreover, God blotted out the road that led to the city, and it stands unchanged, in its stead, until the Resurrection Day."

Muawiyeh wondered greatly ad Kaab's story and said to him, "Hath any mortal ever made his way to the city?" "Yes," answered Kaab; "one of the companions of Mohammed (on whom be peace and salvation) reached it, doubtless after the same fashion as this man who sits here." And (quoth Es Shaabi) it is related, on the authority of learned men of Himyer of Yemen, that Sheddad was succeeded in his kingship by his son Sheddad the Less, whom he left his viceregent in Hezremout and Sebaa, when he set out for Irem. When he heard of his father's death on the road, he caused his body to be brought back to Hezremout and let hew him out a sepulchre in a cavern, where he laid the body on a throne of gold and threw over it threescore and ten robes of cloth of gold, embroidered with precious stones; and at his head he set up a tablet of gold, on which were graven the following verses:

Take warning, thou that by long life
Art duped and thinkst to live alway.
I'm Sheddad son of Aad, a high
And mighty monarch in my day;
Lord of the columned citadel,
Great was my prowess in the fray.
All the world's peoples feared my might
And did my ordinance obey;
Yes, and I held the East and West
And ruled them with an iron sway.
One came to us with God's command
And summoned us to the right way
"Is there no 'scaping from this thing?"
Quoth we and did his word gainsay.
Then on us fell a thunderblast
From out the heaven far away,
And like the sheaves in reaping-time
Midmost a field, o'erthrown we lay.
And now beneath the storied plains
Of earth we wait the appointed Day.

(Quoth Eth Thaalibi also) It chanced that two men once entered this cavern and found at its upper end a stair; so they descended and came to an underground chamber, a hundred cubits long by forth wide and a hundred high. In the midst stood a throne of gold, whereon lay a man of gigantic stature, filling the whole length and breadth of the throne. He was covered with jewelry and raiment gold and silver wrought, and at his head was a tablet of gold, bearing an inscription. So they took the

tablet and bore it off, together with as many bars of gold and silver and so forth as they could away with.

Isaac of Mosul's Story of the Lady Khedijeh and the Khalif Mamoun

(QUOTH Isaac of Mosul) 'I went out one night from Mamoun's presence, on my way to my house, and being taken with a need to make water, I turned aside into a by-street and stood up against a wall, fearing lest something might hurt me, if I squatted down. Presently, I espied something hanging down from one of the houses and feeling it, found that it was a great four- handled basket, covered with brocade. "There must be some reason for this," said I to myself and knew not what to think, then drunkenness led me to seat myself in the basket, whereupon the people of the house pulled me up, supposing me to be he whom they expected. When I came to the top of the wall, I found four damsels, who said to me, "Descend and welcome!" Then one of them went before me with a flambeau and brought me down into a mansion, wherein were furnished sitting-chambers, whose like I had never seen, save in the Khalif's palace. So I sat down and after awhile, the curtains were drawn from one side of the room and in came damsels bearing lighted flambeaux and censers full of Sumatran aloes-wood, and amongst them a young lady as she were the rising full moon. I rose and she said, "Welcome to thee for a visitor!" Then she made me sit down again and asked how I came thither. Quoth I, "I was returning home from a friend's house and went astray in the dark; then, being taken with an urgent occasion, I turned aside into this street, where I found a basket let down. The wine which I had drunk led me to seat myself in it and it was drawn up with me into this house." "No harm shall befall thee," rejoined she, "and I hope thou wilt have cause to praise the issue of thine adventure. But what is thy condition?" "I am a merchant in the Baghdad bazaar," replied I, and she, "Canst thou repeat any verses?" "Some small matter," answered I. "Then," said she, "let us hear some of them." But I said, "A visitor is [naturally] bashful; do thou begin." "True," answered she and recited some of the choicest verses of the poets, past and present, so that I knew not whether more to marvel at her beauty and grace or at the charm of her diction. Then said she, "Is thy bashfulness gone?" "Yes, by Allah!" answered I. "Then, if thou wilt," rejoined she, "recite us somewhat." So I repeated to her a number of poems by old writers, and she applauded, saying, "By Allah I did not look to find such culture among the trader folk!"

Then she called for food and fell to taking of it and setting it before me; and the place was full of all manner sweet-scented flowers and rare fruits, such as are found only in kings' houses. Presently, she called for wine and drank a cup, after which she filled another and gave it to me, saying, "Now is the time for converse and story-telling." So I bethought myself and related to her a number of pleasing stories and anecdotes, with which she was delighted and said, "It is wonderful that a merchant should have such store of tales like unto these, for they are fit for kings." Quoth I, "I have a neighbour who uses to consort with kings and bear them company at table; so, when he is at leisure, I visit his house and he often tells me what he has heard." "By my life," exclaimed she, "thou hast a good memory!"

We continued to converse thus, and as often as I was silent, she would begin, till the most part of the night was spent, whilst the burning aloes-wood diffused its

fragrance and I was in such case as, if the Khalif had suspected it, would have made him wild with longing for it. Then said she to me, "Verily, thou art one of the most pleasant and accomplished of men and passing well- bred; but there lacks one thing." "What is that?" asked I, and she said, "If but thou knewest how to sing verses to the lute!" I answered, "I was once passionately fond of this art, but finding I had no gift for it, I abandoned it, thou reluctantly. Indeed, I should love to sing somewhat well at this present and fulfil my night's enjoyment." "Meseemeth thou hintest a wish for the lute to be brought?" said she, and I, "It is thine to decide, if thou wilt so far favour me, and to thee be the thanks." So she called for a lute and sang a song, in a manner whose like I never heard, both for sweetness of voice and perfection of style and skill in playing, in short, for general excellence. Then said she, "Knowest thou who made the air and words of this song?" "No," answered I; and she said, "The words are so and so's and the air is Isaac's." "And hath Isaac then (may I be thy ransom!) such a talent?" asked I. "Glory be to Isaac!" replied she. "Indeed he excels in this art." "Glory be to Allah," exclaimed I, "who hath given this man what He hath vouchsafed unto none other!" And she said, "How would it be, if thou heardest this song from himself?" Thus did we till break of day, when there came to her an old woman, as she were her nurse, and said to her, "The time is come." So she rose and said to me, "Keep what hath passed between us to thyself; for meetings of this kind are in confidence." "May I be thy ransom!" answered I. "I needed no enjoinder of this." Then I took leave of her and she sent a damsel to open the door to me; so I went forth and retuned to my own house, where I prayed the morning prayer and slept.

Presently, there came to me a messenger from the Khalif; so I went to him and passed the day in his company. When the night came, I called to mind my yesternight's pleasure, a thing from which none but a fool could be content to abstain, and betook myself to the street, where I found the basket, and seating myself therein, was drawn up to the place in which I had passed the previous night. When the lady saw me, she said, "Indeed, thou art assiduous," And I answered, "Meseems rather that I am neglectful." Then we fell to conversing and passed the night as before in talking and reciting verses and telling rare stories, each in turn, till daybreak, when I returned home. I prayed the morning prayer and slept, and there came to me a messenger from Mamoun. So I went to him and spent the day with him till nightfall, when he said to me, "I conjure thee to sit here, whilst I go on an occasion and come back." As soon as he was gone, my thoughts turned to the lady and calling to mind my late delight, I recked little what might befall me from the Commander of the Faithful. So I sprang up and going out, ran to the street aforesaid, where I sat down in the basket and was drawn up as before. When the lady saw me, she said, "Verily, thou art a sincere friend to us." "Yea, by Allah!" answered I; and she said, "Hath thou made our house thine abiding-place?" "May I be thy ransom!" replied I. "A guest hath a right to three days' entertainment, and if I return after this, ye are free to shed my blood." Then we passed the night as before; and when the time of departure drew near, I bethought me that Mamoun would certainly question me nor be content save with a full explanation: so I said to her, "I see thee to be of those who delight in singing. Now I have a cousin who is handsomer than I and higher of station and more accomplished; and he is the most intimate of all God's creatures with Isaac." "Art thou a spunger?" asked she. "Verily,

thou art importunate." Quoth I, "It is for thee to decide;" and she, "If thy cousin be as thou sayst, it would not displease me to make his acquaintance."

Then I left her and returned to my house, but hardly had I reached it, when the Khalif's messengers came down on me and carried me before him by main force. I found him seated on a chair, wroth with me, and he said to me, "O Isaac, art thou a traitor to thine allegiance?" "No, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful!" answered I. "What hast thou then to say?" asked he. "Tell me the truth." And I replied, "I will well; but in private." So he signed to his attendants, who withdrew to a distance, and I told him the case, adding, "I promised to bring thee to visit her." And he said, "Thou didst well." Then we spent the day in our usual pleasures, but Mamoun's heart was taken with the lady, and hardly was the appointed time come, when we set out. As we went along, I cautioned him, "Look that thou call me not by my name before her; but do thou sing and I will accompany thee." He assented to this, and we fared on till we came to the house, where we found two baskets hanging ready. So we sat down in them and were drawn up to the usual place, where the damsel came forward and saluted us. When Mamoun saw her, he was amazed at her beauty and grace; and she began to entertain him with stories and verses. Presently, she called for wine and we fell to drinking, she paying him especial attention and delighting in him and he repaying her in kind. Then he took the lute and sang an air, after which she said to me, "And is thy cousin also a merchant?" "Yes," answered I, and she said, "Indeed, ye resemble one another nearly." But when Mamoun had drunk three pints, he grew merry with wine and called out saying, "Ho, Isaac!" "At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful," answered I. Quoth he, "Sing me such an air."

As soon as the lady knew that he was the Khalif, she withdrew to another place, and when I had made an end of my song, Mamoun said to me, "See who is the master of this house;" whereupon an old woman hastened to make answer, saying, "It belongs to Hassan ben Sehl." "Fetch him to me," said the Khalif. So she went away and after awhile in came Hassan, to whom said Mamoun, "Hath thou a daughter?" "Yes," answered he; "her name is Khedijeh." "Is she married?" asked the Khalif. "No, by Allah!" replied Hassan. "Then," said Mamoun, "I ask her of thee in marriage." "O Commander of the Faithful," replied Hassan, "she is thy handmaiden and at thy commandment." Quoth Mamoun, "I take her to wife at a present dower of thirty thousand dinars, which thou shalt receive this very morning; and do thou being her to us this next night." And Hassan answered, "I hear and obey."

'Then he went out, and the Khalif said to me, "O Isaac, tell this story to no one." So I kept it secret till Mamoun's death. Surely never was man's life to fulfilled with delights as was mine these four days' time, whenan I companied with Mamoun by day and with Khedijeh by night; and by Allah, never saw I among men the like of Mamoun, neither among women have I ever set eyes on the like of Khedijeh, no, nor on any that came near her in wit and understanding and pleasant speech!'

The Scavenger and the Noble Lady of Baghdad.

AT Mecca, one day, in the season of pilgrimage, whilst the people were making the enjoined circuits about the Holy House and the place of compassing was crowded, a man laid hold of the covering of the Kaabeh and cried out, from the bottom of his heart, saying, 'I beseech Thee, O God, that she may once again be wroth with her husband and that I may lie with her!' A company of the pilgrims heard him and falling on him, loaded him with blows and carried him to the governor of the pilgrims, to whom said they, 'O Amir, we found this man in the Holy Places, saying thus and thus.' The governor commanded to hang him; but he said, 'O Amir, I conjure thee, by the virtue of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), hear my story and after do with me as thou wilt.' 'Say on,' quoth the Amir. 'Know then, O Amir,' said the man, 'that I am a scavenger, who works in the sheep-slaughterhouses and carries off the blood and the offal to the rubbish-heaps. One day, as I went along with my ass loaded, I saw the people running away and one of them said to me, "Enter this alley, lest they kill thee." Quoth I, "What ails the folk to run away?" And he answered, "It is the eunuchs in attendance on the wife of one of the notables, who drive the people out of her way and beat them all, without distinction." So I turned aside with the ass and stood, awaiting the dispersal of the crowd. Presently up came a number of eunuchs with staves in their hands, followed by nigh thirty women, and amongst them a lady as she were a willow-wand or a thirsty gazelle, perfect in beauty and elegance and amorous grace. When she came to the mouth of the passage where I stood, she turned right and left and calling one of the eunuchs, whispered in his ear; whereupon he came up to me and laying hold of me, bound me with a rope and haled me along after him, whilst another eunuch took my ass and made off with it. I knew not what was to do and the people followed us, crying out, "This is not allowed of God! What has this poor scavenger done that he should be bound with ropes?" and saying to the eunuchs, "Have pity on him and let him go, so God have pity on you!" And I the while said in myself, "Doubtless the eunuch seized me, because his mistress smelt the offal and it sickened her. Belike she is with child or ailing; but there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!" So I walked on behind them, till they stopped at the door of a great house and entering, brought me into a great hall, I know not how I shall describe its goodliness, furnished with magnificent furniture. The women withdrew to the harem, leaving me bound with the eunuch and saying in myself, "Doubtless they will torture me here till I die, and none know of my death." However, after a while, they carried me into an elegant bathroom, adjoining the hall; and as I sat there, in came three damsels, who seated themselves round me and said to me, "Strip off thy rags." So I pulled off my threadbare clothes, and one of them fell a-rubbing my feet, whilst another washed my head and the third scrubbed my body. When they had made an end of washing me, they brought me a parcel of clothes and said to me, "Put these on." "By Allah," answered I, "I know not how!" So they came up to me and dressed me, laughing at me the while; after which they brought casting- bottles, full of rose-water, and sprinkled me therewith. Then I went out with them into another saloon, by Allah, I know not how to set out its goodliness, for the much paintings and furniture therein; and here I found the lady seated on a couch of Indian cane with

ivory feet and before her a number of damsels. When she saw me, she rose and called to me; so I went up to her and she made me sit by her side. Then she called for food, and the damsels brought all manner rich meats, such as I never saw in all my life; I do not even know the names of the dishes. So I ate my fill and when the dishes had been taken away and we had washed our hands, she called for fruits and bade me eat of them; after which she bade one of the waiting-women bring the wine-service. So they set on flagons of divers kinds of wine and burned perfumes in all the censers, what while a damsel like the moon rose and served us with wine, to the sound of the smitten strings. We sat and drank, the lady and I, till we were warm with wine, whilst I doubted not but that all this was an illusion of sleep. Presently, she signed to one of the damsels to spread us a bed in such a place, which being done, she took me by the hand and led me thither. So I lay with her till the morning, and as often as I pressed her in my arms, I smelt the delicious fragrance of musk and other perfumes that exhaled from her and could think no otherwise but that I was in Paradise or in the mazes of a dream. When it was day, she asked me where I lodged and I told her, "In such a place;" whereupon she gave me a handkerchief gold and silver wrought, with somewhat tied in it, and bade me depart, saying, "Go to the bath with this." So I rejoiced and said to myself, "If there be but five farthings here, it will buy me the morning meal." Then I left her, as I were leaving Paradise, and returned to my lodging, where I opened the handkerchief and found in it fifty dinars of gold. I buried them in the ground and buying two farthings' worth of bread and meat, sat down at the door and breakfasted; after which I sat pondering my case till the time of afternoon-prayer, when a slave-girl accosted me, saying, "My mistress calls for thee." So I followed her to the house aforesaid and she carried me in to the lady, before whom I kissed the earth, and she bade me sit and called for meat and wine as on the previous day; after which I again lay with her all night. On the morrow, she gave me a second handkerchief, with other fifty dinars therein, and I took it and going home, buried this also.

Thus did I eight days running, going in to her at the hour of afternoon-prayer and leaving her at daybreak; but, on the eighth night, as I lay with her, one of her maids came running in and said to me, "Arise, go up into yonder closet." So I rose and went into the closet, which was over the gate and had a window giving upon the street in front of the house. Presently, I heard a great clamour and tramp of horse, and looking out of the window, saw a young man, as he were the rising moon on the night of her full, come riding up, attended by a number of servants and soldiers. He alighted at the door and entering, found the lady seated on the couch in the saloon. So he kissed the earth before her, then came up to her and kissed her hands; but she would not speak to him. However, he ceased not to soothe her and speak her fair, till he made his peace with her, and they lay together that night. Next morning, the soldiers came for him and he mounted and rode away; whereupon she came in to me and said, "Sawst thou yonder man?" "Yes," answered I; and she said, "He is my husband, and I will tell thee what befell me with him.

"It chanced one day that we were sitting, he and I, in the garden within the house, when he rose from my side and was absent a long while, till I grew tired of waiting and said to myself, 'Most like, he is in the wardrobe.' So I went thither, but not finding him there, went down to the kitchen, where I saw a slave-girl, of whom I enquired for him,

and she showed him to me lying with one of the cook-maids. When I saw this, I swore a great oath that I would do adultery with the foulest and filthiest man in Baghdad; and the day the eunuch laid hands on thee, I had been four days going round about the town in quest of one who should answer this description, but found none fouler nor more filthy than thee. So I took thee and there passed between us that which God fore- ordained to us; and now I am quit of my oath. But," added she, "if my husband return yet again to the cook-maid and lie with her, I will restore thee to thy late place in my favours."

When (continued the scavenger) I heard these words from her lips, what while she transfixed my heart with the arrows of her glances, my tears streamed forth, till my eyelids were sore with weeping, and I repeated the saying of the poet:

Vouchsafe me the kiss of thy left hand, I prithee,
And know that it's worthier far than thy right;
For 'tis but a little while since it was washing
Sir reverence away from the stead of delight.

Then she gave me other fifty dinars (making in all four hundred dinars I had of her) and bade me depart. So I went out from her and came hither, that I might pray God (blessed and exalted be He!) to make her husband return to the cook-maid, so haply I might be again admitted to her favours.' When the governor of the pilgrims heard the man's story, he set him free and said to the bystanders, 'God on you, pray for him, for indeed he is excusable.'

The Mock Khalif.

IT is related that the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, being one night troubled with a persistent restlessness, summoned his Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide and said to him, 'My heart is straitened and I have a mind to divert myself tonight by walking about the streets of Baghdad and looking into the affairs of the folk; but we will disguise ourselves as merchants, that none may know us.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer. So they rose at once and putting off the rich clothes they wore, donned merchants' habits and sallied forth, the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour the headsman. They walked from place to place, till they came to the Tigris and saw an old man sitting in a boat; so they went up to him and saluting him, said, 'O old man, we desire thee of thy favour to carry us a-pleasuring down the river, in this thy boat, and take this dinar to thy hire.' 'Who may go a-pleasuring on the Tigris?' replied the boatman. 'Seeing that the Khalif every night comes down the stream in his barge, and with him one crying aloud, "Ho, all ye people, great and small, gentle and simple, men and boys, whoso is found in a boat on the Tigris [by night], I will strike off his head or hang him to the mast of his boat!" And ye had well-nigh met him; for here comes his barge.' But the Khalif and Jaafer said, 'O old man, take these two dinars, and when thou seest the Khalif's barge approaching, run us under one of the arches, that we may hide there till he have passed. 'Hand over the money,' replied the boatman; 'and on God the Most High be our dependence!' So they gave him the two dinars and embarked in the boat; and he put off and rowed about with them awhile, till they saw the barge coming down the river in mid-stream, with lighted flambeaux and cressets therein. Quoth the boatman, 'Did I not tell you that the Khalif passed every night? O Protector, remove not the veils of Thy protection!' So saying, he ran the boat under an arch and threw a piece of black cloth over the Khalif and his companions, who looked out from under the covering and saw, in the bows of the barge, a man holding a cresset of red gold and clad in a tunic of red satin, with a muslin turban on his head. Over one of his shoulders hung a cloak of yellow brocade, and on the other was a green silk bag full of Sumatran aloes-wood, with which he fed the cresset by way of firewood. In the stern stood another man, clad like the first and bearing a like cresset, and in the barge were two hundred white slaves, standing right and left about a throne of red gold, on which sat a handsome young man, like the moon, clad in a dress of black, embroidered with yellow gold. Before him they saw a man, as he were the Vizier Jaafer, and at his head stood an eunuch, as he were Mesrour, with a drawn sword in his hand, besides a score of boon-companions. When the Khalif saw this, he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Belike this is one of my sons, El Amin or El Mamoun.' Then he examined the young man that sat on the throne, and finding him accomplished in beauty and grace and symmetry, said to Jaafer, 'Verily, this young man abates no jot of the state of the Khalifate! See, there stands before him one as he were thyself, O Jaafer; yonder eunuch is as he were Mesrour and those boon-companions as they were my own. By Allah, O Jaafer, my reason is confounded and I am filled with amazement at this thing!' 'And I also, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer. Then the barge passed on and disappeared from sight; whereupon the boatman pushed out again into the stream, saying, 'Praised be God for safety, since none hath fallen in with us!' 'O old man,' said

Er Reshid, 'doth the Khalif come down the river every night?' 'Yes, O my lord,' answered the boatman; 'he hath done so every night this year past.' 'O old man,' rejoined Er Reshid, 'we wish thee of thy favour to await us here to-morrow night, and we will give thee five dinars, for we are strangers, lodging at El Khendek, and we have a mind to divert ourselves.' 'With all my heart,' replied the boatman. Then the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour returned to the palace, where they put off their merchants' habits and donning their apparel of state, sat down each in his several room. Then came the amirs and viziers and chamberlains and officers, and the Divan assembled as of wont.

When the night came and all the folk had dispersed and gone each his own way, the Khalif said to his Vizier, 'Come, O Jaafer, let us go and amuse ourselves by looking on the other Khalif.' At this, Jaafer and Mesrour laughed, and the three, donning merchants' habits, went out at the privy gate and made their way through the city, in great glee, till they came to the Tigris, where they found the boatman sitting, waiting for them. They embarked with him in the boat and had not sat long, before up came the mock Khalif's barge, with the cresset-bearers crying aloud as of wont, and in it two hundred white slaves other than those of the previous night. 'O Vizier,' exclaimed the Khalif, 'had I heard tell of this, I had not believed it; but I have seen it with my own eyes.' Then said he to the boatman, 'Take these ten dinars and row us along abreast of them, for they are in the light and we in the shade, and we can see them and divert ourselves by looking on them, but they cannot see us.' So he took the money and pushing off, followed in the shadow of the barge, till they came among the gardens and the barge cast anchor before a postern door, where they saw servants standing with a mule saddled and bridled. Here the mock Khalif landed and mounting the mule, rode away with his boon-companions, attended by his suite and preceded by the cresset-bearers crying aloud. Then Haroun and Jaafer and Mesrour landed also and making their way through the press of servants, walked on before them. Presently, the cresset-bearers espied them and seeing three strangers in merchants' habits, misdoubted of them; so they pointed them out and caused bring them before the mock Khalif, who looked at them and said, 'How come ye here at this hour?' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'we are foreign merchants, who arrived here this day and were out a- walking to-night, when ye came up and these men laid hands on us and brought us before thee.' Quoth the mock Khalif, 'Since you are strangers, no harm shall befall you; but had ye been of Baghdad, I had struck off your heads.' Then he turned to his Vizier and said to him, 'Take these men with thee; for they are our guests this night.' 'I hear and obey, O our lord,' answered he; and they followed him, till they came to a lofty and splendid palace of curious ordinance, such as no king possesses, rising from the dust and laying hold upon the marges of the clouds. Its door was of teak, inlaid with glittering gold, and by it one passed into a saloon, amiddleward which was a basin of water, with an artificial fountain rising from its midst. It was furnished with carpets and cushions and divans of brocade and tables and other gear such as amazed the wit and defied description. There, also, was a curtain drawn, and upon the door were written these two verses:

A palace, upon it be blessing and greeting and grace!
Fair fortune hath put off her beauty to brighten the place.

Therein are all manner of marvels and rarities found;
The penmen are puzzled in story its charms to retrace.

The mock Khalif entered with his company and sat down on a throne of gold, set with jewels and covered with a prayer-carpet of yellow silk; whilst the boon-companions took their seats and the sword-bearer stood before him. Then the servants laid the tables and they ate and washed their hands, after which the dishes were removed and the wine-service set on, with cups and flagons in due order. The cup went round till it came to Er Reshid, who refused it, and the mock Khalif said to Jaafer, 'What ails thy friend that he drinks not?' 'O our lord,' replied the Vizier, 'this long while he hath drunk no wine.' Quoth the mock Khalif, 'I have drink other than this, a kind of apple-wine, that will suit him.' So he let bring apple-sherbet and said to Haroun, 'Drink thou of this, as often as it comes to thy turn.' Then they continued to drink and make merry, till the wine rose to their heads and mastered their wits; and Haroun said to Jaafer, 'O Jaafer, by Allah, we have no such vessels as these. Would God I knew what manner of man this is!' Presently, the young man glanced at them and seeing them talking privily, said, 'It is unmannerly to whisper.' 'No rudeness was meant,' answered Jaafer. 'My friend did but say to me, "Verily, I have travelled in most countries and have caroused and companied with the greatest of kings and captains; yet never saw I a goodlier ordinance than this nor passed a more delightful night; save that the people of Baghdad say, 'Drink without music often leaves headache.'"' When the mock Khalif heard this, he smiled merrily and struck a gong with a rod he had in his hand; whereupon a door opened and out came an eunuch, bearing a stool of ivory, inlaid with glittering gold, and followed by a damsel of surpassing beauty and symmetry. He set down the stool and the damsel seated herself on it, as she were the sun shining in the cloudless sky. In her hand she had a lute of Indian make, which she laid in her lap and bending over it as a mother bends over her child, preluded in four-and-twenty modes, amazing all wits. Then she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses to a lively measure:

The tongue of passion in my heart bespeaketh thee of me
And giveth thee to know that I enamoured am of thee.
The burning of an anguished heart is witness to my pain
And ulcerated eyes and tears that flow incessantly.
I had no knowledge what Love was, before the love of thee;
But God's forewritten ordinance o'ertaketh all that be.

When the mock Khalif heard this, he gave a great cry and rent his robe to the skirt, whereupon they let down a curtain over him and brought him a fresh robe, handsomer than the first. He put it on and sat as before, till the cup came round to him, when he struck the gong a second time and behold, a door opened and out came an eunuch with a chair of gold, followed by a damsel handsomer than the first, bearing a lute, such as mortified the heart of the envious. She sat down on the chair and sang to the lute these verses:

Ah, how can I be patient, when longing in my soul
Flames high and from mine eyelids the tears in torrents roll?

Life hath no sweet, by Allah, wherein I may rejoice.
How shall a heart be joyous, that's all fulfilled of dole?

No sooner did the youth hear this than he gave a great cry and rent his clothes to the skirt; whereupon they let down the curtain over him and brought him another dress. He put it on and sitting up as before, fell again to cheerful talk, till the cup came round to him, when he smote once more upon the gong and out came an eunuch with a chair, followed by a damsel fairer than she who had foregone her. So she sat down on the chair, with a lute in her hand, and sang thereto the following verses:

Have done with your disdain and leave to make me rue;
For, by your life, my heart to you was ever true!
Have ruth on one distraught, the bondslave of your love,
Sorry and sick and full of longings ever new.
Sickness, for passion's stress, hath wasted him to nought,
And still for your consent to Allah he doth sue.
O ye full moons, whose place of sojourn is my heart,
Amongst the human race whom can I choose but you?

At this the young man gave a great cry and rent his clothes, whereupon they let fall the curtain over him and brought him other clothes. Then he returned to his former case with his boon- companions and the cup went round as before, till it came to him, when he struck the gong a fourth time and the door opening, out came a boy, bearing a chair and followed by a damsel. He set the chair for her and she sat down upon it and taking the lute, tuned it and sang to it these verses:

When, when will separation and hatred pass away
And what is past of joyance come back to make me gay?
But yesterday, in gladness, one dwelling held us both;
We saw the enviers napping, all heedless of their prey.
But fortune played the traitor with us and sundered us,
And left our dwelling-places even as the desert grey.
Wilt have me, O my censor, be solaced for my loves?
Alas, my heart the censor, I see, will not obey!
So make an end of chiding and leave me to my love;
For of my loved one's converse my heart is full alway.
Fair lords, though you've been fickle and broken faith and troth,
Deem not my heart for absence forgets you night or day.

When the mock Khalif heard the girl's song, he gave a great cry and tearing his clothes as before, fell down in a swoon; whereupon they would have let down the curtain over him, as of wont; but the cords stuck fast and Er Reshid, chancing to look at him, saw on his body the marks of beating with palm-rods and said to Jaafer, 'By Allah, he is a handsome youth, but a foul thief!' 'Whence knowest thou that, O Commander of the Faithful?' asked Jaafer, and the Khalif answered, 'Sawst thou not the marks of whips on his sides?' Then they let fall the curtain over him and brought him a fresh dress, which he put on and sat up as before with his courtiers. Presently, he saw the Khalif and Jaafer whispering together and said to them, 'What is the matter,

gentlemen?' 'Nothing, my lord,' replied Jaafer, 'save that my friend here, who (as is not unknown to thee) is of the merchants and hath visited all the great cities and countries of the world and foregathered with kings and men of worth, saith to me, "Verily, that which our lord the Khalif hath done this night is beyond measure extravagant, never saw I any do the like of his fashion in any country; for he hath rent four dresses, each worth a thousand dinars, and this is surely excessive extravagance."' 'O man,' replied the youth, 'the money is my money and the stuff my stuff and this is by way of largesse to my servants and followers; for each suit that is rent belongeth to one of my boon-companions here present and I appoint him, in exchange therefor, [if it so like him,] the sum of five hundred dinars.' 'Well is that thou dost, O our lord!' answered Jaafer and recited the following verses:

The virtues sure have built themselves a dwelling in thy palm;
Thou hast thy wealth to all mankind made common property.
An if the virtues' doors were shut on us one luckless day,
Thy hand unto their locks, indeed, were even as a key.

When the young man heard these verses, he ordered Jaafer a thousand dinars and a dress of honour. Then the cup went round among them and the wine was pleasant to them; but, after awhile, the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Ask him of the marks on his ribs, that we may see what he will say.' 'Softly, O my lord,' replied Jaafer; 'be not hasty, for patience is more becoming.' 'By the life of my head and by the tomb of El Abbas,' rejoined the Khalif, 'except thou ask him, I will assuredly make an end of thee!' With this the young man turned towards Jaafer and said to him, 'What ails thee and thy friend to be whispering together? Tell me what is to do with you.' 'It is nothing,' replied Jaafer; but the mock Khalif rejoined, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, tell me what ails you and hide from me nothing of your case.' 'O my lord,' answered the Vizier, 'my companion here saw on thy sides the marks of beating with whips and rods and marvelled thereat exceedingly, saying, "How came the Khalif to be beaten?" And he would fain know the cause of this.' When the youth heard this, he smiled and said, 'Know that my story is wonderful and my case extraordinary; were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as an admonition to him who can profit by admonition.' And he sighed and repeated the following verses:

Strange is my story and outdoes all marvels that can be.
By Love itself I swear, my ways are straitened upon me!
An ye would know my case, give ear and hearken to my tale
And all be dumb, on every side, in this our company.
Take heed unto my speech, for lo! therein a warning is;
Ay, and my words no leasing are, but naked verity.
I am a man of passion slain, the victim of desire,
And she who slew me fairer is than all the stars to see.
A bright black eye she hath, whose glance is as an Indian sword,
And from her eyebrows' bended bows full many a shaft shoots she.
My heart forebodes me that 'mongst you the Khalif of the age,
Our Imam is, of high descent and noble pedigree,
And that the second of you he, that's known as Jaafer, is,

His vizier and a vizier's son, a lord of high degree.
Yea, and the third of you Mesrour the eunuch is, I ween,
The swordsman of his vengeance. So, if true my saying be,
I have of this my case attained to all for which I hoped
And hearts' content from every side is come, indeed, to me.

When they heard this, Jaafer swore to him a dissembling oath that they were not those he named; whereupon he laughed and said, 'Know, O my lords, that I am not the Commander of the Faithful and that I do but style myself thus, to get my will of the people of the city. My real name is Mohammed Ali son of Ali the Jeweller and my father was one of the chief men [of the city]. When he died, he left me great store of gold and silver and pearls and coral and rubies and chrysolites and other jewels, besides houses and lands and baths and gardens and orchards and shops and brickfields and slaves, male and female. One day, as I sat in my shop, surrounded by my slaves and servants, there came up a young lady, riding on a mule and attended by three damsels like moons. She alighted at my shop and seating herself by me, said to me, "Art thou Mohammed the jeweller?" "Yes," answered I, "I am he, at thy service." "Hast thou a necklace of jewels fit for me?" asked she, and I replied, "O my lady, I will show thee what I have; and if any please thee, it will be of thy slave's good luck; if not, of his ill-fortune." I had by me a hundred necklaces and showed them all to her; but none of them pleased her and she said, "I want a better than those I have seen." Now I had a small necklace, that my father had bought for a hundred thousand dinars and the like whereof was not to be found with any of the great kings; so I said to her, "O my lady, I have yet one necklace of fine stones, whose like none possesseth, great or small." "Show it me," said she. So I showed it her and she said, "This is what I sought and what I have wished for all my life. What is its price?" Quoth I, "It cost my father a hundred thousand dinars;" and she said, "I will give thee five thousand dinars to thy profit." "O my lady," answered I, "the necklace and its owner are at thy service and I cannot gainsay thee [in aught]." "Not so," rejoined she; "needs must thou have the profit, and I am still much beholden to thee." Then she rose and mounting the mule in haste, said to me, "O my lord, in God's name, favour us with thy company, to receive the money; for this thy day is a milk-white day with us." So I shut the shop and accompanied her, in all security, till we came to a house, on which were manifest the signs of fortune. Its door was wrought with gold and silver and lapis lazuli, and thereon were written these verses:

Nay mourning never enter thee, I pray,
O house, nor fortune e'er thy lord bewray!
A goodly sojourn art thou to the guest,
When strait on him is every place and way.

She dismounted and entered the house, bidding me sit down on the stone bench at the door, till the money-changer should come. So I sat awhile, till presently a damsel came out to me and said, "O my lord, enter the vestibule; for it is not seemly that thou shouldst sit at the door." Accordingly, I entered the vestibule and sat down on the settle there. As I sat, another damsel came out and said to me, "O my lord, my mistress bids thee enter and sit down at the door of the saloon, to receive thy money." So I entered and sat down, nor had I sat a moment, before a curtain of silk was drawn aside and I

saw the lady seated on a throne of gold, with the necklace about her neck, unveiled and showing a face as it were the round of the moon. At this sight, my wit was troubled and my mind confounded, by reason of her exceeding beauty and grace; but, when she saw me, she rose and coming up to me, said, "O light of mine eyes, is every handsome one like thee pitiless to his mistress?" "O my lady," answered I, "beauty, all of it, is in thee and is one of thine attributes." "O jeweller," rejoined she, "know that I love thee and can hardly credit that I have brought thee hither." Then she bent to me and I kissed her, and she kissed me, and drawing me towards her, pressed me to her bosom. She knew by my case that I had a mind to enjoy her; so she said to me, "O my lord, dost thou think to foregather with me unlawfully? By Allah, may he not live who would do the like of this sin and who takes pleasure in foul talk! I am a clean virgin, whom no man hath approached, nor am I unknown in the city. Knowest thou who I am?" "No, by Allah, O my lady!" replied I. Quoth she, "I am the lady Dunya, daughter of Yehya ben Khalid the Barmecide and sister of Jaafer, the Khalif's Vizier." When I heard this, I drew back from her, saying, "O my lady, it is no fault of mine if I have been over-bold with thee; it was thou didst encourage me to aspire to thy love, by giving me access to thee." "No harm shall befall thee," answered she; "and needs must thou attain thy desire in the way that is pleasing to God. I am my own mistress and the Cadi shall act as my guardian, in consenting to the marriage-contract; for it is my will that I be thy wife and thou my husband." Then she sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and busied herself with the necessary preparations. When they came, she said to them, "Mohammed Ali ben Ali the jeweller seeks me in marriage and hath given me the necklace to my dowry; and I accept and consent." So they drew up the contract of marriage between us; after which the servants brought the wine-service and the cups passed round, after the goodliest ordinance: and when the wine mounted to our heads, she ordered a damsel, a lute-player, to sing. So she took the lute and sang thereto the following verses:

He comes and shows me, all in one, fawn, moon and sapling slight:
Foul fall the heart for thought of him that watches not the night!
A fair one, Allah had a mind t' extinguish from his cheek
One ravishment, and straight, instead, another sprang to light.
Whenas my censors speak of him, I cavil at their word,
Feigning as if I did mislike the mention of the wight;
Yea, and I hearken, when they speak of other than of him,
Though for the thought of him, nathelesse, I am consumed outright.
Prophet of beauty, all in him 's a very miracle Of grace,
And greatest of them all his face's splendid sight.
The sable mole upon his cheek hath taken up its stead,
Against the troubles of this life to ward his forehead bright.
The censors, of their ignorance, bid me forget; but
I From true-believer cannot turn an infidel forthright.

We were ravished by the sweet music she made and the beauty of the verses she sang and the other damsels went on to sing, one after another, till ten had done so; when the lady Dunya took the lute and playing a lively measure, sang these verses:

By the softness of thy graceful-gaited shape I swear,
For estrangement from thy presence the pangs of hell I bear.
Have pity on a heart that burns i' the hell-fire of thy love,
O full moon in the darkness of the night that shinest fair!
Vouchsafe to me thy favours, and by the wine-cup's light
To blazon forth thy beauties, henceforth, I'll never spare.
A rose hath ta'en me captive, whose colours varied are,
Whose charms outvie the myrtle and make its thorns despair.

When she had finished, I took the lute and playing a quaint prelude, sang the following verses:

Glory to Him who gave thee all beauty in earth and skies
So I'm become of thy bondsmen for ever and thy prize.
Thou that art gifted with glances that make mankind thy slaves,
Pray we may come off scathless from the sorcery of thine eyes.
Two opposites, fire, incarnate in shining splendour of flame,
And water, thy cheek uniteth, conjoined in wondrous wise.
How dulcet and yet how bitter thou art to my heart, alack!
To which thou at once and ever art Hell and Paradise!

When she heard this, she rejoiced with an exceeding joy; then, dismissing her women, she brought me to a most goodly place, where they had spread us a bed of various colours. She did off her clothes and I had a lover's privacy of her and found her an unpierced pearl and a filly no man had ridden. So I rejoiced in her and repeated the following verses:

Stay with us, Night, I prithee! I want no morning white;
The face of my beloved sufficeth me for light.
I gave my love, for chin-band, my palm spread open wide
And eke for ringdove's collar, my arms about him dight.
This is indeed th' attainment of fortune's topmost height!
We clip and clip and care not to stir from our delight.

Never in my life knew I a more delightful night than this, and I abode with her a whole month, forsaking shop and home and family, till one day she said to me, "O light of my eyes, O my lord Mohammed, I have a mind to go to the bath to-day; so sit thou on this couch and budge not from thy place, till I return to thee." "I hear and obey," answered I, and she made me swear to this; after which she took her women and went off to the bath. But, by Allah, O my brothers, she had not reached the end of the street, when the door opened and in came an old woman, who said to me, "O my lord Mohammed, the lady Zubeideh bids thee to her, for she hath heard of thine elegance and accomplishments and skill in singing." "By Allah," answered I, "I will not rise from my place, till the lady Dunya come back." "O my lord," rejoined the old woman, "do not anger the lady Zubeideh with thee and make an enemy of her. Come, speak with her and return to thy place." So I rose and followed her into the presence of the princess, who said to me, "O light of the eye, art thou the lady Dunya's beloved?" "At thy service," answered I. Quoth she, "He spoke sooth who reported thee possessed of

grace and beauty and good breeding and all good qualities; indeed, thou surpassest report; but now sing to me, that I may hear thee." "I hear and obey," answered I. So she brought me a lute, and I sang the following verses:

The heart of the lover is weary with loving and striving in vain,
And even as a spoil is his body in the hands of sickness and pain.
Who should there be, 'mongst the riders on camels with haltered head,
Save a lover whose dear-beloved the camel-litters contain!
A moon, in your tents that rises, to Allah I commend,
One my heart loves and tenders, shut in from the sight of her swain.
Anon she is kind, anon angry: how goodly her coquetry is!
For all that is done of a loved one must needs to her lover be fain.

When I had finished, she said to me, "God assain thy body and sweeten thy voice! Verily, thou art perfect in beauty and good breeding and singing. But now rise and return to thy place, ere the lady Dunya come back, lest she find thee not and be wroth with thee." So I kissed the earth before her and the old woman forewent me to the door whence I came. I entered and going up to the couch, found that my wife had come back and was lying asleep there. So I sat down at her feet and rubbed them; whereupon she opened her eyes and seeing me, drew up her feet and gave me a kick that threw me off the couch, saying, "O traitor, thou hast been false to thine oath and hast perjured thyself. Thou sworest to me that thou wouldst not stir from thy place; yet didst thou break thy promise and go to the lady Zubeideh. By Allah, but that I fear scandal, I would pull down the palace over her head!" Then said she to her black slave, "Harkye, Sewab, arise and strike off this lying traitor's head, for we have no further need of him." So the slave came up to me and tearing a strip from his skirt, bound my eyes with it and would have cut off my head; but all her women, great and small, came up to her and said to her, "O our lady, this is not the first who hath erred: indeed, he knew not thy humour and hath done nothing deserving of death." "By Allah," replied she, "I must needs set my mark on him." And she bade beat me; so they beat me on my sides, and the marks ye saw are the scars of that beating. Then she bade them put me out, and they carried me to a distance from the house and cast me down. I rose and dragged myself little by little to my own house, where I sent for a surgeon, who dressed my wounds and comforted me. As soon as I was recovered and my pains and sickness had left me, I went to the bath and thence betaking myself to my shop, sold all that was therein. With the proceeds, I bought four hundred white slaves, such as no king ever got together, and caused two hundred of them ride out with me every day. Then I made me yonder barge, on which I spent five thousand dinars, and styled myself Khalif and appointed each of my servants to the charge and clad him in the habit of some one of the Khalif's officers. Moreover, I let cry abroad, "Whoso goeth a-pleasuring on the Tigris [by night], I will strike off his head without mercy;" and on this wise have I done this whole year past, during which time I have heard no news of the lady neither happened upon any trace of her.' And he wept copiously and repeated the following verses:

By Allah, I will never all my life long forget her, my dear;
And those only will I tender, who shall bring her to me to draw near.

Now glory to her Maker and Creator be given evermore!
As the full moon in the heavens, in her aspect and her gait she doth appear.
She, indeed, hath made me weariful and wakeful, full of sorrow, sick for love;
Yea, my heart is all confounded at her beauty, dazed for trouble and for fear.

When Er Reshid heard the young man's story and knew the passion and transport and love-longing that afflicted him, he was moved to compassion and wonder and said, 'Glory be to God who hath appointed to every thing a cause!' Than they craved the young man's leave to depart; which being granted, they took leave of him, the Khalif purposing to do him justice and entreat him with the utmost munificence, and returned to the palace of the Khalifate, where they changed their clothes for others befitting their station and sat down, whilst Mesrour stood before them. After awhile, the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'O Vizier, bring me the young man with whom we were last night.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer, and going to the youth, saluted him, saying, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' So he returned with him to the palace, in great concern by reason of the summons, and going in to the Khalif, kissed the earth before him. Then said he, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful and Protector of the people of the Faith!' And offered up a prayer for the endurance of his glory and prosperity, for the accomplishment of his desires and the continuance of his bounty and the cessation of evil and punishment, ordering his speech as best he might and ending by repeating the following verses:

Still may thy threshold as a place of adoration
Be sought and on men's brows its dust bespeak prostration,
That so in every land be made this proclamation,
"Thou, thou art Abraham and this his very station."

The Khalif smiled in his face and returned his salute, looking on him with the eye of favour. Then he bade him draw near and sit down before him and said to him, 'O Mohammed Ali, I wish thee to tell me what befell thee last night, for it was rare and passing strange.' 'Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied the youth. 'Give me the handkerchief of immunity, that my trouble may be appeased and my heart set at rest.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Thou art safe from fear and trouble.' So the young man told him his story from first to last, whereby the Khalif knew him to be a lover and severed from his beloved and said to him, 'Wilt thou that I restore her to thee?' 'This were of the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful,' answered the youth and repeated the following verses:

Kiss thou his finger-tips, for no mere fingers they,
But keys to all the goods by God to men assigned;
And praise his deeds no less, for no mere deeds are they,
But jewels to adorn the necks of humankind.

Thereupon the Khalif turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Bring me thy sister the lady Dunya.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and fetched her forthright. When she stood before the Khalif, he said to her, 'Dost thou know who this is?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'how should women have knowledge of men?' The Khalif smiled and said, 'O Dunya, this is thy beloved, Mohammed ben Ali the jeweller. We are acquainted with his case, for we have heard the whole story, from beginning to end,

and apprehended its inward and its outward; and it is no more hidden, for all it was kept secret.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined she, 'this was written in the book of destiny. I crave the forgiveness of the Most High God for that which I have done and beseech thee to pardon me of thy favour.' At this the Khalif laughed and summoning the Cadi and the witnesses, renewed the marriage-contract between Dunya and her husband, whereby there betided them the utmost of felicity and those who envied them were mortified. Moreover, he made Mohammed Ali one of his boon-companions, and they abode in joy and cheer and gladness, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

Ali the Persian's Story of the Kurd Sharper

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid, being more than commonly restless one night, sent for his Vizier and said to him, 'O Jaafer, I am sore wakeful and heavy at heart to-night, and I desire of thee what may cheer my spirit and ease me of my oppression.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'I have a friend, by name Ali the Persian, who hath store of tales and pleasant stories, such as lighten the heart and do away care.' 'Fetch him to me,' said the Khalif. 'I hear and obey,' replied Jaafer and going out from before him, sent for Ali the Persian and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Ali and followed the Vizier into the presence of the Khalif, who bade him be seated and said to him, 'O Ali, my heart is heavy within me this night and I hear that thou hast great store of tales and anecdotes; so I desire of thee that thou let me hear what will relieve my oppression and gladden my melancholy.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said he, 'shall I tell thee what I have seen with my eyes or what I have heard with my ears?' 'An thou have seen aught [worth telling],' replied the Khalif, 'let me hear that.' 'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Ali, 'that some years ago I left this my native city of Baghdad on a journey, having with me a boy who carried a light wallet. Presently, we came to a certain city, where, as I was buying and selling, a rascally thief of a Kurd fell on me and seized my wallet, saying, "This is my bag, and all that is in it is my property." Thereupon, "Ho, Muslims all," cried I, "deliver me from the hand of the vilest of oppressors!" But they all said, "Come, both of you, to the Cadi and submit yourselves to his judgement." I agreed to this and we both presented ourselves before the Cadi, who said, "What brings you hither and what is your case?" Quoth I, "We are men at difference, who appeal to thee and submit ourselves to thy judgement." "Which of you is the complainant?" asked the Cadi. So the Kurd came forward and said, "God preserve our lord the Cadi! Verily, this bag is my bag and all that is in it is my property. It was lost from me and I found it with this man." "When didst thou lose it?" asked the Cadi. "But yesterday," replied the Kurd; "and I passed a sleepless night by reason of its loss." "If it be thy bag," said the Cadi, "tell me what is in it." Quoth the Kurd, "There were in my bag two silver styles and eye-powders and a handkerchief, and I had laid therein two gilt cups and two candlesticks. Moreover it contained two tents and two platters and two hooks and a cushion and two leather rugs and two ewers and a brass tray and two basins and a cooking-pot and two water-jars and a ladle and a sacking-needle and a she-cat and two bitches and a wooden trencher and two sacks and two saddles and a gown and two fur pelisses and a cow and two calves and a she-goat and two sheep and an ewe and two lambs and two green pavilions and a camel and two she-camels and a she-buffalo and two bulls and a lioness and two lions and a she-bear and two foxes and a mattress and two couches and an upper chamber and two saloons and a portico and two ante-rooms and a kitchen with two doors and a company of Kurds who will testify that the bag is mine." Then said the Cadi to me, "And thou, what sayst thou?" So I came forward, O Commander of the Faithful (and indeed the Kurd's speech had bewildered me) and said, "God advance our lord the Cadi! There was nothing in this my wallet, save a little ruined house and another without a door and a dog-kennel and a boys' school and youths playing dice and tents and tent-poles

and the cities of Bassora and Baghdad and the palace of Sheddad ben Aad and a smith's forge and a fishing net and cudgels and pickets and girls and boys and a thousand pimps, who will testify that the bag is my bag." When the Kurd heard my words, he wept and wailed and said, "O my lord the Cadi, my bag is known and what is in it is renowned; therein are castles and citadels and cranes and beasts of prey and men playing chess and draughts. Moreover, in this my bag is a brood-mare and two colts and a stallion and two blood-horses and two long lances and a lion and two hares and a city and two villages and a courtezan and two sharking pimps and a catamite and two gallows-birds and a blind man and two dogs and a cripple and two lameters and a priest and two deacons and a patriarch and two monks and a Cadi and two assessors, who will testify that the bag is my bag." Quoth the Cadi to me, "And what sayst thou, O Ali?" So, O Commander of the Faithful, being filled with rage, I came forward and said, "God keep our lord the Cadi! I had in this my wallet a coat of mail and a broadsword and armouries and a thousand fighting rams and a sheep-fold and a thousand barking dogs and gardens and vines and flowers and sweet herbs and figs and apples and pictures and statues and flagons and goblets and fair-faced slave-girls and singing-women and marriage-feasts and tumult and clamour and great tracts of land and brothers of success and a company of daybreak-riders, with swords and spears and bows and arrows, and true friends and dear ones and intimates and comrades and men imprisoned for punishment and cup-companions and a drum and flutes and flags and banners and boys and girls and brides, in all their wedding bravery, and singing-girls and five Abyssinian women and three Hindi and four women of Medina and a score of Greek girls and half a hundred Turkish and threescore and ten Persian girls and fourscore Kurd and fourscore and ten Georgian women and Tigris and Euphrates and a fowling net and a flint and steel and Many- Columned Irem and a thousand rogues and pimps and horse- courses and stables and mosques and baths and a builder and a carpenter and a plank and a nail and a black slave, with a pair of recorders, and a captain and a caravan-leader and towns and cities and a hundred thousand dinars and Cufa and Ambar and twenty chests full of stuffs and twenty store-houses for victual and Gaza and Askalon and from Damietta to Essouan and the palace of Kisra Anoushirwan and the kingdom of Solomon and from Wadi Numan to the land of Khorassan and Balkh and Ispahan and from India to the Soudan. Therein also (may God prolong the life of our lord the Cadi!) are doublets and cloths and a thousand sharp razors to shave the Cadi's chin, except he fear my resentment and adjudge the bag to be mine."

When the Cadi heard what I and the Kurd avouched, he was confounded and said, "I see ye are none other than two pestilent atheistical fellows, who make sport of Cadis and magistrates and stand not in fear of reproach. Never did any tell or hear tell of aught more extraordinary than that which ye pretend. By Allah, from China to Shejreh umm Ghailan nor from Fars to the Soudan, nor from Wadi Numan to Khorassan, ever was heard or credited the like of what ye avouch! Is this bag a bottomless sea or the Day of Resurrection, that shall gather together the just and unjust?" Then he bade open the bag; so I opened it and behold, there was in it bread and a lemon and cheese and olives. So I threw it down before the Kurd and went away.'

When the Khalif heard Ali's story, he laughed till he fell backward and made him a handsome present.

VOLUME IV.

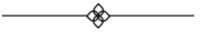
How the Imam Abou Yousuf Extricated the Khalif Haroun Er Reshid and His Vizier Jaafer from a Dilemma.

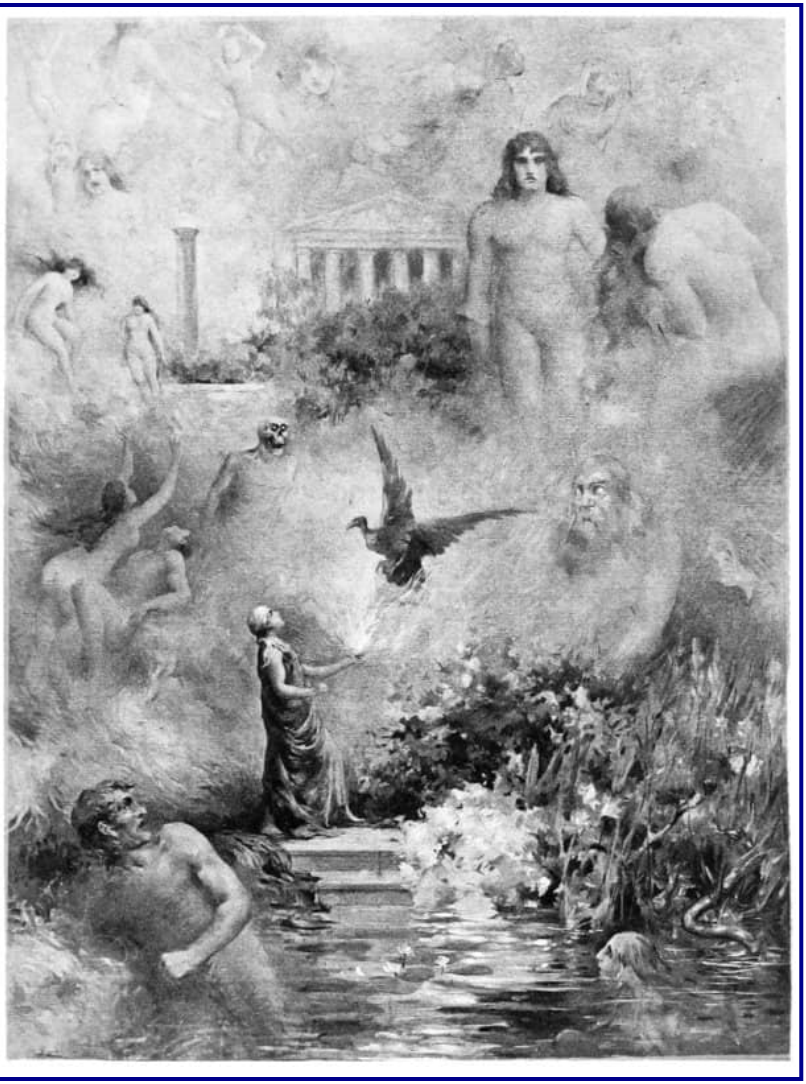
IT is said that Jaafer the Barmecide was one night carousing with Er Reshid, when the latter said to him, 'O Jaafer, I hear that thou hast bought such and such a slave-girl. Now I have long sought her and my heart is taken up with love of her, for she is passing fair; so do thou sell her to me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'I will not sell her.' 'Then give her to me,' rejoined the Khalif. 'Nor will I give her,' answered Jaafer. 'Be Zubeideh triply divorced,' exclaimed Haroun, 'if thou shalt not either sell or give her to me!' Quoth Jaafer, 'Be my wife triply divorced, if I either sell or give her to thee!' After awhile they recovered from their intoxication and were ware that they had fallen into a grave dilemma, but knew not how to extricate themselves. Then said Er Reshid, 'None can help us in this strait but Abou Yousuf.' So they sent for him, and this was in the middle of the night. When the messenger reached the Imam, he arose in alarm, saying in himself, 'I should not be sent for at this hour, save by reason of some crisis in Islam.' So he went out in haste and mounted his mule, saying to his servant, 'Take the mule's nose-bag with thee; it may be she has not finished her feed; and when we come to the Khalif's palace, put the bag on her, that she may eat what is left of her fodder, whilst I am with the Khalif.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the man.

So the Imam rode to the palace and was admitted to the presence of Er Reshid, who made him sit down on the couch beside himself, whereas he was used to seat none but him, and said to him, 'We have sent for thee at this hour to advise us upon a grave matter, with which we know not how to deal' And he expounded to him the case. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Abou Yousuf, 'this is the easiest of things.' Then he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'O Jaafer, sell half of her to the Commander of the Faithful and give him the other half; so shall ye both be quit of your oaths.' The Khalif was delighted with this and they did as he prescribed. Then said Er Reshid, 'Bring me the girl at once, for I long for her exceedingly.' So they brought her and the Khalif said to Abou Yousuf, 'I have a mind to lie with her forthright; for I cannot endure to abstain from her during the prescribed period of purification; how is this to be done?' 'Bring me one of thine unenfranchised male slaves,' answered the Imam, 'and give me leave to marry her to him; then let him divorce her before consummation. So shall it be lawful for thee to lie with her before purification.' This expedient pleased the Khalif yet more than the first and he sent for the slave. When he came, Er Reshid said to the Imam, 'I authorize thee to marry her to him.' So the Imam proposed the marriage to the slave, who accepted it, and performed the due ceremony; after which he said to the slave, 'Divorce her, and thou shalt have a hundred diners.' But he refused to do this and the Imam went on to increase his offer, till he bid him a thousand diners. Then said the slave to him, 'Doth it rest with me to divorce her, or with thee or the Commander of the Faithful?' 'With thee,' answered the Imam. 'Then, by Allah,' quoth the slave, 'I will never do it!'

At this the Khalif was exceeding wroth and said to the Imam, 'What is to be done, O Abou Yousuf?' 'Be not concerned, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the

Imam; 'the thing is easy. Make this slave the damsel's property.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'I give him to her;' and the Imam said to the girl, 'Say, "I accept."' So she said, 'I accept:' whereupon quoth Abou Yousuf, 'I pronounce divorce between them, for that he hath become her property, and so the marriage is annulled.' With this, Er Reshid sprang to his feet and exclaimed, 'It is the like of thee that shall be Cadi in my time.' Then he called for sundry trays of gold and emptied them before Abou Yousuf, to whom he said, 'Hast thou wherein to put this ?' The Imam bethought him of the mule's nose-bag; so he sent for it and filling it with gold, took it and went home; and on the morrow, he said to his friends, 'There is no easier or shorter road to the goods of this world and the next, than that of learning; for, see, I have received all this money for answering two or three questions.' Consider, then, O polite [reader], the pleasantness of this anecdote, for it comprises divers goodly features, amongst which are the complaisance of Jaafer to Er Reshid and the wisdom of the Khalif and the exceeding wisdom of Abou Yousuf, may God the Most High have mercy on all their souls!





The Lover Who Feigned Himself a Thief to Save His Mistress's Honour.

THERE came one day to Khalid ibn Abdallah el Kesri, governor of Bassora, a company of men dragging a youth of exceeding beauty and lofty bearing, whose aspect expressed good breeding and dignity and abundant wit They brought him before the governor, who asked what was to do with him, and they replied, 'This fellow is a thief, whom we caught last night in our dwelling.' Khalid looked at him and was struck with wonder at his well-favouredness and elegance; so he said to the others, 'Loose him,' and going up to the young man, asked what he had to say for himself. 'The folk have spoken truly,' answered he; 'and the case is as they have said.' 'And what moved thee to this,' asked Khalid, 'and thou so noble and comely of aspect?' 'The lust after worldly good,' replied the other, 'and the ordinance of God, glorified and exalted be He!' 'May thy mother be bereaved of thee!' rejoined Khalid. 'Hadst thou not, in thy fair face and sound sense and good breeding, what should restrain thee from thieving?' 'O Amir,' answered the young man, 'leave this talk and proceed to what God the Most High hath ordained; this is what my hands have earned, and God is no oppressor of His creatures.' Khalid was silent awhile, considering the matter; then he said to the young man, 'Verily, thy confession before witnesses perplexes me, for I cannot believe thee to be a thief. Surely thou hast some story that is other than one of theft. Tell it me'. 'O Amir,' replied the youth, 'deem thou nought save what I have confessed; for I have no story other than that I entered these folk's house and stole what I could lay hands on, and they caught me and took the stuff from me and carried me before thee.' Then Khalid bade clap him in prison and commanded a crier to make proclamation throughout Bassora, saying, 'Ho, whoso is minded to look upon the punishment of such an one, the thief, and the cutting off of his hand, let him be present tomorrow morning at such a place!'

When the youth found himself in prison, with irons on his feet, he sighed heavily and repeated the following verses, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes:

Khalid doth threaten me with cutting off my hand,
Except I do reveal to him my mistress' case.
But, "God forbid," quoth I, "that I should e'er reveal
That which of love for her my bosom doth embrace!"
The cutting-off my hand, for that I have confessed
Unto, less grievous were to me than her disgrace.

The warders heard him and went and told Khalid, who sent for the youth after nightfall and conversed with him. He found him well-bred and intelligent and of a pleasant and vivacious wit; so he ordered him food and he ate. Then said Khalid, 'I know thou hast a story to tell that is no thief's; so, when the Cadi comes to-morrow morning and questions thee before the folk, do thou deny the charge of theft and avouch what may avert the cutting-off of thy hand; for the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) saith, "In cases of doubt, eschew [or defer] punishment."' Then he sent him back to the prison, where he passed the night.

On the morrow, the folk assembled to see his hand cut off, nor was there man or woman in Bassora but came forth to look upon his punishment. Then Khalid mounted in company of the notables of the city and others and summoning the Cadi, sent for the young man, who came, hobbling in his shackles. There none saw him but wept for him, and the women lifted up their voices in lamentation. The Cadi bade silence the women and said to the prisoner, 'These folk avouch that thou didst enter their dwelling and steal their goods: belike thou stolest less than a quarter dinar?' 'Nay,' replied he, 'I stole more than that.' 'Peradventure,' rejoined the Cadi, 'thou art partner with them in some of the goods?' 'Not so,' replied the young man; 'it was all theirs. I had no right in it.' At this Khalid was wroth and rose and smote him on the face with his whip, applying this verse to his own case:

Man wisheth and seeketh his wish to fulfil, But Allah denieth save that which He will.

Then he called for the executioner, who came and taking the prisoner's hand, set the knife to it and was about to cut it off, when, behold, a damsel, clad in tattered clothes, pressed through the crowd of women and cried out and threw herself on the young man. Then she unveiled and showed a face like the moon; whereupon the people raised a mighty clamour and there was like to have been a riot amongst them. But she cried out her loudest, saying, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, O Amir, hasten not to cut off this man's hand, till thou have read what is in this scroll!' So saying, she gave him a scroll, and he took it and read therein the following verses:

O Khalid, this man is love-maddened, a cave of desire,
Transfixed by the glances that sped from the bows of my eye.
The shafts of my looks 'twas that pierced him and slew him; indeed,
He a bondsman of love, sick for passion and like for to die.
Yea, rather a crime, that he wrought not, he choose to confess
Than suffer on her whom he cherished dishonour to lie.
Have ruth on a sorrowful lover; indeed he's no thief,
But the noblest and truest of mortals for passion that sigh.

When he had read this, he called the girl apart and questioned her; and she told him that the young man was her lover and she his mistress. He came to the dwelling of her people, thinking to visit her, and threw a stone into the house, to warn her of his coming. Her father and brothers heard the noise of the stone and sallied out on him; but he, hearing them coming, caught up all the household stuff and made as if he would have stolen it, to cover his mistress's honour. 'So they seized him,' continued she, 'saying, "A thief!" and brought him before thee, whereupon he confessed to the robbery and persisted in his confession, that he might spare me dishonour; and this he did, making himself a thief, of the exceeding nobility and generosity of his nature.'

'He is indeed worthy to have his desire,' replied Khalid and calling the young man to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he sent for the girl's father and bespoke him, saying, 'O elder, we thought to punish this young man by cutting off his hand; but God (to whom belong might and majesty) hath preserved us from this! and I now adjudge him the sum of ten thousand dirhems, for that he would have sacrificed his hand for the preservation of thine honour and that of thy daughter and the sparing

you both reproach. Moreover, I adjudge other ten thousand dirhems to thy daughter, for that she made known to me the truth of the case; and I ask thy leave to marry him to her.' 'O Amir,' rejoined the old man, 'thou hast my consent.' So Khalid praised God and thanked Him and offered up a goodly exhortation and prayer; after which he said to the young man, 'I give thee this damsel to wife, with her own and her father's consent; and her dowry shall be this money, to wit, ten thousand dirhems. 'I accept this marriage at thy hands,' replied the youth and Khalid let carry the money on trays in procession to the young man's house, whilst the people dispersed, full of gladness. And surely [quoth he who tells the tale] never saw I a rarer day than this, for that its beginning was weeping and affliction and its end joy and gladness.

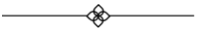
Jaafer the Barmecide and the Beanseller.

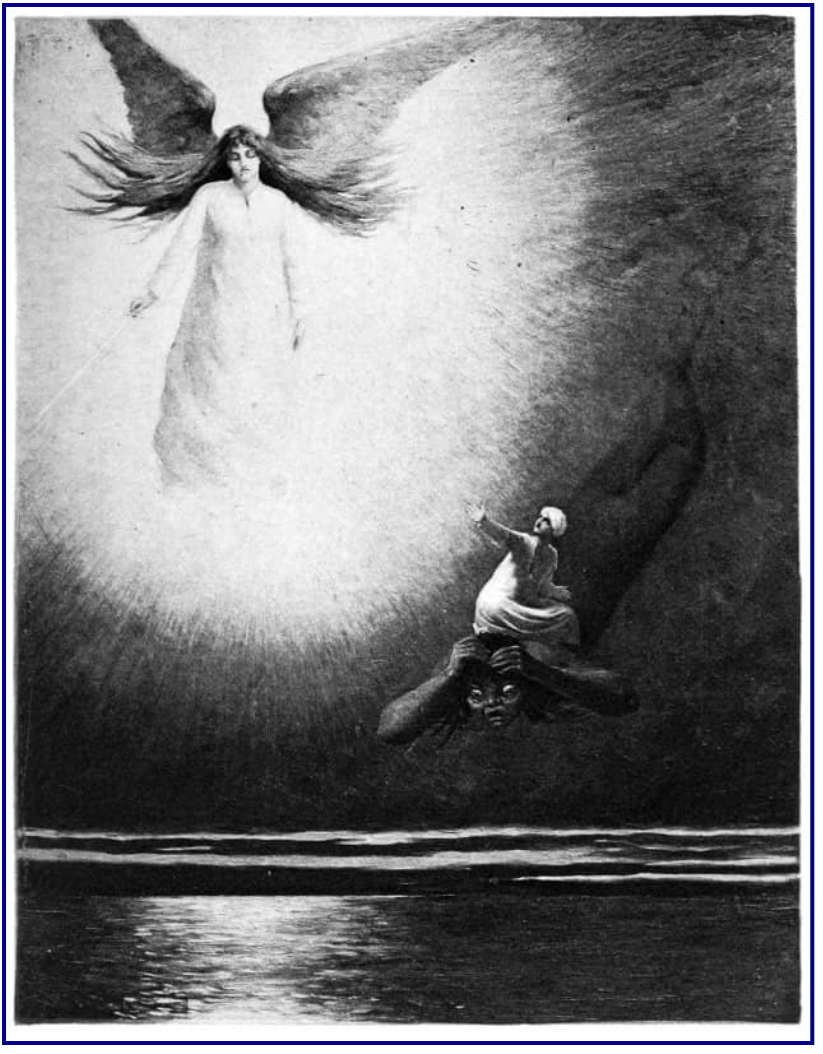
WHEN Haroun er Reshid put Jaafer the Barmecide to death, he commanded that all who wept or made moan for him should be crucified; so the folk abstained from this. Now there was a Bedouin from a distant desert, who used every year to make and bring to Jaafer an ode in his honour, for which he rewarded him with a thousand diners; and the Bedouin took them and returning to his own country, lived upon them, he and his family, for the rest of the year. Accordingly, he came with his ode at the wonted time and finding Jaafer done to death, betook himself to the place where his body was hanging, and there made his camel kneel down and wept sore and mourned grievously. Then he recited his ode and fell asleep. In his sleep Jaafer the Barmecide appeared to him and said, 'Thou hast wearied thyself to come to us and findest us as thou seest; but go to Bassora and ask for such a man there of the merchants of the town and say to him, "Jaafer the Barmecide salutes thee and bids thee give me a thousand diners, by the token of the bean."'

When the Bedouin awoke, he repaired to Bassora, where he sought out the merchant and repeated to him what Jaafer had said in the dream; whereupon he wept sore, till he was like to depart the world. Then he welcomed the Bedouin and entertained him three days as an honoured guest; and when he was minded to depart, he gave him a thousand and five hundred diners, saying, 'The thousand are what is commanded to thee, and the five hundred are a gift from me to thee; and every year thou shalt have of me a thousand diners.' When the Bedouin was about to take leave, he said to the merchant, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, tell me the story of the bean, that I may know the origin of all this.' 'In the early part of my life,' replied the merchant, 'I was miserably poor and hawked hot boiled beans about the streets of Baghdad for a living.

I went out one cold, rainy day, without clothes enough on my body to protect me from the weather, now shivering for excess of cold and now stumbling into the pools of rain-water, and altogether in so piteous a plight as would make one shudder to look upon. Now it chanced that Jaafer was seated that day, with his officers and favourites, in an upper chamber overlooking the street, and his eye fell on me; so he took pity on my case and sending one of his servants to fetch me to him, said to me, "Sell thy beans to my people." So I began to mete out the beans with a measure I had with me, and each who took a measure of beans filled the vessel with gold pieces, till the basket was empty. Then I gathered together the money I had gotten, and Jaafer said to me, "Hast thou any beans left?" "I know not," answered I and sought in the basket, but found only one bean. This Jaafer took and splitting it in twain, kept one half himself and gave the other to one of his favourites, saying, "For how much wilt thou buy this half-bean?" "For the tale of all this money twice-told," replied she; whereat I was confounded and said in myself, "This is impossible." But, as I stood wondering, she gave an order to one of her handmaids and the girl brought me the amount twice-told. Then said Jaafer, "And I will buy my half for twice the sum of the whole. Take the price of thy bean." And he gave an order to one of his servants, who gathered together the whole of the money and laid it in my basket; and I took it and departed. Then I

betook myself to Bassora, where I traded with the money and God prospered me, to Him be the praise and the thanks! So, if I give thee a thousand diners a year of the bounty of Jaafer, it will in no wise irk me.' Consider then the munificence of Jaafer's nature and how he was praised both alive and dead, the mercy of God the Most High be upon him!





Abou Mohammed the Lazy.

IT is told that Haroun er Reshid was sitting one day on the throne of the Khalifate, when there came in to him a youth of his eunuchs, bearing a crown of red gold, set with pearls and rubies and all manner other jewels, such as money might not buy, and kissing the ground before him, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the lady Zubeideh kisses the earth before thee and saith to thee, thou knowest she hath let make this crown, which lacks a great jewel for its top; and she hath made search among her treasures, but cannot find a jewel to her mind.' Quoth the Khalif to his chamberlains and officers, 'Make search for a great jewel, such as Zubeideh desires.' So they sought, but found nothing befitting her and told the Khalif, who was vexed thereat and exclaimed, 'Am I Khalif and king of the kings of the earth and lack of a jewel? Out on ye! Enquire of the merchants.' So they enquired of the merchants, who replied, 'Our lord the Khalif will not find a jewel such as he requires save with a man of Bassora, by name Abou Mohammed the Lazy.' They acquainted the Khalif with this and he bade his Vizier Jaafer send a letter to the Amir Mohammed ez Zubeidi, governor of Bassora, commanding him to equip Abou Mohammed the Lazy and bring him to Baghdad.

Jaafer accordingly wrote a letter to that effect and despatched it by Mesrour, who set out forthright for Bassora and went in to the governor, who rejoiced in him and entreated him with the utmost honour. Then Mesrour read him the Khalif's mandate, to which he replied, 'I hear and obey,' and forthwith despatched him, with a company of his followers, to Abou Mohammed's house. When they reached it, they knocked at the door, whereupon a servant came out and Mesrour said to him, 'Tell thy master that the Commander of the Faithful calls for him.' The servant went in and told his master, who came out and found Mesrour, the Khalif's chamberlain, and a company of the governor's men at the door. So he kissed the earth before Mesrour and said, 'I hear and obey the summons of the Commander of the Faithful; but enter ye my house.' 'We cannot do that,' replied Mesrour, 'save in haste; for the Commander of the Faithful awaits thy coming.' But he said, 'Have patience with me a little, till I set my affairs in order.' So, after much pressure and persuasion, they entered and found the corridor hung with curtains of blue brocade, figured with gold, and Abou Mohammed bade one of his servants carry Mesrour to the bath. Now this bath was in the house and Mesrour found its walls and floor of rare and precious marbles, wrought with gold and silver, and its waters mingled with rose-water. The servants served Mesrour and his company on the most perfect wise and clad them, on their going forth of the bath, in robes of honour of brocade, interwoven with gold.

Then they went in to Abou Mohammed and found him seated in his upper chamber upon a couch inlaid with jewels. Over his head hung curtains of gold brocade, wrought with pearls and jewels, and the place was spread with cushions, embroidered in red gold. When he saw Mesrour, he rose to receive him and bidding him welcome, seated him by his side. Then he called for food: so they brought the table of food, which when Mesrour saw, he exclaimed, 'By Allah, never saw I the like of this in the palace of the Commander of the Faithful!' For indeed it comprised all manner

of meats, served in dishes of gilded porcelain. So they ate and drank and made merry till the end of the day, when Abou Mohammed gave Mesrour and each of his company five thousand diners; and on the morrow he clad them in dresses of honour of green and gold and entreated them with the utmost honour. Then said Mesrour to him, 'We can abide no longer, for fear of the Khalif's displeasure.' 'O my lord,' answered Abou Mohammed, 'have patience with us till to-morrow, that we may equip ourselves, and we will then depart with you.' So they tarried that day and night with him; and next morning, Abou Mohammed's servants saddled him a mule with housings and trappings of gold, set with all manner pearls and jewels; whereupon quoth Mesrour in himself, 'I wonder if, when he presents himself in this equipage before the Commander of the Faithful, he will ask him how he came by all this wealth.'

Then they took leave of Ez Zubeidi and setting out from Bassora, fared on, without stopping, till they reached Baghdad and presented themselves before the Khalif who bade Abou Mohammed be seated. So he sat down and addressing the Khalif in courtly wise, said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have brought with me a present by way of homage: have I thy leave to produce it?' 'There is no harm in that,' replied the Khalif; whereupon Abou Mohammed caused bring in a chest, from which he took a number of rarities and amongst the rest, trees of gold, with leaves of emerald and fruits of rubies and topazes and pearls. Then he fetched another chest and brought out of it a pavilion of brocade, adorned with pearls and rubies and emeralds and chrysolites and other precious stones; its poles were of the finest Indian aloes-wood, and its skirts were set with emeralds. Thereon were depicted all manner beasts and birds and other created things, spangled with rubies and emeralds and chrysolites and balass rubies and other precious stones.

When Er Reshid saw these things, he rejoiced exceedingly, and Abou Mohammed said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, deem not that I have brought these to thee, fearing aught or coveting aught; but I knew myself to be but a man of the people and that these things befitted none save the Commander of the Faithful. And now, with thy leave, I will show thee, for thy diversion, something of what I can do.' 'Do what thou wilt,' answered Er Reshid, 'that we may see.' 'I hear and obey,' said Abou Mohammed and moving his lips, beckoned to the battlements of the palace, whereupon they inclined to him; then he made another sign to them, and they returned to their place. Then he made a sign with his eye, and there appeared before him cabinets with closed doors, to which he spoke, and lo, the voices of birds answered him [from within]. The Khalif marvelled exceedingly at this and said to him, 'How camest thou by all this, seeing that thou art only known as Abou Mohammed the Lazy, and they tell me that thy father was a barber-surgeon, serving in a public bath, and left thee nothing?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'listen to my story, for it is an extraordinary one and its particulars are wonderful; were it graven with needles upon the corners of the eye, it would serve as a lesson to him who can profit by admonition.' 'Let us hear it,' said the Khalif.

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Abou Mohammed, '(may God prolong to thee glory and dominion,) that the report of the folk, that I am known as the Lazy and that my father left me nothing, is true; for he was, as thou hast said, but a barber- surgeon in a bath. In my youth I was the laziest wight on the face of the

earth; indeed, so great was my sluggishness that, if I lay asleep in the sultry season and the sun came round upon me, I was too lazy to rise and remove from the sun to the shade; and thus I abode till I reached my fifteenth year, when my father was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High and left me nothing. However, my mother used to go out to service and feed me and give me to drink, whilst I lay on my side.

One day, she came in to me, with five silver dirhems, and said to me, "O my son, I hear that the Sheikh Aboul Muzeffer is about to go a voyage to China." (Now this Sheikh was a good and charitable man and loved the poor.) "So come, let us carry him these five dirhems and beg him to buy thee therewith somewhat from the land of China, so haply thou mayst make a profit of it, by the bounty of God the Most High!" I was too lazy to move; but she swore by Allah that, except I rose and went with her, she would neither bring me meat nor drink nor come in to me, but would leave me to die of hunger and thirst. When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I knew she would do as she said; so I said to her, "Help me to sit up." She did so, and I wept the while and said to her, "Bring me my shoes." Accordingly, she brought them and I said, "Put them on my feet." She put them on my feet and I said, "Lift me up." So she lifted me up and I said, "Support me, that I may walk." So she supported me and I went along thus, still stumbling in my skirts, till we came to the river-bank, where we saluted the Sheikh and I said to him, "O uncle, art thou Aboul Muzeffer?" "At thy service," answered he, and I said, "Take these dirhems and buy me somewhat from the land of China: haply, God may vouchsafe me a profit of it." Quoth the Sheikh to his companions, "Do ye know this youth?" "Yes," replied they; "he is known as Abou Mohammed the Lazy, and we never saw him stir from his house till now." Then said he to me, "O my son, give me the dirhems and the blessing of God the Most High go with them!" So he took the money, saying, "In the name of God!" and I returned home with my mother.

Meanwhile the Sheikh set sail, with a company of merchants, and stayed not till they reached the land of China, where they bought and sold, and having done their intent, set out on their homeward voyage. When they had been three days at sea, the Sheikh said to his company, "Stay the ship!" And they asked him what was to do with him. "Know," replied he, "that I have forgotten the commission with which Abou Mohammed the Lazy charged me; so let us turn back, that we may buy him somewhat whereby he may profit." "We conjure thee, by God the Most High," exclaimed they, "turn not back with us; for we have traversed an exceeding great distance and endured sore hardship and many perils." Quoth he, "There is no help for it;" and they said "Take from us double the profit of the five dirhems and turn not back with us." So he agreed to this and they collected for him a great sum of money.

Then they sailed on, till they came to an island, wherein was much people; so they moored thereto and the merchants went ashore, to buy thence precious metals and pearls and jewels and so forth. Presently, Aboul Muzeffer saw a man seated, with many apes before him, and amongst them one whose hair had been plucked off. As often as the man's attention was diverted from them, the other apes fell upon the plucked one and beat him and threw him on their master; whereupon the latter rose and beat them and bound them and punished them for this; and all the apes were wroth with the plucked ape therefor and beat him the more. When Aboul Muzeffer saw this, he took

compassion upon the plucked ape and said to his master, "Wilt thou sell me yonder ape?" "Buy," replied the man, and Aboul Muzeffer rejoined, "I have with me five dirhems, belonging to an orphan lad. Wilt thou sell me the ape for that sum?" "He is thine," answered the ape-merchant. "May God give thee a blessing of him!" So the Sheikh paid the money and his slaves took the ape and tied him up in the ship.

Then they loosed sail and made for another island, where they cast anchor; and there came down divers, who dived for pearls and corals and other jewels. So the merchants hired them for money and they dived. When the ape saw this, he did himself loose from his bonds and leaping off the ship's side, dived with them; whereupon quoth Aboul Muzeffer, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! The ape is lost to us, by the [ill] fortune of the poor fellow for whom we bought him." And they despaired of him; but, after awhile, the company of divers rose to the surface, and with them the ape, with his hands full of jewels of price, which he threw down before Aboul Muzeffer, who marvelled at this and said, "There hangs some great mystery by this ape!"

Then they cast off and sailed till they came to a third island, called the Island of the Zunonj, who are a people of the blacks, that eat human flesh. When the blacks saw them, they boarded them in canoes and taking all in the ship, pinioned them and carried them to their king who bade slaughter certain of the merchants. So they slaughtered them and ate their flesh; and the rest passed the night in prison and sore concern. But, when it was [mid]night, the ape arose and going up to Aboul Muzeffer, did off his bonds. When the others saw him free, they said, "God grant that our deliverance may be at thy hands, O Aboul Muzeffer!" But he replied, "Know that he who at delivered me, by God's leave, was none other than this ape; and I buy my release of him at a thousand dinars." "And we likewise," rejoined the merchants, "will pay him a thousand diners each, if he release us." With this, the ape went up to them and loosed their bonds, one by one, till he had freed them all, when they made for the ship and boarding her, found all safe and nothing missing. So they cast off and set sail; and presently Aboul Muzeffer said to them, "O merchants, fulfil your promise to the ape." "We hear and obey," answered they and paid him a thousand diners each, whilst Aboul Muzeffer brought out to him the like sum of his own monies, so that there was a great sum of money collected for the ape.

Then they fared on till they reached the city of Bassora, where their friends came out to meet them; and when they had landed, the Sheikh said, "Where is Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" The news reached my mother, who came to me, as I lay asleep, and said to me, "O my son, the Sheikh Aboul Muzeffer has come back and is now in the city; so go thou to him and salute him and enquire what he hath brought thee; it may be God hath blessed thee with somewhat." "Lift me from the ground," quoth I, "and prop me up, whilst I walk to the river-bank." So she lifted me up and I went out and walked on, stumbling in my skirts, till I met the Sheikh, who exclaimed, at sight of me, "Welcome to him whose money has been the means of my delivery and that of these merchants, by the will of God the Most High! Take this ape that I bought for thee and carry him home and wait till I come to thee." So I took the ape, saying in myself, "By Allah, this is indeed rare merchandise!" and drove it home, where I said to

my mother, "Whenever I lie down to sleep, thou biddest me rise and trade; see now this merchandise with thine own eyes."

Then I sat down, and presently up came Aboul Muzeffer's slaves and said to me, "Art thou Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" "Yes," answered I; and behold, Aboul Muzeffer appeared behind them. So I went up to him and kissed his hands; and he said to me, "Come with me to my house." "I hear and obey," answered I and followed him to his house, where he bade his servants bring me the money [and what not else the ape had earned me]. So they brought it and he said to me, "O my son, God hath blessed thee with this wealth, by way of profit on thy five dirhems." Then the slaves laid the treasure in chests, which they set on their heads, and Aboul Muzeffer gave me the keys of the chests, saying, "Go before the slaves to thy house; for all this wealth is thine." So I returned to my mother, who rejoiced in this and said to me, "O my son, God hath blessed thee with this much wealth; so put off thy laziness and go down to the bazaar and sell and buy." So I shook off my sloth, and opened a shop in the bazaar, where the ape used to sit on the same divan with me, eating with me when I ate and drinking when I drank. But, every day, he was absent from daybreak till noon-day, when he came back, bringing with him a purse of a thousand diners, which he laid by my side, and sat down. Thus did he a great while, till I amassed much wealth, wherewith I bought houses and lands and planted gardens and got me slaves, black and white and male and female.

One day, as I sat in my shop, with the ape at my side, he began to turn right and left, and I said in myself, "What ails the beast?" Then God made the ape speak with a glib tongue, and he said to me, "O Abou Mohammed!" When I heard him speak, I was sore afraid; but he said to me, "Fear not; I will tell thee my case. Know that I am a Marid of the Jinn and came to thee, because of thy poor estate; but to-day thou knowest not the tale of thy wealth; and now I have a need of thee, wherein it thou do my will, it shall be well for thee." "What is it?" asked I, and he said, "I have a mind to marry thee to a girl like the full moon." "How so?" quoth I. "To. morrow," replied he, "don thou thy richest clothes and mount thy mule, with the saddle of gold, and ride to the forage-market. There enquire for the shop of the Sherif and sit down beside him and say to him, 'I come to thee a suitor for thy daughter's hand.' If he say to thee, 'Thou hast neither money nor condition nor family,' pull out a thousand diners and give them to him; and if he ask more, give him more and tempt him with money." "I hear and obey," answered I; "to-morrow, if it please God, I will do thy bidding."

So on the morrow I donned my richest clothes and mounting my mule with trappings of gold, rode, attended by half a score slaves, black and white, to the forage-market, where I found the Sherif sitting in his shop. I alighted and saluting him, seated myself beside him. Quoth he, "Haply, thou hast some business with us, which we may have the pleasure of transacting?" "Yes," answered I; "I have business with thee." "And what is it?" asked he. Quoth I, "I come to thee as a suitor for thy daughter's hand." And he said, "Thou hast neither money nor condition nor family;" whereupon I pulled out a thousand diners of red gold and said to him, "This is my rank and family; and he whom God bless and keep hath said, 'The best of ranks is wealth.' And how well saith the poet:

Whoso hath money, though it be but dirhems twain, his lips
Have learnt all manner speech and he can speak and fear no slight.
His brethren and his mates draw near and hearken to his word
And 'mongst the folk thou seest him walk, a glad and prideful wight.
But for the money, in the which he glorieth on this wise,
Thou'dst find him, midst his fellow-men, in passing sorry plight.
Yea, whensoe'er the rich man speaks, though in his speech he err,
'Thou hast not spoken a vain thing,' they say; 'indeed, thou'rt right.'
But, for the poor man, an he speak, albeit he say sooth,
They say, 'Thou liest,' and make void his speech and hold it light
For money, verily, in all the lands beneath the sun,
With goodliness and dignity cloth its possessors dight.
A very tongue it is for him who would be eloquent
And eke a weapon to his hand who hath a mind to fight."

When he heard this, he bowed his head awhile, then, raising it, said, "If it must be so, I will have of thee other three thousand diners." "I hear and obey," answered I and sent one of my servants to my house for the money. When he came back with it, I handed it to the Sherif, who rose and bidding his servants shut his shop, invited his brother-merchants to the wedding; after which he carried me to his house and drew up the contract of marriage between his daughter and myself, saying to me, "After ten days, I will bring thee in to her." So I went home rejoicing and shutting myself up with the ape, told him what had passed; and he said, "Thou hast done well."

When the time appointed by the Sherif drew near, the ape said to me, "There is a thing I would fain have thee do for me; and after, thou shalt have of me what thou wilt." "What is that?" asked I. Quoth he, "At the upper end of the bridechamber stands a cabinet, on whose door is a padlock of brass and the keys under it. Take the keys and open the cabinet, in which thou wilt find a coffer of iron, with four talismanic flags at its angles. In its midst is a brass basin full of money, wherein is tied a white cock with a cleft comb; and on one side of the coffer are eleven serpents and on the other a knife. Take the knife and kill the cock; cut away the flags and overturn the chest; then go back to the bride and do away her maidenhead. This is what I have to ask of thee." "I hear and obey," answered I and betook myself to the Sherif's house.

As soon as I entered the bridechamber, I looked for the cabinet and found it even as the ape had described it. Then I went in to the bride and marvelled at her beauty and grace and symmetry, for indeed they were such as no tongue can set forth. So I rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy; and in the middle of the night, when she slept, I rose and taking the keys, opened the cabinet. Then I took the knife and killed the cock and threw down the flags and overturned the coffer, whereupon the girl awoke and seeing the closet open and the cock slain, exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! The Marid hath gotten me!" Hardly had she made an end of speaking, when the Marid came down upon the house and seizing the bride, flew away with her; whereupon there arose a great clamour and in came the Sherif, buffeting his face. "O Abou Mohammed," said he, "what is this thou hast done? Is it thus thou requitest us? I made the talisman in the cabinet in my fear for my

daughter from this accursed one; for these six years hath he sought to steal away the girl, but could not. But now there is no more abiding for thee with us; so go thy ways."

So I went out and returned to my own house, where I made search for the ape, but could find no trace of him; whereby I knew that he was the Marid, who had taken my wife and had tricked me into destroying the talisman that hindered him from taking her, and repented, rending my clothes and buffeting my face; and there was no land but was straitened upon me. So I made for the desert, knowing not whither I should go, and wandered on, absorbed in melancholy thought, till night overtook me. Presently, I saw two serpents fighting, a white one and a tawny. So I took up a stone and throwing it at the tawny serpent, which was the aggressor, killed it; whereupon the white serpent made off, but returned after awhile accompanied by ten others of the same colour, which went up to the dead serpent and tore it in pieces, till but the head was left. Then they went their ways and I fell prostrate for weariness on the ground where I stood; but, as I lay, pondering my case, I heard a voice repeat the following verses, though I saw no one:

Let destiny with slackened rein its course appointed fare
And lie thou down by night to sleep with heart devoid of care.
For, twixt the closing of the eyes and th' opening thereof,
God hath it in His power to change a case from foul to fair.

When I heard this, great concern got hold of me and I was beyond measure troubled; and I heard a voice from behind me repeat these verses also:

Muslim, whose guide's the Koran and his due,
Rejoice, for succour cometh thee unto.
Let not the wiles of Satan make thee rue,
For we're a folk whose creed's the One, the True.

Then said I, "I conjure thee by Him whom thou worshippest, let me know who thou art!" Thereupon the unseen speaker appeared to me, in the likeness of a man, and said, "Fear not; for the report of thy good deed hath reached us, and we are a people of the true-believing Jinn. So, if thou lack aught, let us know it, that we may have the pleasure of fulfilling thy need." "Indeed," answered I, "I am in sore need, for there hath befallen me a grievous calamity, whose like never yet befell man." Quoth he, "Surely, thou art Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" And I answered, "Yes." "O Abou Mohammed," rejoined the genie, "I am the brother of the white serpent, whose enemy thou slewest. We are four brothers, by one father and mother, and we are all indebted to thee for thy kindness. Know that he who played this trick on thee, in the likeness of an ape, is a Marid of the Marids of the Jinn; and had he not used this artifice, he had never been able to take the girl; for he hath loved her and had a mind to take her this long while, but could not win at her, being hindered of the talisman; and had it remained as it was, he could never have done so. However, fret not thyself for that; we will bring thee to her and kill the Marid; for thy kindness is not lost upon us."

Then he cried out with a terrible voice, and behold, there appeared a company of Jinn, of whom he enquired concerning the ape; and one of them said, "I know his abiding-place; it is in the City of Brass, upon which the sun riseth not." Then said the

first genie to me, "O Abou Mohammed, take one of these our slaves, and he will carry thee on his back and teach thee how thou shalt get back the girl: but know that he is a Marid and beware lest thou utter the name of God, whilst he is carrying thee; or he will flee from thee, and thou wilt fall and be destroyed." "I hear and obey," answered I and chose out one of the slaves, who bent down and said to me, "Mount." So I mounted on his back, and he flew up with me into the air, till I lost sight of the earth and saw the stars as they were fixed mountains and heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, what while the Marid held me in converse, diverting me and hindering me from pronouncing the name of God. But, as we flew, behold, one clad in green raiment, with streaming tresses and radiant face, holding in his hand a javelin whence issued sparks of fire, accosted me, saying, "O Abou Mohammed, say, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is His apostle;' or I will smite thee with this javelin."

Now I was already sick at heart of my [forced] abstention from calling on the name of God; so I said, "There is no god but God and Mohammed is His apostle." Whereupon the shining one smote the Marid with his javelin and he melted away and became ashes; whilst I was precipitated from his back and fell headlong toward the earth, till I dropped into the midst of a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. Hard by where I fell was a ship and five sailors therein, who, seeing me, made for me and took me up into the boat. They began to speak to me in some tongue I knew not; but I signed to them that I understood not their speech. So they fared on till ended day, when they cast out a net and caught a great fish and roasting it, gave me to eat; after which they sailed on, till they reached their city and carried me in to their king, who understand Arabic. So I kissed the ground before him, and he bestowed on me a dress of honour and made me one of his officers. I asked him the name of the city, and he replied, "It is called Henad and is in the land of China." Then he committed me to his Vizier, bidding him show me the city, which was formerly peopled by infidels, till God the Most High turned them into stones; and there I abode a month's space, diverting myself with viewing the place, nor saw I ever greater plenty of trees and fruits than there.

One day, as I sat on the bank of a river, there accosted me a horseman, who said to me, "Art thou not Abou Mohammed the Lazy?" "Yes," answered I; whereupon, "Fear not," said he; "for the report of thy good deed hath reached us." Quoth I, "Who art thou?" And he answered, "I am a brother of the white serpent, and thou art hard by the place where is the damsel whom thou seekest." So saying, he took off his [outer] clothes and clad me therein, saying, "Fear not; for he, that perished under thee, was one of our slaves." Then he took me up behind him and rode on with me, till we came to a desert place, when he said to me, "Alight now and walk on between yonder mountains till thou seest the City of Brass; then halt afar off and enter it not, till I return to thee and teach thee how thou shalt do." "I hear and obey," replied I and alighting, walked on till I came to the city, the walls whereof I found of brass. I went round about it, looking for a gate, but found none; and presently, the serpent's brother rejoined me and gave me a charmed sword that should hinder any from seeing me, then went his way.

He had been gone but a little while, when I heard a noise of cries and found myself in the midst of a multitude of folk whose eyes were in their breasts. Quoth they,

"Who art thou and what brings thee hither?" So I told them my story, and they said, "The girl thou seekest is in the city with the Marid; but we know not what he hath done with her. As for us, we are brethren of the white serpent. But go to yonder spring and note where the water enters, and enter thou with it; for it will bring thee into the city." I did as they bade me and followed the water-course, till it brought me to a grotto under the earth, from which I ascended and found myself in the midst of the city. Here I saw the damsel seated upon a throne of gold, under a canopy of brocade, midmost a garden full of trees of gold, whose fruits were jewels of price, such as rubies and chrysolites and pearls and coral.

When she saw me, she knew me and accosted me with the [obligatory] salutation, saying, "O my lord, who brought thee hither?" So I told her all that had passed and she said, "Know that the accursed Marid, of the greatness of his love for me, hath told me what doth him hurt and what profit and that there is here a talisman by means whereof he could, an he would, destroy this city and all that are therein. It is in the likeness of an eagle, with I know not what written on it, and whoso possesses it, the Afrits will do his commandment in everything. It stands upon a column in such a place; so go thou thither and take it. Then set it before thee and taking a chafing-dish, throw into it a little musk, whereupon there will arise a smoke, that will draw all the Afrits to thee, and they will all present themselves before thee, nor shall one be absent; and whatsoever thou biddest them, that will they do. Arise therefore and do this thing, with the blessing of God the Most High."

"I hear and obey," answered I and going to the column, did what she bade me, whereupon the Afrits presented themselves, saying, "Here are we, O our lord! Whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do." Quoth I, "Bind the Marid that brought the damsel hither." "We hear and obey," answered they and disappearing, returned after awhile and informed me that they had done my bidding. Then I dismissed them and returning to my wife, told her what had happened and said to her, "Wilt thou go with me?" "Yes," answered she. So I carried her forth of the city, by the underground channel, and we fared on, till we fell in with the folk who had shown me the way into the city. I besought them to teach me how I should return to my native land; so they brought us to the seashore and set us aboard a ship, which sailed on with us with a fair wind, till we reached the city of Bassora. Here we landed, and I carried my wife to her father's house; and when her people saw her, they rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Then I fumigated the eagle with musk and the Afrits flocked to me from all sides, saying, "At thy service; what wilt thou have us do?" I bade them transport all that was in the City of Brass of gold and silver and jewels and precious things to my house in Bassora, which they did; and I then ordered them to fetch the ape. So they brought him before me, abject and humiliated, and I said to him, "O accursed one, why hast thou dealt thus perfidiously with me?" Then I commanded the Afrits to shut him in a brazen vessel: so they put him in a strait vessel of brass and sealed it with lead. But I abode with my wife in joy and delight; and now, O Commander of the Faithful, I have under my hand such stores of precious things and rare jewels and other treasure as neither reckoning may comprise nor measure suffice unto. All this is of the bounty of God the Most High, and if thou desire aught of money or what not, I will bid the Jinn bring it to thee forthright.'

The Khalif wondered greatly at his story and bestowed on him royal gifts, in exchange for his presents, and entreated him with the favour he deserved.

The Generous Dealing of Yehya Ben Khalid the Barmecide With Mensour.

IT is told that Haroun er Reshid, in the days before he became jealous of the Barmecides, sent once for one of his guards, Salih by name, and said to him, 'O Salih, go to Mensour and say to him, "Thou owest us a thousand thousand dirhems and we require of thee immediate payment of the amount." And I charge thee, O Salih, an he pay it not before sundown, sever his head from his body and bring it to me.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Salih and going to Mensour, acquainted him with what the Khalif had said, whereupon quoth he, 'By Allah, I am a lost man; for all my estate and all my hand owns, if sold for their utmost value, would not fetch more than a hundred thousand dirhems. Whence then, O Salih, shall I get the other nine hundred thousand?' 'Contrive how thou mayst speedily acquit thyself,' answered Salih; 'else art thou a dead man; for I cannot grant thee a moment's delay after the time appointed me by the Khalif, nor can I fail of aught that he hath enjoined on me. Hasten, therefore, to devise some means of saving thyself ere the time expire.' 'O Salih,' quoth Mensour, 'I beg thee of thy favour to bring me to my house, that I may take leave of my children and family and give my kinsfolk my last injunctions.'

So he carried him to his house, where he fell to bidding his family farewell, and the house was filled with a clamour of weeping and lamentation and calling on God for help. Then Salih said to him, 'I have bethought me that God may peradventure vouchsafe thee relief at the hands of the Barmecides. Come, let us go to the house of Yehya ben Khalid.' So they went to Yehya's house, and Mensour told him his case, whereat he was sore concerned and bowed his head awhile; then raising it, he called his treasurer and said to him, 'How much money have we in our treasury?' 'Five thousand dirhems,' answered the treasurer, and Yehya bade him bring them and sent a message to his son Fezl, saying, 'I am offered for sale estates of great price, that may never be laid waste; so send me somewhat of money.' Fezl sent him a thousand thousand dirhems, and he despatched a like message to his son Jaafer, who also sent him a thousand thousand dirhems; nor did he leave sending to his kinsmen of the Barmecides, till he had collected from them a great sum of mosey for Mensour. But the latter and Salih knew not of this; and Mensour said to Yehya, 'O my lord, I have laid hold upon thy skirt for I know not whither to look for the money but to thee; so discharge thou the rest of my debt for me, in accordance with thy wonted generosity, and make me thy freed slave.' Thereupon Yehya bowed his head and wept; then he said to a page, 'Harkye, boy, the Commander of the Faithful gave our slave-girl Denanir a jewel of great price: go thou to her and bid her send it us.' The page went out and presently returned with the jewel, whereupon quoth Yehya, 'O Mensour, I bought this jewel of the merchants for the Commander of the Faithful, for two hundred thousand diners, and he gave it to our slave-girl Denanir the lutanist. When he sees it with thee, he will know it and spare thy life and do thee honour for our sake; and now thy money is complete.'

So Salih took the money and the jewel and carried them to the Khalif, together with Mensour; but on the way? he heard the latter repeat this verse, applying it to his

own case:

It was not love, indeed, my feet to them that led; Nay, but because the stroke of th' arrows I did dread.

When Salih heard this, he marvelled at the baseness and ingratitude of Mensour's nature, and turning upon him, said, 'There is none on the face of the earth better than the Barmecides, nor any baser nor more depraved than thou; for they bought thee off from death and saved thee from destruction, giving thee what should deliver thee; yet thou thankest them not nor praisest them, neither acquittest thee after the manner of the noble; nay, thou requitest their benevolence with this speech.' Then he went to Er Reshid and acquainted him with all that had passed; and he marvelled at the generosity and benevolence of Yehya ben Khalid and the baseness and ingratitude of Mensour and bade restore the jewel to Yehya, saying, 'That which we have given, it befits not that we take again.'

So Salih returned to Yehya, and acquainted him with Mensour's ill conduct; whereupon, 'O Salih,' replied he, 'when a man is in distress, sick at heart and distracted with melancholy thought. he is not to be blamed for aught that falls from him; for it comes not from the heart.' And he fell to seeking excuse for Mensour. But Salih wept [in telling the tale] and exclaimed, 'Never shall the revolving sphere bring forth into being the like of thee, O Yehya! Alas, that one of such noble nature and generosity should be buried beneath the earth! 'And he repeated the following verses:

Hasten to do the kindnesses thou hast a mind unto;
For bounty is not possible at every tide and hour.
How many a man denies his soul to do the generous deed,
To which it's fain, till lack of means deprive him of the power!

The Generous Dealing of Yehya Ben Khalid With a Man Who Forged a Letter in His Name.

THERE was between Yehya ben Khalid and Abdallah ben Malik el Khuzai a secret enmity, the reason whereof was that Haroun er Reshid loved the latter with an exceeding love, so that Yehya and his sons were wont to say that he had bewitched the Khalif; and thus they abode a long while, with rancour in their hearts, till it fell out that the Khalif invested Abdallah with the government of Armenia and sent him thither. Soon after he had established himself in his seat of government, there came to him one of the people of Irak, a man of excellent parts and good breeding, who had lost his wealth and wasted his substance, and his estate was come to nought; so he forged a letter to Abdallah in Yehya's name and set out therewith for Armenia. When he came to the governor's gate, he gave the letter to one of the chamberlains, who carried it to his master. Abdallah read it and considering it attentively, knew it to be forged; so he sent for the man, who presented himself before him and called down blessings upon him and praised him and those of his court. Quoth Abdallah to him, 'What moved thee to weary thyself thus and bring me a forged letter? But be of good heart; for we will not disappoint thy travail.' 'God prolong the life of our lord the Vizier!' replied the other. 'If my coming irk thee, cast not about for a pretext to repel me, for God's earth is wide and the Divine Provider liveth. Indeed, the letter I bring thee from Yehya ben Khalid is true and no forgery.' Quoth Abdallah, 'I will write a letter to my agent at Baghdad and bid him enquire concerning the letter. If it be true, as thou sayest, I will bestow on thee the government of one of my cities; or, if thou prefer a present, I will give thee two hundred thousand dirhems, besides horses and camels of price and a robe of honour. But, if the letter prove a forgery, I will have thee beaten with two hundred blows of a stick and thy beard shaven.'

Accordingly, he bade confine him in a privy chamber and furnish him therein with all he needed, till his case should be made manifest. Then he despatched a letter to his agent at Baghdad, to the following purport: 'There is come to me a man with a letter purporting to be from Yehya ben Khalid. Now I have my doubts of this letter: so delay thou not, but go thyself and learn the truth of the case and let me have an answer in all speed.' When the letter reached the agent, he mounted at once and betook himself to the house of Yehya ben Khalid, whom he found sitting with his officers and boon-companions. So he gave him the letter and he read it and said to the agent, 'Come back to me to-morrow, against I write thee an answer.'

When the agent had gone away, Yehya turned to his companions and said, 'What doth he deserve who forgeth a letter in my name and carrieth it to my enemy?' They all answered, saying this and that, each proposing some kind of punishment; but Yehya said, 'Ye err in that ye say and this your counsel is of the meanness and baseness of your spirits. Ye all know the close favour of Abdallah with the Khalif and what is between him and us of despite and enmity; and now God the Most High hath made this man an intermediary, to effect a reconciliation between us, and hath appointed him to quench the fire of hate in our hearts, which hath been growing this score years; and by his means our differences shall be accorded. Wherefore it behoves me to requite

him by confirming his expectation and amending his estate; so I will write him a letter to Abdallah, to the intent that he may use him with increase of honour and liberality.'

When his companions heard what he said, they called down blessings on him and marvelled at his generosity and the greatness of his magnanimity. Then he called for paper and ink and wrote Abdallah a letter in his own hand, to the following effect: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Thy letter hath reached me (may God give thee long life!) and I have read it and rejoice in thy health and well-being. It was thy thought that yonder worthy man had forged a letter in my name and that he was not the bearer of any message from me; but the case is not so, for the letter I myself wrote, and it was no forgery; and I hope, of thy courtesy and benevolence and the nobility of thy nature, that thou wilt fulfil this generous and excellent man of his hope and wish and use him with the honour he deserves and bring him to his desire and make him the special object of thy favour and munificence. Whatever thou dost with him, it is to me that thou dost it, and I am beholden to thee accordingly.' Then he superscribed the letter and sealing it, delivered it to the agent, who despatched it to Abdallah.

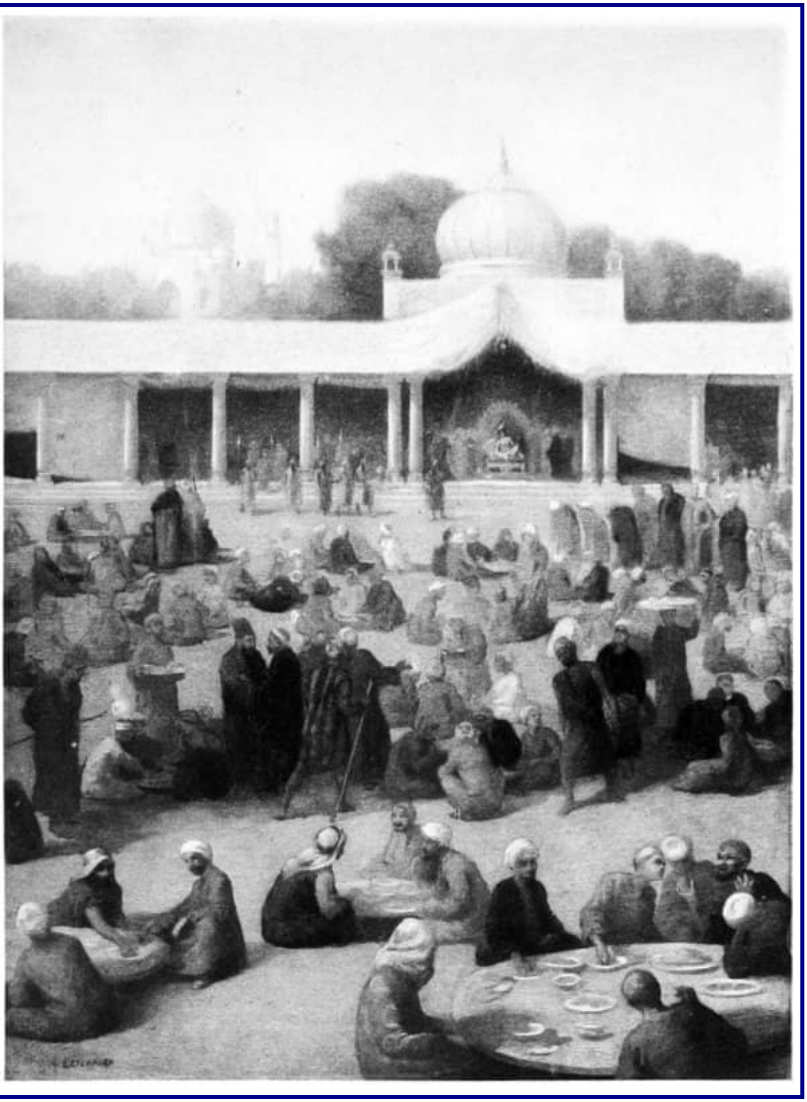
When the latter read it, he was charmed with its contents and sending for the man, said to him, 'Now will I give thee which thou wilt of the two things I promised thee.' 'The gift were more acceptable to me than aught else,' replied the man; whereupon Abdallah ordered him two hundred thousand dirhems and ten Arab horses, five with housings of silk and other five with richly ornamented saddles of state, besides twenty chests of clothes and ten mounted white slaves and a proportionate quantity of jewels of price. Moreover, he bestowed on him a dress of honour and sent him to Baghdad in great state. When he came thither, he repaired to Yehya's house, before he went to his own folk, and sought an audience of him. So the chamberlain went in to Yehya and said to him, 'O my lord, there is one at our door who craves speech of thee; and he is a man of apparent wealth and consideration, comely of aspect and attended by many servants.' Yehya bade admit him; so he entered and kissed the ground before him. 'Who art thou?' asked Yehya; and he answered, 'O my lord, I am one who was dead from the tyranny of fortune; but thou didst raise me again from the grave of calamities and preferredst me to the paradise of [my] desires. I am he who forged a letter in thy name and carried it to Abdallah ben Malek el Khuzai.' 'How hath he dealt with thee,' asked Yehya, 'and what did he give thee?' Quoth the man, 'He hath made me rich and overwhelmed me with presents and favours, thanks to thee and thy great generosity and magnanimity and to thine exceeding goodness and abounding munificence and thine all-embracing liberality. And now, behold, I have brought all that he gave me, and it is at thy door; for it is thine to command, and the decision is in thy hand.' 'Thou hast done me better service than I thee,' rejoined Yehya; 'and I owe thee thanks without stint and abundant largesse, for that thou hast changed the enmity that was between me and yonder man of worship into love and friendship. Wherefore I will give thee the like of what Abdallah gave thee.' Then he ordered him money and horses and apparel, such as Abdallah had given him; and thus that man's fortune was restored to him by the munificence of these two generous men.

The Khalif El Mamoun and the Strange Doctor

IT is said that there was none, among the Khalifs of the house of Abbas, more accomplished in all branches of knowledge than El Mamoun. On two days in each week, he was wont to preside at conferences of the learned, when the doctors and theologians met and sitting, each in his several rank and room, disputed in his presence. One day, as he sat thus, there came into the assembly a stranger, clad in worn white clothes, and sat down in an obscure place, behind the doctors of the law. Then the assembled scholars began to speak and expound difficult questions, it being the custom that the various propositions should be submitted to each in turn and that whoso bethought him of some subtle addition or rare trait, should make mention of it. So the question went round till it came to the stranger, who spoke in his turn and made a goodlier answer than that of any of the doctors; and the Khalif approved his speech and bade advance him to a higher room. When the second question came round to him, he made a still more admirable answer, and the Khalif ordered him to be preferred to a yet higher place. When the third question reached him, he made answer more justly and appropriately than on the two previous occasions, and El Mamoun bade him come up and sit near himself. When the conference broke up, water was brought and they washed their hands; after which food was set on and they ate. Then the doctors arose and withdrew; but El Mamoun forbade the stranger to depart with them and calling him to himself, entreated him with especial favour and promised him honour and benefits.

Presently, they made ready the banquet of wine; the fair-faced boon-companions came and the cup went round amongst them till it came to the stranger, who rose to his feet and said, 'If the Commander of the Faithful permit me, I will say one word.' 'Say what thou wilt,' answered the Khalif. Quoth the stranger, 'Verily, the Exalted Intelligence (whose eminence God increase!) knoweth that his slave was this day, in the august assembly, one of the unknown folk and of the meanest of the company, and the Commander of the Faithful distinguished him and brought him near to himself, little as was the wit he showed, preferring him above the rest and advancing him to a rank whereto his thought aspired not: and now he is minded to deprive him of that small portion of wit that raised him from obscurity and augmented him, after his littleness. God forfend that the Commander of the Faithful should envy his slave what little he hath of understanding and worth and renown! But, if his slave should drink wine, his reason would depart from him and ignorance draw near to him and steal away his good breeding; so would he revert to that low degree, whence he sprang, and become contemptible and ridiculous in the eyes of the folk. I hope, therefore, that the August Intelligence, of his power and bounty and royal generosity and magnanimity, will not despoil his slave of this jewel.'

When the Khalif heard his speech, he praised him and thanked him and making him sit down again in his place, showed him high honour and ordered him a present of a hundred thousand diners. Moreover he mounted him upon a horse and gave him rich apparel; and in every assembly he exalted him and showed him favour over all the other doctors, till he became the highest of them all in rank.



Ali Shar and Zumurrud.

THERE lived once, of old days, in the land of Khorassan, a merchant called Mejdeddin, who had great wealth and many slaves and servants, black and white; but he was childless until he reached the age of threescore, when God the Most High vouchsafed him a son, whom he named Ali Shar. The boy grew up like the moon on the night of its full, and when he came to man's estate and was endowed with all kinds of perfection, his father fell sick of a mortal malady and calling his son to him, said to him, 'O my son, the hour of my death is at hand, and I desire to give thee my last injunctions.' 'And what are they, O my father?' asked Ali. 'O my son,' answered Mejdeddin, 'I charge thee, be not [too] familiar with any and eschew what leads to evil and mischief. Beware lest thou company with the wicked; for he is like the blacksmith; if his fire burn thee not, his smoke irks thee: and how excellent is the saying of the poet:

There is no man in all the world whose love thou shouldst desire,
No friend who, if fate play thee false, will true and constant be.
Wherefore I'd have thee live apart and lean for help on none.
In this I give thee good advice; so let it profit thee.

And what another saith:

Men are a latent malady; Count not on them, I counsel thee. An if thou look into their case, They're full of guile and perfidy.

And yet a third:

The company of men will profit thee in nought,
Except to pass away the time in idle prate;
So spare thou to converse with them, except it be
For gain of lore and wit or mending of estate.

And a fourth

If a quickwitted man have made proof of mankind,
I have eaten of them, where but tasted hath he,
And have seen their affection but practice and nought
But hypocrisy found their religion to be.'

'O my father,' said Ali, 'I hear and obey: what more shall I do?' 'Do good when thou art able thereto,' answered his father; 'be ever courteous and succourable to men and profit by all occasions of doing a kindness; for a design is not always easy of accomplishment; and how well saith the poet:

'Tis not at every time and season that to do
Kind offices, indeed, is easy unto you;
So, when the occasion serves, make haste to profit by't,
Lest by and by the power should fail thee thereunto.'

'I hear and obey,' answered Ali; 'what more?' 'Be mindful of God,' continued Mejdeddin, 'and He will be mindful of thee. Husband thy wealth and squander it not; for, if thou do, thou wilt come to have need of the least of mankind. Know that the measure of a man's worth is according to what his right hand possesses: and how well saith the poet:

If wealth should fail, there is no friend will bear me company,
But whilst my substance yet abounds, all men are friends to me.
How many a foe for money's sake hath companied with me!
How many a friend for loss thereof hath turned mine enemy!'

'What more?' asked Ali. 'O my son,' said Mejdeddin, 'take counsel of those who are older than thou and hasten not to do thy heart's desire. Have compassion on those that are below thee, so shall those that are above thee have compassion on thee; and oppress none, lest God set over thee one who shall oppress thee. How well saith the poet:

Add others' wit to thine and counsel still ensue;
For that the course of right is not concealed from two.
One mirror shows a man his face, but, if thereto
Another one he add, his nape thus can he view.

And as saith another:

Be slow to move and hasten not to match thy heart's desire:
Be merciful to all, as thou on mercy reckonest;
For no hand is there but the hand of God is over it,
And no oppressor but shall be with worse than he opprest.

And yet another:

Do no oppression, whilst the power thereto is in thine hand;
For still in peril of revenge the sad oppressor goes.
Thine eyes will sleep anon, what while the opprest, on wake, call down
Curses upon thee, and God's eye shuts never in repose.

Beware of drinking wine, for it is the root of all evil: it does away the reason and brings him who uses it into contempt; and how well saith the poet:

By Allah, wine shall never invade me, whilst my soul
Endureth in my body and my thoughts my words control!
Not a day long will I turn me to the zephyr-freshened bowl,
And for friend I'll choose him only who of wine-bibbing is whole.

This, then,' added Mejdeddin, 'is my charge to thee; keep it before thine eyes, and may God stand to thee in my stead.' Then he swooned away and kept silence awhile. When he came to himself, he besought pardon of God and making the profession of the Faith, was admitted to the mercy of the Most High. His son wept and lamented for him and made due preparation for his burial. Great and small attended him to the grave and the readers recited the Koran about his bier; nor did Ali Shar omit aught of

what was due to the dead. Then they prayed over him and committed him to the earth, graving these words upon his tomb:

Created of the dust thou wast and cam'st to life
And eloquence didst learn and spokest many a word;
Then to the dust again returnedst and wast dead,
As 'twere from out the dust, indeed, thou'dst never stirred.

His son Ali Shar grieved for him and mourned him after the wont of men of condition; nor did he cease therefrom till his mother died also, not long afterward, when he did with her as he had done with his father. Then he sat in the shop, selling and buying and consorting with none of God's creatures, in accordance with his father's injunction.

On this wise he abode for a year, at the end of which time there came in to him certain whoreson fellows by craft and companied with him, till he turned with them to lewdness and swerved from the right way, drinking wine in goblets and frequenting the fair night and day; for he said in himself, 'My father amassed this wealth for me, and if I spend it not, to whom shall I leave it? By Allah, I will not do save as saith the poet:

If all the days of thy life thou get
And heap up treasure, to swell thy hoard,
When wilt thou use it and so enjoy
That thou hast gathered and gained and stored?'

Then he ceased not to squander his wealth all tides of the day and watches of the night, till he had made away with it all and abode in evil case and troubled at heart. So he sold his shop and lands and so forth, and after this he sold the clothes off his body, leaving himself but one suit. Then drunkenness left him and thought came to him, and he fell into melancholy.

One day, when he had sat from day-break to mid-afternoon without breaking his fast, he said in himself, 'I will go round to those on whom I spent my wealth: it may be one of them will feed me this day.' So he went the round of them all; but, as often as he knocked at any one's door, the man denied himself and hid from him, till he was consumed with hunger. Then he betook himself to the bazaar, where he found a crowd of people, assembled in a ring round somewhat, and said in himself, 'I wonder what ails the folk to crowd together thus? By Allah, I will not remove hence, till I see what is within yonder ring!' So he made his way into the ring and found that the crowd was caused by a damsel exposed for sale. She was five feet high, slender of shape, rosy-cheeked and high- bosomed and surpassed all the people of her time in beauty and grace and elegance and perfection; even as saith one, describing her:

As she wished, she was created, after such a wise that lo!
She in beauty's mould was fashioned, perfect, neither less no mo'.
Loveliness itself enamoured of her lovely aspect is;
Coyness decks her and upon her, pride and pudour sweetly show.
In her face the full moon glitters and the branch is as her shape;
Musk her breath is, nor midst mortals is her equal, high or low.

'Tis as if she had been moulded out of water of pure pearls;
In each member of her beauty is a very moon, I trow.

And Her Name Was Zumurrud.

WHEN Ali Shar saw her, he marvelled at her beauty and grace and said, 'By Allah, I will not stir hence till I see what price this girl fetches and know who buys her!' So he stood with the rest of the merchants, and they thought he had a mind to buy her, knowing the wealth he had inherited from his parents. Then the broker stood at the damsel's head and said, 'Ho, merchants! Ho, men of wealth! Who will open the biddings for this damsel, the mistress of moons, the splendid pearl, Zumurrud the Curtain-maker, the aim of the seeker and the delight of the desirous? Open the biddings, and on the opener be nor blame nor reproach.'

So one merchant said, 'I bid five hundred dinars for her.' 'And ten,' said another. 'Six hundred,' cried an old man named Reshideddin, blue-eyed and foul of face. 'And ten,' quoth another. 'I bid a thousand,' rejoined Reshideddin; whereupon the other merchants were silent and the broker took counsel with the girl's owner, who said, 'I have sworn not to sell her save to whom she shall choose; consult her.' So the broker went up to Zumurrud and said to her, 'O mistress of moons, yonder merchant hath a mind to buy thee.' She looked as Reshideddin and finding him as we have said, replied, 'I will not be sold to a grey- beard, whom decrepitude hath brought to evil plight.' 'Bravo,' quoth I, 'for one who saith:

I asked her for a kiss one day, but she my hoary head
Saw, though of wealth and worldly good I had great plentihead;
So, with a proud and flouting air, her back she turned on me
And, "No, by Him who fashioned men from nothingness!" she said.
"Now, by God's truth, I never had a mind to hoary hairs,
And shall my mouth be stuffed, forsooth, with cotton, ere I'm dead?"

'By Allah,' quoth the broker, 'thou art excusable, and thy value is ten thousand dinars!' So he told her owner that she would not accept of Reshideddin, and he said, 'Ask her of another.' Thereupon another man came forward and said, 'I will take her at the same price.' She looked at him and seeing that his beard was dyed, said, 'What is this lewd and shameful fashion and blackening of the face of hoariness?' And she made a great show of amazement and repeated the following verses:

A sight, and what a sight, did such a one present
To me! A neck, to beat with shoes, by Allah, meant!
And eke a beard for lie a coursing-ground that was
And brows for binding on of ropes all crook'd and bent.
Thou that my cheeks and shape have ravished, with a lie
Thou dost disguise thyself and reck'st not, impudent;
Dyeing thy hoary hairs disgracefully with black
And hiding what appears, with fraudulent intent;
As of the puppet-men thou wert, with one beard go'st
And with another com'st again, incontinent.

And how well saith another:

Quoth she to me, "I see thou dy'st thy hoariness;" and I,
"I do but hide it from thy sight, O thou my ear and eye!"
She laughed out mockingly and said, "A wonder 'tis indeed!
Thou so aboundest in deceit that even thy hair's a lie."

'By Allah,' quoth the broker, 'thou hast spoken truly!' The merchant asked what she said: so the broker repeated the verses to him, and he knew that she was in the right and desisted from buying her. Then another came forward and would have bought her at the same price; but she looked at him and seeing that he had but one eye, said, 'This man is one-eyed; and it is of such as he that the poet saith:

Consort not with him that is one-eyed a day,
And be on thy guard 'gainst his mischief and lies:
For God, if in him aught of good had been found,
Had not curst him with blindness in one of his eyes.'

Then the broker brought her another bidder and said to her, 'Wilt thou be sold to this man?' She looked at him and seeing that he was short of stature and had a beard that reached to his navel, said, 'This is he of whom the poet speaks, when he says:

I have a friend, who has a beard, that
God Caused flourish without profit, till, behold.
'Tis, as it were, to look upon, a night
Of middle winter, long and dark and cold.'

'O my lady,' said the broker, 'look who pleases thee of these that are present, and point him out, that I may sell thee to him.' So she looked round the ring of merchants, examining them one by one, till her eyes rested on Ali Shar. His sight cost her a thousand sighs and her heart was taken with him: for that he was passing fair of favour and more pleasant than the northern zephyr; and she said, 'O broker, I will be sold to none but my lord there, he of the handsome face and slender shape, whom the poet describes in the following verses:

They showed thy lovely face and railed
At her whom ravishment assailed.
Had they desired to keep me chaste,
Thy face so fair they should have veiled.

None shall possess me but he,' added she; 'for his cheek is smooth and the water of his mouth sweet as Selsebil; his sight is a cure for the sick and his charms confound poet and proser, even as saith one of him:

The water of his mouth is wine, and very musk
The fragrance of his breath; his teeth are camphor white.
Rizwan hath put him our from paradise, for fear
The black-eyed girls of heaven be tempted with the wight.
Men blame him for his pride; but the full moon's excuse,
How proud so'er it be, finds favour in our sight.

Him of the curling locks and rose-red cheeks and enchanting glances, of whom saith the poet:

A slender loveling promised me his favours fair and free;
So my heart's restless and my eye looks still his sight to see.
His eyelids warranted me the keeping of his troth;
But how shall they, that bankrupt are, fulfil their warranty?

And as saith another:

"The script of whiskers on his cheek," quoth they,
"Is plain to see: How canst thou then enamoured be of him, and whiskered he?"
Quoth I, "Have done with blame and leave your censuring, I pray.
As if it be a very script, it is a forgery.
Lo, in the gathering of his cheeks the meads of Eden be,
And more by token that his lips are Kauther, verily."

When the broker heard the verses she repeated on the charms of Ali Shar, he marvelled at her eloquence, no less than at the brightness of her beauty; but her owner said to him, 'Marvel not at her beauty, that shames the sun of day, nor that her mind is stored with the choicest verses of the poets; for, besides this, she can repeat the glorious Koran, according to the seven readings, and the august Traditions, after the authentic text; and she writes the seven hands and is versed in more branches of knowledge than the most learned doctor. Moreover, her hands are better than gold and silver; for she makes curtains of silk and sells them for fifty dinars each; and it takes her eight days to make a curtain.' 'Happy the man,' exclaimed the broker, 'who hath her in his house and maketh her of his privy treasures!' And her owner said, 'Sell her to whom she will.' So the broker went up to Ali Shar and kissing his hands, said to him, 'O my lord, buy thou this damsel, for she hath made choice of thee.' Then he set forth to him all her charms and accomplishments, and added: 'I give thee joy, if thou buy her, for she is a gift from Him who is no niggard of His giving.'

Ali bowed his head awhile, laughing to himself and saying inwardly, 'Up to now I have not broken my fast; yet I am ashamed to own before the merchants that I have no money wherewith to buy her.' The damsel, seeing him hang down his head, said to the broker, 'Take my hand and lead me to him, that I may show myself to him and tempt him to buy me; for I will not be sold to any but him.' So the broker took her hand and stationed her before Ali Shar, saying, 'What is thy pleasure, O my lord?' But he made him no answer, and the girl said to him, 'O my lord and darling of my heart, what ails thee that thou wilt not bid for me? Buy me for what thou wilt, and I will bring thee good fortune.' Ali raised his eyes to her and said, 'Must I buy thee perforce? Thou art dear at one thousand dinars.' 'Then buy me for nine hundred,' answered she. 'Nay,' rejoined he; and she said, 'Then for eight hundred;' and ceased not to abate the price, till she came to a hundred dinars. Quoth he, 'I have not quite a hundred dinars.' 'How much dost thou lack of a hundred?' asked she, laughing. 'By Allah,' replied he, 'I have neither a hundred dinars, nor any other sum; for I own neither white money nor red, neither dinar nor dirhem. So look out for another customer.' When she knew that he had nothing, she said to him, 'Take me by the hand and carry me aside into a passage, as if thou wouldst examine me privily.' He did so and she took from her bosom a purse containing a thousand dinars, which she gave him saying, 'Pay down nine hundred to my price and keep the rest to provide us withal.'

He did as she bade him and buying her for nine hundred dinars, paid down the price from the purse and carried her to his house, which when she entered, she found nothing but bare floors, without carpets or vessels. So she gave him other thousand dinars, saying, 'Go to the bazaar and buy three hundred dinars' worth of furniture and vessels for the house and three dinars' worth of meat and drink, also a piece of silk, the size of a curtain, and gold and silver thread and [sewing] silk of seven colours.' He did her bidding, and she furnished the house and they sat down to eat and drink; after which they went to bed and took their pleasure, one of the other. And they lay the night embraced and were even as saith the poet:

Cleave fast to her thou lov'st and let the envious rail amain;
For calumny and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.
Lo, whilst I slept, in dreams I saw thee lying by my side
And from thy lips the sweetest, sure, of limpid springs did drain.
Yea, true and certain all I saw is, as I will avouch,
And 'spite the envier, thereto I surely will attain.
There is no goodlier sight, indeed, for eyes to look upon,
Than when one couch in its embrace enfoldeth lovers twain,
Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their twinned delight,
Whilst hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain.
Lo, when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire,
But on cold iron smite the folk who chide at them in vain.
Thou, that for loving censurest the votaries of love,
Canst thou assain a heart diseased or heal a cankered brain?
If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true,
I rede thee cast the world away and with that one remain.

They lay together till the morning and love for the other was stablished in the heart of each of them. On the morrow, Zumurrud took the curtain and embroidered it with coloured silks and gold and silver thread, depicting thereon all manner birds and beasts; nor is there in the world a beast but she wrought on the curtain the semblant thereof. Moreover, she made thereto a band, with figures of birds, and wrought at it eight days, till she had made an end of it, when she trimmed it and ironed it and gave it to Ali, saying, 'Carry it to the bazaar and sell it to one of the merchants for fifty dinars; but beware lest thou sell it to a passer-by, for this would bring about a separation between us, because we have enemies who are not unmindful of us.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and repairing to the bazaar, sold the curtain to a merchant, as she bade him; after which he bought stuff for another curtain and silk and gold and silver thread as before and what they needed of food, and brought all this to her, together with the rest of the money.

They abode thus a whole year, and every eight days she made a curtain, which he sold for fifty dinars. At the end of the year, he went to the bazaar, as usual, with a curtain, which he gave to the broker; and there came up to him a Christian, who bid him threescore dinars for the curtain; but he refused, and the Christian went on to bid higher and higher, till he came to a hundred dinars and bribed the broker with ten gold pieces. So the latter returned to Ali and told him of this and urged him to accept

the offer, saying, 'O my lord, be not afraid of this Christian, for he can do thee no hurt.' The merchants also were instant with him to accept the offer; so he sold the curtain to the Christian, though his heart misgave him, and taking the price, set off to return home.

Presently, he found the Christian walking behind him; so he said to him, 'O Nazarene, why dost thou follow me?' 'O my lord,' answered the other, 'I have a need at the end of the street, may God never bring thee to need!' Ali went on, but, as he came to the door of his house, the Christian overtook him; so he said to him, 'O accursed one, what ails thee to follow me wherever I go?' 'O my lord,' replied the other, 'give me a draught of water, for I am athirst; and with God the Most High be thy reward!' Quoth Ali in himself, 'Verily, this man is a tributary [of the Khalifate] and seeks a draught of water of me; by Allah, I will not disappoint him!' So he entered the house and took a mug of water; but Zumurrud saw him and said to him, 'O my love, hast thou sold the curtain?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'To a merchant or a passer-by?' asked she. 'For my heart forethinketh me of separation.' 'To a merchant, of course,' replied he. But she rejoined, 'Tell me the truth of the case, that I may order my affair; and what wantest thou with the mug of water?' 'To give the broker a drink,' answered he; whereupon she exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' And repeated the following verses:

O thou that seekest parting, stay thy feet:
Let clips and kisses not delude thy spright.
Softly, for fortune's nature is deceit
And parting is the end of love-delight.

Then he took the mug and going out, found the Christian within the vestibule and said to him, 'O dog, how darest thou enter my house without my leave?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'there is no difference between the door and the vestibule and I will not budge hence, save to go out; and I am beholden to thee for thy kindness.' Then he took the mug and emptying it, returned it to Ali, who took it and waited for him to go; but he did not move. So Ali said to him, 'Why dost thou not rise and go thy way?' 'O my lord,' answered the Christian, 'be not of those that do a kindness and after make a reproach of it, nor one of whom saith the poet:

Gone, gone are they who, if thou stoodst before their door of old,
Had, at thy seeking, handselled thee with benefits untold!
And if thou stoodest at their door who follow after them,
These latter would begrudge to thee a draught of water cold.

O my lord,' continued he, 'I have drunk, and now I would have thee give me to eat of whatever is in the house, though it be but a crust of bread or a biscuit and an onion.' 'Begone, without more talk,' replied Ali; 'There is nothing in the house.' 'O my lord,' insisted the Christian, 'if there be nothing in the house, take these hundred dinars and fetch us somewhat from the market, if but a cake of bread, that bread and salt may pass between us.' With this, quoth Ali to himself, 'This Christian is surely mad; I will take the hundred dinars and bring somewhat worth a couple of dirhems and laugh at him.' 'O my lord,' added the Christian, 'I want but somewhat to stay my

hunger, were it but a cake of dry bread and an onion; for the best food is that which does away hunger, not rich meats; and how well saith the poet:

A cake of dry stale bread will hunger out to flight:
Why then are grief and care so heavy on my spright?
Death is, indeed, most just, since, with an equal hand,
Khalif and beggar-wretch, impartial, it doth smite.'

Then said Ali, 'Wait here, whilst I lock the saloon and fetch thee somewhat from the market.' 'I hear and obey,' said the Christian. So Ali shut up the saloon and locking the door with a padlock, put the key in his pocket: after which he repaired to the market and bought fried cheese and virgin honey and bananas and bread, with which he returned to the Christian. When the latter saw this, he said, 'O my lord, this is [too] much; thou hast brought enough for half a score men and I am alone; but belike thou wilt eat with me.' 'Eat by thyself,' replied Ali; 'I am full.' 'O my lord,' rejoined the Christian, 'the wise say, "He who eats not with his guest is a base-born churl."'

When Ali heard this, he sat down and ate a little with him, after which he would have held his hand: but [whilst he was not looking] the Christian took a banana and peeled it, then, splitting it in twain, put into one half concentrated henbane, mixed with opium, a drachm whereof would overthrow an elephant. This half he dipped in the honey and gave to Ali Shar, saying, 'O my lord, I swear by thy religion that thou shalt take this.' Ali was ashamed to make him forsworn; so he took the half banana and swallowed it; but hardly had it reached his stomach, when his head fell down in front of his feet and he was as though he had been a year asleep.

When the Nazarene saw this, he rose, as he had been a bald wolf or a baited cat, and taking the saloon key, made off at a run, leaving Ali Shar prostrate. Now this Christian was the brother of the decrepit old man who thought to buy Zumurrud for a thousand dinars, but she would have none of him and flouted him in verse. He was an infidel at heart, though a Muslim in outward show, and called himself Reshideddin; and when Zumurrud mocked him and would not accept of him to her lord, he complained to his brother, the aforesaid Christian, Bersoum by name, who said to him, 'Fret not thyself about this affair; for I will make shift to get her for thee, without paying a penny.'

Now he was a skilful sorcerer crafty and wicked; so he watched his time and played Ali Shar the trick aforesaid; then, taking the key, he went to his brother and told him what had passed, whereupon Reshideddin mounted his mule and repaired with his servants to Ali Shar's house, taking with him a purse of a thousand dinars, wherewith to bribe the master of police, should he meet him. He unlocked the saloon door, and the men who were with him rushed in upon Zumurrud and seized her, threatening her with death if she spoke; but they left the house as it was and took nothing therefrom. Moreover, they laid the key by Ali's side and leaving him lying in the vestibule, shut the door on him and went away. The Christian carried the girl to his own house and setting her amongst his women and concubines, said to her, 'O strumpet, I am the old man, whom thou did reject and lampoon; but now I have thee, without paying a penny.' 'God requite thee, O wicked old man,' replied she, with her eyes full of tears, 'for sundering my lord and me!' 'Wanton doxy that thou art,'

rejoined he,' thou shalt see how I will punish thee! By the virtue of the Messiah and the Virgin, except thou obey me and embrace my faith, I will torture thee with all manner of torture!' 'By Allah,' answered she, 'though thou cut me in pieces, I will not forswear the faith of Islam! It may be God the Most High will bring me speedy relief, for He is all-powerful, and the wise say, "Better hurt in body than in religion."'

Thereupon the old man called out to his eunuchs and women, saying, 'Throw her down!' So they threw her down and he beat her grievously, whilst she cried in vain for help, but presently stinted and fell to saying, 'God is my sufficiency, and He is indeed sufficient!' till her breath failed her and she swooned away. When he had taken his fill of beating her, he said to the eunuchs, 'Drag her forth by the feet and cast her down in the kitchen, and give her nothing to eat.' They did his bidding, and on the morrow the accursed old man sent for her and beat her again, after which he bade return her to her place. When the pain of the blows had subsided, she said, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is His Apostle! God is my sufficiency and excellent is He in whom I put my trust!' And she called upon our lord Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) for succour.

Meanwhile, Ali Shar slept on till next day, when the fumes of the henbane quitted his brain and he awoke and cried out, 'O Zumurrud!' But none answered him. So he entered the saloon and found 'the air empty and the place of visitation distant;' whereby he knew that it was the Nazarene, who had played him this trick. And he wept and groaned and lamented and repeated the following verses:

O Fate, thou sparest not nor dost desist from me:
Lo, for my soul is racked with dolour and despite!
Have pity, O my lords, upon a slave laid low,
Upon the rich made poor by love and its unright.
What boots the archer's skill, if, when the foe draw near,
His bowstring snap and leave him helpless in the fight?
And when afflictions press and multiply on man,
Ah, whither then shall he from destiny take flight?
How straitly did I guard 'gainst severance of our loves!
But, when as Fate descends, it blinds the keenest sight.

Then he sobbed and repeated these verses also:

Her traces on the encampment's sands a robe of grace bestow:
The mourner yearneth to the place where she dwelt whiles ago.
Towards her native land she turns; a camp in her doth raise
Longing, whose very ruins now are scattered to and fro.
She stops and questions of the place; but with the case's tongue
It answers her, "There is no way to union, I trow.
'Tis as the lost a Levin were, that glittered on the camp
Awhile, then vanished and to thee appeareth nevermo'."

And he repented, whenas repentance availed him not, and wept and tore his clothes. Then he took two stones and went round the city, beating his breast with the stones and crying out, 'O Zumurrud!' whilst the children flocked round him, calling

out, 'A madman! A madman!' and all who knew him wept for him, saying, 'Yonder is such an one: what hath befallen him?' This he did all that day, and when night darkened on him, he lay down in one of the by-streets and slept till morning. On the morrow, he went round about the city with the stones till eventide, when he returned to his house, to pass the night. One of his neighbours, a worthy old woman, saw him and said to him, 'God keep thee, O my son! How long hast thou been mad?' And he answered her with the following verse:

Quoth they, "Thou'rt surely mad for her thou lov'st;" and I replied,
"Indeed the sweets of life belong unto the raving race.
My madness leave and bring me her for whom ye say I'm mad;
And if she heal my madness, spare to blame me for my case."

Therewith she knew him for a lover who had lost his mistress and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! O my son, I would have thee acquaint me with the particulars of thine affliction. Peradventure God may enable me to help thee against it, if it so please Him.' So he told her all that had happened and she said, 'O my son, indeed thou hast excuse.' And her eyes ran over with tears and she repeated the following verses:

Torment, indeed, in this our world, true lovers do aby;
Hell shall not torture them, by God, whenas they come to die!
Of love they died and to the past their passions chastely hid;
So are they martyrs, as, indeed, traditions testify.

Then she said, 'O my son, go now and buy me a basket, such as the jewel-hawkers carry, and stock it with rings and bracelets and ear-rings and other women's gear, and spare not money. Bring all this to me and I will set it on my head and go round about, in the guise of a huckstress, and make search for her in all the houses, till I light on news of her, if it be the will of God the Most High.' Ali rejoiced in her words and kissed her hands, then, going out, speedily returned with all she required; whereupon she rose and donning a patched gown and a yellow veil, took a staff in her hand and set out, with the basket on her head.

She ceased not to go from quarter to quarter and street to street and house to house, till God the Most High led her to the house of the accursed Reshideddin the Nazarene. She heard groans within and knocked at the door, whereupon a slave-girl came down and opening the door to her, saluted her. Quoth the old woman, 'I have these trifles for sale: is there any one with you who will buy aught of them?' 'Yes,' answered the girl and carrying her indoors, made her sit down; whereupon all the women came round her and each bought something of her. She spoke to them fair and was easy with them as to price, so that they rejoiced in her, because of her pleasant speech and easiness. Meanwhile, she looked about to see who it was she had heard groaning, till her eyes fell on Zumurrud, when she knew her and saw that she was laid prostrate. So she wept and said to the girls, 'O my children, how comes yonder damsel in this plight?' And they told her what had passed, adding, 'Indeed, the thing is not of our choice; but our master commanded us to do this, and he is now absent on a journey.' 'O my children,' said the old woman, 'I have a request to make of you, and it is that you loose this unhappy woman of her bonds, till you know of your lord's

return, when do ye bind her again as she was; and you shall earn a reward from the Lord of all creatures.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and loosing Zumurrud, gave her to eat and drink.

Then said the old woman, 'Would my leg had been broken, ere I entered your house!' And she went up to Zumurrud and said to her, 'O my daughter, take heart; God will surely bring thee relief.' Then she told her [privily] that she came from her lord Ali Shar and appointed her to be on the watch that night, saying, 'Thy lord will come to the bench under the gallery and whistle to thee; and when thou hearest him, do thou whistle back to him and let thyself down to him by a rope from the window, and he will take thee and go away.' Zumurrud thanked the old woman, and the latter returned to Ali Shar and told him what she had done, saying, 'Go to-night, at midnight, to such a quarter, — for the accursed fellow's house is there and its fashion is thus and thus. Stand under the window of the upper chamber and whistle; whereupon she will let herself down to thee; then do thou take her and carry her whither thou wilt.' He thanked her for her good offices and repeated the following verses, with the tears running down his cheeks:

Let censors cease to rail and chide and leave their idle prate:
My body's wasted and my heart weary and desolate;
And from desertion and distress my tears, by many a
chain Of true traditions handed down, do trace their lineage straight.
Thou that art whole of heart and free from that which I endure
Of grief and care, cut short thy strife nor question of my state.
A sweet-lipped maiden, soft of sides and moulded well of shape,
With her soft speech my heart hath ta'en, ay, and her graceful gait.
My heart, since thou art gone, no rest knows nor my eyes do sleep,
Nor can the hunger of my hopes itself with patience sate.
Yea, thou hast left me sorrowful, the hostage of desire,
'Twixt enviers and haters dazed and all disconsolate.
As for forgetting, 'tis a thing I know not nor will know;
For none but thou into my thought shalt enter, soon or late.

Then he sighed and shed tears and repeated these also:

May God be good to him who brought me news that ye were come!
For never more delightful news unto my ears was borne.
If he would take a worn-out wede for boon, I'd proffer him
A heart that at the parting hour was all in pieces torn.

He waited until the appointed time, then went to the street, where was the Christian's house, and recognizing it from the old woman's description, sat down on the bench under the gallery. Presently, drowsiness overcame him, for it was long since he had slept, for the violence of his passion, and he became as one drunken with sleep. Glory be to Him who sleepeth not!

Meanwhile, chance led thither a certain thief, who had come out that night to steal somewhat and prowled about the skirts of the city, till he happened on Reshideddin's house. He went round about it, but found no way of climbing up into it

and presently came to the bench, where he found Ali Shar asleep and took his turban. At that moment, Zumurrud looked out and seeing the thief standing in the darkness, took him for her lord; so she whistled to him and he whistled back to her; whereupon she let herself down to him, with a pair of saddle-bags full of gold. When the robber saw this, he said to himself, 'This is a strange thing, and there must needs be some extraordinary cause to it.' Then, snatching up the saddle-bags, he took Zumurrud on his shoulders and made off with both like the blinding lightning.

Quoth she, 'The old woman told me that thou wast weak with illness on my account; and behold, thou art stronger than a horse.' He made her no reply; so she put her hand to his face and felt a beard like a bath-broom, as he were a hog that had swallowed feathers and they had come out at his gullet; whereat she took fright and said to him, 'What art thou?' 'O strumpet,' answered he, 'I am the sharper Jewan the Kurd, of the band of Ahmed ed Denef; we are forty sharpers, who will all tilt at thy tail this night, from dusk to dawn.' When she heard his words, she wept and buffeted her face, knowing that Fate had gotten the better of her and that there was nothing for it but to put her trust in God the Most High. So she took patience and submitted herself to the ordinance of God, saying, 'There is no god but God! As often as we escape from one trouble, we fall into a worse.'

Now the manner of Jewan's coming thither was thus: he had said to Ahmed ed Denef, 'O captain, I have been here before and know a cavern without the town, that will hold forty souls; so I will go before you thither and set my mother therein. Then will I enter the city and steal somewhat on your account and keep it till you come; so shall you be my guests this day.' 'Do what thou wilt,' replied Ahmed. So Jewan forewent them to the cavern and left his mother there; but, as he came out, he found a trooper lying asleep, with his horse tethered beside him; so he slew him and taking his clothes and arms, hid them with his mother in the cave, where also he tied up the horse. Then he betook himself to the city and prowled about, till he happened on the Christian's house and did with Ali Shar and Zumurrud as we have said. He ceased not to run, with Zumurrud on his back, till he came to the cavern, where he gave her in charge of his mother, saying, 'Keep watch over her till I come back to thee at point of day,' and went away.

Meanwhile Zumurrud said to herself, 'Now is the time to cast about for a means of escape. If I wait till these forty men come, they will take their turns at me, till they make me like a water- logged ship.' Then she turned to the old woman and said to her, 'O my aunt, wilt thou not come without the cave, that I may louse thee in the sun?' 'Ay, by Allah, O my daughter!' replied the old woman. 'This long time have I been out of reach of the bath; for these hogs cease not to hale me from place to place.' So they went without the cavern, and Zumurrud combed out the old woman's hair and killed the vermin in her head, till this soothed her and she fell asleep; whereupon Zumurrud arose and donning the clothes of the murdered trooper, girt herself with his sword and covered her head with his turban, so that she became as she were a man. Then she took the saddle-bags full of gold and mounted the horse, saying in herself, 'O kind Protector, I adjure thee by the glory of Mohammed, (whom God bless and preserve,) protect me! If I enter the city, belike one of the trooper's folk will see me, and no good will befall me.' So she turned her back on the city and rode forth into the desert.

She fared on ten days, eating of the fruits of the earth and drinking of its waters, she and her horse; and on the eleventh day, she came in sight of a pleasant and safe city, stablished in good; the season of winter had departed from it with its cold and the spring-tide came to it with its roses and orange-blossoms; its flowers blew bright, its streams welled forth and its birds warbled. As she drew near, she saw the troops and Amirs and notables of the place drawn up before the gate, at which she marvelled and said to herself, 'The people of the city are all collected at the gate: there must needs be a reason for this.' Then she made towards them; but, as she drew near, the troops hastened forward to meet her and dismounting, kissed the ground before her and said, 'God aid thee, O our lord the Sultan!'

Then the grandees ranked themselves before her, whilst the troops ranged the people in order, saying, 'God aid thee and make thy coming a blessing to the Muslims, O Sultan of all men! God stablish thee, O king of the age and pearl of the day and the time!' 'What ails you, O people of the city?' asked Zumurrud; and the chamberlain answered, 'Verily, He who is no niggard in giving hath been bountiful to thee and hath made thee Sultan of this city and ruler over the necks of all that are therein; for know that it is the custom of the citizens, when their king dies, leaving no son, that the troops should sally forth of the pace and abide there three days; and whoever cometh from the quarter whence thou hast come, they make him king over them. So praised be God who hath sent us a well-favoured man of the sons of the Turks; for had a lesser than thou presented himself, he had been Sultan.'

Now Zumurrud was well-advised in all she did; so she said, 'Think not that I am of the common folk of the Turks; nay, I am a man of condition; but I was wroth with my family, so I went forth and left them. See these saddle-bags full of gold I brought with me, that I might give alms thereof to the poor and needy by the way.' So they called down blessings upon her and rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy and she also rejoiced in them and said in herself, 'Now that I have attained to this estate, it may be God will reunite me with my lord in this place, for He can do what He will.' Then the troops escorted her to the city and dismounting, walked before her to the palace. Here she alighted and the Amirs and grandees, taking her under the armpits, carried her into the palace and seated her on the throne; after which they all kissed the ground before her. Then she bade open the treasuries and gave largesse to the troops, who offered up prayers for the continuance of her reign, and all the townsfolk and the people of the kingdom accepted her rule.

She abode thus awhile, ordering and forbidding, and remitted taxes and released prisoners and redressed grievances, so that all the people came to hold her in exceeding reverence and to love her, by reason of her generosity and continence; but, as often as she bethought her of her lord, she wept and besought God to reunite them; and one night, as she was thinking of him and calling to mind the days she had passed with him, her eyes ran over with tears and she repeated the following verses:

My longing, 'spite of time, for thee is ever new;
My weeping wounds my lids and tears on tears ensue.
Whenas I weep, I weep for anguish of desire;
For grievous severance is a lover's heart unto.

Then she wiped away her tears and rising, betook herself to the harem, where she appointed to the slave-girls and concubines separate lodgings and assigned them pensions and allowances, giving out that she was minded to live apart and devote herself to works of piety. So she betook herself to fasting and praying, till the Amirs said, 'Verily, this Sultan is exceeding devout.' Nor would she suffer any attendants about her, save two little eunuchs, to serve her.

She held the throne thus a whole year, during which time she heard no news of Ali Shar, and this was exceeding grievous to her; so, when her distress became excessive, she summoned her Viziers and chamberlains and bid them fetch architects and builders and make her a tilting ground, a parasang long and the like broad, in front of the palace. They hastened to do her bidding, and when the place was competed to her liking, she went down into it and they pitched her there a great pavilion, wherein the chairs of the Amirs were set in their order. Then she bade spread in the tilting-ground tables with all manner rich meats and ordered the grandees to eat. So they ate and she said to them, 'It is my will that, on the first day of each month, ye do on this wise and proclaim in the city that none shall open his shop, but that all the people shall come and eat of the king's banquet, and that whoso disobeyeth shall be hanged over his own door.'

They did as she bade them, and when came the first day of the next month, Zumurrud went down into the tilting-ground and the crier proclaimed aloud, saying, 'Ho, all ye people, great and small, whoso openeth shop or house or magazine shall straightway be hanged over his own door; for it behoves you all to come and eat of the king's banquet.' Then they laid the tables and the people came in troops; so she bade them sit down at the tables and eat their fill of all the dishes. So they sat down and she sat on her chair of estate, watching them, whilst each thought she was looking at none but him. Then they fell to eating and the Amirs said to them, 'Eat and be not ashamed; for this is pleasing to the King.' So they ate their fill and went away, blessing the King and saying, one to the other, 'Never saw we a Sultan that loved the poor as doth this Sultan.' And they wished her length of life, whilst Zumurrud returned to the palace, rejoicing in her device and saying in herself, 'If it please God the Most High, I shall surely by this means happen on news of my lord Ali Shar.'

When the first day of the second month came round, she made the banquet as before and the folk came and sat down at the tables, company by company and one by one. As she sat on her throne, at the head of the tables, watching the people eat, her eye fell on Bersoum, the Nazarene who had bought the curtain of Ali Shar; and she knew him and said in herself, 'This is the first of my solace and of the accomplishment of my desire.' Bersoum came up to the table and sitting down with the rest to eat, espied a dish of sweet rice, sprinkled with sugar; but it was far from him. So he pushed up to it and putting out his hand to it, took it and set it before himself. His next neighbour said to him, 'Why dost thou not eat of what is before thee? Art thou not ashamed to reach over for a dish that is distant from thee?' Quoth Bersoum, 'I will eat of none but this dish.' 'Eat then,' rejoined the other, 'and small good may it do thee!' But another man, a hashish- eater, said, 'Let him eat of it, that I may eat with him.' 'O unluckiest of hashish-eaters,' replied the first speaker, 'this is no meat for thee; it is eating for Amirs. Let it be, that it may return to those for whom it is meant and they eat it.'

But Bersoum heeded him not and putting his hand to the rice, took a mouthful and put it in his mouth. He was about to take a second mouthful, when Zumurrud, who was watching him, cried out to certain of her guards, saying, 'Bring me yonder man with the dish of sweet rice before him and let him not eat the mouthful he hath ready, but throw it from his hand.' So four of the guards went up to Bersoum and throwing the mouthful of rice from his hand, haled him forthright before Zumurrud, whilst all the people left eating and said to one another, 'By Allah, he did wrong in not eating of the food meant for the like of him.' 'For me,' quoth one, 'I was content with this frumenty that is before me.' And the hashish- eater said, 'Praised be God who hindered me from eating of the dish of sweet rice, for I looked for it to stand before him and was only waiting for him to have stayed his hunger of it, to eat with him, when there befell him what we see.' And they said, one to another, 'Wait till we see what befalls him.'

Then said Zumurrud to Bersoum, 'Out on thee, O blue eyes! What is thy name and why comest thou hither?' But the accursed fellow miscalled himself, having a white turban, and answered, 'O King, my name is Ali; I am a weaver and came hither to trade.' 'Bring me a table of sand and a pen of brass,' quoth Zumurrud, and they brought her what she sought. She levelled the sand and taking the pen, drew a geomantic figure, in the likeness of an ape; then, raising her head, she considered Bersoum straitly and said to him, 'O dog, how darest thou lie to kings? Art thou not a Nazarene, Bersoum by name, and comest thou not hither in quest of somewhat? Speak the truth, or, by the splendour of the Deity, I will strike off thy head?' At this, Bersoum was confounded and the Amirs and bystanders said, 'Verily, the King understands geomancy: blessed be He who hath gifted him!' Then Zumurrud cried out upon Bersoum and said, 'Tell me the truth, or I will make an end of thee!' 'Pardon, O King of the age,' replied Bersoum; 'the table hath told thee aright; thy slave is indeed a Nazarene.' Whereupon all present wondered at the King's skill in geomancy, saying, 'Verily, the King is a diviner, whose like there is not in the world.'

Then Zumurrud bade flay the Christian and stuff his skin with straw and hang it over the gate of the tilting-ground. Moreover, she commanded to dig a pit without the city and burn his flesh and bones therein and throw over his ashes offal and rubbish. 'We hear and obey,' answered they and did with him as she bade. When the people saw what had befallen the Christian, they said, 'He hath his deserts; but what an unlucky mouthful was that for him!' And another said, 'Be my wife triply divorced if ever I eat of sweet rice as long as I live!' 'Praised be God,' quoth the hashish-eater, 'who saved me from this fellow's fate by hindering me from eating of the rice!' Then they all went out, minded thenceforth to leave sitting in the Christian's place, over against the dish of sweet rice.

When the first day of the third month came, they laid the tables as of wont, and Queen Zumurrud came down and sat on her throne, with her guards in attendance on her, fearing her danger. Then the townsfolk entered, as usual, and went round about the tables, looking for the place of the dish of sweet rice, and quoth one to another, 'Hark ye, Hajji Khelef!' 'At thy service, O Hajji Khalid,' answered the other. 'Avoid the dish of sweet rice,' said Khalid, 'and look thou eat not thereof; for if thou do, thou wilt be hanged.' Then they sat down to meat; and as they were eating, Zumurrud chanced to

look at the gate of the tilting-ground and saw a man come running in. So she considered him and knew him for Jewan the Kurd.

Now the manner of his coming was on this wise. When he left his mother, he went to his comrades and said to them, 'I had fine purchase yesterday; for I slew a trooper and took his horse. Moreover there fell to me last night a pair of saddle-bags, full of gold, and a girl worth more than the money; and I have left them all with my mother in the cave.' At this they rejoiced and repaired to the cavern at nightfall, whilst they forewent them, that he might fetch them the booty. But he found the place empty and questioned his mother, who told him what had befallen; whereupon he bit his hands for despite and exclaimed, 'By Allah, I will make search for yonder harlot and take her, wherever she is, though it be in the shell of a pistachio-nut, and quench my malice on her!' So he went forth in quest of her and journeyed from place to place, till he came to Queen Zumurrud's city. He found the town deserted and enquiring of some women whom he saw looking from the windows, learnt that it was the Sultan's custom to make a banquet for all the people on the first of each month and was directed to the tilting-ground, where the feast was spread.

So he came running in and finding no place empty, save that before the dish of sweet rice, took his seat there and put out his hand to the dish; whereupon the folk cried out to him, saying, 'O brother, what wilt thou do?' Quoth he, 'I mean to eat my fill of this dish.' 'If thou eat of it,' rejoined one of the people, 'thou wilt assuredly be hanged.' But Jewan said, 'Hold thy peace and talk not thus.' Then he stretched out his hand to the dish aforesaid and drew it to him.

Now the hashish-eater, of whom we have before spoken, was sitting by him; but when he saw him do this, the fumes of the hashish left his head and he fled from his place and sat down afar off, saying, 'I will have nothing to do with yonder dish.' Then Jewan put out his hand, as it were a crow's foot, and dipping it in the dish, scooped up therewith half the dishful and drew it out, as it were a camel's hoof, and the bottom of the dish appeared. He rolled the rice in his hand, till it was like a great orange, and threw it ravenously into his mouth; and it rolled down his gullet, with a noise like thunder. 'Praised by God,' quoth his neighbour, 'who hath not made me meat before thee; for thou hast emptied the dish at one mouthful.' 'Let him eat,' said the hashish-eater; 'methinks he hath a gallows-face.' Then, turning to Jewan, 'Eat,' added he, 'and small good may it do thee!'

Jewan put out his hand again and taking another mouthful, was rolling it in his hands like the first, when Zumurrud cried out to the guards, saying, 'Bring me yonder man in haste and let him not eat the mouthful in his hand.' So they ran and seizing him, as he bent over the dish, brought him to her, whilst the people exulted over him and said, one to the other, 'He hath his deserts, for we warned him, but he would not take warning. Verily, this place is fated to be the death of whoso sits therein, and yonder rice is fatal to all who eat of it.'

Then said Zumurrud to Jewan, 'What is thy name and condition and why comest thou hither?' 'O our lord the Sultan,' answered he, 'my name is Othman; I am a gardener and am come hither in quest of somewhat I have lost.' 'Bring me a table of sand,' said Zumurrud. So they brought it, and she took the pen and drawing a

geomantic figure, considered it awhile, then raising her head, exclaimed, 'Out on thee, thou sorry knave! How darest thou lie to kings? This sand tells me that thy name is Jewan the Kurd and that thou art by trade a robber, taking men's goods in the way of unright and slaying those whom God hath forbidden to slay, save for just cause.' And she cried out upon him, saying, 'O hog, tell me the truth of thy case or I will cut off thy head!'

When he heard this, he turned pale and his teeth chattered; then, deeming that he might save himself by telling the truth, he replied, 'O King, thou sayest sooth; but I repent at thy hands henceforth and turn to God the Most High!' Quoth she, 'I may not leave a pest in the way of the true-believers.' And she said to her guards, 'Take him and flay him and do with him as ye did by his like last month.' And they did her commandment. When the hashish-eater saw this, he turned his back upon the dish of rice, saying, 'It is unlawful to present my face to thee.' Then, when they had made an end of eating, they dispersed and Zumurrud returned to her palace and dismissed her attendants.

When the fourth month came round, they made the banquet, as of wont, and the folk sat awaiting leave to begin. Presently Zumurrud entered and sitting down on her throne, looked at the tables and saw that room for four people was left void before the dish of rice, at which she wondered. As she sat, looking around, she saw a man come running in at the gate, who stayed not till he reached the tables and finding no room, save before the dish of rice, took his seat there. She looked at him and knowing him for the accursed Christian, who called himself Reshideddin, said in herself, 'How blessed is this device of the food, into whose toils this infidel hath fallen!'

Now the manner of his coming was extraordinary, and it was on this wise. When he returned from his journey, the people of the house told him that Zumurrud was missing and with her a pair of saddle-bags full of gold; whereupon he rent his clothes and buffeted his face and plucked out his beard. Then he despatched his brother Bersoum in quest of her, and when he was weary of awaiting news of him, he went forth himself, to seek for him and for Zumurrud, and fate led him to the latter's city. He entered it on the first day of the month and finding the streets deserted and the shops shut, enquired of the women at the windows, who told him that the King made a banquet on the first of each month for the people, all of whom were bound to attend it, nor might any abide in his house or shop that day; and they directed him to the tilting-ground.

So he betook himself thither and sitting down before the rice, put out his hand to eat thereof, whereupon Zumurrud cried out to her guards, saying, 'Bring me him who sits before the dish of rice.' So they laid hands on him and brought him before Queen Zumurrud, who said to him, 'Out on thee! What is thy name and occupation, and what brings thee hither?' 'O King of the age,' answered he, 'my name is Rustem and I have no occupation, for I am a poor dervish.' Then said she to her attendants, 'Bring me a table of sand and pen of brass.' So they brought her what she sought, as usual; and she took the pen and drawing a geomantic figure, considered it awhile, then raising her head to Reshideddin, said, 'O dog, how darest thou lie to kings? Thy name is Reshideddin the Nazarene; thou art outwardly a Muslim, but a Christian at heart, and thine occupation is to lay snares for the slave-girls of the Muslims and take them.

Speak the truth, or I will smite off thy head.' He hesitated and stammered, then replied, 'Thou sayest sooth, O King of the age!' Whereupon she commanded to throw him down and give him a hundred blows on each sole and a thousand on his body; after which she bade flay him and stuff his skin with hards of flax and dig a pit without the city, wherein they should burn his body and cast dirt and rubbish on his ashes. They did as she bade them and she gave the people leave to eat.

So they ate their fill and went their ways, whilst Zumurrud returned to her palace, thanking God for that He had solaced her heart of those who had wronged her. Then she praised the Creator of heaven and earth and repeated the following verses:

Lo, these erst had power and used it with oppression and unright!
In a little, their dominion was as it ne'er had been.
Had they used their power with justice, they had been repaid the like;
But they wrought unright and Fortune guerdoned them with dole and teen.
So they perished and the moral of the case bespeaks them thus,
"This is what your crimes have earnt you: Fate is not to blame, I ween."

Then she called to mind her lord Ali Shar and wept, but presently recovered herself and said, 'Surely God, who hath given mine enemies into my hand, will vouchsafe me speedy reunion with my beloved; for He can do what He will and is generous to His servants and mindful of their case!' Then she praised God (to whom belong might and majesty) and besought forgiveness of Him, submitting herself to the course of destiny, assured that to each beginning there is an end, and repeating the saying of the poet:

Be at thine ease, for all things' destiny
Is in His hands who fashioned earth and sea.
Nothing of Him forbidden shall befall
Nor aught of Him appointed fail to thee.

And what another saith:

Let the days pass, as they list, and fare,
And enter thou not the house of despair.
Full oft, when the quest of a thing is hard,
The next hour brings us the end of our care.

And a third:

Be mild what time thou'rt ta'en with anger and despite
And patient, if there fall misfortune on thy head.
Indeed, the nights are quick and great with child by
Time And of all wondrous things are hourly brought to bed.

And a fourth:

Take patience, for therein is good; an thou be learn'd in it,
Thou shalt be calm of soul nor drink of anguish any whit.
And know that if, with a good grace, thou do not thee submit,
Yet must thou suffer, will or nill, that which the Pen hath writ.

She abode thus another whole month's space, judging the folk and commanding and forbidding by day, and by night weeping and bewailing her separation from her lord Ali Shar. On the first day of the fifth month, she bade spread the banquet as usual and sat down at the head of the tables, whilst the people awaited the signal to fall to, leaving the space before the dish of rice vacant. She sat with eyes fixed upon the gate of the tilting- ground, noting all who entered and saying, 'O Thou that restoredst Joseph to Jacob and didst away the affliction of Job, vouchsafe of Thy power and greatness to restore me my lord Ali Shar; for Thou canst all things! O Lord of all creatures, O Guide of the erring, O Hearer of those that cry, O Answerer of prayer, answer Thou my prayer, O Lord of all creatures!'

Hardly had she made an end of her prayer, when she saw entering the gate a young man, in shape like the willow wand, the comeliest and most accomplished of youths, save that his face was sallow and his form wasted. He came up to the tables and finding no seat vacant save before the dish of rice, sat down there; whereupon Zumurrud's heart fluttered and observing him narrowly, she knew him for her lord Ali Shar and was like to have cried out for joy, but restrained herself, fearing disgrace before the folk. Her bowels were troubled and her heart throbbed; but she concealed that which she suffered.

Now the manner of his coming thither was on this wise. When he awoke and found himself lying on the bench outside the Christian's house, with his head bare, he knew that some one had come upon him and robbed him of his turban, whilst he slept. So he spoke the word, which whoso saith shall never be confounded, that is to say, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!' and going back to the old woman's house, knocked at the door. She came out and he wept before her, till he swooned away. When he came to himself, he told her all that had passed, and she blamed him and chid him for his heedlessness, saying, 'Thou hast but thyself to thank for thine affliction and calamity.' And she gave not over reproaching him, till the blood streamed from his nostrils and he again fainted away. When he revived, he saw her weeping over him; so he bewailed himself and repeated the following verses:

How bitter is parting to friends, and how sweet
Reunion to lovers, for sev'rance that sigh!
May God all unite them and watch over me,
For I'm of their number and like for to die.

The old woman mourned over him and said to him, 'Sit here, whilst I go in quest of news and return to thee in haste.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he. So she left him and was absent till midday, when she returned and said to him, 'O Ali, I fear me thou must die in thy grief; thou wilt never see thy beloved again save on Es Sirat; for the people of the Christian's house, when they arose in the morning, found the window giving on the garden broken in and Zumurrud missing, and with her a pair of saddle- bags, full of the Christian's money. When I came thither, I found the Master of Police and his officers standing at the door, and there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!'

When he heard this, the light in his eyes was changed to darkness and he despaired of life and made sure of death; nor did he leave weeping, till he lost his

senses. When he recovered, love and longing were sore upon him; there befell him a grievous sickness and he kept his house a whole year; during which time the old woman ceased not to bring him doctors and ply him with diet- drinks and make him broths, till his life returned to him. Then he recalled what had passed and repeated the following verses:

Union is parted; in its stead, of grief I am possessed:
My tears flow still, my heart's on fire for yearning and unrest.
Longing redoubles on a wight who hath no peace, so sore
Of love and wakefulness and pain he's wasted and oppressed.
Lord, I beseech Thee, if there be relief for me in aught,
Vouchsafe it, whilst a spark of life abideth in my breast.

When the second year began, the old woman said to him, 'O my son, all this thy sadness and sorrowing will not bring thee back thy mistress. Rise, therefore, take heart and seek for her in the lands: haply thou shalt light on some news of her.' And she ceased not to exhort and encourage him, till he took heart and she carried him to the bath. Then she made him drink wine and eat fowls, and thus she did with him for a whole month, till he regained strength and setting out, journeyed without ceasing till he arrived at Zumurrud's city, when he went to the tilting-ground and sitting down before the dish of sweet rice, put out his hand to eat of it.

When the folk saw this, they were concerned for him and said to him, 'O young man, eat not of that dish, for whoso eats thereof, misfortune befalls him.' 'Leave me to eat of it,' answered he, 'and let them do with me as they list, so haply I may be at rest from this weary life.' Then he ate a first mouthful, and Zumurrud was minded to have him brought to her; but bethought her that belike he was anhungred and said in herself, 'It were well to let him eat his fill.' So he went on eating, whilst the people looked on in astonishment, waiting to see what would befall him; and when he had done, Zumurrud said to certain of her eunuchs, 'Go to yonder youth that eateth of the rice and bring him to me on courteous wise, saying, 'The King would have speech of thee on some slight matter.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and going up to Ali Shar, said to him, 'O my lord, the King desires the favour of a word with thee, and let thy heart be easy.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he and followed the eunuchs, who carried him before Zumurrud, whilst the people said to one another, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what the King will do with him!' And others said, 'He will do him nought but good; for, were he minded to harm him, he had not suffered him to eat his fill.'

When he came before Zumurrud, he saluted and kissed the earth before her, whilst she returned his greeting and received him with honour. Then said she to him, 'What is thy name and condition and what brought thee hither?' 'O King,' answered he, 'my name is Ali Shar; I am of the sons of the merchants of Khorassan and the object of my coming hither is to seek for a slave-girl whom I have lost; for she was dearer to me than my sight and my hearing, and indeed my soul cleaves to her, since I lost her.' And he wept, till he swooned away. She caused sprinkle rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when she said, 'Bring me the table of sand and the pen.' So they brought them and she took the pen and drew a geomantic figure, which she

considered awhile; then, 'Thou hast spoken sooth,' quoth she. 'God will grant thee speedy reunion with her; so be not troubled.' Then she bade her chamberlain carry him to the bath and after clothe him in a handsome suit of royal apparel, and mount him an one of the best of the King's horses and bring him to the palace at end of day. So the chamberlain took him away, whilst the folk said to one another, 'What makes the King deal thus courteously with yonder youth?' And one said, 'Did I not tell you that he would do him no hurt? For he is fair of aspect; and this I knew, when the King suffered him to eat his fill.' And each said his say; after which they all dispersed and went their ways.

As for Zumurrud, she thought the night would never come, that she might be alone with the beloved of her heart. As soon as it was dusk, she withdrew to her sleeping-chamber and made as she were overcome with sleep; and it was her wont to suffer none to pass the night with her, save the two little eunuchs that waited upon her. After a little, she sent for Ali Shar and sat down upon the bed, with candles burning at her head and feet and the place lighted with hanging lamps of gold that shone like the sun. When the people heard of her sending for Ali Shar, they marvelled and said, 'Algates, the King is enamoured of this young man, and to- morrow he will make him commander of the troops.' And each thought his thought and said his say. When they brought him in to her, he kissed the earth before her and called down blessings on her, and she said in herself, 'Needs must I jest with him awhile, ere I make myself known to him.' Then said she to him, 'O Ali, hast thou been to the bath?' 'Yes, O my lord,' answered he. 'Come, eat of this fowl and meat and drink of this wine and sherbet of sugar,' said she; 'for thou art weary; and after come hither.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he and did as she bade him.

When he had made an end of eating and drinking, she said to him, 'Come up with me on the couch and rub my feet.' So he fell to rubbing her feet and legs and found them softer than silk. Then said she, 'Go higher with the rubbing;' and he, 'Pardon me, O my lord, I will go no higher than the knee.' Whereupon, 'Wilt thou gainsay me?' quoth she. 'It shall be an ill-omened night for thee! Nay, but it behoves thee to do my bidding and I will make thee my minion and appoint thee one of my Amirs.' 'And in what must I do thy bidding, O King of the age?' asked Ali. 'Put off thy trousers,' answered she, 'and lie down on thy face.' Quoth he, 'That is a thing I never in my life did; and if thou force me thereto, I will accuse thee thereof before God on the Day of Resurrection. Take all thou hast given me and let me go to my own city.' And he wept and lamented. But she said, 'Put off thy trousers and lie down on thy face, or I will strike off thy head.' So he did as she bade him and she mounted upon his back. And he felt what was softer than silk and fresher than cream and said in himself, 'Of a truth, this King is better than all the women!'

She abode a while on his back, then turned over on to the ground, and he said [in himself], 'Praised be God! It seems his yard is not in point.' Then said she, 'O Ali, it is of the wont of my yard that it standeth not on end, except it be rubbed with the hand; so, some, rub it with thy hand, till it be in point, else will I kill thee.' So saying, she lay down on her back and taking his hand, set it to her kaze, and he found it a kaze softer than silk, white, plump and great, resembling for heat the hot room of the bath or the heart of a lover, whom passion hath wasted. Quoth Ali in himself, 'Verily, this King

hath a kaze. This is a wonder of wonders!' And desire got hold on him and his yard stood on end to the utmost; which when Zumurrud saw, she burst out laughing and said to him, 'O my lord, all this betideth and yet thou knowest me not!' 'And who art thou, O King?' asked he; and she said, 'I am thy slave-girl Zumurrud.'

When he knew this and was certified that she was indeed his very slave-girl Zumurrud, he threw himself upon her, as the lion upon the sheep, and kissed her and embraced her. Then he thrust his yard into her poke and stinted not to play the porter at her door and the Imam at her prayer-niche, whilst she with him ceased not from inclination and prostration and rising up and sitting down, accompanying her canticles of praise with motitations and other amorous gestures, till the [two little] eunuchs [aforesaid] heard [the noise]. So they came and peeping out from behind the curtains, saw the King lying [on his back] and Ali Shar upon him, thrusting and thronging amain, whilst she puffed and blew and wriggled. Quoth they, 'This is no man's wriggle; belike this King is a woman.' But they concealed their affair and discovered it to none.

On the morrow, Zumurrud summoned all the troops and the grandees of the realm and said to them, 'I am minded to journey to this man's country; so choose a deputy, who shall rule over you, till I return to you.' And they answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then she applied herself to making ready for the journey and furnished herself with victual and treasure and camels and mules and so forth; after which she set out with Ali Shar, and they fared on, till they arrived at his native place, where he entered his house and gave alms and largesse. God vouchsafed him children by her, and they both lived the happiest of lives, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies. Glory be to God, the Eternal without cease, and praised be He in every case!

The Loves of Jubeir Ben Umeir and the Lady Budour

IT is related the Khalif Haroun er Reshid was restless one night and could not sleep; so that he ceased not to toss from side to side for very restlessness, till, growing weary of this, he called Mesrour and said to him, 'O Mesrour, look what may solace me of this my restlessness.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Mesrour, 'wilt thou walk in the garden of the palace and divert thyself with the sight of its flowers and gaze upon the stars and note the beauty of their ordinance and the moon among them, shining on the water?' 'O Mesrour,' replied the Khalif, 'my heart inclines not to aught of this.' 'O my lord,' continued Mesrour, 'there are in thy palace three hundred concubines, each of whom hath her separate lodging. Do thou bid retire each into her own apartment and then go thou about and divert thyself with gazing on them, without their knowledge.' 'O Mesrour,' answered Haroun, 'the palace is mine and the girls are my property: moreover, my soul inclineth not to aught of this.' 'O my lord,' said Mesrour, 'summon the doctors and sages and poets and bid them contend before thee in argument and recite verses and tell thee tales and anecdotes.' 'My soul inclines not to aught of this,' answered the Khalif; and Mesrour said, 'O my lord, bid the minions and wits and boon-companions attend thee and divert thee with witty sallies.' 'O Mesrour,' replied the Khalif, 'indeed my soul inclineth not to aught of this.' 'Then, O my lord,' rejoined Mesrour, 'strike off my head; maybe, that will dispel thine unease and do away the restlessness that is upon thee.'

At this the Khalif laughed and said, 'See which of the boon- companions is at the door.' So Mesrour went out and returning, said, 'O my lord, he who sits without is Ali ben Mensour of Damascus, the Wag.' 'Bring him to me,' quoth Haroun; and Mesrour went out and returned with Ibn Mensour, who said, on entering, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' The Khalif returned his salutation and said to him, 'O Ibn Mensour, tell us one of thy stories.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said the other, 'shall I tell thee what I have seen with my eyes or what I have only heard tell?' 'If thou have seen aught worth telling,' replied the Khalif, 'let us hear it; for report is not like eye- witness.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said Ibn Mensour, 'lend me thine ear and thy heart.' 'O Ibn Mensour,' answered the Khalif, 'behold, I am listening to thee with mine ears and looking at thee with mine eyes and attending to thee with my heart.'

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' began Ibn Mensour, 'that I receive a yearly allowance from Mohammed ben Suleiman el Hashimi, Sultan of Bassora; so I went to him, once upon a time, as usual, and found him about to ride out a-hunting. I saluted him, and he returned my salute and would have me mount and go a-hunting with him; but I said, "O my lord, I cannot ride; so do thou stablish me in the guest-house and give thy chamberlains and officers charge over me." And he did so and departed for the chase. His officers entreated me with the utmost honour and hospitality; but I said in myself, "By Allah, it is a strange thing that I should have used so long to come from Baghdad to Bassora, yet know no more of the town than from the palace to the garden and back again! When shall I find an occasion like this to view

the different parts of Bassora? I will rise at once and walk forth alone and divert myself and digest what I have eaten."

So I donned my richest clothes and went out a-walking in Bassora. Now it is known to thee, O Commander of the Faithful, that it hath seventy streets, each seventy parasangs long of Irak measure; and I lost myself in its by-streets and thirst overcame me. Presently, as I went along, I came to a great door, on which were two rings of brass, with curtains of red brocade drawn before it. Over the door was a trellis, covered with a creeping vine, that hung down and shaded the doorway; and on either side the porch was a stone bench. I stood still, to gaze upon the place, and presently heard a sorrowful voice, proceeding from a mourning heart, warbling melodiously and chanting the following verses:

My body is become th' abode of sickness and dismay,
By reason of a fawn, whose land and stead are far away.
O zephyr of the waste, that roused my pain in me, I pray,
By God your Lord, to him, with whom my heart dwells, take your way
And prithee chide him, so reproach may soften him, maybe.
And if to you he do incline and hearken, then make fair
Your speech and tidings unto him of lovers, 'twixt you, bear.
Yea, and vouchsafe to favour me with service debonair
And unto him I love make known my case and my despair,
Saying, "What ails thy bounden slave that, for estrangement, she
Should die without offence of her committed or despite
Or disobedience or breach of plighted faith or slight
Or fraud or turning of her heart to other or unright?"
And if he smile, with dulcet speech bespeak ye thus the wight:
"An thou thy company wouldst grant to her, 'twere well of thee;
For she for love of thee's distraught, as needs must be the case;
Her eyes are ever void of sleep; she weeps and wails apace."
If he show favour and incline to grant the wished-for grace,
'Tis well and good; but, if ye still read anger in his face,
Dissemble then with him and say, "We know her not, not we."

Quoth I to myself, "Verily, if the owner of this voice be fair, she unites beauty of person and eloquence and sweetness of voice." Then I drew near the door, and raising the curtain little by little, beheld a damsel, white as the moon, when it rises on its fourteenth night, with joined eyebrows and languorous eyelids, breasts like twin pomegranates and dainty lips like twin corn-marigolds, mouth as it were Solomon's seal and teeth that sported with the reason of rhymester and proser, even as saith the poet:

O mouth of the beloved, who set thy pearls arow
And eke with wine fulfilled thee and camomiles like show,
And lent the morning-glory unto thy smile, and who
Hath with a padlock sealed thee of rubies sweet of show?

Whoso but looks upon thee is mad for joy and pride.
How should it fare with him, who kisseth thee, heigho!

And as saith another:

O pearls of the teeth of my love, Have ruth on cornelian and spare To vie with it! Shall it not find You peerless and passing compare?

In fine, she comprised all manner of loveliness and was a ravishment to men and women, nor could the beholder satisfy himself with the sight of her beauty; for she was as the poet hath said of her:

If, face to face, she do appear, unveiled, she slays; and if
She turn her back, she makes all men her lovers far and near.
Like the full moon and eke the sun she is, but cruelty
And inhumanity belong not to her nature dear.
The garden-gates of Paradise are opened with her shift
And the full moon revolveth still upon her neck-rings' sphere.

As I looked at her through the opening of the curtains, she turned and seeing me standing at the door, said to her maid, "See who stands at the door." So the maid came up to me and said, "O old man, hast thou no shame, or do gray hairs and impudence go together?" "O my mistress," answered I, "I confess to the gray hairs, but as for unmannerliness, I think not to be guilty of it." "And what can be more unmannerly," rejoined her mistress, "than to intrude thyself upon a house other than thy house and gaze on a harem other than thy harem?" "O my lady," said I, "I have an excuse." "And what is thine excuse?" asked she. Quoth I, "I am a stranger and well-nigh dead of thirst." "We accept thine excuse," answered she and calling one of her maids, said to her, "O Lutf, give him to drink in the golden tankard."

So she brought me a tankard of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, full of water mingled with odoriferous musk and covered with a napkin of green silk; and I addressed myself to drink and was long about it, casting stolen glances at her the while, till I could prolong it no longer. Then I returned the tankard to the maid, but did not offer to go; and she said to me, "O old man, go thy way." "O my lady," replied I, "I am troubled in mind." "For what?" asked she; and I answered, "For the uncertainty of fortune and the vicissitudes of events." "Well mayst thou be troubled thereanent," replied she, "for Time is the mother of wonders. But what hast thou seen of them that thou shouldst muse upon?" Quoth I, "I was thinking of the former owner of this house, for he was my good friend in his lifetime." "What was his name?" asked she. "Mohammed ben Ali the Jeweller," answered I; "and he was a man of great wealth. Did he leave any children?" "Yes," said she; "he left a daughter, Budour by name, who inherited all his wealth." Quoth I, "Meseems thou art his daughter?" "Yes," answered she, laughing; then added, "O old man, thou hast talked long enough; go thy ways." "Needs must I go," replied I; "but I see thou art out of health. Tell me thy case; it may be God will give thee solace at my hands." "O old man," rejoined she, "if thou be a man of discretion, I will discover to thee my secret; but first tell me who thou art, that I may know whether thou art worthy of confidence or not; for the poet saith:

None keepeth secrets but the man who's trusty and discreet:
A secret's ever safely placed with honest fold and leal;
For me, my secrets I preserve within a locked-up house,
Whose key is lost and on whose door is set the Cadi's seal."

"O my lady," answered I, "an thou wouldst know who I am, I am Ali ben Mensour of Damascus, the Wag, boon-companion to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid." When she heard my name she came down from her seat and saluting me, said, "Welcome, O Ibn Mensour! Now will I tell thee my case and entrust thee with my secret. Know that I am a lover separated from her beloved." "O my lady," rejoined I, "thou art fair and shouldst love none but the fair. Whom then dost thou love?" Quoth she, "I love Jubeir ben Umeir es Sheibani, Prince of the Benou Sheiban;" and she described to me a young man than whom there was none handsomer in Bassora. "O my lady," asked I, "have letters or interviews passed between you?" "Yes," answered she; "but his love for me was of the tongue, not of the heart; for he kept not his covenant nor was faithful to his troth." "And what was the cause of your separation?" asked I.

"I was sitting one day," replied she, "whilst my maid here combed my hair. When she had made an end of combing it, she plaited my tresses, and my beauty and grace pleased her; so she bent down to me and kissed my cheek. At that moment, he came in, unawares, and seeing her kiss my cheek, turned away in anger, vowing eternal separation and repeating the following verses:

If any share with me in her I love, incontinent,
I'll cast her off from me and be to live alone content.
A mistress, sure, is nothing worth, if, in the way of love,
She wish for aught but that to which the lover doth consent.

And from that time to this, O Ibn Mensour," continued she, "he hath neither written to me nor answered my letters." "And what thinkest thou to do?" asked I. Quoth she, "I have a mind to send him a letter by thee. If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me five hundred dinars; and if not, then a hundred for thy pains." "Do what seemeth good to thee," answered I. So she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Whence this estrangement and despite, beloved of my soul?
Whither have kindliness and love between us taken flight?
What makes thee with aversion turn from me? Indeed, thy face
Is not the face I used to know, when we our troth did plight.
Belike, the slanderers have made a false report of me,
And thou inclin'dst to them, and they redoubled in despite.
If thou believedst their report, far, far it should have been
From thee, that art too whole of wit at such a bait to bite!
Yea, I conjure thee by thy life, tell me what thou hast heard:
For lo! thou knowest what was said and wilt not do unright.
If aught I've said that angered thee, a speech of change admits;
Ay, and interpreting, I trow, may change its meaning quite,
Were it a word sent down from God; for even the Pentateuch

Hath falsified and garbled been of this and th' other wight.
Whilst, as for lies, how many were of folk before us told!
Joseph to Jacob was traduced and blackened in his sight.
Yea, for the slanderer and myself and thee, an awful day
Of standing up shall come, when God to judgment all shall cite.

Then she sealed the letter and gave it to me. I took it and carried it to the house of Jubeir ben Umeir, whom I found absent hunting. So I sat down, to wait for him, and presently he returned; and when I saw him come riding up, my wit was confounded by his beauty ands grace. As soon as he saw me sitting at the door, he dismounted and coming up to me, saluted and embraced me; and meseemed I embraced the world and all that therein is. Then he carried me into his house and seating me on his own couch, called for food. So they brought a table of khelenj wood of Khorassan, with feet of gold, whereon were all manner of meats, fried and roasted and the like. So I seated myself at the table and examining it, found the following verses engraved upon it:

Weep for the cranes that erst within the porringers did lie
And for the stews and partridges evanished heave a sigh!
Mourn for the younglings of the grouse; lament unceasingly,
As, for the omelettes and the fowls browned in the pan, do I.
How my heart yearneth for the fish that, in its different kinds,
Upon a paste of wheaten flour, lay hidden in the pie!
Praised be God for the roast meat, as in the dish it lay,
With pot-herbs, soaked in vinegar, in porringers hard by,
And eke the rice with buffaloes' milk dressed and made savoury,
Wherein the hands were plunged and arms were buried bracelet high!
O soul, I rede thee patient be, for God is bountiful:
What though thy fortunes straitened be, His succour's ever nigh.

Then said Jubeir, "Put thy hand to our food and ease our heart by eating of our victual." "By Allah," answered I, "I will not eat a mouthful, till thou grant me my desire." "What is thy desire?" asked he. So I brought out the letter and gave it to him; but, when he had read it, he tore it into pieces and throwing it on the floor, said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, I will grant thee whatever thou askest, save this that concerns the writer of this letter, for I have no answer to make to her." At this, I rose in anger; but he caught hold of my skirts, saying, "O Ibn Mensour, I will tell thee what she said to thee, for all I was not present with you." "And what did she say to me?" asked I. "Did she not say to thee," rejoined he, "'If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me five hundred dinars; and if not, a hundred for thy pains?'" "Yes," answered I; and he said, "Abide with me this day and eat and drink and make merry, and thou shalt have five hundred dinars."

So I sat with him and ate and drank and made merry and entertained him with converse; after which I said to him, "O my master, is there no music in thy house?" "Indeed," answered he, "we have drunk this long while without music." Then he called out, saying, "Ho, Shejeret ed Durr!" Whereupon a slave-girl answered him from her chamber and came in to us, with a lute of Indian make, wrapped in a silken bag. She

sat down and laying the lute in her lap, preluded in one-and-twenty modes, then, returning to the first, sang the following verses to a lively measure:

Who hath not tasted the sweet and the bitter of passion,
I trow, The presence of her whom he loves from her absence he hardly shall know.
So he, from the pathway of love who hath wandered and fallen astray,
The smooth knoweth not from the rough of the roadway, wherein he doth go.
I ceased not the votaries of love and of passion to cross and gainsay,
Till I too must taste of its sweet and its bitter, its gladness and woe.
Then I drank a full draught of the cup of its bitters, and humbled was
I, and thus to the bondman of Love and its freedman therein was brought low.
How many a night have I passed with the loved one, carousing with him,
Whilst I drank from his lips what was sweeter than nectar and colder than snow!
How short was the life of the nights of our pleasance! It seemed to us still,
No sooner was night fallen down than the daybreak to eastward did glow.
But Fortune had vowed she would sever our union and sunder our loves;
And now, in good sooth, she her vow hath accomplished. Fate ordered it so;
Fate ordered it thus, and against its ordaining, appeal there is none;
For who shall gainsay a supreme one's commandments or causes him forego?

Hardly had she made an end of these verses, when Jubeir gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon; whereupon, "May God not punish thee, O old man!" exclaimed the damsel. "This long time have we drunk without music, for fear the like of this should befall our master. But go now to yon chamber and sleep there." So I went to the chamber in question and slept till the morning, when a page brought me a purse of five hundred dinars and said to me, "This is what my master promised thee; but return thou not to her who sent thee and let it be as if neither thou nor we had heard of this affair." "I hear and obey," answered I and taking the purse, went my way.

However, I said in myself, "The lady will have expected me since yesterday; and by Allah, I must needs return to her and tell her what passed between me and him; or she will curse me and all who come from my country." So I went to her and found her standing behind the door; and when she saw me, she said, "O Ibn Mensour, thou hast gotten me nought." "Who told thee of this?" asked I; and she answered, "O Ibn Mensour, yet another thing hath been revealed to me; and it is that, when thou gavest hum the letter, he tore it in pieces and throwing it on the floor, said to thee, 'O Ibn Mensour, ask me anything but what relates to the writer of this letter; for I have no reply to make to her.' Then didst thou rise from beside him in anger; but he laid hold of thy skirts, saying, 'Abide with me to-day, for thou art my guest, and eat and drink and make merry; and thou shalt have five hundred dinars.' So thou didst sit with him, eating and drinking and making merry, and entertainedst him with converse; and a slave-girl sand such an air and such verses, whereupon he fell down in a swoon." Quoth I, "Wast thou then with us?" "O Ibn Mensour," replied she, "hast thou not heard the saying of the poet:

The heart of the lover hath eyes, well I wot, That see what the eyes of beholders see not.

But," added she, "day and night alternate not upon aught, but they change it." Then she raised her eyes to heaven and said, "O my God and my Master and my Lord, like as Thou hast afflicted me with love of Jubeir ben Umeir, even so do Thou afflict him with love of me and transfer the passion from my heart to his!" Then she gave me a hundred dinars for my pains and I took it and returned to the palace, when I found the Sultan come back from hunting; so I took my pension of him and made my way back to Baghdad.

Next year, I repaired to Bassora, as usual, to seek my pension, and the Sultan paid it to me; but as I was about to return to Baghdad, I bethought me of the lady Budour and said to myself, "By Allah, I must needs go and see what hath befallen between her and her lover!" So I went to her house and finding the porch swept and sprinkled and slaves and servants and pages standing before the door, said to myself, "Most like grief hath broken the lady's heart and she is dead, and some Amir or other hath taken up his abode in her house." So I went on to Jubeir's house, where I found the benches of the porch broken down and no pages at the door, as of wont, and said to myself, "Belike he too is dead." Then I took up my station before the door of his house and with my eyes running over with tears, bemoaned it in the following verses:

Lords, that are gone, but whom my heart doth evermore ensue,
Return; so shall my festal says return to me with you.
I stand before your sometime stead, bewailing your abodes,
With quivering lids, from which the tears rain down, like summer dew.
Weeping, I question of the house and ruins, "Where is he
Who was the source of benefits and bounties ever new?"
[They answer] "Go thy ways, for those thou lov'st from the abode
Departed are and neath the dust are buried; so adieu!"
May God not stint us of the sight [in dreams] of all their charms
Nor be their noble memories aye absent from men's view!

As I was thus bewailing the folk of the house, there came a black slave thereout and said to me, "Hold thy peace, O old man! May thy mother be bereft of thee! What ails thee to bemoan the house thus?" Quoth I, "I knew it of yore, when it belonged to a good friend of mine." "What was his name?" asked the slave. And I answered, "Jubeir ben Umeir the Sheibani." "And what hath befallen him?" rejoined he. "Praised be God, he is yet in the enjoyment of wealth and rank and prosperity, except that God hath stricken him with love of a damsel called the lady Budour; and he is overcome with love of her, that, for the violence of his passion and torment, he is like a great rock overthrown. If he hunger, he saith not, 'Feed me;' nor, if he thirst, doth he say, 'Give me to drink.'" Quoth I, "Ask leave me to go in to him." "O my lord," said the slave, "Wilt thou go in to him who understands or to him who understands not?" "I must needs see him, whatever be his case," answered I.

Se he went in and presently returned with permission for me to enter, whereupon I went in to Jubeir and found him like a rock overthrown, understanding neither sign nor speech. I spoke to him, but he answered me not; and one of his servants said to me, "O my lord, if thou know aught of verse, repeat it, and raise thy voice; and he will be aroused by this and speak with thee." So I recited the following verses:

Budour's love hast thou forgotten or art deaf still to her sighs?
Wak'st anights, or do thine eyelids close upon thy sleeping eyes?
If thy tears flow fast and freely, night and day long, torrent-
wise, Know thou, then, that thou shalt sojourn evermore in Paradise.

When he heard this, he opened his eyes and said, "Welcome, O Ibn Mensour! Verily, the jest is become earnest." "O my lord," said I, "is there aught thou wouldst have me do for thee?" "Yes," answered he; "I would fain write her a letter and send it to her by thee. If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me a thousand dinars; and if not, two hundred for thy pains." "Do what seemeth good to thee," said I. So he called to one of his slave-girls for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

By Allah, O my lady, have ruth on me, I pray!
For all my wit by passion is ravished quite away.
Yea, love for thee and longing have mastered me and clad
With sickness and bequeathed me abjection and dismay.
Aforetime, O my lady, by love I set small store
And deemed it light and easy to bear, until to-day;
But now that Love hath shown me the billows of its sea,
Those I excuse, repenting, who languish neath its sway.
Vouchsafe thy grace to grant me; or, if thou wilt me slay,
At least, then, for thy victim forget thou not to pray.

Then he sealed the letter and gave it to me. I took it and repairing to Budour's house, raised the curtain of the door, little by little, as of wont, and looking in, saw ten damsels, high-bosomed maids, like moons, and the lady Budour sitting in their midst, as she were the full moon among stars or the sun, when it is clear of clouds; nor was there on her any trace of pain or care. As I looked and marvelled at her case, she turned and seeing me standing at the gate, said to me, "Welcome and fair welcome to thee, O Ibn Mensour! Come in." So I entered and saluting her, gave her the letter. She read it and laughing, said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, the poet lied not when he said:

The love of thee I will endure with patient constancy, Till such time as a messenger shall come to me from thee.

O Ibn Mensour," added she, "I will write thee an answer that he may give thee what he promised thee." "May God requite thee with good!" answered I. So she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

How comes it my vows I fulfilled and thou, thou wast false to thy plight?
Thou sawst me do justice and truth, and yet thou thyself didst unright.
'Twas thou that begannest on me with rupture and rigour, I trow;
'Twas thou that play'dst foul, and with thee began the untruth and the slight.
Yea, still I was true to my troth and cherished but thee among men
And ceased not thine honour to guard and keep it unsullied and bright,
Till tidings of fashions full foul I heard, as reported of thee,
And saw with mine eyes what thou didst, to harm me and work me despite.
Shall I then abase my estate, that thine may exalted become?
By God, hadst thou generous been, the like should thy conduct requite!

So now unto solace I'll turn my heart, with forgetting, from thee
And washing my hands of thy thought, blot despair for thee out of my spright.

"By Allah, O my lady," said I, "there needs but the reading of this letter, to kill him!" So I tore it in pieces and said to her, "Write him other than this." "I hear and obey," answered she and wrote the following:

Indeed, I am consoled and sleep is pleasant to mine eyes;
For I have heard what came of prate of slanderers and spies.
My heart my summons hath obeyed, thee to forget; and eke
My lids to stint from wake for thee have seen it good and wise.
He lies who says that severance is bitterness; for me
I find its taste none otherwise than sweet; indeed he lies.
I've grown to turn away from those who bring me news of thee
And look upon it as a thing at which my gorge doth rise.
Behold, I have forgotten thee with every part of me.
Let then the spy and who will else this know and recognise.

"By Allah, O my lady," said I, "when he reads these verses, his soul will depart his body!" "O Ibn Mensour," quoth she, "is passion indeed come to such a pass with him as thou sayst?" "Had I said more than this," replied I, "it were but the truth: but clemency is of the nature of the noble." When she heard this, her eyes filled with tears and she wrote him a letter, O Commander of the Faithful, there is none in thy court could avail to write the like of it; and therein were these verses:

How long shall this despite continue and this pride?
My enviers' spite on me thou sure hast satisfied.
Mayhap, I did amiss and knew it not; so tell
Me what thou heardst of me, that did our loves divide.
Even as I welcome sleep unto mine eyes and lids,
So would I welcome thee, beloved, to my side.
I've quaffed the cup of love for thee, unmixed and pure;
So, if thou see me drunk, reproach me not nor chide.

Then she sealed it and gave it to me; and I said, "O my lady, this thy letter will heal the sick and ease the thirsting soul." Then I took it and was going away, when she called me back and said to me, "Tell me that I will be his guest this night." At this I rejoiced greatly and carried the letter to Jubeir, whom I found with his eyes fixed on the door, expecting the reply. I gave him the letter and he opened and read it, then gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, did she indeed write this letter with her hand and touch it with her fingers?" "O my lord," answered I, "do folk write with their feet?" And by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I had not done speaking, when we heard the chink of her anklets in the vestibule and she entered.

When he saw her, he sprang to his feet, as thou there ailed him nought, and embraced her as the letter Lam embraces Alif, and the malady, that would not depart, ceased from him. Then he sat down, but she abode standing and I said to her, "O my lady, why dost thou not sit?" Quoth she, "I will not sit, O Ibn Mensour, save on a

condition that is between us." "And what is that?" asked I. "None may know lovers' secrets," answered she and putting her mouth to Jubeir's ear, whispered to him; whereupon, "I hear and obey," replied he and rising, said somewhat privily to one of his slaves, who went out and returned, in a little, with a Cadi and two witnesses. Then Jubeir rose and taking a bag containing a hundred thousand dinars, said, "O Cadi, marry me to this young lady and write this sum to her dowry." Quoth the Cadi to her, "Say, 'I consent to this.'" "I consent to this," said she, whereupon he drew up the contract of marriage, and she opened the bag and taking out a handful of gold, gave it to the Cadi and the witnesses and handed the rest to Jubeir.

Then the Cadi and the witnesses withdrew, and I sat with them, in mirth and delight, till the most part of the night was past, when I said in myself, "These are lovers and have been this long while separated. I will go now and sleep in some place afar from them and leave them to be private, one with the other." So I rose, but she laid hold of my skirts, saying, "What thinkest thou to do?" "So and so," answered I. But she rejoined, "Sit still, when we would be rid of thee, we will send thee away." So I sat with them till near daybreak, when she said to me, "O Ibn Mensour, go to yonder chamber; for we have furnished it for thee, and it is thy sleeping-place." So I went thither and slept till morning, when a page brought me basin and ewer, and I made the ablution and prayed the morning-prayer. Then I sat down and presently, Jubeir and his mistress came out of the bath in the house, wringing their locks.

I wished them good morning and gave them joy of their safety and reunion, saying to Jubeir, "That which began with constraint hath ended in contentment." "Thou sayst well," replied he; "and indeed thou deservest largesse." And he called his treasurer and bade him fetch three thousand dinars. So he brought a purse containing that sum, and Jubeir gave it to me, saying, "Favour us by accepting this." "I will not take it," answered I, "till thou tell me the manner of the transfer of love from her to thee, after so great an aversion." "I hear and obey," said he. "Know that we have a festival, called the festival of the New Year, when all the people use to take boat and go a-pleasuring on the river. So I went out, with my comrades, and saw a boat, wherein were half a score damsels like moons, and amongst them, the lady Budour, with her lute in her hand. She preluded in eleven modes, then returning to the first, sang the following verses:

Fire is not so fierce and so hot as the fires in my heart that glow,
And granite itself is less hard than the heart of my lord, I trow.
Indeed, when I think on his make and his fashion, I marvel to see
A heart that is harder than rock in a body that's softer than snow.

Quoth I to her, 'Repeat the verses and the air.' But she would not; so I bade the boatmen pelt her with oranges, and they pelted her till we feared her boat would sink. Then she went her way, and this is how the love was transferred from her breast to mine." So I gave them joy of their reunion and taking the purse, with its contents, returned to Baghdad.

When the Khalif heard Ibn Mensour's story, his heart was lightened and the restlessness and oppression from which he suffered forsook him.

The Man of Yemen and His Six Slave-girls

THE Khalif El-Mamoun was sitting one day in his palace, surrounded by his grandees and officers of state, and there were present also before him all his poets and minions, amongst the rest one named Mohammed of Bassora. Presently, the Khalif turned to the latter and said to him, 'O Mohammed, I wish thee to tell me something that I have never before heard.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Mohammed, 'shall I tell thee a thing that I have heard with my ears of a thing that I have seen with my eyes?' 'Tell me whichever is the rarer,' said El Mamoun.

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' began Mohammed, 'that there lived once a wealthy man, who was a native of Yemen; but he left his native land and came to this city of Baghdad, whose sojourn so pleased him that he transported hither his family and possessions. Now he had six slave-girls, the first fair, the second dark, the third fat, the fourth thin, the fifth yellow and the sixth black, all fair of face and perfectly accomplished and skilled in the arts of singing and playing upon instruments of music. One day he sent for them all and called for meat and drink; and they ate and drank and made merry. Then he filled the cup and taking it in his hand, said to the blonde, "O new-moon- face, let us hear somewhat pleasing." So she took the lute and tuning it, made music thereon with such melodious trills and modulations that the place danced to the rhythm; after which she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

I have a friend, whose form is mirrored in mine eye,
And deep within my breast, his name doth buried lie.
Whenas I call him back to mind, I am all heart,
And when on him I gaze, all eyes indeed am I.
"Forswear the love of him," my censor says; and I,
"That which is not to be, how shall it be?" reply.
"Go forth from me," quoth I, "and leave me, censor mine:
Feign not that eath and light, that's grievous to aby."

At this their master was moved to mirth and drinking off his cup, gave the damsels to drink, after which he said to the brunette, "O light of the brasier and delight of souls, let us hear thy lovely voice, wherewith all that hearken are ravished." So she took the lute and trilled upon it, till the place was moved to mirth; then, taking all hearts with her graceful bendings, she sang the following verses:

As thy face liveth, none but thee I'll love nor cherish e'er,
Till death, nor ever to thy love will I be false, I swear.
O full moon, shrouded, as it were a veil, with loveliness,
All lovely ones on earth that be beneath thy banners fare.
Thou, that in pleasantness and grace excellest all the fair,
May God, the Lord of heaven and earth, be with thee everywhere!

The man was pleased and drank off his cup; after which he filled again and taking the goblet in his hand, beckoned to the plump girl and bade her sing and play. So she

took the lute and striking a grief-dispelling measure, sang as follows:

If but thy consent be assured, O thou who art all my desire,
Be all the folk angered 'gainst me; I set not a whit by their ire.
And if thou but show me thy face, thy brilliant and beautiful face,
I reck not if all the kings of the earth from my vision retire.
Thy favour, O thou unto whom all beauty must needs be referred,
Of the goods and the sweets of the world is all that I seek and require.

The man was charmed and emptying his cup, gave the girls to drink. Then he beckoned to the slender girl and said to her, "O houri of Paradise, feed thou our ears with sweet sounds." So she took the lute and tuning it, preluded and sang the following verses:

Is it not martyrdom that I for thine estrangement dree,
Seeing, indeed, I cannot live, if thou depart from me?
Is there no judge, in Love its law, to judge betwixt us twain,
To do me justice on thy head and take my wreak of thee?

Their lord rejoiced and emptying the cup, gave the girls to drink. Then he signed to the yellow girl and said to her, "O sun of the day, let us hear some pleasant verses." So she took the lute and preluding after the goodliest fashion, sang as follows:

I have a lover, whenas I draw him nigh,
He bares upon me a sword from either eye.
May God avenge me some whit of him! For lo,
He doth oppress me, Whose heart in 's hand doth lie.
Oft though, "Renounce him, my heart," I say, yet it
Will to none other than him itself apply.
He's all I ask for, of all created things;
Yet jealous Fortune doth him to me deny.

The man rejoiced and drank and gave the girls to drink; then he filled the cup and taking it in his hand, signed to the black girl, saying, "O apple of the eye, let us have a taste of thy fashion, though it be but two words." So she took the lute and preluded in various modes, then returned to the first and sang the following verses to a lively air:

O eyes, be large with tears and pour them forth amain,
For, lo, for very love my senses fail and wane.
All manner of desire I suffer for his sake
I cherish, and my foes make merry at my pain.
My enviers me forbid the roses of a cheek;t
And yet I have a hear that is to roses fain.
Ay, once the cups went round with joyance and delight
And to the smitten lutes, the goblets did we drain,
What time my love kept troth and I was mad for him
And in faith's heaven, the star of happiness did reign.
But lo, he turned away from me, sans fault of mine!

Is there a bitterer thing than distance and disdain?
Upon his cheeks there bloom a pair of roses red,
Blown ready to be plucked; ah God, those roses twain!
Were't lawful to prostrate oneself to any else
Than God, I'd sure prostrate myself upon the swain.

Then rose the six girls and kissing the ground before their lord, said to him, "Judge thou between us, O our lord!" He looked at their beauty and grace and the difference of their colours and praised God the Most High and glorified Him: then said he, "There is none of you but has read the Koran and learnt to sing and is versed in the chronicles of the ancients and the doings of past peoples; so it is my desire that each of you rise and pointing to her opposite, praise herself and dispraise her rival; that is to say, let the blonde point to the black, the plump to the slender and the yellow to the brunette; and after, the latter shall, each in turn, do the like with the former; and be this illustrated with citations from the Holy Koran and somewhat of anecdotes and verse, so as to show forth your culture and elegance of discourse." Quoth they, "We hear and obey."

So the blonde rose first and pointing at the black, said to her, "Out on thee, blackamoor! It is told that whiteness saith, 'I am the shining light, I am the rising full moon.' My colour is patent and my forehead is resplendent, and of my beauty quoth the poet:

A blonde with smooth and polished cheeks, right delicate and fair,
As if a pearl in beauty hid, as in a shell, she were.
Her shape a splendid Alif is, her smile a medial Mim
And over it her eyebrows make inverted Nouns, a pair.
Yes, and the glances of her eyes are arrows, and her brows
A bow that therewithal is horned with death and with despair.
If to her cheeks and shape thou pass, her cheeks are roses red,
Sweet basil, ay, and eglantine and myrtles rich and rare.
'Tis of the saplings' wont, to be implanted in the meads
But, in the saplings of thy shape, how many meads are there!

My colour is like the wholesome day and the newly-gathered orange-blossom and the sparkling star; and indeed quoth God the Most High, in His precious book, to His prophet Moses (on whom be peace), 'Put thy hand into thy bosom and it shall come forth white without hurt.' And again He saith, 'As for those whose faces are made white, they are in the mercy of God and dwell for ever therein.' My colour is a miracle and my grace an extreme and my beauty a term. It is in the like of me that clothes show fair and to the like of me that hearts incline. Moreover, in whiteness are many excellences; for instance, the snow falls white from heaven, and it is traditional that white is the most beautiful of colours. The Muslims also glory in white turbans; but I should be tedious, were I to repeat all that may be said in praise of white; little and enough is better than too much. So now I will begin with thy dispraise, O black, O colour of ink and blacksmith's dust, thou whose face is like the crow that brings about lovers' parting! Verily, the poet saith in praise of white and dispraise of black:

Seest not that for their milky hue white pearls in price excel
And charcoal for a groat a load the folk do buy and sell?
And eke white faces, 'tis well known, do enter Paradise,
Whilst faces black appointed are to fill the halls of Hell.

And indeed it is told in certain histories, related on the authority of devout men, that Noah (on whom be peace) was sleeping one day, with his sons Ham and Shem seated at his head, when a wind sprang up and lifting his clothes, uncovered his nakedness; whereat Ham laughed and did not cover him; but Shem rose and covered him. Presently, Noah awoke and learning what had passed, blessed Shem and cursed Ham. So Shem's face was whitened and from him sprang the prophets and the orthodox Khalifs and Kings; whilst Ham's face was blackened and he fled forth to the land of Ethiopia, and of his lineage came the blacks. All people are of a mind in affirming the lack of understanding of the blacks, even as saith the adage, 'How shall one find a black having understanding?'"

Quoth her master, "It sufficeth; sit down, thou hast been prodigal." And he signed to the negress, who rose, and pointing at the blonde, said, "Doth thou not know that, in the Koran sent down to His prophet and apostle, is transmitted the saying of God the Most High, 'By the night, when it veileth [the world with darkness], and by the day, when it appeareth in all its glory!' If the night were not more illustrious than the day, why should God swear by it and give it precedence of the day? And indeed those of sense and understanding accept this. Knowst now that black [hair] is the ornament of youth and that, when whiteness descends upon the head, delights pass away and the hour of death draws nigh? Were not black the most illustrious of things, God had not set it in the kernel of the heart and the apple of the eye; and how excellent is the saying of the poet:

An if I cherish the dusky maids, this is the reason why;
They have the hue of the core of the heart and the apple of the eye
And youth; nor in error I eschew the whiteness of the blondes;
For 'tis the colour of hoary hair and shrouds in them shun I.

And that of another:

The brown, not the white, are first in my love
And worthiest eke to be loved of me,
For the colour of damask lips have they,
Whilst the white have the hue of leprosy.

And of a third:

Black women, white of deeds, are like indeed to eyne
That, though jet-black they be, with peerless splendours shine.
If I go mad for her, be not amazed; for black
The source of madness is, when in the feminine.
'Tis as my colour were the middle dark of night;
For all no moon it be, yet brings it light, in fine.

Moreover, is the companying together of lovers good but in the night? Let this quality and excellence suffice thee. What protects lovers from spies and censors like the blackness of the shadows? And nought gives them cause to fear discovery like the whiteness of the dawn. So, how many claims to honour are there not in blackness and how excellent is the saying of the poet:

I visit them, and the mirk of night doth help me to my will And seconds me, but the white of dawn is hostile to me still.

And that of another:

How many a night in joy I've passed with the beloved one,
What while the darkness curtained us about with tresses dun!
Whenas the light of morn appeared, it struck me with affright,
And I to him, 'The Magians lie, who worship fire and sun.'

And saith a third:

He came forth to visit me, shrouding himself in the cloak of the night,
And hastened his steps, as he wended, for caution and fear and affright.
Then rose I and laid in his pathway my cheek, as a carpet it were,
For abjection, and trailed o'er my traces my skirts, to efface them from sight.
But lo, the new moon rose and shone, like a nail-paring cleft from the nail,
And all but discovered our loves with the gleam of her meddlesome light.
And then there betided between us what I'll not discover, i' faith:
So question no more of the matter and deem not of ill or unright.

And a fourth:

Foregather with thy lover, whilst night your loves may screen;
For that the sun's a telltale, the moon a go-between.

And a fifth:

I love not white women, with fat blown out and overlaid;
The girl of all girls for me is the slender dusky maid.
Let others the elephant mount, if it like them; as for me,
I'll ride but the fine-trained colt on the day of the cavalcade.

And a sixth:

My loved one came to me by night And we did clip and interlace
And lay together through the dark; But, lo, the morning broke apace.
To God, my Lord, I pray that He Will reunite us of His grace
And make night last to me, what while I hold my love in my embrace.

Were I to set forth all the praise of blackness, I should be tedious; but little and enough is better than great plenty and too much. As for thee, O blonde, thy colour is that of leprosy and thine embrace is suffocation; and it is of report that frost and intense cold are in Hell for the torment of the wicked. Again, of black things is ink, wherewith is written the word of God; and were is not for black ambergris and black

musk, there would be no perfumes to carry to kings. How many glories are there not in blackness and how well saith the poet:

Dost thou not see that musk, indeed, is worth its weight in gold,
Whilst for a dirhem and no more a load of lime is sold?
Black eyes cast arrows at men's hearts; but whiteness of the eyes,
In man, is judged of all to be unsightly to behold."

"It sufficeth," said her master. "Sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the fat girl, who rose and pointing at the slim girl, uncovered her arms and legs and bared her stomach, showing its creases and the roundness of her navel. Then she donned a shift of fine stuff, that showed her whole body, and said, "Praised be God who created me, for that He beautified my face and made me fat and fair and likened me to branches laden with fruit and bestowed upon me abounding beauty and brightness; and praised be He no less, for that He hath given me the precedence and honoured me, when He speaks of me in His holy book! Quoth the Most High, 'And he brought a fat calf.' And indeed He hath made me like unto an orchard, full of peaches and pomegranates. Verily, the townsfolk long for fat birds and eat of them and love not lean birds; so do the sons of Adam desire fat meat and eat of it. How many precious attributes are there not in fatness, and how well saith the poet:

Take leave of thy love, for the caravan, indeed, is on the start.
O man, canst thou bear to say farewell and thus from her to part?
'Tis as her going were, I trow, but to her neighbour's house,
The faultless gait of a fat fair maid, that never tires the heart.

Sawst thou ever one stop at a butcher's stall, but sought fat meat of him? The wise say, 'Pleasure is in three things, eating flesh and riding on flesh and the thrusting of flesh into flesh.' As for thee, O thin one, thy legs are like sparrow's legs or pokers, and thou art like a cruciform plank or a piece of poor meat; there is nought in thee to gladden the heart; even as saith of thee the poet:

Now God forfend that aught enforce me take for bedfellow
A woman like a foot-rasp, wrapt in palm-fibres and tow!
In every limb she has a horn, that butts me in my sleep,
So that at day-break, bruised and sore, I rise from her and go."

"It is enough," quoth her master. "Sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the slender girl, who rose, as she were a willow-wand or a bamboo-shoot or a plant of sweet basil, and said, "Praised be God who created me and beautified me and made my embraces the end of all desire and likened me to the branch, to which all hearts incline. If I rise, I rise lightly; if I sit, I sit with grace; I am nimble-witted at a jest and sweeter-souled than cheerfulness [itself]. Never heard I one describe his mistress, saying, 'My beloved is the bigness of an elephant or like a long wide mountain;' but rather, 'My lady hath a slender waist and a slim shape.'

A little food contents me and a little water stays my thirst; my sport is nimble and my habit elegant; for I am sprightlier than the sparrow and lighter-footed than the starling. My favours are the desire of the longing and the delight of the seeker; for I am

goodly of shape, sweet of smile and graceful as the willow-wand or the bamboo-cane of the basil-plant; nor is there any can compare with me in grace, even as saith one of me:

Thy shape unto the sapling liken I
And set my hope to win thee or to die.
Distraught, I follow thee, and sore afraid,
Lest any look on thee with evil eye.

It is for the like of me that lovers run mad and that the longing are distracted. If my lover be minded to draw me to him, I am drawn to him, and if he would have me incline to him, I incline to him and not against him. But as for thee, O fat of body, thine eating is as that of an elephant, and neither much not little contents thee. When thou liest with a man, he hath no ease of thee, nor can he find a way to take his pleasure of thee; for the bigness of thy belly holds him off from clipping thee and the grossness of thy thighs hinders him from coming at thy kaze. What comeliness is there in thy grossness and what pleasantness or courtesy in thy coarse nature? Fat meat is fit for nought but slaughter, nor is there aught therein that calls for praise. If one joke with thee, thou art angry; if one sport with thee, thou art sulky; if thou sleep, thou snorest; if thou walk, thou pantest; if thou eat, thou art never satisfied. Thou art heavier than mountains and fouler than corruption and sin. Thou hast in thee nor movement nor blessing nor thinkest of aught but to eat and sleep. If thou make water, thou scatterest; if thou void, thou gruntest like a bursten wine-skin or a surly elephant. If thou go to the draught-house, thou needest one to wash out thy privy parts and pluck out the hairs; and this is the extreme of laziness and the sign of stupidity. In fine, there is no good thing in thee, and indeed the poet saith of thee:

Heavy and swollen with fat, like a blown-out water-skin,
With thighs like the pillars of stone that buttress a mountain's head,
Lo, if she walk in the West, so cumbrous her corpulence is
The Eastern hemisphere hears the sound of her heavy tread."

Quoth her master, "It is enough: sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the yellow girl, who rose to her feet and praised God and magnified His name, calling down peace and blessing on the best of His creatures; after which she pointed at the brunette and said to her, "I am praised in the Koran, and the Compassionate One hath described my colour and its excellence over all others in His manifest Book, where He saith, 'A yellow [heifer], pure yellow, whose colour rejoices the beholders.' Wherefore my colour is a portent and my grace an extreme and my beauty a term; for that my colour is the colour of a dinar and of the planets and moons and of apples. My fashion is the fashion of the fair, and the colour of saffron outvies all other colours; so my fashion is rare and my colour wonderful. I am soft of body, and of great price, comprising all attributes of beauty. My colour, in that which exists, is precious as virgin gold, and how many glorious qualities are there not in me! Of the like of me quoth the poet:

Yellow she is, as is the sun that shineth in the sky,
And like to golden dinars, eke, to see, her beauties are.
Nor with her brightness, anywise, can saffron hold compare,
And even the very moon herself her charms outvie by far.

And now I will begin in thy dispraise, O brown of favour! Thy colour is that of the buffalo, and all souls shudder at thy sight. If thy colour be in aught, it is blamed; if it be in food, it is poisoned; for thy colour is that of flies and is a mark of ugliness in dogs. It is, among colours, one which strikes with amazement and is of the signs of mourning. Never heard I of brown gold or brown pearls or brown jewels. If thou enter the wardrobe, thy colour changes, and when thou comest out, thou addest a new ugliness to thine ugliness. Thou art neither black, that thou mayst be known, nor white, that thou mayst be described; and there is no good quality in thee, even as saith of thee the poet:

As a complexion unto her, the hue of soot doth serve;
Her mirky colour is as dust on couriers' feet upcast.
No sooner fall mine eyes on her, thou but a moment's space,
Than troubles and misgivings straight beset me thick and fast."

"Enough," said her master. "Sit down." So she sat down and he signed to the brunette. Now she was endowed with grace and beauty and symmetry and perfection, delicate of body, with coal-back hair, slender shape, rosy, oval cheeks, liquid black eyes, fair face, eloquent tongue, slim waist and heavy buttocks. So she rose and said, "Praised be God who hath created me neither blameably fat nor lankily slender, neither white like leprosy nor yellow like colic nor black like coal, but hath made my colour to be beloved of men of wit; for all the poets praise brunettes in every tongue and exalt their colour over all others. Brown of hue, praiseworthy of qualities; and God bless him who saith:

In the brunettes a meaning is, couldst read its writ aright,
Thine eyes would never again look on others, red or white.
Free-flowing speech and amorous looks would teach Harout himself
The arts of sorcery and spells of magic and of might.

And saith another:

Give me brunettes; the Syrian spears, so limber and so straight,
Tell of the slender dusky maids, so lithe and proud of gait.
Languid of eyelids, with a down like silk upon her cheek,
Within her wasting lover's heart she queens it still in state.

And yet another:

Yea, by my life, such virtues in goodly brownness lie,
One spot thereof makes whiteness the shining moons outvie;
But if the like of whiteness is borrowed, then, for sure,
Its beauty were transmuted unto reproach thereby.
Not with her wine I'm drunken, but with her tresses bright
That make all creatures drunken that dwell beneath the sky.
Each of her charms doth envy the others; yea, and each
To be the down so silky upon her cheek doth sigh.

And again:

Why should I not incline me unto the silken down
On the cheeks of a dusky maiden, like the cane straight and brown,
Seeing the spot of beauty in waterlilies' cups
Is of the poets fabled to be all beauty's crown?
Yea, and I see all lovers the swarthy-coloured mole,
Under the ebon pupil, do honour and renown.
Why, then, do censors blame me for loving one who's all A mole?
May Allah rid me of every railing clown!

My form is beautiful and my shape slender; kings desire my colour and all love it, rich and poor. I am pleasant, nimble, handsome, elegant, soft of body and great of price. I am perfect in beauty and breeding and eloquence; my aspect is comely and my tongue fluent, my habit light and my sport graceful. As for thee, [O yellow girl,] thou art like unto a mallow of Bab el Louc, yellow and made all of sulphur. Perdition to thee, O pennyworth of sorrel, O rust of copper, O owl's face and food of the damned! Thy bedfellow, for oppression of spirit, is buried in the tombs, and there is no good thing in thee, even as saith the poet of the like of thee:

Paleness is sore on her, for all no illness doth her fret;
My breast is straitened by its sight; ay, and my head aches yet.
If thou repent thee not, my soul, to punish thee, I vow,
I'll humble thee with a kiss of her face, my teeth on edge shall set."

"Enough," said her master; "sit down." Then he made peace between them and clad them all in sumptuous dresses of honour and handselled them with precious jewels of land and sea. And never, O Commander of the Faithful, in any place or time have I seen fairer than these six fair damsels.'

When the Khalif El Mamoun heard this story from Mohammed of Bassora, he said to him, 'O Mohammed, knowest thou the abiding-place of these damsels and their master, and canst thou make shift to buy them of him for us?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'I have heard that their master is wrapped up in them and cannot endure to be parted from them.' 'Take threescore thousand dinars, — that is, ten thousand for each girl,—' rejoined the Khalif, 'and go to his house and buy them of him.' So Mohammed took the money and betaking himself to the man of Yemen, acquainted him with the Khalif's wish. He consented to sell them at that price, to pleasure him, and despatched them to El Mamoun, who assigned them an elegant lodging and used to sit with them therein, marvelling at their beauty and grace, no less than at their varied colours and the excellence of their speech.

After awhile, when their former owner could no longer endure separation from them, he sent a letter to the Khalif, complaining of his ardent love for them and containing, amongst the rest, the following verses:

Six damsels fair and bright have captivated me;
My blessing and my peace the six fair maidens greet!
My life, indeed, are they, my hearing and my sight,
Yea, and my very drink, my pleasance and my meat.
No other love can bring me solace for their charms,

And slumber, after them, no more to me is sweet.
Alas, my long regret, my weeping for their loss!
Would I have ne'er been born, to know this sore defeat!
For eyes, bedecked and fair with brows like bended bows,
Have smitten me to death with arrows keen and fleet.

When the letter came to El Mamoun's hands, he clad the six damsels in rich apparel and giving them threescore thousand dinars, sent them back to their master, who rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy, — more by token of the money they brought him, — and abode with them in all delight and pleasance of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

Haroun Er Rashid and the Damsel and Abou Nuwas.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid, being one night exceeding restless and oppressed with melancholy thought, went out and walked about his palace, till he came to a chamber, over whose doorway hung a curtain. He raised the curtain and saw, at the upper end of the room, a bed, on which lay something black, as it were a man asleep, with a candle on his right hand and another on his left and by his side a flagon of old wine, over against which stood the cup. The Khalif wondered at this, saying, 'How came yonder black by this wine-service?' Then, drawing near the bed, he found that it was a girl asleep there, veiled with her hair, and uncovering her face, saw that it was like the moon on the night of her full. So he filled a cup of wine and drank it to the roses of her cheeks; then bent over her and kissed a mole on her face, whereupon she awoke and cried out, saying, 'O Trusty One of God,, what is to do?' 'A guest who knocks at thy dwelling by night,' replied the Khalif, '[hoping] that thou wilt give him hospitality till the dawn.' 'It is well,' answered she; 'I will grace the guest with my hearing and my sight.'

So she brought the wine and they drank it together; after which she took the lute and tuning it, preluded in one-and-twenty modes, then returning to the first, struck a lively measure and sang the following verses:

The tongue of passion in my heart bespeaks thee for my soul,
Telling I love thee with a love that nothing can control.
I have an eye, that testifies unto my sore disease,
And eke a heart with parting wrung, a-throb for love and dole.
Indeed, I cannot hide the love that frets my life away;
Longing increases still on me, my tears for ever roll.
Ah me, before the love of thee, I knew not what love was;
But God's decree must have its course on every living soul.

Then said she, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I am a wronged woman.' 'How so?' quoth he, 'and who hath wronged thee?' She answered, 'Thy son bought me awhile ago, for ten thousand dirhems, meaning to give me to thee; but the daughter of thine uncle sent him the price aforesaid and bade him shut me up from thee in this chamber.' Whereupon, 'Ask a boon of me,' said the Khalif; and she, 'I ask thee to lie to-morrow night with me.' 'If it be the will of God,' replied the Khalif, and leaving her, went away.

Next morning, he repaired to his sitting-room and called for Abou Nuwas, but found him not and sent his chamberlain to seek for him. The chamberlain found him in pawn, in a tavern, for a score of a thousand dirhems, that he had spent on a certain boy, and questioned him. So he told him what had befallen him with the boy and how he had spent a thousand dirhems upon him; whereupon quoth the chamberlain, 'Show him to me; and if he be worth this, thou art excused.' 'Wait awhile,' replied the poet, 'and thou shalt see him presently.' As they were talking, up came the boy, clad in a white tunic, under which was another of red and yet another of black. When Abou Nuwas saw him, he sighed and repeated the following verses:

To me he appeared in a garment of white,
His eyes and his eyelids with languor bedight.
Quoth I, "Dost thou pass and salutest me not?
Though God knows thy greeting were sweet to my spright.
Be He blessed who mantled with roses thy cheeks,
Who creates, without let, what He will, of His might!"
"Leave prating," he answered; "for surely my
Lord Is wondrous of working, sans flaw or dissight.
Yea, truly, my garment is even as my face
And my fortune, each white upon white upon white."

When the boy heard this, he put off the white tunic and appeared in the red one; whereupon Abou Nuwas redoubled in expressions of admiration and repeated the following verses:

Appeared in a garment, the colour of flame,
A foeman of mine, "The beloved," by name.
"Thou'rt a full moon," I said in my wonder,
"And com'st In a garment that putteth the roses to shame.
Hath the red of thy cheek clad that vest upon thee
Or in heart's blood of lovers hast tinctured the same?"
Quoth he, "'Twas the sun lately gave me the wede;
From the rubicund hue of his setting it came.
So my garment and wine and the colour so clear
Of my cheek are as flame upon flame upon flame."

Then the boy doffed the red tunic and abode in the black; whereupon Abou Nuwas redoubled in attention to him and repeated the following verses:

He came in a tunic all sable of hue
And shone out, thus veiled in the dark, to men's view.
"Thou passest," quoth I, "without greeting, and thus
Givest cause to exult to the rancorous crew.
Thy garment resembles thy locks and my lot,
Yea, blackness and blackness and blackness thereto."

Then the chamberlain returned to Haroun er Reshid and acquainted him with the poet's predicament, whereupon he bade him take a thousand dirhems and go and take him out of pawn. So he returned to Abou Nuwas and paying his score, carried him to the Khalif, who said, 'Make me some verses containing the words, "O Trusty One of God, what is to do?"' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he and improvised the following verses:

My night was long for sleeplessness and care.
Weary I was and many my thoughts were.
I rose and walked awhile in my own place,
Then midst the harem's cloistered courts did fare,
Until I chanced on somewhat black and found

It was a damsel shrouded in her hair.
God bless her for a shining moon! Her shape
A willow-wand, and pudour veiled the fair.
I quaffed a cup to her; then, drawing near,
I kissed the mole upon her cheek so rare.
She woke and swayed about in her amaze,
Even as the branch sways in the rain-fraught air;
Then rose and said, "O Trusty One of God,
What is to do, and thou, what dost thou there?"
"A guest", quoth I, "that sues to thee, by night,
For shelter till the hour of morning-prayer."
"Gladly," she said; "with hearing and with sight
To grace the guest, my lord, I will not spare."

'Confound thee!' cried the Khalif. 'It is as if thou hadst been present with us.' Then he took him by the hand and carried him to the damsel, who was clad in a dress and veil of blue. When Abou Nuwas saw her, he was profuse in expressions of admiration and recited the following verses:

Say to the lovely maid, i' the veil of azure dight,
"By Allah, O my life, have pity on my plight!
For when the fair entreats her lover cruelly,
Sighs of all longing rend his bosom day and night.
So, by thy charms and by the whiteness of thy cheek,
Have ruth upon a heart for love consumed outright.
Incline to him and be his stay 'gainst stress of love,
Nor let what fools may say find favour in thy sight."

Then the damsel set wine before the Khalif and taking the lute, played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

Wilt thou be just in thy love to others and deal with me
Unjustly and put me away, while others have joy in thee?
Were there for lovers a judge, to whom I might complain
Of thee, he would do me justice and judge with equity.
If thou forbid me to pass thy door, yet from afar
To greet thee and to bless, at least, I shall be free.

The Khalif bade her ply Abou Nuwas with wine, till he lost his wits; when he gave him a full cup, and he drank a draught of it and held the cup in his hand. Er Reshid bade the girl take the cup from him and conceal it; so she took it and hid it between her thighs. Then he drew his sword and standing at the poet's head, pricked him with the point; whereupon he awoke and saw the Khalif standing over him, with a drawn sword. At this sight the fumes of the wine fled from his head and the Khalif said to him, 'Make me some verses and tell me therein what is come of thy cup; or I will cut off thy head.' So he improvised the following verses:

My tale, indeed is hard to tell:
The thief was none but yon gazelle.
She stole my cup of wine, whereof
My lips had drunken but one spell,
And hid it in a place, for which
My heart's desire's unspeakable.
I name it not, for awe of him,
In whom the right thereof doth dwell.

'Confound thee!' quoth the Khalif. 'How knewst thou that? But we accept what thou sayst.' Then he ordered him a dress of honour and a thousand dinars, and he went away, rejoicing.

The Man Who Stole the Dish of Gold in Which the Dog Ate.

THERE was once a man, who was overborne with debt, and his case was straitened upon him, so that he left his people and family and went forth in distraction. He wandered on at random till he came to a high-walled and splendidly built city and entered it in a state of wretchedness and despair, gnawed with hunger and worn with the toil of his journey. As he passed through one of the streets, he saw a company of notables going along; so he followed them, till they entered a house like to a royal palace. He entered with them, and they stayed not till they came in presence of a man of the most dignified and majestic aspect, seated at the upper end of a saloon and surrounded by pages and servants, as he were of the sons of the Viziers. When he saw the visitors, he rose and received them with honour; but the poor man was confounded at the goodliness of the place and the crowd of servants and attendants and drawing back, in fear and perplexity, sat down apart in a place afar off, where none should see him.

After awhile, in came a man with four hunting-dogs, clad in various kinds of silk and brocade and having on their necks collars of gold with chains of silver, and tied up each dog in a place set apart for him; after which he went out and presently returned with four dishes of gold, full of rich meats, one of which he set before each dog. Then he went away and left them, whilst the poor man began to eye the food, for stress of hunger, and would fain have gone up to one of the dogs and eaten with him; but fear of them withheld him. Presently, one of the dogs looked at him and God the Most High inspired him with a knowledge of his case; so he drew back from the platter and beckoned to the man, who came and ate, till he was satisfied. Then he would have withdrawn, but the dog pushed the dish towards him with his paw, signing to him to take it and what was left in it for himself. So the man took the dish and leaving the house, went his way, and none followed him. Then he journeyed to another city, where he sold the dish and buying goods with the price, returned to his own town. There he sold his stock and paid his debts; and he prospered and became rich and at his ease.

After some years had passed, he said to himself, 'Needs must I repair to the city of the owner of the dish, which the dog bestowed on me, and carry him its price, together with a fit and handsome present.' So he took the price of the dish and a suitable present and setting out, journeyed night and day, till he came to the city and entering, went straight to the place where the man's house had been; but lo, he found there nothing but mouldering ruins and dwelling-places laid waste, over which the raven croaked; for the place was desert and the environs changed out of knowledge. At this, his heart and soul were troubled and he repeated the words of him who saith:

The privy chambers are void of all their hidden store,
As hearts of the fear of God and the virtues all of yore.
Changed is the vale and strange to me are its gazelles,
And those I knew of old its sandhills are no more.

And those of another:

The phantom of Saada came to me by night, near the break of day,
And roused me, whenas my comrades all in the desert sleeping lay.
But, when I awoke to the dream of the night, that came to visit me,
I found the air void and the wonted place of our rendezvous far away.

When he saw what the hand of time had manifestly done with the place, leaving but traces of the things that had been aforetime, the testimony of his eyes made it needless for him to enquire of the case; so he turned away and seeing a wretched man, in a plight that made the skin quake and would have moved the very rock to pity, said to him, 'Harkye, sirrah! What have time and fortune done with the master of this place? Where are his shining full moons and splendid stars; and what is the cause of the ruin that is come upon his abode, so that but the walls thereof remain?' Quoth the other, 'He is the miserable wretch thou seest bewailing that which hath befallen him. Knowest thou not the words of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), wherein is a lesson to him who will profit by it and an admonition to whoso will be guided thereby in the right way? "Verily it is the way of God the Most High to raise up nothing of this world, except He cast it down again." If thou enquire of the cause of this thing, indeed, it is no wonder, considering the vicissitudes of fortune. I was the master of this place and its builder and founder and owner and lord of its shining full moons and radiant damsels and of all its splendid circumstance an magnificent garniture; but Fortune turned and did away from me wealth and servants, overwhelming me unawares with disasters unforeseen and bringing me to this sorry plight. But there must needs be some reason for this thy question: tell it me and leave wondering.'

So the other told him the whole story, sore concerned at what he heard and saw, and added, 'I have brought thee a present such as souls desire, and the price of thy dish of gold, that I took; for it was the cause of my becoming rich, after poverty, and of the reinstating of my dwelling-place, after desolation, and of the doing away of my trouble and straitness from me.' But the poor man shook his head, groaning and weeping and lamenting, and answered, 'O man, methinks thou art mad; for this is not the fashion of a man of understanding. How should a dog of mine make gift to thee of a dish of gold and I receive back its price? This were indeed a strange thing! By Allah, were I in the straitest misery and unease, I would not accept of thee aught, no, not the worth of a nail-paring! So return whence thou camest, in health and safety.'

The merchant kissed his feet and taking leave of him, returned whence he came, praising him and reciting the following verse:

The men and eke the dogs are gone and vanished all.
Peace be upon the men and dogs, whate'er befall!

The Sharper of Alexandria and the Master Of Police.

THERE was once, in the coast-fortress of Alexandria, a Master of Police, Husameddin by name, who was one night sitting in his seat of office, when there came in to him a trooper, who said to him, 'Know, O my lord, that I entered the city this night and alighted at such a khan and slept there, till a third part of the night was past, when I awoke and found my saddle-bags cut open and a purse of a thousand dinars stolen from them.' No sooner had he done speaking than the magistrate called his officers and bade them lay hands on all in the khan and clap them in prison till the morning; and on the morrow, he caused bring the instruments of torment and sending for the prisoners, was about to torture them, [to make them confess], in the presence of the owner of the stolen money, when, behold, a man pressed through the crowd and coming up to the chief of the police, said, 'O Amir, let these folk go, for they are wrongly accused. It was I who robbed the trooper, and here is the purse I stole from his saddle-bags.' So saying, he pulled out the purse from his sleeve and laid it before Husameddin, who said to the soldier, 'Take thy money; thou hast no ground of complaint now against the people of the khan.' Thereupon the latter and all who were present fell to blessing the thief and praising him; but he said, 'O Amir, the skill is not in that I came to thee and brought thee the purse, but in taking it a second time from the trooper.' 'And how didst thou take it, O sharper?' asked Husameddin.

'O Amir,' replied the thief, 'I was standing in the money-changers' bazaar at Cairo, when I saw yonder man receive the gold and put it in his purse; so I followed him from street to street, but found no occasion of stealing it from him. Then he left Cairo and I followed him from place to place, casting about by the way to rob him, but without avail, till he entered this city and I followed him to the khan. I took up my lodging beside him and watched him till he fell asleep and I heard him snoring, when I went softly up to him and cutting open his saddlebags with this knife, took the purse thus—'

So saying, he put out his hand and took the purse from before the chief of the police, whilst the latter and the trooper and the folk drew back, watching him and thinking he would show them how he took the purse from the saddle-bags; but, of a sudden, he broke into a run and threw himself into a reservoir hard by. The chief of the police called to his officers to pursue him, but before they could put off their clothes and descend the steps, he had made off; and they sought for him, but found him not; for the streets of Alexandria all communicate one with another. So they came back, empty-handed, and the chief of the police said to the trooper, 'Thou hast no recourse against the folk; for thou foundest him who robbed thee and receivedst back thy money, but didst not keep it.' So the trooper went away, having lost his money, whilst the folk were delivered from his hands and those of the chief of the police; and all this was of the favour of God the Most High.

El Melik En Nasir and the Three Masters of Police.

EL MELIK EN NASIR once sent for the chiefs of the police of New Cairo, Boulac and Old Cairo and said to them, 'I wish each of you to tell me the most remarkable thing that hath befallen him during his term of office.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they. Then said the chief of the police of New Cairo, 'O our lord the Sultan, the most remarkable thing that befell me, during my term of office, was on this wise:

Story of the Chief of the Police of New Cairo.

THERE were once, in this city, two men apt to bear witness in matters of blood and wounds; but they were both given to wine and women and debauchery; nor, do what I would, could I succeed in bringing them to account. So I charged the vintners and confectioners and fruiterers and chandlers and bagnio-keepers to acquaint me of these two, when ever they should anywhere be engaged in drinking or debauchery, whether together or apart, and that, if they or either of them bought of them aught for the purpose of carousal, they should not conceal it from me. And they replied, "We hear and obey."

One night, a man came to me and said, "O my lord, know that the two witnesses are in such a house in such a street, engaged in sore wickedness." So I disguised myself and went out, accompanied by none but my page, to the street in question. When I came to the house, I knocked at the door, whereupon a slave-girl came out and opened to me, saying, "Who art thou?" I made her no answer, but entered and saw the two witnesses and the master of the house sitting, and lewd women with them, and great plenty of wine before them. When they saw me, they rose to receive me, without showing the least alarm, and made much of me, seating me in the place of honour and saying to me, "Welcome for an illustrious guest and a pleasant cup-companion!"

Presently, the master of the house went out and returning after awhile with three hundred dinars, said to me, without the least fear, "O my lord, it is, we know, in thy power both to disgrace and punish us; but this will bring thee nothing but weariness. So thou wouldst do better to take this money and protect us; for God the Most High is named the Protector and loveth those of His servants who protect each other; and thou shalt have thy reward in the world to come." The money tempted me and I said in myself, "I will take the money and protect them this once; but, if ever again I have them in my power, I will take my wreak of them."

So I took the money and went away; but, next day, one of the Cadi's serjeants came to me and cited me before the court. I accompanied him thither, knowing not the meaning of the summons; and when I came into the Cadi's presence, I saw the two witnesses and the master of the house sitting by him. The latter rose and sued me for three hundred dinars, nor was it in my power to deny the debt; for he produced a written obligation and the two others testified against me that I owed the amount.

Their evidence satisfied the Cadi and he ordered me to pay the money; nor did I leave the Court till they had of me the three hundred dinars. So I went away, in the utmost wrath and confusion, vowing vengeance against them and repenting that I had not punished them.'

Then rose the chief of the Boulac police and said, 'As for me, O our lord the Sultan, the most remarkable thing that befell me, during my term of office, was as follows:

Story of the Chief of the Boulac Police.

I WAS once in debt to the amount of three hundred thousand dinars, and being distressed thereby, I sold what was behind me and what was before me and all I could lay my hands on, but could raise no more than a hundred thousand dinars and abode in great perplexity. One night, as I sat at home, in this state of mind, there came a knocking at the gate; so I said to one of my servants, "See who is at the door." He went out and returned, pale and trembling in every nerve; so I said to him, "What ails thee?" "There is a man at the door, seeking thee," answered he. "He is half naked, clad in skins, with a sword and a knife in his girdle, and with him are a company of the same fashion." So I took my sword and going out to see who these were, found them as the boy had reported and said to them, "What is your business?" "We are thieves," answered they, "and have made great purchase to-night and appointed it to thy use, that thou mayst pay therewith the debts that oppress thee and free thyself from thy distress." "Where is it?" asked I; and they brought me a great chest, full of vessels of gold and silver; which when I saw, I rejoiced and said in myself, "It were ungenerous to let them go away empty-handed."

So I took the hundred thousand dinars I had by me and gave it to them, thanking them; and they took it and went their way, under cover of the night. But, on the morrow, when I examined the contents of the chest, I found them gilded brass and pewter, worth five hundred dirhems at the most; and this was grievous to me, for I had lost what money I had, and trouble was added to my trouble.'

Then rose the chief of the police of Old Cairo and said, 'O our lord the Sultan, the most remarkable thing that befell me, during my term of office, was on this wise:

Story of the Chief of the Old Cairo Police

I once had ten thieves hanged, each on his own gibbet, and set guards to watch them and hinder the folk from taking them down. Next morning, when I came to look at them, I found two bodies hanging from one gibbet and said to the guards, "Who did this, and where is the tenth gibbet?" But they denied all knowledge of it, and I was about to beat them, when they said, "Know, O Amir, that we fell asleep last night, and when we awoke, we found one of the bodies gone, gibbet and all, whereat we were alarmed, fearing thy wrath. But, presently, up came a peasant, jogging along on his ass; so we laid hands on him and killing him, hung his body upon this gibbet, in the stead of the missing thief."

When I heard this, I marvelled and said to them, "Had he aught with him?" "He had a pair of saddle-bags on the ass," answered they. "What was in them?" asked I and they said, "We know not." Quoth I, "Bring them hither." So they brought them to me and I bade open them, when, behold, therein was the body of a murdered man, cut in pieces. When I saw this, I marvelled and said in myself, "Glory be to God! The cause of the hanging of this peasant was no other but his crime against this murdered man; and the Lord is no unjust dealer with [His] servants."'

The Thief and the Money-changer

A MONEY-CHANGER, bearing a bag of money, once passed by a company of thieves, and one of the latter said to the others, 'I know how to steal yonder bag of money.' 'How wilt thou do it?' asked they. 'Look,' answered he and followed the money- changer, till he entered his house, when he threw the bag on a shelf and went into the draught-house, to do an occasion, calling to the slave-girl to bring him an ewer of water. So she took the jug and followed him to the draught-house, leaving the door open, whereupon the thief entered and taking the bag of money, made off with it to his companions, to whom he related what had passed. 'By Allah,' said they, 'this was a clever trick! It is not every one could do it: but, presently, the money-changer will come out of the draught-house and missing the bag of money, will beat the slave-girl and torture her grievously. Meseems thou hast at present done nothing worthy of praise; but, if thou be indeed a sharper, thou wilt return and save the girl from being beaten.' 'If it be the will of God,' answered the thief, 'I will save both the girl and the purse.'

Then he went back to the money-changer's house and found him beating the girl, because of the bag of money; so he knocked at the door and the man said, 'Who is there? Quoth the thief, 'I am the servant of thy neighbour in the bazaar.' So he came out to him and said, 'What is thy business?' 'My master salutes thee,' replied the thief, 'and says to thee, "Surely, thou art mad to cast the like of this bag of money down at the door of thy shop and go away and leave it! Had a stranger chanced on it, he had made off with it." And except my master had seen it and taken care of it, it had been lost to thee.' So saying, he pulled out the purse and showed it to the money-changer, who said, 'That is indeed my purse,' and put out his hand to take it; but the thief said, 'By Allah, I will not give it thee, till thou write me a receipt; for I fear my master will not believe that thou hast duly received the purse, except I bring him a writing to that effect, under thy hand and seal.' So the money-changer went in to write the receipt; but, in the meantime, the thief made off with the bag of money, having [thus] saved the slave-girl her beating.

The Chief of the Cous Police and the Sharper

IT is related that Alaeddin, chief of the police of Cous, was sitting one night in his house, when a man of comely aspect and dignified port, followed by a servant bearing a chest upon his head, came to the door and said to one of the young men, 'Go in and tell the Amir that I would speak with him privily.' So the servant went in and told his master, who bade admit the visitor. When he entered the Amir saw him to be a man of good appearance and carriage; so he received him with honour, seating him beside himself, and said to him, 'What is thy business?' 'I am a highwayman,' replied the stranger, 'and am minded to repent at thy hands and turn to God the Most High but I would have thee help me to this, for that I am in thy district and under thine eye. I have here a chest, wherein is that which is worth nigh forty thousand dinars; and none hath so good a right to it as thou; so do thou take it and give me in exchange a thousand dinars of thy money, lawfully gotten, that I may have a little capital, to aid me in my repentance, and not be forced to resort to sin for subsistence; and with God the Most High be thy reward!' So saying he opened the chest and showed the Amir that it was full of trinkets and jewels and bullion and pearls, whereat he was amazed and rejoiced greatly. Then he cried out to his treasurer, to bring him a purse of a thousand dinars, and gave it to the highwayman, who thanked him and went his way, under cover of the night.

On the morrow, the Amir sent for the chief of the goldsmiths and showed him the chest and what was therein; but the goldsmith found it nothing but pewter and brass and the jewels and pearls all of glass; at which Alaeddin was sore chagrined and sent in quest of the highwayman; but none could come at him.

Ibrahim Ben El Mehdi and the Merchant's Sister.

THE Khalif El Mamoun once said to [his uncle] Ibrahim ben el Mehdi, 'Tell us the most remarkable thing that thou hast ever seen.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he. 'Know that I went out one day, a-pleasuring, and my course brought me to a place where I smelt the odour of food. My soul longed for it and I halted, perplexed and unable either to go on or enter. Presently, I raised my eyes and saw a lattice window and behind it a hand and wrist, the like of which for beauty I never saw. The sight turned my brain and I forgot the smell of the food and began to cast about how I should get access to the house. After awhile, I espied a tailor hard by and going up to him, saluted him. He returned my greeting and I said to him, "Whose house is that?" "It belongs to a merchant called such an one," answered he, "who consorteth with none but merchants."

As we were talking, up came two men of comely and intelligent aspect, riding on horseback; and the tailor told me their names and that they were the merchant's most intimate friends. So I spurred my horse towards them and said to them, "May I be your ransom! Abou such an one waits for you!" And I rode with them to the gate, where I entered and they also. When the master of the house saw me, he doubted not but I was their friend; so he welcomed me and made me sit down in the highest room. Then they brought the table of food and I said, "God hath granted me my desire of the food; and now there remain the hand and wrist." After awhile, we removed, for carousal, to another room, which I found full of all manner of rarities; and the host paid me particular attention, addressing his conversation to me, for that he deemed me a guest of his guests; whilst the latter, in like manner, made much of me, taking me for a friend of the master of the house.

When we had drunk several cups of wine, there came in to us a damsel of the utmost beauty and elegance, as she were a willow-wand, who took a lute and playing a lively measure, sang the following verses:

Is it not passing strange, indeed, one house should hold us tway
And still thou drawst not near to me nor yet a word dost say,
Except the secrets of the souls and hearts that broken be
And entrails blazing in the fires of love, the eye bewray
With meaning looks and knitted brows and eyelids languishing
And hands that salutation sign and greeting thus convey?

When I heard this, my entrails were stirred and I was moved to delight, for the excess of her grace and the beauty of the verses she sang; and I envied her her skill and said, "There lacketh somewhat to thee, O damsel!" Whereupon she threw the lute from her hand, in anger, and cried, "Since when do you use to bring ill-mannered fools into your assemblies?" Then I repented of what I had done, seeing that the others were vexed with me, and said in myself, "My hopes are at an end;" and I saw no way of quitting myself of reproach but to call for a lute, saying, "I will show you what escaped her in the air she sang." So they brought me a lute and I tuned it and sang the following verses:

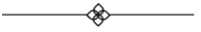
This is thy lover distraught, absorbed in his passion and pain;
Thy lover, the tears of whose eyes run down on his body like rain.
One hand to his heart ever pressed, whilst the other the Merciful One
Imploreth, so He of His grace may grant him his hope to attain.
O thou, that beholdest a youth for passion that's perished, thine eye
And thy hand are the cause of his death and yet might restore him again.

When the damsel heard this, she sprang up and throwing herself at my feet, kissed them and said, "It is thine to excuse, O my lord! By Allah, I knew not thy quality nor heard I ever the like of this fashion!" And they all extolled me and made much of me, being beyond measure delighted, and besought me to sing again. So I sang a lively air, whereupon they all became as drunken men, and their wits left them. Then the guests departed to their homes and I abode alone with the host and the girl. The former drank some cups with me, then said to me, "O my lord, my life hath been wasted, in that I have not known the like of thee till now. By Allah, then, tell me who thou art, that I may know who is the boon-companion whom God hath bestowed on me this night."

I would not at first tell him my name and returned him evasive answers; but he conjured me, till I told him who I was; whereupon he sprang to his feet and said, "Indeed, I wondered that such excellence should belong to any but the like of thee; and Fortune hath done me a service for which I cannot avail to thank her. But, belike, this is a dream; for how could I hope that the family of the Khalifate should visit me in my own house and carouse with me this night?" I conjured him to be seated; so he sat down and began to question me, in the most courteous terms, as to the cause of my visit. So I told him the whole matter, concealing nothing, and said to him, "Verily, I have had my desire of the food, but not of the hand and wrist." Quoth he, "Thou shalt have thy desire of them also, so God will." Then said he to the slave-girl, "Bid such an one come down." And he called his slave-girls down, one by one and showed them to me; but I saw not my mistress among them, and he said, "O my lord, there is none left save my mother and sister; but, by Allah, I must needs have them also down and show them to thee."

I marvelled at his courtesy and large-heartedness and said, "May I be thy ransom! Begin with thy sister." "Willingly," replied he. So she came down and behold, it was she whose hand and wrist I had seen. "May God make me thy ransom!" said I. "This is the damsel whose hand and wrist I saw at the lattice." Then he sent at once for witnesses and bringing out two myriads of dinars, said to the witnesses, "This our lord Ibrahim ben el Mehdi, uncle of the Commander of the Faithful, seeks the hand of my sister such an one, and I call you to witness that I marry her to him and that he has endowed her with a dowry of ten thousand dinars." And he said to me, "I give thee my sister in marriage, at the dowry aforesaid." "I consent," answered I. Whereupon he gave one of the bags to her and the other to the witnesses, and said to me, "O my lord, I desire to array a chamber for thee; where thou mayst lie with thy wife." But I was abashed at his generosity and was ashamed to foregather with her in his house; so I said, "Equip her and send her to my house." And by thy life, O Commander of the Faithful, he sent me such an equipage with her, that my house was too strait to hold it, for all its greatness! And I begot on her this boy that stands before thee.'

The Khalif marvelled at the merchant's generosity and said, 'Gifted of God is he! Never heard I of his like.' And he bade Ibrahim bring him to court, that he might see him. So he brought him and the Khalif conversed with him; and his wit and good breeding so pleased him, that he made him one of his chief officers.



The Woman Whose Hands Were Cut Off for That She Gave Alms to the Poor.

A CERTAIN King once made proclamation to the people of his realm, saying, 'If any of you give alms of aught, I will assuredly cut off his hand;' wherefore all the people abstained from alms-giving, and none could give to any.

One day a beggar accosted a certain woman (and indeed hunger was sore upon him) and said to her, 'Give me an alms.' 'How can I give thee aught,' answered she, 'when the King cutteth off the hands of all who give alms?' But he said, 'I conjure thee by God the Most High, give me an alms.' So, when he adjured her by God, she had compassion on him and gave him two cakes of bread. The King heard of this; so he called her before him and cut off her hands, after which she returned to her house.

A while after, the King said to his mother, 'I have a mind to take a wife; so do thou marry me to a fair woman.' Quoth she, 'There is among our female slaves one who is unsurpassed in beauty; but she hath a grievous blemish.' 'What is that?' asked the King; and his mother answered, 'She hath had both her hands cut off.' Said he, 'Let me see her.' So she brought her to him, and he was ravished by her and married her and went in to her; and she brought him a son.

Now this was the woman, who had her hands cut off for alms-giving; and when she became queen, her fellow-wives envied her and wrote to the King [who was then absent] that she was unchaste; so he wrote to his mother, bidding her carry the woman into the desert and leave her there. The old queen obeyed his commandment and abandoned the woman and her son in the desert; whereupon she fell to weeping and wailing exceeding sore for that which had befallen her. As she went along, with the child at her neck, she came to a river and knelt down to drink, being overcome with excess of thirst, for fatigue and grief; but, as she bent her head, the child fell into the water.

Then she sat weeping sore for her child, and as she wept, there came up two men, who said to her, 'What makes thee weep?' Quoth she, 'I had a child at my neck, and he hath fallen into the water.' 'Wilt thou that we bring him out to thee?' asked they, and she answered, 'Yes.' So they prayed to God the Most High, and the child came forth of the water to her, safe and sound. Quoth they, 'Wilt thou that God restore thee thy hands as they were?' 'Yes,' replied she: whereupon they prayed to God, blessed and exalted be He! and her hands were restored to her, goodlier than before. Then said they, 'Knowst thou who we are?' 'God [only] is all-knowing,' answered she; and they said, 'We are thy two cakes of bread, that thou gavest in alms to the beggar and which were the cause of the cutting off of thy hands. So praise thou God the Most High, for that He hath restored thee thy hands and thy child.' So she praised God the Most High and glorified Him.

The Devout Israelite.

THERE was once a devout man of the children of Israel, whose family span cotton; and he used every day to sell the yarn they span and buy fresh cotton, and with the profit he bought the day's victual for his household. One day, he went out and sold the day's yarn as usual, when there met him one of his brethren, who complained to him of want; so he gave him the price of the yarn and returned, empty-handed, to his family, who said to him, 'Where is the cotton and the food?' Quoth he, 'Such an one met me and complained to me of want; so I gave him the price of the yarn.' And they said, 'How shall we do? We have nothing to sell.' Now they had a broken platter and a jar; so he took them to the market; but none would buy them of him.

Presently, as he stood in the market, there came up a man with a stinking, swollen fish, which no one would buy of him, and he said to the Jew, 'Wilt thou sell me thine unsaleable ware for mine?' 'Yes,' answered the Jew and giving him the jar and platter, took the fish and carried it home to his family, who said, 'What shall we do with this fish?' Quoth he, 'We will broil it and eat of it, till it please God to provide for us.' So they took it and ripping open its belly, found therein a great pearl and told the Jew, who said, 'See if it be pierced. If so, it belongs to some one of the folk; if not, it is a provision of God for us.' So they examined it and found it unpierced.

On the morrow, the Jew carried it to one of his brethren, who was skilled in jewels, and he said, 'Whence hadst thou this pearl?' 'It was a gift of God the Most High to us,' replied the Jew, and the other said, 'It is worth a thousand dirhems, and I will give thee that sum; but take it to such an one, for he hath more money and skill than I.' So the Jew took it to the jeweller, who said, 'It is worth threescore and ten thousand dirhems and no more. Then he paid him that sum and the Jew hired two porters to carry the money to his house. As he came to his door, a beggar accosted him, saying, 'Give me of that which God the Most High hath given thee.' Quoth the Jew, 'But yesterday, we were even as thou; take half the money.' So he made two parts of it, and each took his half. Then said the beggar, 'Take back thy money and God prosper thee in it; I am a messenger, whom thy Lord hath sent to try thee.' Quoth the Jew, 'To God be the praise and the thanks!' and abode with his family in all delight of life, till death.

Abou Hassan Ez Ziyadi and the Man From Khorassan.

QUOTH Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi, 'I was once in very needy case, and the baker and grocer and other purveyors importuned me, so that I was in sore straits and knew of no resource nor what to do. Things being thus, there came in to me one day one of my servants and said to me, "There is a man, a pilgrim, at the door, who seeks admission to thee." Quoth I, "Admit him." So he came in and behold, he was a native of Khorassan. We exchanged salutations and he said to me, "Art thou Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi?" "Yes," answered I. "What is thy business?" Quoth he, "I am a stranger and am minded to make the pilgrimage; but I have with me a great sum of money, which is burdensome to me. So I wish to deposit with thee these ten thousand dirhems, whilst I make the pilgrimage and return. If the caravan return and thou see me not, know that I am dead, in which case the money is a gift from me to thee; but if I come back, it shall be mine." "Be it as thou wilt," answered I, "so it please God the Most High." So he brought out a leather bag and I said to the servant, "Fetch the scales." He brought them and the man weighed out the money and handed it to me, after which he went his way. Then I called the tradesmen and paid them what I owed and spent freely, saying in myself, "By the time he returns, God will have succoured me with one or another of His bounties." However, next day, the servant came in to me and said, "Thy friend the man from Khorassan is at the door."

"Admit him," answered I. So he came in and said to me, "I had thought to make the pilgrimage; but news hath reached me of the death of my father, and I have resolved to return; so give me the money I deposited with thee yesterday." When I heard this, I was troubled and perplexed beyond measure and knew not what reply to make him; for, if I denied it, he would put me to my oath, and I should be shamed in the world to come; whilst, if I told him that I had spent the money, he would make an outcry and disgrace me. So I said to him, "God give thee health! This my house is no stronghold nor place of safe custody for this money. When I received thy leather bag, I sent it to one with whom it now is; so do thou return to us to-morrow and take thy money, if it be the will of God."

So he went away, and I passed the night in sore concern, because of his return to me. Sleep visited me not nor could I close my eyes: so I rose and bade the boy saddle me the mule. "O my lord," answered he, "it is yet but the first watch of the night." So I returned to bed, but sleep was forbidden to me and I ceased not to awaken the boy and he to put me off, till break of day, when he saddled me the mule, and I mounted and rode out, not knowing whither to go. I threw the reins on the mule's shoulders and gave myself up to anxiety and melancholy thought, whilst she fared on with me to the eastward of Baghdad. Presently, as I went along, I saw a number of people in front and turned aside into another path to avoid them; but they, seeing that I wore a professor's hood, followed me and hastening up to me, said, "Knowest thou the lodging of Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi?" "I am he," answered I; and they rejoined, "The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee." Then they carried me before El Mamoun, who said to me, "Who art thou?" Quoth I, "I am a professor of the law and traditions, and one of the

associates of the Cadi Abou Yousuf." "How art thou called?" asked the Khalif. "Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi," answered I, and he said, "Expound to me thy case."

So I told him how it was with me and he wept sore and said to me, "Out on thee! The Apostle of God (whom may He bless and preserve) would not let me sleep this night, because of thee; for he appeared to me in my first sleep and said to me, 'Succour Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi.' Whereupon I awoke and knowing thee not, went to sleep again; but he came to me a second time and said to me, 'Woe to thee! Succour Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi.' I awoke a second time, but knew thee not, so went to sleep again; and he came to me a third time and still I knew thee not and went to sleep again. Then he came to me once more and said, 'Out on thee! Succour Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi!' After that I dared not go to sleep again, but watched the rest of the night and aroused my people and sent them in all directions in quest of thee." Then he gave me ten thousand dirhems, saying, "This is for the Khorassani," and other ten thousand, saying, "Spend freely of this and amend thy case therewith, and set thine affairs in order." Moreover, he gave me yet thirty thousand dirhems, saying, "Furnish thyself with this, and when the day of estate comes round, come thou to me, that I may invest thee with an office."

So I took the money and returned home, where I prayed the morning-prayer. Presently came the Khorassani, so I carried him into the house and brought out to him ten thousand dirhems, saying, "Here is thy money." "It is not my very money," answered he. "How cometh this?" So I told him the whole story, and he wept and said, "By Allah, hadst thou told me the truth at first, I had not pressed thee! And now, by Allah, I will not accept aught of the money; and thou art quit of it." So saying, he went away and I set my affairs in order and repaired on the appointed day to the Divan, where I found the Khalif seated. When he saw me, he called me to him and bringing forth to me a paper from under his prayer-carpet, said to me, "This is a patent, conferring on thee the office of Cadi of the western division of the Holy City from the Bab es Selam to the end of the town; and I appoint thee such and such monthly allowances. So fear God (to whom belong might and majesty) and be mindful of the solicitude of His Apostle (whom may He bless and preserve) on thine account." The folk marvelled at the Khalif's words and questioned me of their meaning; so I told them the whole story and it spread abroad amongst the people.'

And [quoth he who tells the tale] Abou Hassan ez Ziyadi ceased not to be Cadi of the Holy City, till he died in the days of El Mamoun, the mercy of God be on him!

The Poor Man and His Generous Friend.

THERE was once a rich man, who lost all he had and became poor, whereupon his wife counselled him to seek aid of one of his friends. So he betook himself to a certain friend of his and acquainted him with his strait; and he lent him five hundred dinars to trade withal. Now he had aforetime been a jeweller; so he took the money and went to the jewel-bazaar, where he opened a shop to buy and sell. Presently, three men accosted him, as he sat in his shop, and asked for his father. He told them that he was dead, and they said, 'Did he leave any offspring?' Quoth the jeweller, 'He left a son, your servant.' 'And who knoweth thee for his son?' asked they. 'The people of the bazaar,' replied he; and they said, 'Call them together, that they may testify to us that thou art his son.' So he called them and they bore witness of this; whereupon the three men delivered to him a pair of saddle-bags, containing thirty thousand dinars, besides jewels and bullion, saying, 'This was deposited with us in trust by thy father.' Then they went away; and presently there came to him a woman, who sought of him certain of the jewels, worth five hundred dinars, and paid him three thousand for them.

So he took five hundred dinars and carrying them to his friend, who had lent him the money, said to him, 'Take the five hundred dinars I borrowed of thee; for God hath aided and prospered me.' 'Not so,' quoth the other. 'I gave them to thee outright, for the love of God; so do thou keep them. And take this paper, but read it not, till thou be at home, and do according to that which is therein.' So he took the paper and returned home, where he opened it and read therein the following verses:

The men who came to thee at first my kinsmen were, my sire,
His brother and my dam's, Salih ben Ali is his name.
Moreover, she to whom thou soldst the goods my mother was,
And eke the jewels and the gold, from me, to boot, they came;
Nor, in thus ordering myself to thee, aught did I seek
Save of the taking it from me to spare thee from the shame.

The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again Through a Dream.

THERE lived once in Baghdad a very wealthy man, who lost all his substance and became so poor, that he could only earn his living by excessive labour. One night, he lay down to sleep, dejected and sick at heart, and saw in a dream one who said to him, 'Thy fortune is at Cairo; go thither and seek it.' So he set out for Cairo; but, when he arrived there, night overtook him and he lay down to sleep in a mosque. Presently, as fate would have it, a company of thieves entered the mosque and made their way thence into an adjoining house; but the people of the house, being aroused by the noise, awoke and cried out; whereupon the chief of the police came to their aid with his officers. The robbers made off; but the police entered the mosque and finding the man from Baghdad asleep there, laid hold of him and beat him with palm rods, till he was well-nigh dead. Then they cast him into prison, where he abode three days, after which the chief of the police sent for him and said to him, 'Whence art thou?' 'From Baghdad,' answered he. 'And what brought thee to Cairo?' asked the magistrate. Quoth the Baghdadi, 'I saw in a dream one who said to me, "Thy fortune is at Cairo; go thither to it." But when I came hither, the fortune that he promised me proved to be the beating I had of thee.'

The chief of the police laughed, till he showed his jaw-teeth, and said, 'O man of little wit, thrice have I seen in a dream one who said to me, "There is in Baghdad a house of such a fashion and situate so-and-so, in the garden whereof is a fountain and thereunder a great sum of money buried. Go thither and take it." Yet I went not; but thou, of thy little wit, hast journeyed from place to place, on the faith of a dream, which was but an illusion of sleep.' Then he gave him money, saying, 'This is to help thee back to thy native land.' Now the house he had described was the man's own house in Baghdad; so the latter returned thither, and digging underneath the fountain in his garden, discovered a great treasure; and [thus] God gave him abundant fortune.

The Khalif El Mutawekkil and His Favourite Mehboubeh.

THERE were in the palace of the Khalif El Mutawekkil ala Allah four thousand concubines, whereof two thousand were Greeks [and other foreigners] and other two thousand native Arabians and Abyssinians; and Obeid ibn Tahir had given him two hundred white girls and a like number of Abyssinian and native girls. Among these latter was a girl of Bassora, Mehboubeh by name, who was of surpassing beauty and elegance and voluptuous grace. Moreover, she played upon the lute and was skilled in singing and making verses and wrote excellent well; so that El Mutawekkil fell passionately in love with her and could not endure from her a single hour. When she saw this, she presumed upon his favour to use him haughtily and capriciously, so that he waxed exceeding wroth with her and forsook her, forbidding the people of the palace to speak with her.

On this wise she abode some days, but the Khalif still inclined to her; and he arose one morning and said to his courtiers, 'I dreamt, last night, that I was reconciled to Mehboubeh.' 'Would God this might be on wake!' answered they. As they were talking, in came one of the Khalif's maidservants and whispered him that they had heard a noise of singing and luting in Mehboubeh's chamber and knew not what this meant. So he rose and entering the harem, went straight to Mehboubeh's apartment, where he heard her playing wonder-sweetly upon the lute and singing the following verses:

I wander through the halls, but not a soul I see
To whom I may complain or who will speak with me.
It is as though I'd wrought so grievous an offence,
No penitence avails myself therefrom to free.
Will no one plead my cause with a king, who came to me
In sleep and took me back to favour and to gree;
But with the break of day to rigour did revert
And cast me off from him and far away did flee?

When the Khalif heard these verses, he marvelled at the strange coincidence of their dreams and entered the chamber. As soon as she was ware of him, she hastened to throw herself at his feet, and kissing them, said, 'By Allah, O my lord, this is what I dreamt last night; and when I awoke, I made the verses thou hast heard.' "By Allah,' replied El Mutawekkil, 'I also dreamt the like!' Then they embraced and made friends and he abode with her seven days and nights.

Now she had written upon her cheek, in musk, the Khalif's name, which was Jaafer: and when he saw this, he made the following verses:

One wrote on her cheek, with musk, a name, yea, Jaafer to wit:
My soul be her ransom who wrote on her cheek what I see on it!
If her fingers, indeed, have traced a single line on her cheek,
I trow, in my heart of hearts full many a line she hath writ

O thou, whom Jaafer alone of men possesses, may God Grant
Jaafer to drink his fill of the wine of thy beauty and wit!

When El Mutawekkil died, all his women forgot him save Mehboubeh, who ceased not to mourn for him, till she died and was buried by his side, the mercy of God be on them both!

Werdan the Butcher His Adventure With the Lady and the Bear.

THERE lived once in Cairo, in the days of the Khalif El Hakim bi Amrillah, a butcher named Werdan, who dealt in sheep's flesh; and there came to him every forenoon a lady and gave him a diner, whose weight was nigh two and a half Egyptian diners, saying, 'Give me a lamb.' So he took the money and gave her the lamb, which she delivered to a porter she had with her; and he put it in his basket and she went away with him to her own place. This went on for some time, the butcher profiting a dinar by her every day, till at last he began to be curious about her and said to himself, 'This woman buys a diner's worth of meat of me every day, paying ready money, and never misses a day. Verily, this is a strange thing!' So he took an occasion of questioning the porter, in her absence, and said to him, 'Whither goest thou every day with yonder woman?' 'I know not what to make of her,' answered the porter; 'for, every day, after she hath taken the lamb of thee, she buys fresh and dried fruits and wax candles and other necessaries of the table, a dinar's worth, and takes of a certain Nazarene two flagons of wine, for which she pays him another diner. Then she loads me with the whole and I go with her to the Vizier's Gardens, where she blindfolds me, so that I cannot see where I set my feet, and taking me by the hand, leads me I know not whither. Presently, she says, "Set down here;" and when I have done so, she gives me an empty basket she has ready and taking my hand, leads me back to the place, where she bound my eyes, and there does off the bandage and gives me ten dirhems.' 'God be her helper!' quoth Werdan; but he redoubled in curiosity about her case; disquietude increased upon him and he passed the night in exceeding restlessness.

Next morning, [quoth Werdan,] she came to me as of wont and taking the lamb, delivered it to the porter and went away. So I gave my shop in charge to a boy and followed her, unseen of her; nor did I cease to keep her in sight, hiding behind her, till she left Cairo and came to the Vizier's Gardens. Then I hid, whilst she bound the porter's eyes, and followed her again from place to place, till she came to the mountain and stopped at a place where there was a great stone. Here she made the porter set down his crate, and I waited, whilst she carried him back to the Vizier's Gardens, after which she returned and taking out the contents of the basket, disappeared behind the stone. Then I went up to the stone and pulling it away, discovered behind it an open trap-door of brass and a flight of steps leading downward. So I descended, little by little, into a long corridor, brilliantly lighted, and followed it, till I came to a [closed] door, as it were the door of a room. I looked about till I discovered a recess, with steps therein; then climbed up and found a little niche with an opening therein giving upon a saloon.

So I looked in and saw the lady cut off the choicest parts of the lamb and laying them in a saucepan, throw the rest to a huge great bear, who ate it all to the last bit. When she had made an end of cooking, she ate her fill, after which she set on wine and fruits and confections and fell to drinking, using a cup herself and giving the bear to drink in a basin of gold, till she was heated with wine, when she put off her trousers and lay down. Thereupon the bear came up to her and served her, whilst she gave him the best of what belongeth to mankind, till he had made an end, when he sat down and

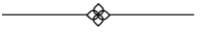
rested. Presently, he sprang to her and served her again; and thus he did, till he had furnished half a score courses, and they both fell down in a swoon and abode without motion.

Then said I to myself, "Now is my opportunity," and taking a knife I had with me, that would cut bones before flesh, went down to them and found them motionless, not a muscle of them moving for their much swink. So I put my knife to the bear's gullet and bore upon it, till I severed his head from his body, and he gave a great snort like thunder, whereat she started up in alarm and seeing the bear slain and me standing with the knife in my hand, gave such a shriek that I thought the soul had left her body. Then said she, "O Werdan, is this how thou requitest me my favours?" "O enemy of thine own soul," replied I, "dost thou lack of men that thou must do this shameful thing?" She made me no answer, but bent down to the bear, and finding his head divided from his body, said to me, "O Werdan, which were the liefer to thee, to hearken to what I shall say to thee and be the means of thine own safety and enrichment to the end of thy days, or gainsay me and so bring about thine own destruction?" "I choose rather to hearken unto thee," answered I. "Say what thou wilt." "Then," said she, "kill me, as thou hast killed this bear, and take thy need of this treasure and go thy way." Quoth I, "I am better than this bear. Return to God the Most High and repent, and I will marry thee, and we will live on this treasure the rest of our lives." "O Werdan," rejoined she, "far be it from me! How shall I live after him? An thou kill me not, by Allah, I will assuredly do away thy life! So leave bandying words with me, or thou art a lost man. This is all I have to say to thee and peace be on thee." Then said I, "I will slay thee, and thou shalt go to the malediction of God." So saying, I caught her by the hair and cut her throat; and she went to the malediction of God and of the angels and of all mankind.

Then I examined the place and found there gold and pearls and jewels, such as no king could bring together. So I filled the porter's crate with as much as I could carry and covered it with the clothes I had on me. Then I shouldered it and going up out of the underground place, set out homeward and fared on, till I came to the gate of Cairo, where I fell in with ten of the Khalif's body-guard, followed by El Hakim himself, who said to me. "Ho, Werdan!" "At thy service, O King," replied I. "Hast thou killed the woman and the bear?" asked he and I answered, "Yes." Quoth he, "Set down the basket and fear naught, for all the treasure thou hast with thee is thine, and none shall dispute it with thee." So I set down the basket, and he uncovered it and looked at it; then said to me, "Tell me their case, though I know it, as if I had been present with you." So I told him all that had passed and he said, "Thou hast spoken the truth, O Werdan. Come now with me to the treasure."

So I returned with him to the cavern, where he found the trap-door closed and said to me, "O Werdan, lift it; none but thou can open the treasure, for it is enchanted in thy name and favour." "By Allah," answered I, "I cannot open it;" but he said, "Go up to it, trusting in the blessing of God." So I called upon the name of God the Most High and going up to the trap-door, put my hand to it; whereupon it came up, as it had been the lightest of things. Then said the Khalif, "Go down and bring up what is there; for none but one of thy name and favour and quality hath gone down there since the place was made, and the slaying of the bear and the woman was appointed to

be at thy hand. This was recorded with me and I was awaiting its fulfilment." Accordingly, I went down and brought up all the treasure, whereupon the Khalif sent for beasts of burden and carried it away, after giving me the porter's crate, with what was therein. So I carried it home and opened me a shop in the market. And [quoth he who tells the tale] this market is still extant and is known as Werdan's Market.



The King's Daughter and the Ape.

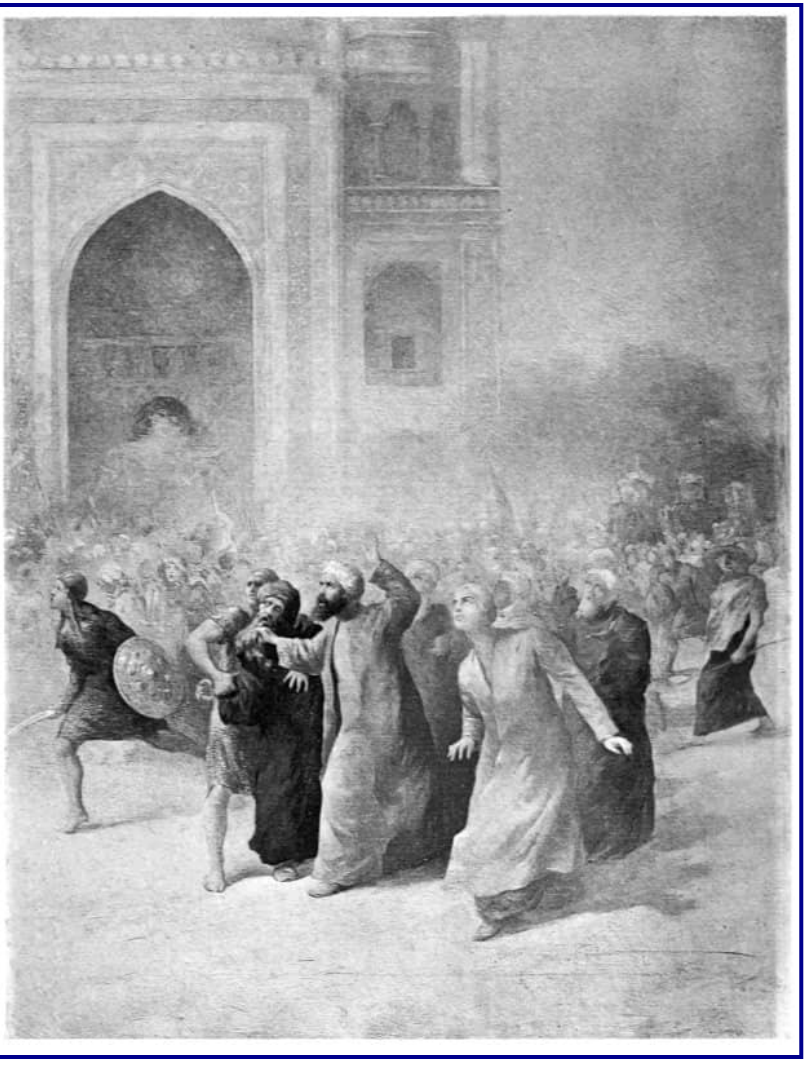
THERE was once a King's daughter, whose heart was taken with love of a black slave: he did away her maidenhead, and she became passionately addicted to amorous dalliance, so that she could not endure from it a single hour and made moan of her case to one of her body women, who told her that no thing doth the deed of kind more abundantly than the ape. Now it chanced, one day, that an ape-leader passed under her lattice, with a great ape; so she unveiled her face and looking upon the ape, signed to him with her eyes, whereupon he broke his bonds and shackles and climbed up to the princess, who hid him in a place with her, and he abode, eating and drinking and cricketing, night and day. Her father heard of this and would have killed her; but she took the alarm and disguising herself in a [male] slave's habit, loaded a mule with gold and jewels and precious stuffs past count; then, taking horse with the ape, fled to Cairo, where she took up her abode in one of the houses without the city.

Now, every day, she used to buy meat of a young man, a butcher, but came not to him till after noonday, pale and disordered in face; so that he said in himself, 'There hangs some mystery by this slave.' For she used to visit him in her slave's habit. [Quoth the butcher,] So, one day, when she came to me as usual, I went out after her, unseen, and ceased not to follow her from place to place, so as she saw me not, till she came to her lodging, without the city, and I looked in upon her, through a cranny, and saw her light a fire and cook the meat, of which she ate her fill and gave the rest to an ape she had with her. Then she put off her slave's habit and donned the richest of women's apparel; and so I knew that she was a woman. After this she set on wine and drank and gave the ape to drink; and he served her nigh half a score times, till she swooned away, when he threw a silken coverlet over her and returned to his place.

Thereupon I went down into the midst of the place and the ape, becoming aware of me, would have torn me in pieces; but I made haste to pull out my knife and slit his paunch. The noise aroused the young lady, who awoke, terrified and trembling; and when she saw the ape in this plight, she gave such a shriek, that her soul well-nigh departed her body. Then she fell down in a swoon, and when she came to herself, she said to me, "What moved thee to do thus? By Allah, I conjure thee to send me after him!" But I spoke her fair and engaged to her that I would stand in the ape's stead, in the matter of much clicketing, till her trouble subsided and I took her to wife.

However, I fell short in this and could not endure to it; so I complained of her case to a certain old woman, who engaged to manage the affair and said to me, "Thou must bring me a cooking- pot full of virgin vinegar and a pound of pyrethrum." So I brought her what she sought, and she laid the pyrethrum in the pot with the vinegar and set it on the fire, till it boiled briskly. Then she bade me serve the girl, and I served her, till she fainted away, when the old woman took her up, and she unknowing, and set her kaze to the mouth of the cooking-pot. The steam of the pot entered her poke and there fell from it somewhat, which I examined and behold, it was two worms, one black and the other yellow. Quoth the old woman, "The black was bred of the embraces of the negro and the yellow of those of the ape."

When my wife recovered from her swoon, she abode with me, in all delight and solace of life, and sought not copulation, as before, for God the Most High had done away from her this appetite; whereat I marvelled and acquainted her with the case. Moreover, [quoth he who tells the tale,] she took the old woman to be to her in the stead of her mother, and she and Werdan and his wife abode in joy and cheer, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and glory be to the Living One, who dieth not and in whose hand is the empire of the Seen and the Unseen!



The Enchanted Horse.

THERE was once, of old time, a great and puissant King, of the Kings of the Persians, Sabour by name, who was the richest of all the Kings in store of wealth and dominion and surpassed them all in wit and wisdom. Generous, open-handed and beneficent, he gave to those who sought and repelled not those who resorted to him, comforted the broken-hearted and honourably entreated those who fled to him for refuge. Moreover, he loved the poor and was hospitable to strangers and did the oppressed justice upon those who oppressed them. He had three daughters, like shining full moons or flowered gardens, and a son as he were the moon; and it was his wont to keep two festivals in the year, those of the New Year and the Autumnal Equinox, on which occasions he threw open his palaces and gave gifts and made proclamation of safety and security and advanced his chamberlains and officers; and the people of his realm came in to him and saluted him and gave him joy of the festival, bringing him gifts and servants.

Now he loved science and geometry, and one day, as he sat on his throne of kingship, during one of these festivals, there came in to him three sages, cunning artificers and past masters in all manner of crafts and inventions, skilled in making rarities, such as confound the wit, and versed in the knowledge of [occult] truths and subtleties; and they were of three different tongues and countries, the first an Indian, the second a Greek and the third a Persian. The Indian came forward and prostrating himself before the King, gave him joy of the festival and laid before him a present befitting [his dignity]; that is to say, a figure of gold, set with precious stones and jewels of price and holding in its hand a golden trumpet. When Sabour saw this, he said, 'O sage, what is the virtue of this figure?' And the Indian answered, 'O my lord; if this figure be set at the gate of thy city, it will be a guardian over it; for, if an enemy enter the place, it will blow this trumpet against him, and so he will be known and laid hands on.' The King marvelled at this and said, 'By Allah, O sage, an this thy word be true, I will grant thee thy wish and thy desire.'

Then came forward the Greek and prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a basin of silver, in whose midst was a peacock of gold, surrounded by four-and-twenty young ones of the same metal. Sabour looked at them and turning to the Greek, said to him, 'O sage, what is the virtue of this peacock?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'as often as an hour of the day or night passes, it pecks one of its young [and cries out and flaps its wings,] till the four-and-twenty hours are accomplished; and when the month comes to an end, it will open its mouth and thou shalt see the new moon therein.' And the King said, 'An thou speak sooth, I will bring thee to thy wish and thy desire.'

Then came forward the Persian sage and prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a horse of ebony wood, inlaid with gold and jewels, ready harnessed with saddle and bridle and stirrups such as befit kings; which when Sabour saw, he marvelled exceedingly and was confounded at the perfection of its form and the ingenuity of its fashion. So he said, 'What is the use of this horse of wood, and what is its virtue and the secret of its movement?' 'O my lord,' answered the Persian,

'the virtue of this horse is that, if one mount him, it will carry him whither he will and fare with its rider through the air for the space of a year and a day.' The King marvelled and was amazed at these three wonders, following thus hard upon each other in one day, and turning to the sage, said to him, 'By the Great God and the Bountiful Lord, who created all creatures and feedeth them with water and victual, an thy speech be true and the virtue of thy handiwork appear, I will give thee whatsoever thou seekest and will bring thee to thy wish and thy desire!'

Then he entertained the three sages three days, that he might make trial of their gifts, after which they brought them before him and each took the creature he had wrought and showed him the secret of its movement. The trumpeter blew the trumpet, the peacock pecked its young and the Persian sage mounted the horse of ebony, whereupon it soared with him into the air and descended again. When the King saw all this, he was amazed and perplexed and was like to fly for joy and said to the three sages, 'Now am I certified of the truth of your words and it behoves me to quit me of my promise. Seek ye, therefore, what ye will, and I will give it you.' Now the report of the [beauty of the] King's daughters had reached the sages, so they answered, 'If the King be content with us and accept of our gifts and give us leave to ask a boon of him, we ask of him that he give us his three daughters in marriage, that we may be his sons-in-law; for that the stability of kings may not be gainsaid.' Quoth the King, 'I grant you that which you desire,' and bade summon the Cadi forthright, that he might marry each of the sages to one of his daughters.

Now these latter were behind a curtain, looking on; and when they heard this, the youngest considered [him that was to be] her husband and saw him to be an old man, a hundred years of age, with frosted hair, drooping forehead, mangy eyebrows, slitten ears, clipped beard and moustaches, red, protruding eyes, bleached, hollow, flabby cheeks, nose like an egg-plant and face like a cobbler's apron, teeth overlapping one another, lips like camel's kidneys, loose and pendulous; brief, a monstrous favour; for he was the frightfullest of the folk of his time; his grinders had been knocked out and his teeth were like the tusks of the Jinn that fright the fowls in the hen-house. Now the princess was the fairest and most graceful woman of her time, more elegant than the tender gazelle, blander than the gentle zephyr and brighter than the moon at her full, confounding the branch and outdoing the gazelle in the flexile grace of her shape and movements; and she was fairer and sweeter than her sisters. So, when she saw her suitor, she went to her chamber and strewed dust on her head and tore her clothes and fell to buffeting her face and lamenting and weeping.

Now the prince her brother, who loved her with an exceeding love, more than her sisters, was then newly returned from a journey and hearing her weeping and crying, came in to her and said, 'What ails thee? Tell me and conceal nought from me.' 'O my brother and my dear one,' answered she, 'if the palace be straitened upon thy father, I will go out; and if he be resolved upon a foul thing, I will separate myself from him, though he consent not to provide for me.' Quoth he, 'Tell me what means this talk and what has straitened thy breast and troubled thy humour.' 'O my brother and my dear one,' answered the princess, 'know that my father hath given me in marriage to a sorcerer, who brought him, as a gift, a horse of black wood, and hath stricken him with his craft and his sorcery; but, as for me, I will none of him, and would, because of him,

I had never come into this world!' Her brother soothed her and comforted her, then betook himself to his father and said to him, 'What is this sorcerer to whom thou hast given my youngest sister in marriage, and what is this present that he hath brought thee, so that thou hast caused my sister to [almost] die of chagrin? It is not right that this should be.'

Now the Persian was standing by and when he heard the prince's words, he was mortified thereby and filled with rage, and the King said, 'O my son, an thou sawest this horse, thy wit would be confounded and thou wouldst be filled with amazement.' Then he bade the slaves bring the horse before him and they did so; and when the prince, who was an accomplished cavalier, saw it, it pleased him. So he mounted it forthright and struck its belly with the stirrup-irons; but it stirred not and the King said to the sage, 'Go and show him its movement, that he also may help thee to thy wish.' Now the Persian bore the prince malice for that he willed not he should have his sister; so he showed him the peg of ascent on the right side [of the horse's neck] and saying to him, 'Turn this pin,' left him. So the prince turned the pin and forthwith the horse soared with him into the air, as it were a bird, and gave not over flying with him, till it disappeared from sight, whereat the King was troubled and perplexed about his affair and said to the Persian, 'O sage, look how thou mayst make him descend.' But he answered, 'O my lord, I can do nothing, and thou wilt never see him again till the Day of Resurrection, for that he, of his ignorance and conceit, asked me not of the peg of descent and I forgot to acquaint him therewith.' When the King heard this, he was sore enraged and bade beat the sorcerer and clap him in prison, whilst he himself cast the crown from his head and buffeted his face and beat upon his breast. Moreover, he shut the doors of his palaces and gave himself up to weeping and lamentation, he and his wife and daughters and all the folk of the city; and [thus] their joy was turned to mourning and their gladness changed into chagrin and sore affliction.

Meanwhile, the horse gave not over soaring with the prince, till he drew near the sun, whereat he gave himself up for lost and was confounded at his case, repenting him of having mounted the horse and saying in himself, 'Verily, this was a plot of the sage to destroy me; but there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I am lost without recourse; but, I wonder, did not he who made the peg of ascent make a peg of descent also?' Now he was a man of wit and intelligence; so he fell to examining all the parts of the horse, but saw nothing save a peg, like a cock's head, on its right shoulder and the like on the left, and turned the right-hand peg, whereupon the horse flew upward with increased speed. So he left it and turned the left-hand peg, and immediately the steed's upward motion ceased and he began to descend, little by little, towards the earth. When the prince saw this and knew the uses of the horse, he was filled with joy and gladness and thanked God the Most High for that He had vouchsafed to deliver him from destruction. Then he began to turn the horse's head whither he would, making him rise and fall at pleasure, till he had gotten complete command of his movement.

He ceased not to descend the whole of that day, for that the steed's upward flight had borne him afar from the earth; and as he descended, he diverted himself with viewing the various towns and countries over which he passed and which he knew not, having never seen them in his life. Amongst the rest, he saw a city of the goodliest

ordinance, in the midst of a green and smiling country, abounding in trees and streams; whereat he fell a-musing and said in himself, 'Would I knew the name of yonder city and in what country it is!' And he began to circle about it and observe it right and left. By this time, the day began to wane and the sun drew near to its setting; and he said, 'I see no goodlier place to pass the night in than this city; so I will lodge here this night and on the morrow I will return to my people and my kingdom and tell my father and family what has passed and what I have seen with my eyes.' Then he addressed himself to look for a place, where he might safely bestow himself and his horse and where none should see him, and presently espied a palace, surrounded by a great wall with lofty battlements, rising high into the air from the midst of the city and guarded by forty black slaves, clad in complete mail and armed with spears and swords and bows and arrows. Quoth he, 'This is a goodly place,' and turned the peg of descent, whereupon the horse sank down with him and alighted gently on the roof of the palace. So the prince dismounted and began to go round about the horse and examine it, saying, 'By Allah, he who fashioned thee was a cunning craftsman, and if God extend the term of my life and restore me to my country and family in safety and reunite me with my father, I will assuredly bestow upon him all manner of bounties and entreat him with the utmost favour.'

By this time the night had overtaken him and he sat on the roof, till he was assured that all in the palace slept; and indeed hunger and thirst were sore upon him, for that he had not tasted food since he parted from his father. So he said in himself, 'Surely, the like of this palace will not lack of victual,' and leaving the horse there, went in quest of somewhat to eat. Presently, he came to a stair and descending it, found himself in a court paved with white marble and alabaster, that shone in the light of the moon. He marvelled at the place and the goodliness of its fashion, but heard no sound and saw no living soul and stood in perplexity, looking right and left and knowing not whither he should go. Then said he to himself, 'I cannot do better than return to where I left my horse and pass the night by it; and as soon as it is day, I will mount and depart.' However, as he stood talking to himself, he espied a light within the palace, and making towards it, found that it came from a candle that stood before a door of the palace, at the head of an eunuch, as he were one of the Afrits of Solomon or a tribesman of the Jinn, longer than a plank and wider than a bench. He lay asleep before the door, with the pommel of his sword gleaming in the flame of the candle, and at his head was a budget of leather hanging from a column of granite.

When the prince saw this, he was affrighted and said, 'I crave help from God the Supreme! O my God, even as Thou hast [already] delivered me from destruction, vouchsafe me strength to quit myself of the adventure of this palace!' So saying, he put out his hand to the budget and taking it, carried it to a place apart and opened it and found in it food of the best. So he ate his fill and refreshed himself and drank water, after which he hung the budget up in its place and drawing the eunuch's sword from its sheath, took it, whilst the latter slept on, knowing not whence destiny should come to him. Then the prince fared on into the palace, till he came to another door, with a curtain drawn before it; so he raised the curtain and entering, saw a couch of ivory, inlaid with pearls and jacinths and jewels, and four slave-girls sleeping about it. He went up to the couch, to see what was therein, and found a young lady lying asleep,

veiled with her hair, as she were the full moon at its rising, with flower-white forehead and shining parting and cheeks like blood-red anemones and dainty moles thereon.

When he saw this, he was amazed at her beauty and grace and symmetry and recked no more of death. So he went up to her, trembling in every nerve, and kissed her on the right cheek; whereupon she awoke forthright and seeing the prince standing at her head, said to him, 'Who art thou and whence comest thou?' Quoth he, 'I am thy slave and thy lover.' 'And who brought thee hither?' asked she. 'My Lord and my fortune,' answered he; and she said, 'Belike thou art he who demanded me yesterday of my father in marriage and he rejected thee, pretending that thou wast foul of favour. By Allah he lied, when he spoke this thing, for thou art not other than handsome.'

Now the son of the King of Hind had sought her in marriage, but her father had rejected him, for that he was ill- favoured, and she thought the prince was he. So, when she saw his beauty and grace, for indeed he was like the radiant moon, her heart was taken in the snare of his love, as it were a flaming fire, and they fell to talk and converse. Presently, her waiting-women awoke from their sleep and seeing the prince sitting with their mistress, said to her, 'O my lady, who is this with thee?' Quoth she, 'I know not; I found him sitting by me, when I awoke. Belike it is he who seeks me in marriage of my father.' 'O my lady,' answered they, 'by the Most Great God, this is not he who seeks thee in marriage, for he is foul and this man is fair and of high condition. Indeed, the other is not fit to be his servant.'

Then they went out to the eunuch and finding him asleep, awoke him, and he started up in alarm. Quoth they, 'How comes it that thou art guardian of the palace and yet men come in to us, whilst we are asleep?' When the eunuch heard this, he sprang in haste to his sword, but found it not, and fear took him and trembling. Then he went in, confounded, to his mistress and seeing the prince sitting talking with her, said to the former, 'O my lord, art thou a man or a genie?' 'O it on thee, O unluckiest of slaves!' replied the prince. 'How darest thou even a prince of the sons of the Chosroës with one of the unbelieving Satans?' Then he took the sword in his hand and said, 'I am the King's son-in-law, and he hath married me to his daughter and bidden me go in to her.' 'O my lord,' replied the eunuch, 'if thou be indeed a man, as thou avouchest, she is fit for none but thee, and thou art worthier of her than any other.'

Then he ran to the King, shrieking out and rending his clothes and casting dust upon his head; and when the King heard his outcry, he said to him, 'What has befallen thee? Speak quickly and be brief; for thou troublest my heart.' 'O King,' answered the eunuch, 'come to thy daughter's succour; for a devil of the Jinn, in the likeness of a king's son, hath gotten possession of her; so up and at him!' When the King heard this, he thought to kill him and said, 'How camest thou to be careless of my daughter and let this demon come at her?' Then he betook himself to the princess's palace, where he found her women standing, [awaiting him] and said to them, 'What is come to my daughter?' 'O King,' answered they, 'sleep overcame us and when we awoke, we found a young man sitting talking with her, as he were the full moon, never saw we a fairer of favour than he. So we questioned him of his case and he avouched that thou hadst given him thy daughter in marriage. More than this we know not, nor do we know if he be a man or a genie; but he is modest and well bred, and doth nothing unseemly.'

When the King heard this, his wrath cooled and he raised the curtain stealthily and looking in, saw a prince of the goodliest fashion, with a face like the shining full moon, sitting talking with his daughter. At this sight he could not contain himself, of his jealousy for his daughter, and putting the curtain aside, rushed in upon them, like a Ghoul, with his drawn sword in his hand. When the prince saw him, he said to the princess, 'Is this thy father?' 'Yes,' answered she; whereupon he sprang to his feet and taking his sword in his hand, cried out at the King with such a terrible cry, that he was confounded. Then he would have fallen on him with the sword; but the King, seeing that the prince was doughtier than he, sheathed his blade and stood till the latter came up to him, when he accosted him courteously and said to him, 'O youth, art thou a man or a genie?' Quoth the prince, 'Did I not respect thy right and thy daughter's honour, I would spill thy blood! How darest thou even me with devils, me that am a prince of the sons of the Chosroës, who, had they a mind to take thy kingdom, could shake thee from thy power and thy dominion and despoil thee of all thy possessions?' When the King heard his words, he was smitten with awe and fear of him and rejoined, 'If thou indeed be of the sons of the kings, as thou pretendest, how comes it that thou enterest my palace, without my leave, and soilest my honour, making thy way to my daughter and feigning that thou art her husband and that I have given her to thee to wife, I that have slain kings and kings' sons, who sought her of me in marriage? And now who shall save thee from my mischief, when, if I cried out to my slaves and servants and bade them put thee to death, they would slay thee forthright? Who then shall deliver thee out of my hand?'

When the prince heard this speech of the King, he answered, 'Verily, I wonder at thee and at the poverty of thy wit! Canst thou covet for thy daughter a goodlier mate than myself and hast ever seen a stouter of heart or a more sufficient or a more glorious in rank and dominion than I?' 'Nay, by Allah,' rejoined the King. 'But, O youth, I would have had thee make suit to me for her hand before witnesses, that I might marry her to thee publicly; and now, were I to marry her to thee privily, yet hast thou dishonoured me in her person.' 'Thou sayst well, O King,' replied the prince; 'but, if thy servants and soldiers should fall upon me and slay me, as thou pretendest, thou wouldst but publish thine own dishonour, and the folk would be divided between belief and disbelief with regard to thee. Wherefore, meseems thou wilt do well to turn from this thought to that which I shall counsel thee.' Quoth the King, 'Let me hear what thou hast to propose.' And the prince said, 'What I have to propose to thee is this: either do thou meet me in single combat and he who slays the other shall be held the worthier and having a better title to the kingdom; or else, let me be this night and on the morrow draw out against me thy horsemen and footmen and servants; but [first] tell me their number.' Quoth the King, 'They are forty thousand horse, besides my own slaves and their followers, who are the like of them in number.' 'When the day breaks, then,' continued the prince, 'do thou array them against me and say to them, "This fellow is a suitor to me for my daughter's hand, on condition that he shall do battle single-handed against you all; for he pretends that he will overcome you and put you to the rout and that ye cannot prevail against him." Then leave me to do battle with them. If they kill me, then is thy secret the safelier hidden and thine honour the better guarded; and if I overcome them, then is the like of me one whose alliance a King should covet.'

The King approved of his counsel and accepted his proposition, despite his awe and amaze at the exorbitant pretension of the prince to do battle against his whole army, such as he had described it to him, being at heart assured that he would perish in the mellay and so he be quit of him and freed from the fear of dishonour. So he called the eunuch and bade him go forthright to his Vizier and bid him assemble the whole of the troops and cause them don their arms and mount their horses. The eunuch carried the King's order to the Vizier, who straightway summoned the captains of the army and the grandees of the realm and bade them don their harness of war and mount their horses and sally forth in battle array.

Meanwhile, the King sat conversing with the prince, being pleased with his wit and good breeding, till daybreak, when he returned to his palace and seating himself on his throne, commanded the troops to mount and bade saddle one of the best of the royal horses with handsome housings and trappings and bring it to the prince. But the latter said, 'O King, I will not mount, till I come in sight of the troops and see them.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' answered the King. Then they repaired to the tilting ground, where the troops were drawn up, and the prince looked upon them and noted their great number; after which the King cried out to them, saying, 'Ho, all ye men, there is come to me a youth who seeks my daughter in marriage, — never have I seen a goodlier than he, no, nor a stouter of heart nor a doughtier, for he pretends that he can overcome you, single-handed, and put you to the rout and that, were ye a hundred thousand in number, yet would ye be for him but little. But, when he charges upon you, do ye receive him upon the points of your lances and the edges of your sabres; for, indeed, he hath undertaken a grave matter.'

Then said he to the prince, 'Up, O my son, and do thy will on them.' 'O King,' answered he, 'thou dealest not fairly with me. How shall I go forth against them, seeing that I am afoot and they are mounted?' 'I bade thee mount, and thou refusedst,' rejoined the King; 'but take which of my horses thou wilt.' But he said, 'None of thy horses pleases me, and I will ride none but that on which I came.' 'And where is thy horse?' asked the King. 'Atop of thy palace,' answered the prince, and the King said, 'In what part of my palace?' 'On the roof,' replied the prince. 'Out on thee!' quoth the King. 'This is the first sign thou hast given of madness. How can the horse be on the roof? But we shall soon see if thou speak truth or falsehood.' Then he turned to one of his chief officers and said to him, 'Go to my palace and bring me what thou findest on the roof.' And all the people marvelled at the prince's words, saying, 'How can a horse come down the steps from the roof? Verily this is a thing whose like we never heard.'

Meanwhile, the King's messenger repaired to the palace, accompanied by other of the royal officers, and mounting to the roof, found the horse standing there, — never had they looked on a handsomer; but when they drew near and examined it, they saw that it was made of ebony and ivory; whereat they laughed to each other, saying, 'Was it of the like of this horse that the youth spoke? Surely, he must be mad; but we shall soon see the truth of his case. Belike, there hangs some great mystery by him.' Then they lifted up the horse and carrying it to the King, set it down before him, and all the people flocked round it, staring at it and marvelling at the beauty of its fashion and the richness of its saddle and bridle. The King also admired it and wondered at it extremely; and he said to the prince, 'O youth, is this thy horse?' 'Yes, O King,'

answered the prince; 'this is my horse, and thou shalt soon see wonders of it.' 'Then take and mount it,' rejoined the King, and the prince said, 'I will not mount till the troops withdraw afar from it.' So the King bade them withdraw a bowshot from the horse; whereupon quoth the prince, 'O King, I am about to mount my horse and charge upon thy troops and scatter them right and left and cleave their hearts in sunder.' 'Do as thou wilt,' answered the King; 'and spare them not, for they will not spare thee.' Then the prince mounted, whilst the troops ranged themselves in ranks before him, and one said to another, 'When the youth comes between the ranks, we will take him on the points of our pikes and the edges of our swords.' 'By Allah,' quoth another, 'it were pity to kill so handsome and well-shaped a youth!' 'By Allah,' rejoined a third, 'ye will have hard work to get the better of him; for he had not done this, but for what he knew of his own prowess and valiantise.'

Meanwhile, the prince, having settled himself in his saddle, whilst all eyes were strained to see what he would do, turned the peg of ascent; whereupon the horse began to sway to and fro and make the strangest of movements, after the manner of horses, till its belly was filled with air and it took flight with him and soared into the sky. When the King saw this, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Out on you! Take him, ere he escape you!' But his Viziers and officers said to him, 'O King, how shall we overtake the flying bird? This is surely none but some mighty enchanter, and God hath saved thee from him. So praise thou the Most High for thy deliverance from his hand.' Then the King returned to his palace and going in to his daughter, acquainted her with what had befallen. He found her sore afflicted for the prince and bewailing her separation from him; wherefore she fell grievously sick and took to her pillow. When her father saw her thus, he pressed her to his bosom and kissing her between the eyes, said to her, 'O my daughter, praise God and thank Him for that He hath delivered thee from this crafty enchanter!' And he repeated to her the story of the prince's disappearance; but she paid no heed to his word and did but redouble in her tears and lamentations, saying to herself, 'By Allah, I will neither eat nor drink, till God reunite me with him!' Her father was greatly concerned for her plight and mourned sore over her; but, for all he could do to comfort her, passion and love-longing still grew on her for the prince.

Meanwhile, the King's son, whenas he had risen into the air, turned his horse's head towards his native land, musing upon the beauty and grace of the princess. Now he had enquired of the King's people the name of the princess and of the King her father and of the city, which was the city of Senaa of Yemen. So he journeyed homeward with all speed, till he drew near his father's capital and making a circuit about the city, alighted on the roof of the King's palace, where he left his horse, whilst he descended into the palace and finding its threshold strewn with ashes, bethought him that one of his family was dead. Then he entered, as of wont, and found his father and mother and sisters clad in mourning raiment of black, pale-faced and lean of body. When his father saw him and was assured that it was indeed his son, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, but presently coming to himself, threw himself upon him and embraced him, straining him to his bosom and rejoicing in him exceedingly. His mother and sisters heard this; so they came in and seeing the prince, fell upon him, kissing him and weeping and rejoicing with an exceeding joy. Then they questioned him of his case; so he told them all that had befallen him from first to last and his

father said to him, 'Praised be God for thy safety, O solace of my eyes and life-blood of my heart!'

Then the King bade hold high festival, and the glad news flew through the city. So they beat the drums and the cymbals and putting off the raiment of mourning, donned that of joy and decorated the streets and markets; whilst the folk vied with one another who should be the first to give the King joy, and the latter proclaimed a general pardon and opening the prisons, released those who were therein. Moreover, he made banquets to the people seven days and nights and all creatures were glad; and he took horse with his son and rode out with him, that the folk might see him and rejoice. After awhile the prince enquired for the maker of the horse, saying, 'O my father, what hath fortune done with him?' 'May God not bless him,' answered the King, 'nor the hour in which I set eyes on him! For he was the cause of thy separation from us, O my son, and he hath lain in prison since the day of thy disappearance.' Then he bade release him from prison and sending for him, invested him in a dress of honour and entreated him with the utmost favour and munificence, save that he would not give him his daughter to wife; whereat he was sore enraged and repented of that which he had done, knowing that the prince had learnt the secret of the horse and the manner of its motion. Moreover, the King said to his son, 'Methinks thou wilt do well not to mount the horse neither go near it henceforth; for thou knowest not its properties, and it is perilous for thee to meddle with it.' Now the prince had told his father of his adventure with the King's daughter of Senaa, and he said, 'If the King had been minded to kill thee, he had done so; but thine hour was not yet come.'

When the rejoicings were at an end, the people returned to their houses and the King and his son to the palace, where they sat down and fell to eating and drinking and making merry. Now the King had a handsome slave-girl, who was skilled in playing upon the lute; so she took it and began to play upon it and sing thereto of separation of lovers before the King and his son, and she chanted the following verses:

Think not that absence ever shall win me to forget:
For what should I remember, if I'd forgotten you?
Time passes, but my passion for you shall never end:
In love of you, I swear it, I'll die and rise anew.

When the prince heard this, the fires of longing flamed up in his heart and passion redoubled upon him. Grief and regret were sore upon him and his entrails yearned in him for love of the King's daughter of Senaa; so he rose forthright and eluding his father's notice, went forth the palace to the horse and mounting it, turned the peg of ascent, whereupon it flew up into the air with him and soared towards the confines of the sky. Presently, his father missed him and going up to the summit of the palace, in great concern, saw the prince rising into the air; whereat he was sore afflicted and repented exceedingly that he had not taken the horse and hidden it: and he said in himself, 'By Allah, if but my son return to me, I will destroy the horse, that my heart may be at rest concerning my son.' And he fell again to weeping and bewailing himself for his son.

Meanwhile, the prince flew on through the air till he came to the city of Senaa and alighted on the roof as before. Then he went down stealthily and finding the

eunuch asleep, as of wont, raised the curtain and went on, little by little, till he came to the door of the princess's chamber and stopped to listen; when, behold, he heard her weeping plenteous tears and reciting verses, whilst her women slept round her. Presently, they heard her weeping and wailing and said, 'O our mistress, why wilt thou mourn for one who mourns not for thee?' 'O little of wit,' answered she, 'is he for whom I mourn of those who are forgotten?' And she fell again to weeping and wailing, till sleep overcame her.

Now the prince's heart ached for her, so he entered and seeing her lying asleep, without covering, touched her with his hand; whereupon she opened her eyes and saw him standing by her. Quoth he, 'Why this weeping and mourning?' And when she knew him, she threw herself upon him and embraced him and kissed him and answered, 'For thy sake and because of my separation from thee.' 'O my lady,' said he, 'I have wearied for thee all this time!' But she answered, 'It is I who have wearied for thee, and hadst thou tarried longer, I had surely died!' 'O my lady,' rejoined he, 'what thinkest thou of my case with thy father and how he dealt with me? Were it not for my love of thee, O ravishment of all creatures, I had surely slain him and made him a warning to all beholders; but, even as I love thee, so I love him for thy sake.' Quoth she, 'How couldst thou leave me? Can life be sweet to me after thee?' Quoth he, 'Let what has happened suffice now: I am hungry and thirsty.' So she bade her maidens make ready meat and drink, [and they sat eating and drinking and conversing] till nigh upon daybreak, when he rose to take leave of her and depart, ere the eunuch should awake, and she said, 'Whither goest thou?' 'To my father's house,' answered he; 'and I plight thee my troth that I will come to thee once in every week.' But she wept and said, 'I conjure thee, by God the Supreme, take me with thee whither thou goest and make me not taste anew the bitterness of separation from thee.' Quoth he, 'Wilt thou indeed go with me?' and she answered, 'Yes.' 'Then,' said he, 'arise, that we may depart.' So she rose forthright and going to a chest, arrayed herself in what was richest and dearest to her of her trinkets of gold and jewels of price. Then he carried her up to the roof of the palace and mounting the horse, took her up behind him and bound her fast to himself; after which he turned the peg of ascent, and the horse rose with him into the air. When her women saw this, they shrieked aloud and told her father and mother, who rushed up to the roof of the palace and looking up, saw the ebony horse flying away with the prince and princess. At this the King was sore troubled and cried out, saying, 'O King's son, I conjure thee, by Allah, have compassion on me and my wife and bereave us not of our daughter!' The prince made him no reply, but, thinking that the princess repented of leaving her father and mother, said to her, 'O ravishment of the age, wilt thou that I restore thee to thy father and mother?' 'By Allah, O my lord, that is not my desire,' answered she; 'my only wish is to be with thee wherever thou art; for I am distracted by the love of thee from all else, even to my father and mother.' At this the prince rejoiced greatly and made the horse fare softly with them, so as not to disquiet the princess; nor did they stay their flight till they came in sight of a green meadow, in which was a spring of running water. Here they alighted and ate and drank; after which they took horse again and fared on, till they came in sight of his father's capital. At this, the prince was filled with joy and bethought himself to show her the seat of his dominion and his father's power and dignity and give her to know that it was greater than that of her father. So he set her down in one of his

father's pleasance-gardens [without the city] and carrying her into a pavilion there, prepared for the King, left the horse at the door and charged her keep watch over it, saying, 'Sit here, till my messenger come to thee; for I go now to my father, to make ready a palace for thee and show thee my royal estate.' 'Do as thou wilt,' answered she, for she was glad that she should not enter but with due honour and observance, as became her rank.

Then he left her and betook himself to the palace of the King his father, who rejoiced in his return and welcomed him; and the prince said to him, 'Know that I have brought with me the princess of whom I told thee and have left her without the city in such a garden and come to tell thee, that thou mayest make ready and go forth to meet her in state and show her thy royal dignity and troops and guards.' 'With all my heart,' answered the King and straightway bade decorate the city after the goodliest fashion. Then he took horse and rode out in all state and splendour, he and his troops and household and grandees; whilst the prince made ready for her a litter of green and red and yellow brocade, in which he set Indian and Greek and Abyssinian slave-girls. Moreover, he took forth of his treasuries jewellery and apparel and what else of the things that kings treasure up and made a rare display of wealth and magnificence. Then he left the litter and those who were therein and rode forward to the pavilion, where he had left the princess; but found both her and the horse gone. When he saw this, he buffeted his face and rent his clothes and went round about the garden, as he had lost his wits; after which he came to his senses and said to himself, 'How could she have come at the secret of the horse, seeing I told her nothing of it? Maybe the Persian sage who made the horse has chanced upon her and stolen her away, in revenge for my father's treatment of him.' Then he sought the keepers of the garden and asked them if they had seen any enter the garden.

Quoth they, 'We have seen none enter but the Persian sage, who came to gather simples.' So the prince was certified that it was indeed he that had taken away the princess and abode confounded and perplexed concerning his case. And he was abashed before the folk and returning to his father, [told him what had happened and] said to him, 'Take the troops and return to the city. As for me, I will never return till I have cleared up this affair.' When the King heard this, he wept and beat his breast and said to him, 'O my son, calm thyself and master thy chagrin and return with us and look what King's daughter thou wouldst fain have, that I may marry thee to her.' But the prince paid no heed to his words and bidding him farewell, departed, whilst the King returned to the city and their joy was changed into mourning.

Now, as Fate would have it, when the prince left the princess in the pavilion and betook himself to his father's palace, for the ordering of his affair, the Persian entered the garden to pluck simples and scenting the fragrance of musk and essences, that exhaled from the princess's person and perfumed the whole place, followed it till he came to the pavilion and saw the horse, that he had made with his own hands, standing at the door. At this sight, his heart was filled with joy and gladness, for he had mourned sore for it, since it had gone out of his hand. So he went up to it and examining its every part, found it safe and sound; whereupon he was about to mount and ride away, when he bethought himself and said, 'Needs must I first look what the prince hath brought and left here with the horse.' So he entered the pavilion and seeing

the princess sitting there, as she were the sun shining in the cloudless sky, knew her to be some high-born lady and doubted not but the prince had brought her thither on the horse and left her in the pavilion, whilst he went to the city, to make ready for her entry in state.

Then he went up to her and kissed the earth before her, whereupon she raised her eyes to him and finding him exceeding foul of face and favour, said, 'Who art thou?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I am sent by the prince, who hath bidden me bring thee to another garden, nearer the city; for that my lady the queen cannot go so far a journey and is unwilling, of her joy in thee, that another should forestall her with thee.' 'Where is the prince?' asked she; and the Persian replied, 'He is in the city, with his father, and will presently come for thee in great state.' 'O fellow,' said she, 'could he find none to send to me but thee?' At this he laughed and answered, 'O my lady, let not the ugliness of my face and the foulness of my favour deceive thee. Hadst thou profited of me as hath the prince, thou wouldst praise my affair. Indeed, he chose me as his messenger to thee, because of my uncomeliness and forbidding aspect, in his jealousy and love of thee: else hath he slaves and pages and servants, white and black, out of number, each goodlier than the other.' When she heard this, it commended itself to her reason and she believed him; so she rose and putting her hand in his, said, 'O my father, what hast thou brought me to ride?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'thou shalt ride the horse thou camest on.' Quoth she, 'I cannot ride it by myself.' Whereupon he smiled and knew that she was in his power and said, 'I myself will ride with thee.' So he mounted and taking her up behind him, bound her fast to himself, for she knew not what he would with her. Then he turned the peg of ascent, whereupon the belly of the horse became full of wind and it swayed to and fro and rose with them into the air nor slackened in its flight, till it was out of sight of the city.

When the princess saw this, she said to him, 'O fellow, what didst thou tell me of the prince, that he sent thee to me?' 'Foul befall the prince!' answered the Persian. 'He is a scurril knave.' And she said, 'Out on thee! How darest thou disobey thy lord's commandment!' 'He is no lord of mine,' rejoined the Persian. 'Knowst thou who I am?' 'I know nothing of thee,' replied the princess, 'save what thou toldest me.' Quoth he, 'What I told thee was a trick of mine against thee and the prince. I am he who made this horse under us, and I have long regretted its loss; for the prince made himself master of it. But now I have gotten possession of it and of thee too, and I will rack his heart, even as he hath racked mine; nor shall he ever have the horse again. So take comfort and be of good cheer, for I can be of more service to thee than he.' When she heard this, she buffeted her face and cried out, saying, 'Ah, woe is me! I have neither gotten my beloved nor kept my father and mother!' And she wept sore over what had befallen her, whilst the Persian fared on with her, without ceasing, till he came to the land of the Greeks and alighted in a verdant meadow, abounding in trees and streams.

Now this meadow was near a city, in which was a king of great puissance, and it befell that he went forth that day to hunt and divert himself. As he passed by the meadow, he saw the Persian standing there, with the princess and the horse by his side, and before he was aware, the King's followers fell upon him and carried him, the lady and the horse to their master, who noting the foulness of his favour and the beauty

and grace of the princess, said to the latter, 'O my lady, what kin is this old fellow to thee?' The Persian made haste to reply, 'She is my wife and the daughter of my father's brother.' But she gave him the lie and said, 'O King, by Allah, I know him not, nor is he my husband, but hath stolen me away by force and fraud.' Thereupon the King bade beat the Persian, and they beat him, till he was well-nigh dead; after which the King commanded to carry him to the city and cast him into prison, and taking the princess and the horse from him, set the former in his harem and laid up the latter in his treasury, though he knew not its properties nor the secret of its motion.

Meanwhile, the prince donned a travelling-habit and taking what he needed of money, set out, in very sorry plight, in quest of the princess, and journeyed from country to country and city to city, enquiring after the ebony horse, whilst all who heard him marvelled at him and deemed his talk extravagant. Thus did he a long while; but, for all his enquiry and research, he could win at no news of her. At last, he came to the city of Senaa and there enquired for her, but could get no tidings of her and found her father mourning her loss. So he turned back and made for the land of the Greeks, pursuing his enquiries as he went, till, as chance would have it, he alighted at a certain khan and saw a company of merchants sitting talking. He sat down near them and heard one say to the others, 'O my friends, I happened lately upon a wonder of wonders.' 'What was that?' asked they, and he answered, 'I was late in such a city,' naming the city wherein was the princess, 'and heard its people speak of a strange thing that had lately befallen. It was that their King went out one day a-hunting, with a company of his courtiers and the grandees of his realm, and coming to a green meadow, espied there a man standing, with a horse of ebony, and a lady sitting hard by. The man was ugly and foul of favour, but the lady was a marvel of beauty and grace and symmetry; and as for the ebony horse, it was a wonder, never saw eyes aught goodlier than it nor more perfect than its fashion.' 'And what did the King with them?' asked the others. 'As for the man,' said the merchant, 'he questioned him of the lady and he pretended that she was his wife and the daughter of his father's brother; but she gave him the lie. So the King took her from him and bade beat him and cast him into prison. As for the horse, I know not what became of it.' When the prince heard this, he drew near unto the speaker and questioned him discreetly and courteously, till he told him the name of the city and of its king; which when he knew, he passed the night, full of joy.

On the morrow, he set out and travelled till he reached the city; but, when he would have entered, the gatekeepers laid hands on him, that they might bring him before the King; for that it was his wont to question all strangers respecting their conditions and the crafts in which they were skilled and the reason of their coming thither. Now it was eventide, when he entered the city, and it was then too late to go in to the King or take counsel with him respecting him. So they carried him to the prison, thinking to lay him therein for the night; but, when the warders saw his beauty and grace, they could not find it in their hearts to imprison him, but made him sit with them, without the prison; and when food came to them, he ate his fill with them. When they had made an end of eating, they turned to him and said, 'What countryman art thou?' 'I come from Persia,' answered he, 'the land of the Chosroës.' When they heard this, they laughed and one of them said, 'O Chosroän, I have heard

the talk of men and their histories and looked upon their conditions; but never saw or heard I a greater liar than the Chosroän that is with us in the prison.' 'Nor,' quoth another, 'did I ever see fouler than his favour or more repulsive than his aspect.' 'What have ye seen of his lying?' asked the prince, and they answered, 'He pretends that he is a sage. Now the King came upon him, as he went a-hunting, and found with him a most beautiful lady and a horse of ebony, never saw I a handsomer. As for the lady, she is with the King, who is enamoured of her and would fain marry her; but she is mad, and were this man a physician, as he pretends, he would have cured her, for the King doth his utmost endeavour to find a remedy for her disease, and this whole year past hath he spent treasures upon physicians and astrologers, on her account; but none can avail to cure her. As for the horse, it is in the royal treasury, and the man is here with us in the prison; and all night long he weeps and bemoans himself and will not let us sleep.'

When the prince heard this, he bethought himself of a device by which he might compass his desire; and presently the warders, being minded to sleep, clapped him into the prison and locked the door. He heard the Persian weeping and bemoaning himself, in his own tongue, and saying, 'Woe is me for my sin, that I sinned against myself and against the King's son, in that which I did with the damsel; for I neither left her nor got my desire of her! All this comes of my want of sense, in that I sought for myself that which I deserved not and which befitted not the like of me; for he, who seeks what befits him not, falleth into the like of my predicament.' When the prince heard this, he accosted him in Persian, saying, 'How long wilt thou keep up this weeping and wailing? Thinkst thou that there hath befallen thee what never befell other than thou?' When the Persian heard this, he made friends with him and began to complain to him of his case and misfortunes.

As soon as it was day, the warders took the prince and carried him before the King, informing him that he had entered the city on the previous night, at a time when no audience could be had of him. Quoth the King to the prince, 'Whence comest thou and what is thy name and craft and why comest thou hither?' And he answered, 'I am called, in Persian, Herjeh. I come from the land of Fars and I am of the men of art and especially of the art of medicine and cure the sick and the mad. For this, I go round about all countries and cities, adding knowledge to my knowledge, and whenever I see a sick person, I heal him; and this is my craft.' When the King heard this, he rejoiced exceedingly and said, 'O excellent sage, thou hast come to us at a time when we have need of thee.' Then he acquainted him with the case of the princess, adding, 'If thou win to cure her and recover her of her madness, thou shalt have of me whatever thou seekest.' 'May God advance the King!' rejoined the prince. 'Describe to me all thou hast seen of her madness and tell me how long it is since it attacked her; also how thou camest by her.' So the King told him the whole story, from first to last, adding, 'The sage is in prison.' 'O august King,' said the prince, 'and what hast thou done with the horse?' 'It is with me yet, laid up in one of my treasure-chambers,' replied the King; whereupon quoth the prince in himself, 'The first thing to do is to see the horse and assure myself of its condition. If it be whole and unhurt, all will be well; but, if its works be destroyed, I must find some other way of delivering my beloved.'

So he turned to the King and said to him, 'O King, I must see the horse in question: haply I may find in it somewhat that will serve me for the recovery of the damsel.' 'With all my heart,' replied the King and taking him by the hand, led him to the place where the horse was. The prince went round about it, examining its condition, and found it whole and unhurt, whereat he rejoiced greatly and said to the King, 'May God exalt the King! I would fain go in to the damsel, that I may see how it is with her; for I hope, by God's grace, to cure her by means of the horse.' Then he bade take care of the horse and the King carried him to the princess's apartment, where he found her writhing and beating herself against the ground, as was her wont; but there was no madness in her, and she did this but that none might approach her. When the prince saw her thus, he said to her, 'No harm shall betide thee, O ravishment of all creatures;' and went on to soothe her and speak her fair, till he won to make himself known to her; whereupon she gave a loud cry and fell down in a swoon for excess of joy; but the King thought this came of her fear of him.

Then the prince put his mouth to her ear and said to her, 'O seduction of the universe, have a care for thy life and mine and be patient and constant; for we have need of patience and skilful ordinance to make shift for our delivery from this tyrannical King. To begin with, I will now go out to him and tell him that thou art possessed of a genie, and hence thy madness; but, that if he will loose thee from thy bonds, I will engage to heal thee and drive away the evil spirit. So, when he comes in to thee, do thou give him fair words, that he may think I have cured thee, and all will be accomplished as we desire.' Quoth she, 'I hear and obey;' and he went out to the King, full of joy and happiness, and said to him, 'O august King, by thy good fortune I have discovered her disease and its remedy and have cured her for thee. So now do thou go in to her and speak softly to her and entreat her kindly, and promise her what may please her; so shall all thou desirest of her be accomplished to thee.' So he went in to her and when she saw him, she rose and kissing the ground, bade him welcome; whereat he was greatly rejoiced and bade the eunuchs and waiting-women attend her and carry her to the bath and make ready for her dresses and ornaments.

So they went in to her and saluted her, and she returned their greeting, after the goodliest and pleasantest fashion; after which they clad her in royal apparel and clasping a collar of jewels about her neck, carried her to the bath and served her there. Then they brought her forth, as she were the full moon; and when she came into the King's presence, she saluted him and kissed the ground before him, whereupon he rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy and said to the prince, 'All this is of thy blessing, may God increase us of thy good offices!' Quoth the prince, 'O King, it behoves, for the completion of her cure, that thou carry her forth, together with the ebony horse, and attend her with all thy troops to the place where thou foundest her, that there I may expel from her the evil spirit, by whom she is possessed, and bind him and kill him, so he may never more return to her.' 'With all my heart,' answered the King. Then he caused carry out the horse to the meadow in question and mounting, rode thither with all his troops and the princess, knowing not the prince's purpose.

When they came to the appointed place, the prince bade set the horse and the princess as far as the eye could reach from the King and his troops and said to the former, 'With thy leave, I will now proceed to the needful fumigations and

conjurations and imprison the genie here, that he may nevermore return to her. After this, I shall mount the horse and take the damsel up behind me; whereupon it will sway to and fro and fare forward, till it come to thee, when the affair will be at an end; and after this thou mayst do with her as thou wilt.' And when the King heard his words, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy. So the prince mounted the horse and taking the princess up behind him, bound her fast to him, whilst the King and his troops watched him. Then he turned the peg of ascent and the horse took flight and soared with them into the air, till he disappeared from sight.

The King abode half the day, expecting their return; but they returned not. So, when he despaired of them, he returned to the city with his troops, repenting him greatly of that which he had done and grieving sore for the loss of the damsel. He shut himself up in his palace, mourning and afflicted; but his Viziers came in to him and applied themselves to comfort him, saying, 'Verily, he who took the damsel is an enchanter, and praised be God who hath delivered thee from his craft and sorcery!' And they ceased not from him, till he was comforted for her loss.

Meanwhile, the prince bent his course, in joy and cheer, towards his father's capital and stayed not, till he alighted on his own palace, where he set the princess in safety; after which he went in to his father and mother and acquainted them with her coming, whereat they rejoiced exceedingly. Then he made great banquets to the townsfolk and they held high festival a whole month, at the end of which time he went in to the princess and they rejoiced in one another with an exceeding joy. But his father broke the horse in pieces and destroyed its works. Moreover, the prince wrote a letter to the princess's father, advising him of all that had befallen her and how she was now married to him and in all health and happiness, and sent it by a messenger, together with costly presents and rarities. The messenger, in due course, arrived at the city of Senaa and delivered the letter and the presents to the King, who, when he read the former, rejoiced greatly and accepted the presents, rewarding the bearer handsomely. Moreover, he sent rich presents to his son-in-law by the same messenger, who returned to his master and acquainted him with what had passed, whereat he was much cheered. And after this the prince wrote a letter every year to his father-in-law and sent him a present, till, in course of time, his father King Sabour died and he reigned in his stead, ruling justly over his subjects and ordering himself well and righteously towards them, so that they submitted themselves to him and did him loyal service; and he and his wife abode in the enjoyment of all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, He that layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs; and glory be to the Living One who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the Seen and the Unseen!

Uns El Wujoud and the Vizier's Daughter Rose-In-Bud.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a King of great power and glory and dominion, who had a Vizier named Ibrahim, and this Vizier had a daughter of extraordinary beauty and grace, gifted with surpassing brilliancy and all perfection, possessed of abundant wit and perfectly accomplished. She loved wine and good cheer and fair faces and choice verses and rare stories; and the delicacy of her charms invited all hearts to love, even as Saith the poet, describing her:

She shines out like the moon at full, that midst the stars doth fare,
And for a wrapping-veil she hath the ringlets of her hair.
The Eastern zephyr gives her boughs to drink of all its sweets
And like a jointed cane, she sways to every breath of air.
She smiles in passing by. O thou that dost alike accord
With red and yellow and arrayed in each, alike art fair,
Thou sportest with my wit in love, so that indeed meseems
As if a sparrow in the clutch of playful urchin 'twere.

Her name was Rose-in-bud and she was so named for the exceeding delicacy and perfection of her beauty; and the King loved to carouse with her, because of her wit and good breeding.

Now it was the King's custom yearly to gather together all the nobles of his realm and play with the ball. So, when the day came round, on which the folk assembled for ball-play, the Vizier's daughter seated herself at her lattice, to divert herself by looking on at the game; and as they were at play, her eyes fell upon a youth among them, never was seen a handsomer than he or a goodlier of favour, for he was bright of face, laughing-teethed, tall and broad-shouldered. She looked at him again and again and could not take her fill of gazing on him. Then she said to her nurse, 'What is the name of yonder handsome young man among the troops?' 'O my daughter,' replied the nurse, 'they are all handsome. Which of them dost thou mean?' 'Wait till he passes,' said Rose-in-bud, 'and I will point him out to thee.' So she took an apple and waited till he came under her window, when she dropped it on him, whereupon he raised his head, to see who did this, and saw the Vizier's daughter at the window, as she were the full moon in the darkness of the night; nor did he withdraw his eyes, till he had fallen passionately in love with her; and he recited the following verses:

Was it an archer shot me or did thine eyes undo
The lover's heart that saw thee, what time thou metst his view?
Did the notched arrow reach me from midst a host, indeed,
Or was it from a lattice that launched at me it flew?

When the game was at an end, he went away with the King, [whose servant and favourite he was,] with heart occupied with love of her; and she said to her nurse, 'What is the name of that youth I showed thee?' 'His name is Uns el Wujoud,' answered she; whereat Rose-in-bud shook her head and lay down on her couch, with a heart on fire for love. Then, sighing deeply, she improvised the following verses:

He erred not who dubbed thee, "All creatures' delight,"
That pleasance and bounty at once dust unite.
Full-moonlike of aspect, O thou whose fair face
O'er all the creation sheds glory and light,
Thou'rt peerless midst mortals, the sovran of grace,
And many a witness to this I can cite.
Thy brows are a Noun and shine eyes are a Sad,
That the hand of the loving Creator did write;
Thy shape is the soft, tender sapling, that gives
Of its bounties to all that its favours invite.
Yea, indeed, thou excellest the world's cavaliers
In pleasance and beauty and bounty and might.

When she had finished, she wrote the verses on a sheet of paper, which she folded in a piece of gold-embroidered silk and laid under her pillow. Now one of her nurses saw her; so she came up to her and held her in talk, till she slept, when she stole the scroll from under her pillow and reading it, knew that she had fallen in love with Uns el Wujoud. Then she returned the scroll to its place and when her mistress awoke, she said to her, 'O my lady, indeed, I am to thee a faithful counsellor and am tenderly solicitous for thee. Know that passion is grievous and the hiding it melteth iron and causeth sickness and unease; nor is there reproach for whoso confesses it.' 'O my nurse,' rejoined Rose-in-bud,'and what is the remedy of passion?' 'The remedy of passion is enjoyment,' answered the nurse. 'And how may one come by enjoyment?' asked Rose-in-bud. 'By letters and messages,' replied the nurse, 'and many a tender word and greeting; this brings lovers together and makes hard matters easy. So, if thou have aught at heart, mistress mine, I will engage to keep thy secret and do thy need and carry thy letters.'

When the girl heard this, her reason fled for joy; but she restrained herself from speech, till she should see the issue of the matter, saying in herself, 'None knoweth this thing of me, nor will I trust this woman with my secret, till I have proved her.' Then said the nurse, 'O my lady, I saw in my sleep as though one came to me and said, "Thy mistress and Uns el Wujoud love one another; so do thou serve their loves by carrying their messages and doing their need and keeping their secrets; and much good shall befall thee." So now I have told thee my dream, and it is thine to decide.' 'O my nurse,' quoth Rose-in-bud, 'canst thou keep secrets?' 'And how should I not keep secrets,' answered the nurse, 'I that am of the flower of the free-born?' Then Rose-in-bud pulled out the scroll, on which she had written the verses afore said, and said to her,' Carry this my letter to Uns el Wujoud and bring me his answer.'

So the nurse took the letter and repairing to Uns el Wujoud, kissed his hands and saluted him right courteously, then gave him the letter; and he read it and wrote on the back the following verses:

I temper my heart in passion and hide my case as I may;
But my case interprets for me and doth my love bewray.
And whenas my lids brim over with tears, – lest the spy should see
And come to fathom my secret,– "My eye is sore," I say.

Of old I was empty-hearted and knew not what love was; But now
I am passion's bondman, my heart to love's a prey.
To thee I prefer my petition, complaining of passion and pain,
So haply thou mayst be softened and pity my dismay.
With the tears of my eye I have traced it, that so unto thee it may
The tidings of what I suffer for thee to thee convey.
God watch o'er a visage, that veileth itself with beauty, a face
That the full moon serves as a bondman and the stars as slaves obey!
Yea' Allah protect her beauty, whose like I ne'er beheld!
The boughs from her graceful carriage, indeed, might learn to sway.
I beg thee to grant me a visit; algates, if it irk thee nought.
An thou knewst how dearly I'd prize it, thou wouldst not say me nay.
I give thee my life, so haply thou mayst accept it: to me
Thy presence is life eternal and hell thy turning away.

Then he folded the letter and kissing it, gave it to the nurse and said to her, 'O nurse, incline thy lady's heart to me.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she and carried the letter to her mistress, who kissed it and laid it on her head, then wrote at the foot of it these verses:

Harkye, thou whose heart is taken with my grace and loveliness,
Have but patience, and right surely thou my favours shalt possess.
When we were assured the passion thou avouchedst was sincere
And that that which us betided had betided thee no less,
Gladly had we then vouchsafed thee what thou sighedst for, and more;
But our guardians estopped us to each other from access.
When night darkens on the dwellings, fires are lighted in our heart
And our entrails burn within us, for desire and love's excess.
Yea, for love and longing, slumber is a stranger to our couch
And the burning pangs of fever do our body sore distress.
'Twas a law of passion ever, love and longing to conceal;
Lift not thou the curtain from us nor our secret aye transgress.
Ah, my heart is overflowing with the love of yon gazelle;
Would it had not left our dwellings for the distant wilderness.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the nurse, who took it and went out to go to the young man; but as she went forth the door, her master met her and said to her, 'Whither away?' 'To the bath,' answered she; but, in her trouble, she dropped the letter, without knowing it, and one of the servants, seeing it lying in the way, picked it up. When she came without the door, she sought for it, but found it not, so turned back to her mistress and told her of this and what had befallen her with the Vizier.

Meanwhile, the latter came out of the harem and seated himself on his couch. Presently, the servant, who had picked up the letter, came in to him, with it in his hand, and said, 'O my lord, I found this paper lying on the floor and picked it up.' So the Vizier took it from his hand, folded as it was, and opening it, read the verses above set down. Then he examined the writing and knew it for his daughter's hand;

whereupon he went in to her mother, weeping so sore that his beard was drenched. 'What makes thee weep, O my lord?' asked she; and he answered, 'Take this letter and see what is therein.' So she took it and saw it to be a love-letter from her daughter Rose-in-bud to Uns el Wujoud; whereupon the tears sprang to her eyes; but she mastered herself and swallowing her tears, said to her husband, 'O my lord, there is no profit in weeping: the right course is to cast about for a means of preserving thine honour and concealing thy daughter's affair.' And she went on to comfort him and lighten his trouble. Quoth he, 'I am fearful of what may ensue this passion of my daughter, and that for two reasons. The first concerns myself; it is, that she is my daughter; the second, that Uns el Wujoud is a favourite with the Sultan, who loves him with an exceeding love, and maybe great troubles shall come of this affair. What deemest thou of the matter?' 'Wait,' answered she, 'whilst I pray to God for direction.' So she prayed a two-bow prayer, according to the prophetic ordinance of the prayer for divine guidance; after which she said to her husband, 'Amiddleward the Sea of Treasures stands a mountain called the Mount of the Bereaved Mother,' (the cause of which being so named shall follow in its place, if it be the will of God,) 'and thither can none come, save with difficulty; do thou make her an abiding-place there.'

So the Vizier and his wife agreed to build, on the mountain in question, a strong castle and lodge his daughter therein with a year's victual, to be annually renewed, and attendants to serve and keep her company. Accordingly, he collected builders and carpenters and architects and despatched them to the mountain, where they builded her an impregnable castle, never saw eyes its like. Then he made ready victual and carriage for the journey and going in to his daughter by night, bade her make ready to set out on a pleasure-excursion. She refused to set out by night, but he was instant with her, till she went forth; and when she saw the preparations for the journey, her heart misgave her of separation from her beloved and she wept sore and wrote upon the door the following verses, to acquaint him with what had passed and with the transports of passion and grief that were upon her, transports such as would make the flesh quake, that would cause the hearts of stones to melt and eyes to overflow with tears:

By Allah, O house, if the loved one pass in the morning-glow
And greet with the greeting of lovers, as they pass to and fro,
Give him our salutation, a pure and fragrant one,
For that we have departed, and whither he may not know.
Why on this wise they hurry me off by stealth, anights
And lightly equipped, I know not, nor whither with me they go.
Neath cover of night and darkness, they carry me forth, alack I
Whilst the birds in the brake bewail us and make their moan for our woe;
And the tongue of the case interprets their language and cries,
"Alas, Alas for the pain of parting from those that we love, heigho!"
When I saw that the cups of sev'rance were filled and that
Fate, indeed, Would give us to drink of its bitter, unmingled, would we or no,
I blended the draught with patience becoming, as best I might;
But patience avails not to solace my heart for your loss, I trow.

Then she mounted, and they set forward with her and fared on over desert and plain and hill, till they came to the shore of the Sea of Treasures, where they pitched their tents and built a great ship, in which they embarked her and her suite and carried them over to the mountain. Here they left them in the castle and making their way back to the shore, broke up the vessel, in obedience to the Vizier's commandment, and returned home, weeping over what had befallen.

Meanwhile, Uns el Wujoud arose from sleep and prayed the morning prayer, after which he mounted and rode forth to wait upon the Sultan. On his way, he passed by the Vizier's house, thinking to see some of his followers, as of wont, but saw no one and drawing near the door, read the verses aforesaid written thereon. At this sight, his senses failed him; fire was kindled in his vitals and he returned to his lodging, where he passed the rest of the day in ceaseless trouble and anxiety, without finding ease or patience, till night darkened upon him, when his transport redoubled. So he put off his clothes and disguising himself in a fakir's habit, set out, at a venture, under cover of the night, distraught and knowing not whither he went.

He wandered on all that night and next day, till the heat of the sun grew fierce and the mountains flamed like fire and thirst was grievous upon him. Presently, he espied a tree, by whose side was a spring of running water; so he made towards it and sitting down in the shade, on the bank of the rivulet, essayed to drink, but found that the water had no taste in his mouth. Then, [looking in the stream,] he saw that his body was wasted, his colour changed and his face grown pale and his, feet, to boot, swollen with walking and weariness. So he shed copious tears and repeated the following verses:

The lover is drunken with love of his fair;
In longing and heat he redoubles fore'er.
Love-maddened, confounded, distracted, perplexed,
No dwelling is pleasant to him and no fare.
For how, to a lover cut off from his love,
Can life be delightsome? 'Twere strange an it were.
I melt with the fire of my passion for her
And the tears down my cheek roll and never forbear.
Shall I ever behold her or one from her stead,
With whom I may solace my heart in despair?

And he wept till he wet the ground; after which he rose and fared on again over deserts and wilds, till there came out upon him a lion, with a neck buried in hair, a head the bigness of a dome, a mouth wider than the door [thereof] and teeth like elephants' tusks. When Uns el Wujoud saw him, he gave himself up for lost and turning towards Mecca, pronounced the professions of the faith and prepared for death.

Now he had read in books that whoso will flatter the lion, beguileth him, for that he is lightly duped by fair words and glorieth in praise; so he began and said, 'O lion of the forest and the waste! O unconquerable warrior! O father of heroes and Sultan of wild beasts! Behold, I am a desireful lover, whom passion and severance have undone. Since I parted from my beloved, I have lost my reason; wherefore, do thou hearken to

my speech and have ruth on my passion and love-longing.' When the lion heard this, he drew back from him and sitting down on his hind-quarters, raised his head to him and began to frisk his tail and paws to him; which when Uns el Wujoud saw, he recited these verses:

Wilt slay me, O lord of the desert, before
My enslaver I meet with, e'en her I adore?
No fat on me is; I'm no booty for thee;
For the loss of my loved one hath wasted me sore.
Yea, my love's separation hath worn out my soul,
And I'm grown like a shape, with a shroud covered o'er.
Give the railers not cause to exult in my woe,
O prince of the spoilers, O lion of war!
A lover, all sleepless for loss of my dear,
I'm drowned in the tears from mine eyelids that pour;
And my pining for her in the darkness of night
Hath robbed me, for passion, of reason and lore.

When he had finished, the lion rose and coming softly up to him, with his eyes full of tears, licked him with his tongue, then walked on before him, signing to him, as who should say, 'Follow me.' So he followed him, and he led him on till he brought him, over a mountain, to the farther side, where he came upon the track of a caravan and knew it to be that of Rose-in-bud and her company. When the lion saw that he knew the track and set himself to follow it, he turned back and went his way; whilst Uns el Wujoud followed the foot-marks, till they brought him to a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. The trail led down to the water's edge and there broke off; whereby he knew that they had taken ship there and had continued their journey by sea. So he lost hope of finding his beloved and repeated the following verses, weeping sore:

Far's the place of visitation and my patience faileth me
For my love; but how to reach her o'er the abysses of the sea?
When, for love of her, my vitals are consumed and I've forsworn
Slumber, sleep for wake exchanging, ah, how can I patient be?
Since the day she left the homesteads and departed, hath my heart
Burnt with never-ceasing anguish, all a-fire with agony.
Oxus and Jaxartes, running like Euphrates, are my tears;
More than rain and flood abounding, run like rivers to the sea.
Ulcerated are my eyelids with the running of the tears,
And my heart on fires of passion's burnt and wasted utterly.
Yea, the armies of my longing and my transport on me pressed,
And the hosts of my endurance did before them break and flee.
Lavishly my life I've ventured for the love of her; for life
Is the lightest to a lover of all ventures, verily.
Be an eye of God unpunished that beheld the beauteous one,
Than the moon how much more splendid, in the harem's sanctuary!
Struck was I and smitten prostrate by wide-opened eyes, whose shafts,

From a bow all stringless loosened, pierced the hapless heart of me.
By the soft and flexile motions of her shape she captived me,
Swaying as the limber branches sway upon the cassia-tree.
Union with her I covet, that therewith I may apply
Solace to the pains of passion, love and care and misery.
For the love of her, afflicted, as I am, I have become;
All that's fallen on me betided from the evil eye, perdie.

Then he wept, till he swooned away, and abode in his swoon a long while. When he came to himself, he looked right and left and seeing none in the desert, was fearful of the wild beasts; so he climbed to the top of a high mountain, where he heard a man's voice speaking within a cavern. He listened and found it to be that of a devotee, who had forsworn the world and given himself up to pious exercises. So he knocked thrice at the cavern door; but the hermit made him no answer, neither came forth to him; wherefore he sighed heavily and recited the following verses:

What way is open unto me, to my desire to get And put off
weariness and toil and trouble and regret?
All pains and terrors have combined on me, to make me hoar And
old of head and heart, whilst I a very child am yet.
I find no friend to solace me of longing and unease' Nor one
'gainst passion and its stress to aid me and abet.
Alas, the torments I endure for waste and wistful love!
Fortune, meseems, 'gainst me is turned and altogether set.
Ah, woe's me for the lover's pain, unresting, passion-burnt,
Him who in parting's bitter cup his lips perforce hath wet!
His wit is ravished clean away by separation's woe,
Fire in his heart and all consumed his entrails by its fret.
Ah, what a dreadful day it was, when to her stead I came
And that, which on the door was writ, my eyes confounded met!
I wept, until I gave the earth to drink of my despair;
But still from friend and foe I hid the woes that me beset.
Then strayed I forth till, in the waste, a lion sprang on me
And would have slain me straight; but him with flattering words I met
And soothed him. So he spared my life and succoured me, as 'twere
He too had known love's taste and been entangled in its net.
Yet, for all this, could I but win to come to my desire,
All, that I've suffered and endured, straightway I should forget.
O thou, that harbour'st in thy cave, distracted from the world,
Meseems thou'st tasted love and been its slave, O anchoret!

Hardly had he made an end of these verses when, behold, the door of the cavern opened and he heard one say' 'Alas, the pity of it I' So he entered and saluted the hermit, who returned his greeting and said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'Uns el Wujoud,' answered the young man. 'And what brings thee hither?' asked the hermit. So he told him his whole story, whereat he wept and said' 'O Uns el Wujoud, these twenty years have I dwelt in this place, but never beheld I any here, till the other day, when I

heard a noise of cries and weeping, and looking forth in the direction of the sound, saw much people and tents pitched on the sea-shore. They built a ship, in which they embarked and sailed away. Then some of them returned with the ship and breaking it up, went their way; and methinks those, who embarked in the ship and returned not, are they whom thou seekest. In that case, thy trouble must needs be grievous and thou art excusable; though never yet was lover but suffered sorrows.' Then he recited the following verses:

Uns el Wujoud, thou deem'st me free of heart, but, wel-a-way!
Longing and transport and desire fold and unfold me aye.
Yea, love and passion have I known even from my earliest years,
Since at my mother's nursing breast a suckling babe I lay.
I struggled sore and long with Love, till I his power confessed.
If thou enquire at him of me, he will me not unsay.
I quaffed the cup of passion out, with languor and disease,
And as a phantom I became for pining and decay.
Strong was I, but my strength is gone and neath the swords of eyes,
The armies of my patience broke and vanished clean away.
Hope not to win delight of love, without chagrin and woe;
For contrary with contrary conjoined is alway.
But fear not change from lover true; do thou but constant be
Unto thy wish, and thou shalt sure be happy yet some day:
For unto lovers passion hath ordained that to forget
Is heresy, forbidden all its mandates that obey.

Then he rose and coming to the youth, embraced him, and they wept together, till the hills rang with their crying and they fell down in a swoon. When they revived, they swore brotherhood in God the Most High, and the hermit said to Uns el Wujoud, 'This night will I pray to God and seek of Him direction what thou shouldst do to attain thy desire.'

To return to Rose-in-bud. When they brought her into the castle and she beheld its ordinance, she wept and exclaimed, 'By Allah, thou art a goodly place, save that thou lackest the presence of the beloved in thee!' Then, seeing [many] birds in the island, she bade her people set snares for them and hang up all they caught in cages within the castle; and they did so. But she sat at a window of the castle and bethought her of what had passed, and passion and transport and love-longing redoubled upon her, till she burst into tears and repeated the following verses:

To whom, of my desire complaining, shall I cry,
To whom, for loss of loves and parting's sorrow, sigh?
Flames rage within my breast, but I reveal them not,
For fear lest they my case discover to the spy.
I'm grown as thin as e'er a bodkin's wood, so worn
With absence and lament and agony am I.
Where is the loved one's eye, to see how I'm become
Even as a blasted tree, stripped bare and like to die?

They wronged me, when they shut me prisoner in a place,
Wherein my love, alas I may never come me nigh.
Greetings a thousandfold I beg the sun to bear,
What time he riseth up and setteth from the sky,
To a beloved one, who puts the moon to shame,
For loveliness, and doth the Indian cane outvie.
If the rose ape his cheek, "Now God forfend," I say,
"That of my portion aught to pilfer thou shouldst try."
Lo, in his mouth are springs of limpid water sweet,
Refreshment that would bring to those in flames who lie.
How shall I one forget who is my heart and soul,
My malady and he that healing can apply?

Then, as the shadows darkened upon her, her longing increased and she called to mind the past and recited these verses also:

The shadows darken and passion stirs up my sickness amain
And longing rouses within me the old desireful pain.
The anguish of parting hath taken its sojourn in my breast
And love and longing and sorrow have maddened heart and brain.
Passion hath made me restless and yearning consumes my soul
And tears discover my secret, that else concealed had lain.
I know of no way to ease me of sickness and care and woe;
Nor can my weak endeavour reknit Love's severed skein.
My heart is a raging furnace, because of the heat whereof
My entrails are racked with anguish, that nothing can assain.
O thou, that thinkest to blame me for what is fallen on me,
Enough, I suffer with patience whatever the Fates ordain.
I swear I shall ne'er find comfort nor be consoled for them,
The oath of the children of passion, whose oaths are never in vain!
Bear tidings, O night, to my dear ones and greet them and witness bear
That thou knowest in thee I sleep not, but ever to wake am fain.

Meanwhile, the hermit said to Uns el Wujoud, 'Go down into the valley and fetch me palm-fibre.' So he went and returned with the palm-fibre, which the hermit took and twisting into ropes, made therewith a net, such as is used for carrying straw; after which he said to the youth, 'O Uns el Wujoud, in the heart of the valley grows a gourd, which springs up and dries upon its roots. Go thither and fill this net therewith; then tie it together and casting it into the water, embark thereon and make for the midst of the sea, so haply thou shalt come to thy desire; for he, who adventureth not himself, shall not attain that he seeketh.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Uns el Wujoud and bidding the hermit farewell after he had prayed for him, betook himself to the hollow of the valley, where he did as he had counselled him and launched out upon the water, supported by the net.

Then there arose a wind, which drove him out to sea, till he was lost to the hermit's view; and he ceased not to fare on over the abysses of the ocean, one billow

tossing him up on the crest of the wave and another bearing him down into the trough of the sea, and he beholding the while the terrors and wonders of the deep, for the space of three days, at the end of which time Fate cast him upon the Mount of the Bereft Mother, where he landed, weak and giddy as a fledgling bird, for hunger and thirst; but, finding there streams running and birds warbling on the branches and fruit-laden trees, growing in clusters and singly, he ate of the fruits and drank of the streams. Then he walked on till he saw some white thing alar off, and making for it, found that it was a strongly-fortified castle. So he went up to the gate and finding it locked, sat down by it.

He sat thus three days and on the fourth, the gate opened and an eunuch came out, who seeing Uns el Wujoud seated there, said to him, 'Whence comest thou and who brought thee hither?' Quoth he, 'I come from Ispahan and was travelling by sea with merchandise, when my ship was wrecked and the waves cast me upon this island.' When the eunuch heard this, he wept and embraced him, saying, 'God preserve thee, O [thou that bringest me the] fragrance of the beloved! Ispahan is my own country and I have there a cousin, the daughter of my father's brother, whom I loved and cherished from a child; but a people stronger than we fell upon us and taking me among other booty, docked me and sold me for an eunuch, whilst I was yet a lad; and this is how I come to be what I am.' Then he carried him into the courtyard of the castle, where he saw a great basin of water, surrounded by trees, on whose branches hung cages of silver, with doors of gold, and therein birds warbling and singing the praises of the Requiting King. In the first cage he came to was a turtle dove which, seeing him, raised her voice and cried out, saying, 'O Bountiful One!' Whereat he fell down in a swoon, but, presently coming to himself, sighed heavily and recited the following verses:

O turtle, art thou mad for love, as is my case?
Then sing, 'O Bountiful!' and seek the Lord His grace!
Tell me, doth thy descant in joyance tale its rise
Or in desireful pain, that in thy heart hath place?
If for desire thou moan'st of bygone loves or pin'st
For dear ones that have gone and left thee but their trace,
Or if thou'st lost thy love, like me, ah, then, indeed,
Severance long-felt desire discovereth apace.
God guard a lover true! Though my bones rot, nor time
Nor absence from my heart her image shall efface.

Then he fainted again and presently coming to his senses, went on to the second cage, wherein he found a ring-dove. When it saw him, it sang out, 'O Eternal, I praise thee!' and he sighed and recited these verses:

I heard a ring-dove say in her plaintive note,
"Despite of my woes, O Eternal, I praise Thee still!"
And God, of His grace, reunion of our loves,
In this my travel, may yet to us fulfil.
She visits me oft, with her dusk-red honeyed lips,
And lends to the passion within me an added thrill.
And I cry, whilst the fires in my tortured heart flame high

And my soul for ardour consumes and my eyes distil
Tears that resemble blood and withouten cease
Pour down on my wasted cheeks in many a rill,
There's none created without affliction, and
I Must bear with patience my tribulations, until
The hour of solace with her I love one day Unite me.
Ah, then, by God His power and will,
In succouring lovers, I vow, I'll spend my good,
For they're of my tribe and category still;
And eke from prison I'll loose the birds, to boot,
And leave, for joyance, the thought of every ill!

Then he went on to the third cage, in which was a mocking-bird. When it saw him, it set up a song, and he recited the following verses:

The mocking-bird delighteth me with his harmonious strain,
As 'twere a lover's voice that pines and wastes for love in vain.
Woe's me for those that lovers be! How many a weary night,
For love and anguish and desire, to waken they are fain!
'Twould seem as if they had no part in morning or in sleep,
For all the stress of love and woe that holds their heart and brain.
When I became distraught for her I love and wistfulness
Bound me in fetters strait, the tears from out mine eyes did rain
So thick and fast, they were as chains, and I to her did say,
"My tears have fallen so thick, that now they've bound me with a chain."
The treasures of my patience fail, absence is long on me
And yearning sore; and passion's stress consumeth me amain.
If God's protection cover me and Fortune be but just
And Fate with her whom I adore unite me once again,
I'll doff my clothes, that she may see how worn my body is,
For languishment and severance and solitary pain.

Then he went on to the fourth cage, where he found a nightingale, which, at sight of him, began to tune its plaintive note. When he heard its descant, he burst into tears and repeated the following verses:

The nightingale's note, when the dawning is near,
Distracts from the lute-strings the true lover's ear.
Complaineth, for love-longing, Uns el Wujoud,
Of a passion that blotteth his being out sheer.
How many sweet notes, that would soften, for mirth,
The hardness of iron and stone, do I hear!
The zephyr of morning brings tidings to me
Of meadows, full-flower'd for the blossoming year.
The scents on the breeze and the music of birds,
In the dawning, transport me with joyance and cheer.
But I think of a loved one, that's absent from me,

And mine eyes rain in torrents, with tear upon tear;
And the ardour of longing flames high in my breast,
As a fire in the heart of a brasier burns clear.
May Allah vouchsafe to a lover distraught
To see and foregather once more with his dear!
Yea, for lovers, heart-sickness and longing and woe
And wake are excuses that plainly appear.

Then he went on a little and came to a handsome cage, than which there was no goodlier there, and in it a culver, that is to Say, a wood-pigeon, the bird renowned among the birds as the singer of love-longing, with a collar of jewels about its neck, wonder-goodly of ordinance. He considered it awhile and seeing it mazed and brooding in its cage, shed tears and repeated these verses:

O culver of the copse, may peace upon thee light,
O friend of all who love and every wistful wight!
I love a young gazelle, a slender one, whose glance
Than sharpest sabre's point is keener and more bright.
For love of her, my heart and entrails are a-fire
And sicknesses consume my body and my spright.
The sweet of pleasant food's forbidden unto me,
And eke I am denied the taste of sleep's delight.
Solace and fortitude have taken flight from me,
And love and longing lodge with me, both day and night.
How shall my life be sweet to me, while she's afar,
That is my life, my wish, the apple of my sight?

When the pigeon heard these verses, it awoke from its brooding and cooed and warbled and trilled, till it all but spoke; and the tongue of the case interpreted for it and recited the following verses:

O lover, thy wailings recall to my mind
The time when my youth from me wasted and dwined,
And A mistress, whose charms and whose grace I adored,
Seductive and fair over all of her kind;
Whose voice, from the twigs of the sandhill upraised,
Left the strains of the flute, to my thought, far behind.
A snare set the fowler and caught me, who cried,
"Would he'd leave me to range at my will on the wind!"
I had hoped he was clement or seeing that I
Was a lover, would pity my lot and be kind;
But no, (may God smite him!) he tore me away
From my dear and apart from her harshly confined.
Since then, my desire for her grows without cease,
And my heart with the fires of disjunction is mined.
God guard a true lover, who striveth with love
And hath suffered the torments in which I have pined!

When he seeth me languish for love in my cage,
He will loose me, in mercy, my loved one to find!

Then Uns el Wujoud turned to his friend, the Ispahani and said to him, 'What palace is this? Who built it and who abideth in it?' Quoth the eunuch, 'The Vizier of King Shamikh built it for his daughter, fearing for her the assaults of fate and the vicissitudes of fortune, and lodged her therein, with her attendants; nor do we open it save once in every year, when our victual comes to us.' And Uns el Wujoud said in himself, 'I have gained my end' though after long travail.'

Meanwhile, Rose-in-bud took no delight in eating nor drinking, sitting nor sleeping; but her transport and passion and love-longing redoubled on her, and she went wandering about the castle, but could find no issue; wherefore she shed plenteous tears and recited the following verses:

They have prisoned me straitly from him I adore
And given me to eat of mine anguish galore.
My heart with the flames of love-longing they fired,
When me from the sight of my loved one they bore.
They have cloistered me close in a palace built high
On a mount in the midst of a sea without shore.
If they'd have me forget, their endeavour is vain,
For my love but redoubles upon me the more.
How can I forget him, when all I endure
Arose from the sight of his face heretofore?
My days are consumed in lament, and my nights
Pass in thinking of him, as I knew him of yore.
His memory my solace in solitude is,
Since the lack of his presence I needs must deplore.
I wonder, will Fate grant my heart its desire
And my love, after all, to my wishes restore!

Then she donned her richest clothes and trinkets and threw a necklace of jewels around her neck; after which she ascended to the roof of the castle and tying some strips of Baalbek stuff together, [to serve for a rope], made them fast to the battlements and let herself down thereby to the ground. Then she fared on over wastes and wilds, till she came to the sea-shore, where she saw a fishing-boat, and therein a fisherman, whom the wind had driven on to the island, as he went, fishing here and there, on the sea. When he saw her, he was affrighted, [taking her for a Jinniyeh] and put out again to sea; but she cried out and made pressing signs to him to return, reciting the following verses:

Harkye, O fisherman, fear thou no injury;
I'm but an earthly maid, a mortal like to thee.
I do implore thee, stay, give ear unto my prayer
And hearken to my true and woeful history.
Pity, (so God thee spare,) the ardour [of my love,]
And say if thou hast seen a loved one, fled from me.

I love a fair-faced youth and goodly; brighter far
Of aspect than the face of sun or moon is he.
The antelope, that sees his glances, cries,
"His slave Am I," and doth confess inferiority.
Yea, beauty on his brow these pregnant words hath writ
In very dust of musk, significant to see,
"Who sees the light of love is in the way of right,
And he who strays commits foul sin and heresy."
An thou have ruth on me and bring me to his sight,
O rare! Whate'er thou wilt thy recompense shall be;
Rubies and precious stones and freshly gathered pearls
And every kind of gem that is in earth and sea.
Surely, O friend, thou wilt with my desire comply;
For all my heart's on fire with love and agony.

When the fisherman heard this, he wept and sighed and lamented; then, recalling what had betided himself in the days of his youth, when love had the mastery over him and transport and love-longing and distraction were sore upon him and the fires of passion consumed him, replied with these verses:

Indeed, the lover's excuse is manifest,
Wasting of body and streaming tears, unrest,
Eyes, in the darkness that waken still, and heart,
As 'twere a fire-box, bespeak him love-oppress.
Passion, indeed, afflicted me in youth,
And I good money from bad learnt then to test.
My soul I bartered, a distant love to win;
To gain her favours, I wandered East and West;
And eke I ventured my life against her grace
And deemed the venture would bring me interest.
For law of lovers it is that whoso buys
His love's possession with life, he profits best.

Then he moored his boat to the shore and bade her embark, saying, 'I will carry thee whither thou wilt.' So she embarked and he put off with her; but they had not gone far, before there came out a stern-wind upon the boat and drove it swiftly out of sight of land. The fisherman knew not whither he went, and the wind blew without ceasing three days, at the end of which time it fell, by leave of God the Most High, and they sailed on, till they came in sight of a city builded upon the seashore, and the fisherman set about making fast to the land.

Now the King of the city, a very powerful prince called Dirbas, was at that moment sitting, with his son, at a window in the palace giving upon the sea, and chancing to look out to sea-ward, they saw the fishing-boat enter the harbour. They observed it narrowly and espied therein a young lady, as she were the full moon in the mid-heaven, with pendants in her ears of fine balass rubies and a collar of precious stones about her neck. So the King knew that this must be the daughter of some king

or great noble, and going forth of the sea-gate of the palace, went down to the boat, where he found the lady asleep and the fisherman busied in making fast to the shore. He went up to her and aroused her, whereupon she awoke, weeping; and he said to her, 'Whence comest thou and whose daughter art thou and what brings thee hither?' 'I am the daughter of Ibrahim, Vizier to King Shamikh,' answered she; 'and the manner of my coming hither is strange and the cause thereof extraordinary.' And she told him her whole story, hiding nought from him; then she sighed deeply and recited the following verses:

Tears have mine eyelids wounded sore, and wonder-fast they flow
Adown my cheek for parting's pain and memory and woe,
For a beloved's sake, who dwells for ever in my heart,
Though to foregather with himself I cannot win, heigho!
Fair, bright and brilliant is his face, in loveliness and grace,
Turk, Arab and barbarian he cloth indeed o'ercrow.
The full moon and the sun contend in deference to him,
And when he rises into sight, they, lover-like, bend low.
His eyes with wondrous witchery are decked, as 'twere with kohl;
Even as a bow, that's bent to shoot its shafts, to thee they show.
O thou, to whom I have perforce revealed my case, have ruth
On one with whom the shifts of love have sported long eno'.
Lo, broken-hearted, Love hath cast me up upon thy coast,
Wherefore I trust that thou on me fair favour wilt bestow.
The noble who, when folk of worth alight within their bounds,
Do honour and protect them, win increase of glory so.
Cover thou then, my lord, my hope, two lovers' follies up
And let them to thy succouring hand their loves' reunion owe.

Then she shed plenteous tears and recited these verses also:

I lived, a marvel till I saw in love, then lived no mo';
Each month to thee as Rejeb be, as free from fear of foe!
Is it not strange that, on the morn they went away, I lit
Fire in my vitals with the tears that from mine eyes did flow?
Indeed, mine eyelids ran with blood, and on the wasted plain
Of my sad cheek, that therewithal was watered, gold did grow.
Yea, for the safflower hue, that thence o'erspread my cheeks, they seem
The shirt of Joseph, steeped in blood, to make a lying show.

When the King heard this, he was certified of her passion and love-longing and was moved to compassion for her; so he said to her, 'Fear nothing and be not troubled; thou hast attained the term of thy wishes; for needs must I bring thee to thy desire.' And he recited the following verses:

Daughter if nobles, thou hast reached thy wishes' goal, I trow:
In happy presage then rejoice and fear not any woe.
Treasures this very day, will I collect and neath escort
Of horsemen and of champions, to Shamikh they shall go.

Brocade and bladders full of musk I will to him despatch
And eke white silver and red gold I'll send to him also.
Yea, and a letter neath my hand my wish for ties of kin
And for alliance with himself shall give him eke to know;
And all endeavour will I use, forthwith, that he thou lov'st
Once more with thee may be conjoined, to part from thee no mo.
I, too, have battened upon love and know the taste thereof
And can excuse the folk who've quaffed the self-same cup of woe.

Then, returning to his palace, he summoned his Vizier and causing pack him up countless treasure, bade him carry it to King Shamikh and say to him, 'The King is minded to ally himself with thee by marrying Uns el Wujoud, shine officer, to his daughter. So needs must thou send him with me, that the marriage may be solemnized in her father's kingdom.' And he wrote a letter to King Shamikh, to this effect, and gave it to the Vizier, charging him without fail bring back Uns el Wujoud, on pain of deposition from his office. 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier and setting out forthright, in due course arrived at the court of King Shamikh, to whom he delivered the letter and presents, saluting him in the name of King Dirbas. When Shamikh read the letter and saw the name of Uns el Wujoud, he burst into tears and said to the Vizier, 'And where is Uns el Wujoud? He went away, and we know not his place of abiding. Bring him to me, and I will give thee the sum of the presents thou hast brought me, twice told.' And he wept and sighed and groaned, reciting the following verses:

Him whom I loved to me restore;
By gold and gifts I set no store.
Nor do I crave largesse, indeed,
Of pearls and gems and precious ore.
As 'twere a moon at full, for us,
In beauty's heaven he did soar.
Passing in wit and grace, gazelles
With him comparison gave o'er.
His shape was as a willow-wand,
For fruits that sweet seductions bore;
But in the willow, to enslave
The hearts of men, there is no lore.
I reared him from a child upon
The bed of fondness evermore;
And now I am at heart distraught
For him and sorrow passing sore.

Then said he to the Vizier, 'Go back to thy master and tell him that Uns el Wujoud has been missing this year past, and his lord knoweth not whither he is gone nor hath any news of him.' 'O my lord,' answered King Dirbas's Vizier, 'my master said to me, "An thou come back without him, thou shalt be ousted from the Vizierate and shall not enter my city." How then can I return without him?' So King Shamikh said to his Vizier Ibrahim, 'Take a company and go with him and make search for Uns el

Wujoud everywhere.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Ibrahim, and taking a company of his own retainers, set out in quest of Uns el Wujoud, accompanied by King Dirbas's Vizier; and as often as they fell in with Bedouins or others, they enquired at them of Uns el Wujoud, saying, 'Have ye seen a man, whose name is so and so and his favour thus and thus?' But they answered, 'We know him not.'

So they fared on, enquiring in city and hamlet and seeking in hill and plain and desert and wold, till they came to the sea-shore, where they took ship and sailed, till they came to the Mountain of the Bereaved Mother; and King Dirbas's Vizier said to Ibrahim, 'Why is this mountain thus called?' 'There was once of old time,' answered the other Vizier, 'a Jinniych, of the Jinn of China, who fell passionately in love with a man and being in fear of her own people, searched all the earth for a place, where she might hide him from them, till she happened on this mountain and finding it inaccessible both to men and Jinn, carried off her beloved and lodged him therein. There she used to visit him privily, till she had borne him a number of children, and the merchants, sailing by the mountain, in their voyages over the sea, heard the weeping of the children, as it were the wailing of a woman who had lost her young, and said, "Is there here a mother bereaved of her children?" For which reason the place was named the Mountain of the Bereaved Mother.' And King Dirbas's Vizier marvelled at this.

Then they landed and making for the castle, knocked at the gate, which was opened to them by an eunuch, who knew the Vizier Ibrahim and kissed his hands. Ibrahim entered and finding in the courtyard, among the serving men, a man in the habit of a fakir, said. 'Whence comes yonder fellow?' Quoth they, 'He is a merchant, who hath lost his goods by shipwreck, but saved himself on a plank; and he is an ecstatic.' Now this was none other than Uns el Wujoud, [but the Vizier knew him not]; so he left him and went on into the castle. He found there no trace of his daughter and questioned her women, who answered, 'She abode with us but a little while and went away, how and whither we know not.' Whereupon he wept sore and repeated the following verses:

O house, whose birds warbled for joyance whilere
And whose sills were resplendent with glory and pride,
Till the lover came to thee, bemooning himself
For his passion, and found thy doors open and wide,
Would I knew where my soul is, my soul that was late
In a house, where its masters no longer abide!
Therein were all things that are costly and rich
And with suits of brocade it was decked, like a bride.
Yea, happy and honoured its doorkeeper were.
Would God I knew whither its mistress hath tried!

Then he wept and sighed and bemoaned himself, exclaiming, 'There is no resource against the ordinance of God neither is there any escape from that which He hath decreed!' Then he went up to the roof and finding the strips of Baalbek stuff tied to the battlements and hanging down to the ground, knew that she had descended thence and had fled forth, as one distracted and mad with passion. Presently, he turned

and seeing there two birds, an owl and a raven, deemed this an ill omen; so he groaned and recited these verses:

Unto the loved ones' stead I came, as hoping, by their sight,
To quench the fire that burnt in me of love-longing and woe;
But no beloved found I there, nor aught, indeed, I found,
Save two ill-omened ones, an owl And eke a corby-crow.
And quoth the tongue o' the case to me, "Thou hast been tyrannous
And hast two longing lovers torn, the one the other fro!
Taste of the anguish, then, of love what thou hast made them taste
And live, 'twixt agony and tears, in sorrow evermo."

Then he descended, weeping, and bade the servants go forth and search the island for their mistress; so they sought for her, but found her not. As for Uns el Wujoud, when he was certified that Rose-in-bud was indeed gone, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, nor came to himself for a long time, whilst the folk deemed that a ravishment from the Merciful One had taken him and that he was absorbed in contemplation of the splendour of the majesty of the Requiter of good and evil. Then, despairing of finding Uns el Wujoud and seeing that Ibrahim was distracted for the loss of his daughter, King Dirbas's Vizier addressed himself to return to his own country, for all he had not attained the object of his journey, and said to Ibrahim? 'I have a mind to take yonder fakir with me; it may be God, for his sake, will incline the King's heart to me, for that he is a holy man; and after, I will send him to Ispahan, which is near our country.' 'Do &as thou wilt,' answered Ibrahim.

So they took leave of one another and departed, each for his own country, King Dirbas's Vizier carrying with him Uns el Wujoud, who was still insensible. They bore him with them on muleback, unknowing if he were carried or not, for three days, at the end of which time he came to himself and said, 'Where am I?' 'Thou art in company with King Dirbas's Vizier,' answered they and went and told the latter, who sent him rose-water and sherbet of sugar, of which they gave him to drink and restored him. Then they fared on till they drew near King Dirbas's capital and the King, being advised of his Vizier's coming, wrote to him, saying, 'An Uns el Wujoud be not with thee, come not to me ever.'

When the Vizier read the royal mandate, it was grievous to him, for he knew not that Rose-in-bud was with the King nor why he had sent him in quest of Uns el Wujoud, neither knew he that the fakir he had with him was Uns el Wujoud himself; and the latter in like manner knew not whither they were bound nor that the Vizier had been despatched in quest of himself. So, when he saw him thus chagrined, he said to him, 'What ails thee?' And he answered, 'I was sent by the King on an errand, which I have not been able to accomplish. So, when he heard of my return, he wrote to me? saying, "Enter not my city, except thou have fulfilled my need."' 'And what is the King's need?' asked Uns el Wujoud. So the Vizier told him the case, and he said, 'Fear nothing, but go boldly to the King and take me with thee; and I will be surety to thee for the coming of Uns el Wujoud.' At this the Vizier rejoiced and said, 'Is this true that thou sayest?' 'Yes,' answered he; whereupon the Vizier mounted and carried him to King Dirbas, who said to him, 'Where is Uns el Wujoud?' 'O King,' answered the

young man, 'I know where he is.' So the King called him to him and said, 'Where?' 'Near at hand, replied Uns d Wujoud. 'Tell me what thou wouldst with him, and I will fetch him to thee.' 'With all my heart,' answered the King; 'but the case calls for privacy.'

So he bade the folk withdraw and, carrying Uns el Wujoud into his closet, told him the whole story; whereupon quoth the youth, 'Clothe me in rice apparel, and I will eftsoons bring Uns el Wujoud to thee.' So they brought him a sumptuous dress, and he donned it and said, 'I am the Delight of the World and the Mortification of the Envious.' So saying, he transfixed ail hearts with his glances and recited the following verses:

My loved one's memory cheers me still in this my solitude
And doth wanhope from me away, as I in absence brood.
I have no helper but my tears; yet, when from out mine eyes
They flow, they lighten my despair and ease my drearihood.
Sore is my longing; yea, it hath no like and my affair
In love and passion's marvellous, beyond all likelihood.
I lie the night long, wakeiul-eyed, – no sleep is there forme, –
And pass, for love, from heaven to hell, according to my mood.
Yea, patience fair some time I had, but have it now no more;
And longing and chagrin increase upon me, like a flood.
Indeed, my body's worn to nought, for severance from her;
Yearnings my aspect and my form to change have all subdued.
Mine eyelids ulcerated are with weeping, nor can
I Avail to stay the constant tears, wherewith they're still bedewed.
Indeed, I can no more; my strength, my very vitals fail.
How many sorrows have I borne, on sorrows still renewed!
My heart and head are grizzled grown, for loss of a princess
In beauty, sure, the fairest maid that ever lover wooed.
In her despite, our parting was, for no desire hath she
Save to be joined with me and feed once more on lovers' food.
I wonder, will my fate to me union vouchsafe with her
I cherish, after absence long and stress of lonelihood,
And shut the book of severance up, that now is open wide,
And blot out troubles from my thought with love's supremest good?
Shall my beloved, in my land, my cup-companion be
And sorrow and affliction be by pure delight ensued?

'By Allah,' exclaimed the King, 'ye are, indeed, a pair of true lovers and in the heaven of beauty two shining stars! Your story is marvellous and your case extraordinary.' Then he told him all that had befallen Rose-in-bud; and Uns el Wujoud said, 'Where is she, O King of the age?' 'She is with me now,' answered Dirbas and sending for the Cadi and the witnesses, drew up the contract of marriage between her and him. Then he loaded Uns el Wujoud with favours and bounties and sent to King Shamikh, advising him of what had befallen, whereat the latter rejoiced with an exceeding joy and wrote back to him, saying, 'Since the marriage contract hath been

drawn up at thy court! it behoves that the wedding and consummation be at mine.' And he made ready camels and horses and men and sent them in quest of the lovers.

When the embassy reached King Dirbas, he gave the pair great store of treasure and despatched them to King Shamikh's court with an escort of his own troops. The day of their arrival was a notable day, never was seen a greater; for the King assembled all the singers and players on instruments of music and made banquets and held high festival seven days; and on each day he gave largesse to the folk and bestowed on them sumptuous dresses of honour. Then Uns el Wujoud went in to Rose-in-bud, and they embraced and sat weeping for excess of joy and gladness, whilst she recited the following verses:

Gladness is come, dispelling grief and putting care aside;
We are united now and have our enviers mortified.
The fragrant breeze of union blows fresh and sweet for us,
Whereby our bodies, vitals, hearts are all revivified.
The splendour of fulfilled delight in all its glory shines,
And for glad tidings beat the drums about us far and wide.
Think not we weep for stress Of grief or for affliction; nay,
It is for joy our tears flow down and will not be denied.
How many terrors have we seen, that now are past away!
Yet we each agonizing strait did patiently abide.
In one hour of delight have we forgotten all the woes,
Whose stresses made us twain, whilom, grey-haired and hollow-eyed.

Then they clipped each other and ceased not from their embrace, till they fell down in a swoon, for the ecstasy of reunion; and when they came to themselves, Uns d Wujoud recited these verses:

Ah, how peerlessly sweet are the nights of delight,
When the loved one to me keeps the troth she did plight,
When enjoyment enjoyment ensues and the bonds
Of estrangement between us are sundered outright,
And fortune is come to us, favouring and fair,
After turning away with aversion and spite!
Fair fortune hath set up her standards for us
And we drink from her hand a cup pure of affright.
United, our woes each to each we recount
And the nights when in torments we watched for the light.
But now, O my lady, forgotten have we Our griefs, and
God pardon the past its upright!
How pleasant, how lovesome, how joyous is life!
Enjoyment my passion doth only excite.

Then they gave themselves up anew to the pleasures of the nuptial bed and passed seven whole days thus, carousing and conversing and reciting verses and telling pleasant tales and anecdotes, in the intervals of amorous dalliance; for so drowned were they in the sea of passion, that they knew not night from day and it was to them, for

very stress of joy and gladness and pleasure and delight, as if the seven days were but one day, and that without a morrow. Nor did they know the seventh day, but by the coming of the singers and players on instruments of music; whereat Rose-in-bud was beyond measure wondered and improvised the following verses:

Despite the enviers' rage and malice of the spy,
I've won of him I love my wish to satisfy;
Yea, we have crowned our loves with many a close embrace,
On cushions of brocade and silken stuffs piled high
Upon a couch full soft, of perfumed leather made
And stuffed with down of birds of rarest kind that fly.
Thanks to the honeyed dews of my beloved's lips,
Illustrious past compare, no need of wine have I.
Yea, for the sweet excess of our fulfilled delight,
The present from the past we know, nor far from nigh.
A miracle indeed! Seven nights o'er us have passed,
Without our taking note of how they flitted by;
Till, on the seventh day, they wished us joy and said,
"Your union God prolong to all eternity!"

When she had finished, Uns el Wujoud kissed her, more than a hundred times, and recited the following verses:

O day of pure delight and mutual happiness!
The loved one came and set me free from loneliness.
She blest me with the sweets of all her glorious charms,
What while her converse filled my spirit with liesse.
She plied me with the wine of amorous delight,
Till all my senses failed, for very drunkenness.
Yea, merry each with each we made, together lay,
Then fell to wine and did, in song, our cheer express;
Nor knew we, of the days that fleeted over us,
The present from the past, for very joy's excess.
Fair fall all those that love of ease and twinned delight,
And joy to them fulfil its promise none the less!
Ne'er may they know the taste of parting's bitter cup!
God succour them as me He succoured in my stress!

Then they went forth and distributed to the folk alms and largesse of money and raiment and so forth; after which Rose-in-bud bade empty the bath for her and turning to Uns el Wujoud, said to him' 'O solace of my eyes, I have a mind to see thee in the bath; and we will be alone together therein.' He gladly consented to this, and she bade perfume the bath for them with all manner of scented woods and essences and light the candles. Then, of the excess of her contentment, she recited the following Verses:

O thou aforetime of my heart that mad'st prize
(And the present for us on the past still relies),
Thou, the only companion I crave, for to me

None other the want of thy presence supplies,
To the bath, – that in midst of hell-fire we may see
Even Paradise shining, – come, light of mine eyes!
We will scent it with ambergris, aloes and musk,
Till the fragrance in clouds from all quarters arise.
Yea, Fortune we'll pardon her sins and give thanks,
For His grace, to the Merciful One, the All-Wise;
And I'll say, when I see thee therein, "O my love,
All delights be thy lot in the earth and the skies!"

So they went to the bath and took their pleasure there in; after which they returned to their palace and there abode in the fulness of delight, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and glory be to Him who changeth not neither ceaseth and in whom all things have their term!

Abou Nuwas With the Three Boys and the Khalif Haroun Er Reshid.

ABOU NUWAS one day shut himself up and making ready a richly- furnished saloon, set out therein a banquet of meats of all kinds and colours that lips and tongue can desire. Then he went forth, to seek a minion who should befit the entertainment, saying, 'O my God and my Master and my Lord, I beseech Thee to send me one worthy of this banquet and apt to carouse with me this day!' Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when he espied three handsome beardless youths, as they were of the children of Paradise, differing in complexion but equal in perfection of beauty; and all hearts yearned with desire to the graceful bending of their shapes, even to what saith the poet:

Two beardless youths I happened on one day
And said "I love you." "Hast thou pelf?" asked they.
"Yes," answered I, "and liberality."
"Then is the matter easy," did they say.

Now Abou Nuwas was on this wise given and loved to sport and make merry with the fair and cull the rose from every fresh- flowered cheek, even as saith the poet:

Full many a graybeard is amorous and loves
Fair faces and music and dalliance and glee:
From Mosul, the country of pureness, he comes,
Yet nought but Aleppo remembereth he.

So he accosted them with the salutation, and they returned his greeting with all honour and civility and would have gone their way; but he stayed them, repeating these verses:

To none but me your footsteps steer;
For I have store of all good cheer;
Wine that the heart of convent monk
Would glad, so bright it is and clear;
And flesh of sheep, to boot, have
I And birds of land and sea and mere.
Eat ye of these and drink old wine,
That doth away chagrin and fear.

The boys were beguiled by his verses and consented to his wishes, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So he carried them to his lodging, where they found all ready that he had set forth in his verses. They sat down and ate and drank and made merry awhile, after which they appealed to Abou Nuwas to decide which was the handsomest and most shapely of them. So he pointed to one of them, after having kissed him twice, and recited the following verses:

With my life I will ransom the mole, on the cheek of the loveling that is;
For how should I ransom it else with treasure or aught but my soul?

And blessed for ever be He who fashioned his cheek without hair
And made, of His power and His might, all beauty to dwell in yon mole!

Then he pointed to another and kissing his lips, repeated these verses:

There's a loveling hath a mole upon his cheek,
As 'twere musk on virgin camphor, so to speak.
My eyes marvel when they see it. Quoth the mole,
"Heaven's blessing on the Prophet look ye seek!"

Then he pointed to the third and repeated the following verses, after kissing him half a score times:

All in a silver cup he melted gold full fine,
A youth whose hands were dyed in ruby-coloured wine,
And with the skinkers went and handed round one cup
Of wine, whilst other two were proffered by his eyne.
Fairer than all the Turks, an antelope, whose waist
Together would attract the mountains of Hunain.
An if I were content with crooked womankind,
Betwixt attractions twain would be this heart of mine.
One love towards Diyarbeker drawing it, and one
That draws it, otherguise, to the land of Jamiain.

Now each of the youths had drunk two cups, and when it came to Abou Nuwas's turn, he took the goblet and repeated these verses:

Drink not of wine except it be at the hands of a loveling slim,
Who in brightness of soul resembles it and it resembles him.
The drinker of wine, in very truth, hath no delight thereof,
Except the cheek of the fair be pure, who doth the goblet brim.

Then he drank off his cup, and when it came round to Him again, joyance got the mastery of him and he repeated The following verses:

Make thou thy boon-fellow of cups, brimmed up as full as this,
And eke to follow cup with cup, I rede thee, do not miss,
Poured by a damask-lipped one's hand, a wonder-lovely fair,
Whose mouth's sweet water, after sleep, as musk on apple is.
Drink not of wine, except it be from the hand of a gazelle,
Whose cheek is goodlier than itself and sweeter still his kiss.

Presently, the wine crept to his head, drunkenness mastered him and he knew not hand from head, so that he swayed about for mirth, inclining anon to this one, to kiss him, and anon to another. Then he fell to glorying in himself and his case and the goodliness of his entertainment and his companions, and recited these verses:

None knoweth perfection of pleasure but he
Who drinketh, with fair ones to hearten him still.
This sings to him, t'other, when cheer him would be,
Revives him forthright with the cups he doth fill;

And whenever from one he hath need of a kiss,
Long draughts from his lips, at his case, he doth swill.
God bless them! Right sweet has my day with them been,
And wonder delightsome and void of all ill!
We drank of the wine cup, both mingled and pure,
And agreed whoso slept, we should touzle at will.

At this moment, there came a knocking at the door; so they bade him who knocked enter, and behold, it was the Khalif Haroun er Reshid. When they saw him, they all rose to him and kissed the ground before him; and the fumes of the wine forsook Abou Nuwas's head for awe of the Khalif, who said to him, 'Hallo, Abou Nuwas!' 'At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'may God preserve thee!' 'What state is this I find thee in?' asked the Khalif; and the poet replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, methinks my state dispenses with question.' Quoth the Khalif, 'O Abou Nuwas, I have sought direction of God the Most High and appoint thee Cadi of whoremasters.' 'Dost thou indeed invest me with that office, O Commander of the Faithful?' asked Abou Nuwas. 'I do,' replied the Khalif. 'Then, O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Abou Nuwas, 'hast thou any suit to prefer to me?' At this the Khalif was wroth and turned away and left them, full of rage, and passed the night, sore angered against Abou Nuwas, whilst the latter spent the merriest and most easeful of nights, till the day dawned and the morning-star appeared and shone, when he broke up the sitting and dismissing the boys, donned his court- dress and set out for the Khalif's palace.

Now it was the latter's custom, when the Divan broke up, to withdraw to his sitting-chamber and summon thither his poets and minions and musicians, each having his own place, which he might not overpass. So, that day, he retired to his saloon, and the minions came and seated themselves, each in his place. Presently, in came Abou Nuwas and was about to take his usual seat, when the Khalif cried out to Mesrour the headsman and bade him strip the poet of his clothes and clap an ass's pannel on his back. Moreover, he charged him bind a halter about his head and a crupper under his rear and carry him round to all the lodgings of the slave-girls and the chambers of the harem, that the women might make mock of him; then cut off his head and bring it to him. 'I hear and obey,' replied Mesrour and accoutring Abou Nuwas, as the Khalif had bidden him, carried him round to all the lodgings of the harem, in number as the days of the year; but he made all the girls laugh with his buffooneries and each gave him something, so that he returned with a pocketful of money.

Just then, Jaafer the Barmecide, who had been absent on an important business for the Khalif, entered and seeing the poet in this plight, said to him, 'Hallo, Abou Nuwas!' 'At thy service, O our lord,' answered he. 'What offence hast thou committed,' asked Jaafer, 'to bring this punishment on thee?' 'None whatever,' answered the other, 'except that I made our lord the Khalif a present of the best of my verses, and he presented me, in return, with the best of his clothes.' When the Khalif heard this, he laughed, from a heart full of wrath, and [not only] pardoned Abou Nuwas, but gave him a myriad of money.

Abdallah Ben Maamer With the Man of Bassora and His Slave-girl.

A CERTAIN man of Bassora once bought a slave-girl and reared and educated her excellent well. Moreover, he loved her very dearly and spent all his substance in pleasuring and making merry with her, till he had nothing left and want was very sore upon him. So she said to him, 'O my master, sell me; for thou needest my price and it makes my heart ache to see the sorry plight to which want hath brought thee. It thou sell me and make use of my price, it will be better for thee than keeping me, and haply God the Most High will prosper thee and mend thy fortune.' He agreed to this, of the straitness of his case, and carried her to the bazaar, where the broker offered her for sale to the Governor of Bassora, by name Abballah ben Maamer et Teimi, and she pleased him. So he bought her, for five hundred dinars, of her master, who took the money and was about to go away, when the girl burst into tears and repeated the following verses:

May Allah prosper unto thee the money thou hast got!
For me, nought's left me but lament and memory and woe.
I say to my afflicted soul, "Mourn little or mourn much;
It skills not, for the loved one's gone and will return no mo."

When he heard this, he sighed heavily and replied thus:

Though there be no recourse for thee in this thy case and thou
Find nought but death to solace thee, excuse me yet and know,
Evening and morn the thought of thee will company with me,
Wherewith a heart I will console, that's all fulfilled of woe.
Peace be on thee! Henceforth for us no meeting shall there be
Nor any union more, except Ben Maamer will it so.

When Abdallah heard these verses and saw their affliction, he exclaimed, 'By Allah, I will have no hand in separating you; for it is manifest to me that ye indeed love one another. So take the money and the damsel, O man, and may God bless thee in them! For parting is grievous to true lovers.' So they kissed his hand and going away, ceased not to dwell together, till death parted them; and glory be to Him whom death overtaketh not!

The Lovers of the Benou Udhreh.

THERE was once, among the Benou Udhreh, a handsome and accomplished man, who was never a day out of love, and it chanced that he became enamoured of a beautiful woman of his own tribe and sent her many messages; but she ceased not to use him with cruelty and disdain, till, for stress of passion and longing and distraction, he fell exceeding sick and took to his bed and forswore sleep. His sickness grew on him and his anguish redoubled upon him, till he was all but dead; and his case became known and his passion noised abroad among the folk. His family and hers were instant with her to visit him, but she refused, till he was at the point of death, when, being told of this, she relented towards him and vouchsafed him a visit. When he saw her, his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated the following verses, from a broken heart:

If, by thy life, there pass thee by my funeral train, to wit,
A bier borne on the necks of four, wilt grudge to follow it?
Wilt thou not follow in its track, that so thou mayst salute
The sepulchre of one who's dead, committed to the pit?

When she heard this, she wept sore and said to him, 'By Allah, I thought not that passion had come to such a pass with thee, as to cast thee into the arms of death! Had I known this, I had been favourable to thee, and thou shouldst have enjoyed thy desire.' At this, his tears streamed down, like the cloud- showers, and he repeated the following verse:

She draweth near to me, when death hath come betwixt us two And proffereth union, when it no profit can me do.

Then he gave one sigh and died, and she fell on him, kissing him and weeping, till she swooned away. When she came to herself she charged her people bury her in his grave and recited the following verses, with streaming eyes:

We lived upon the earth a life of comfort and delight:
Country and tribe and dwelling-place alike of us were proud;
But Fortune and the shifts of time did rend our loves apart,
And now the grave uniteth us within a single shroud.

Then she fell again to weeping and ceased not from tears and lament, till she swooned away. She lay three days, senseless; then died and was buried in his grave. This is one of the strange chances of love.

The Vizier of Yemen and His Young Brother

BEDREDDIN, Vizier of Yemen, had a young brother of singular beauty and kept strait watch over him. So he applied himself to seek a governor for him and coming upon an elder of dignified and reverend aspect, chaste and pious, lodged him in a house next his own, whence he used to come daily to the Vizier's dwelling, to teach the latter's brother. After awhile, the old man's heart was taken with love for his pupil and longing grew upon him and his entrails were troubled, till, one day, he made moan of his case to the boy, who said, 'What can I do, seeing that I may not leave my brother day or night? Thou seest how careful he is over me.' Quoth the governor, 'My lodging adjoins thine; so, when thy brother sleeps, do thou rise and entering the wardrobe, feign thyself asleep. Then come to the parapet of the roof and I will receive thee on the other side of the wall; so shalt thou sit with me awhile and return without thy brother's knowledge.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the boy. So, when awhile of the night was past, he entered the closet and waited till his brother lay down on his bed and was drowned in sleep, when he rose and going to the parapet of the roof, found the governor awaiting him, who gave him his hand and carried him to the sitting-chamber, where he had made ready various dainties for his entertainment, and they sat down to carouse.

Now it was the night of the full moon, and as they sat, passing the wine-cup to one another, her rays shone upon them, and the governor fell to singing. But, whilst they were thus in mirth and joyance and good cheer, such as confounds the wit and the sight and defies description, the Vizier awoke and missing his brother, arose in affright and found the door open. So he went up to the roof and hearing a noise of talk, peeped over the parapet and saw a light shining in the governor's lodging. He looked in and espied his brother and his governor sitting carousing: but the latter became aware of him and sang the following verses, cup in hand, to a lively measure:

He gave me wine to drink, of his mouth's nectar rare,
Toasting with down of cheeks and what adjoineth there;
Then passed with me the night, embracing, cheek to cheek,
A loveling midst mankind unpeered and past compare.
The full moon gazed on us all night; pray then to her,
So to his brother she to tell of us forbear.

Now the Vizier was a merry man; so, when he heard this, he said, 'By Allah, I will not betray you!' And he went away and left them to their diversion.

The Loves of the Boy and Girl at School.

A BOY and a girl once learnt together in a school, and the boy fell passionately in love with the girl. So, one day, when the other boys were heedless, he took her tablet and wrote on it the following verses:

Tell me, what sayst thou unto him, whom sickness for thy love
Hath worn and wasted, till he's grown distraught and stupefied?
Him who of passion maketh moan; for love and longing pain,
That which is in his heart, indeed, no longer can he hide.

When the girl took her tablet, she read the verses and wept for pity of him; then wrote thereunder these others:

An if we see one languishing for very love of us,
Our favours, surely, unto him shall nowise be denied.
Yea, and of us he shall obtain that which he doth desire
Of love-delight, whate'er to us in consequence betide.

Now it chanced that the teacher came in on them And taking the tablet, unnoticed, read what was written thereon. So he was moved to pity of their case and wrote on the tablet the following verses, in reply to those of the girl:

Favour thy lover, for he's grown distracted for desire,
And reck thou not of punishment nor fear lest any chide.
As for the master, have no dread of his authority,
For he with passion an its pains aforetime hath been tried.

Presently, the girl's master entered the school and finding the tablet, read the above verses and wrote under them the following:

May Allah never separate your loves, whilst time abide,
And may your slanderer be put to shame and mortified!
But, for the master of the school, by Allah, all my life,
A busier go-between than he I never yet espied.

Then he sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and married them on the spot. Moreover, he made them a marriage-feast and entreated them with exceeding munificence; and they abode together in joy and contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

El Mutelemmis and His Wife Umeimeh.

IT is related that El Mutelemmis once fled from En Numan ben Mundhir and was absent so long that the folk deemed him dead. Now he had a handsome wife, Umeimeh by name, and her family pressed her to marry again; but she refused, for that she loved her husband El Mutelemmis very dearly. However, they were instant with her, because of the multitude of her suitors, and importuned her till she at last reluctantly consented and they married her to a man of her own tribe.

On the night of the wedding, El Mutelemmis came back and hearing in the camp a noise of pipes and tabrets and seeing signs of festival, asked some of the children what was toward, to which they replied, 'They have married Umeimeh, widow of El Mutelemmis, to such an one, and he goes in to her this night.' When he heard this, he made shift to enter the house with the women and saw there the bride seated on her throne. By and by, the bridegroom came up to her, whereupon she sighed heavily and weeping, recited the following verses:

Ah would, (but many are the shifts of good and evil fate),
I knew in what far land thou art, O Mutelemmis mine!

Now El Mutelemmis was a renowned poet: so he answered her with the following verse:

Right near at hand, Umeimeh! Know, whene'er the caravan Halted,
I never ceased for thee with longing heart to pine.

When the bridegroom heard this, he guessed how the case stood and went forth from among them in haste, repeating the following verse:

I was in luck, but now I'm fall'n into the contrary. A hospitable house and room your reknit loves enshrine!

So El Mutelemmis took his wife again and abode with her in all delight and solace of life, till death parted them. And glory be to Him at whose command the earth and the heavens shall arise!

The Khalif Haroun Er Reshid and the Princess Zubeideh in the Bath.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid loved the Princess Zubeideh with an exceeding love and laid out for her a pleasaunce, in which he made a great pool and led thither water from all sides. Moreover, he set thereabout a screen of trees, which so grew and interlaced over the pool, that one could go in and wash, without being seen of any, for the thickness of the leafage. It chanced, one day, that Zubeideh entered the garden and coming to the basin, gazed upon its goodliness, and the limpidity of the water and the interlacing of the trees over it pleased her. Now it was a day of exceeding heat; so she put off her clothes and entering the pool, which was not deep enough to cover her, fell to pouring the water over herself from an ewer of silver.

The Khalif heard she was in the pool; so he left his palace and came down to spy upon her, through the screen of the leaves. He stood behind the trees and saw her naked, with all her secret charms displayed. Presently, she became aware of him and turning, saw him behind the trees and was ashamed that he should see her naked. So she laid her hands on her kaze, but it escaped from between them, by reason of its much greatness and plumpness; and the Khalif turned and went away, wondering and reciting the following verse:

I looked on her whom I adore And longing rose in me full sore.

But he knew not what to say next; so he sent for Abou Nuwas and bade him make a piece of verse commencing with the above line. 'I hear and obey,' replied the poet and in a twinkling extemporized the following lines:

I looked on her whom I adore,
And longing rose in me full sore
For a gazelle that ravished me,
By double lote-trees shaded o'er.
The water on her dainty part
With silver ewer did she pour
And would have hidden it, seeing me,
But all too small her hands therefor.
Would I were on it, wel-a-way,
An hour or liefer two or more!

The Khalif smiled and made him a handsome present, and he went away rejoicing.

Haroun Er Reshid and the Three Poets.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid was exceeding restless one night; so he rose and walked about his palace, till he happened on a damsel overcome with wine. Now he was greatly enamoured of this damsel; so he toyed with her and pulled her to him, whereupon her girdle fell down and her trousers were unloosed and he besought her of amorous dalliance. But she said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wait till to-morrow night, for I am unprepared for thee, knowing not of thy coming.' So he left her and went away.

On the morrow, he sent a page to her to announce his visit to her apartment; but she sent back to him, saying, 'The day obliterates the promise of the night.' So he said to his minions, 'Make me somewhat of verse, introducing these words, "The day obliterates the promise of the night."' 'We hear and obey,' answered they; and Er Recashi came forward and recited the following:

By Allah, an thou feltst my longing and my pain,
Repose had turned away from thee and taken flight.
A maid hath made me love-distraught, nor visiting
Nor being visited, a sad and love-lorn wight.
She promised me her grace, then turned away and said,
"The day obliterates the promise of the night."

Then Abou Musab came forward and recited these verses:

When wilt thou put away this dotage from thy spright?
Thy heart is dazed and rest to thee forbidden quite.
Is't not enough for thee to have a weeping eye
And vitals still on fire for memory and despite?
For self-conceit, indeed, he laugheth, when he saith,
"The day obliterates the promise of the night."

Last came Abou Nuwas and recited the following:

Love was prolonged and far was union out of sight,
Nor skilled it aught to feign aversion and despite.
One day, she came into the palace, drunk with wine,
But even her drunkenness with pudour was bedight.
Her upper garments dropped and left her shoulders bare
And loosened trousers showed the dwelling of delight;
Yea, and the breeze shook hips, full heavy, and a shape,
As 'twere a branch, whereon pomegranates twain unite.
"Give me a tryst," quoth I; and she replied, "The place
Of visiting will be to-morrow clean and right."
Next day, I came and said, "Thy promise;" but quoth she,
"The day obliterates the promise of the night."

The Khalif bestowed a myriad each on Er Recashi and Abou Musab, but bade strike off Abou Nuwas's head, saying, 'Thou west with us yesternight in the palace.' 'By Allah,' answered the poet, 'I slept not but in my own house! I was directed to what I said by thine own words as to the subject of the poem; and indeed quoth God the Most High (and He is the truest of all speakers), "As for poets (devils ensue them!) dost thou not see how they run wild in each valley and say that they do not?"' So the Khalif forgave him and bestowed on him two myriads of gold.

Musab Ben Ez Zubeir and Aaisheh Daughter of Telheh.

IT is told of Musab ben ez Zubeir that he met Izzeh, who was one of the shrewdest of women, in Medina and said to her, 'I have a mind to marry Aaisheh, daughter of Telheh, and I would have thee go to her and spy out for me how she is made.' So she went and returning to Musab, said, 'I have seen her, and her face is more beautiful than health; she hath large and well-opened eyes, an aquiline nose and smooth, oval cheeks and a mouth like a cleft pomegranate, a neck like an ewer of silver and a bosom with two breasts like twin pomegranates, a slim waist and a slender belly, with a navel therein as it were a casket of ivory, and backside like a hummock of sand. Moreover, she hath plump thighs and legs like columns of alabaster; but I saw her feet to be large, and thou wilt fall short with her in time of amorous dalliance.' Upon this report, he married her and Izzeh invited Aaisheh and the women of the tribe of Kureish to her house, when Aaisheh sang the following, with Musab standing by:

The mouths of girls, with their odoriferous,
Sweet breath and their witching smiles, are sweet to buss;
Yet ne'er have I tasted them, but in thought of him;
And by thought, indeed, the Ruler rules over us.

The night of his going in to her, he departed not from her, till after seven courses; and on the morrow, a freed-woman of his met him and said to him, 'May I be thy ransom! Thou art perfect, even in this.'

Quoth a certain woman, 'I was with Aaisheh, when her husband came in to her, and she lusted to him; so he fell upon her and she puffed and snorted and made use of all manner of rare motions and strange inventions, and I the while within hearing. So when he came out from her, I said to her, "How canst thou, with thy rank and nobility and condition, do thus, and I in thy house?" Quoth she, "A woman should bring her husband all of which she is mistress, by way of excitations and rare motions. What mislikest thou of this?" And I answered, "I would have this anights." "Thus is it by day," rejoined she, "and by night I do more than this; for, when he sees me, desire stirs in him and he falls on heat; so he puts out his hand to me and I obey him, and it is as thou seest."'

Aboul Aswed and His Squinting Slave-girl.

ABOUL ASWED bought a native-born slave-girl, who was squint- eyed, and she pleased him; but his people decried her to him; whereat he wondered and spreading out his hands, recited the following verses:

They run her down to me, and yet no fault in her find I,
Except perhaps it be a speck she hath in either eye.
To compensate this fault, if fault it be, o' the upper parts
She's slim and heavy of the parts beneath the waist that lie.

Haroun Er Reshid and the Two Slave-girls.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid lay one night between two slave-girls, one from Medina and the other from Cufa, and the latter rubbed his hands, whilst the former rubbed his feet and made his yard to stand up. Quoth the Cufan girl, 'I see thou wouldst keep the whole of the stock-in-trade to thyself; give me my share of it.' And the other answered, 'I have been told by Malik, on the authority of Hisham ibn Orweh, who had it of his [grand]father, that the Prophet said, "Whoso bringeth the dead to life, it is his."' But the Cufan took her unawares and pushing her away, took it all in her own hand and said, 'El Aamesh tells us, on the authority of Kheithemeh, who had it of Abdallah ben Mesoud, that the Prophet said, "Game belongeth to him who taketh it, not to him who raiseth it."'

The Khalif Haroun Er Reshid and the Three Slave-girls.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid lay once with three slave-girls, a Meccan, a Medinan and an Irakite. The Medina girl put her hand to his yard and handled it, whereupon it rose and the Meccan sprang up and drew it to herself. Quoth the other, 'What is this unjust aggression? I have heard of Malik, on the authority of Ez Zuhri, who had it of Abdallah ibn Salim, on the report of Said ben Zeid, that the Apostle (whom God bless and preserve) said, "Whoso revivifies a dead land, it is his."' And the Meccan answered, 'Sufyan tells us, on the authority of Abou Zenad, who had it of El Aarej, on the report of Abou Hureireh, that the Apostle of God said, "The game is his who catches it, not his who starts it."' But the Irak girl pushed them both away and taking it to herself, said, 'This is mine, till your contention be decided.'

The Miller and His Wife.

THERE was a miller, who had an ass to turn his mill; and he was married to a wicked wife, whom he loved; but she hated him and loved a neighbour of hers, who liked her not and held aloof from her. One night, the miller saw, in his sleep, one who said to him, 'Dig in such a spot of the ass's circuit in the mill, and thou shalt find a treasure.' When he awoke, he told his wife the dream and charged her keep it secret; but she told her neighbour, thinking to win his favour, and he appointed with her to come to her by night. So he came and they dug in the mill and found the treasure and took it forth. Then said he to her, 'How shall we do with this?' 'We will share it equally between us,' answered she; 'and do thou leave thy wife and I will cast about to rid me of my husband. Then shalt thou marry me, and when we are united, we will add the two halves of the treasure, one to the other, and it will be [all] in our hands.' Quoth he, 'I fear lest Satan seduce thee and thou take some man other than myself; for gold in the house is like the sun in the world. Meseems, therefore, it were better that the money be all in my hands, so thou mayst study to win free of thy husband and come to me.' 'I fear the like of thee,' rejoined she, 'and I will not yield up my part to thee; for it was I directed thee to it.' When he heard this, covetise prompted him to kill her; so he killed her and threw her body into the empty hole; but the day overtook him and hindered him from covering it up; so he took the treasure and went away.

Presently, the miller awoke and missing his wife, went into the mill, where he fastened the ass to the beam and shouted to it. It went on a little, then stopped; whereupon he beat it grievously; but the more he beat it, the more it drew back; for it was affrighted at the dead woman and could not go on. So he took out a knife and goaded it again and again, but still it would not budge. Then he was wroth with it, knowing not the cause of its obstinacy, and drove the knife into its flanks, and it fell down dead. When the sun rose, he saw his wife lying dead, in the place of the treasure, and great was his rage and sore his chagrin for the loss of the treasure and the death of his wife and his ass. All this came of his letting his wife into his secret and not keeping it to himself.

The Simpleton and the Sharper.

A CERTAIN simple fellow was once going along, haling his ass after him by the halter, when a couple of sharpers saw him and one said to his fellow, 'I will take that ass from yonder man.' 'How wilt thou do that?' asked the other. 'Follow me and I will show thee,' replied the first. So he went up to the ass and loosing it from the halter, gave the beast to his fellow; then clapped the halter on his own head and followed the simpleton, till he knew that the other had got clean off with the ass, when he stood still. The man pulled at the halter, but the thief stirred not; so he turned and seeing the halter on a man's neck, said to him, 'Who art thou?' Quoth the sharper, 'I am thine ass and my story is a strange one. Know that I have a pious old mother and came in to her one day, drunk; and she said to me, "O my son, repent to God the Most High of these thy transgressions." But I took the cudgel and beat her, whereupon she cursed me and God the Most High changed me into an ass and caused me fall into thy hands, where I have remained till now. However, to-day, my mother called me to mind and her heart relented towards me; so she prayed for me, and God restored me to my former shape of a man.' 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' cried the simpleton. 'O my brother, I conjure thee by Allah, acquit me of what I have done with thee, in the way of riding and so forth.'

Then he let the sharper go and returned home, drunken with chagrin and concern. His wife asked him, 'What ails thee and where is the ass?' And he answered, 'Thou knowest not what was this ass; but I will tell thee.' So he told her the story, and she exclaimed, 'Woe worth us for God the Most High! How could we have used a man as a beast of burden, all this while?' And she gave alms and asked pardon of God. Then the man abode awhile at home, idle, till she said to him, 'How long wilt thou sit at home, idle? Go to the market and buy us an ass and do thy business with it.' Accordingly, he went to the market and stopping by the ass-stand, saw his own ass for sale. So he went up to it and clapping his mouth to its ear, said to it, 'Out on thee, thou good-for-nought! Doubtless thou hast been getting drunk again and beating thy mother! But, by Allah, I will never buy thee more!' And he left it and went away.

The Imam Abou Yousuf With Haroun Er Reshid and Zubeideh.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid went up one noon-tide to his couch, to lie down, and mounting, found thereon fresh semen; whereat he was startled and sore perturbed and troubled. So he called the princess Zubeideh and said to her, 'What is that spilt on the bed?' She looked at it and replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, it is semen.' 'Tell me truly what this means,' said he; 'or I will lay violent hands on thee forthright.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'indeed, I know not how it came there and I am guiltless of that whereof thou suspectest me.' So he sent for the Imam Abou Yousuf and told him the case. The Imam raised his eyes to the roof and seeing a crack therein, said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the bat hath semen like that of a man, and this is bats' semen.' Then he called for a lance and thrust it into the crack, whereupon down fell the bat. In this manner the Khalif's suspicions were dispelled and Zubeideh's innocence was made manifest; whereat she gave vent to her joy and promised Abou Yousuf a liberal reward.

Now there were with her magnificent fruits, out of their season, and she knew of others in the garden; so she said to Abou Yousuf, 'O Imam of the Faith, which wouldst thou rather of the two kinds of fruits, those that are here or those that are not here?' 'Our code forbids us to pronounce judgment on the absent,' answered he. 'When they are present, we will give judgment.' So she caused bring the two kinds of fruits before him, and he ate of both. Quoth she, 'What is the difference between them?' And he answered, 'As often as I think to praise one kind, the other puts in its claim.' The Khalif laughed at his answer and made him a present. Zubeideh also gave him what she had promised him, and he went away, rejoicing. See, then, the blessed qualities of this Imam and how at his hands were made manifest the truth and the innocence of the lady Zubeideh.

The Khalif El Hakim and the Merchant.

THE Khalif El Hakim bi Amrillah was riding out in state one day, when he came to a garden, in which he saw a man, surrounded by slaves and servants. He asked him for a draught of water, and the man gave him to drink, saying, 'Peradventure, the Commander of the Faithful will honour me by alighting in this my garden.' So the Khalif dismounted and entered the garden with his suite; whereupon the man brought out to them a hundred carpets and a hundred leather mats and a hundred cushions and set before them a hundred dishes of fruits, a hundred saucers of sweetmeats and a hundred bowls full of sherbets of sugar; whereat the Khalif marvelled and said to his host, 'O man, this thy case is a strange one. Didst thou know of our coming and make this preparation for us?' 'No, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the other, 'I knew not of thy coming and am but a merchant of the rest of thy subjects. But I have a hundred concubines; so, when the Commander of the Faithful honoured me by alighting with me, I sent to each of them, bidding her send me the morning-meal here. So they sent me each of her furniture and of the excess of her meat and drink: and every day each sends me a dish of meat and another of marinades, also a plate of fruits and a saucer of sweetmeats and a bowl of sherbet. This is my every- day noon-meal, nor have I added aught thereto for thee.'

The Khalif prostrated himself in thanksgiving to God the Most High and said, 'Praised be God, who hath been so bountiful to one of our subjects, that he entertaineth the Khalif and his suite, without making ready for them, but of the surplus of his day's victual!' Then he sent for all the dirhems in the treasury, that had been struck that year, — and they were in number three thousand and seven hundred thousand; — nor did he mount, till the money came, when he gave it to the merchant, saying, 'Use this for the maintenance of thy state; and thy desert is more than this.' Then he mounted and rode away.

King Kisra Anoushirwan and the Village Damsel.

THE just King, Kisra Anoushirwan, was hunting one day and became separated from his suite, in pursuit of an antelope. Presently, he caught sight of a hamlet, near at hand, and being sore athirst, made for the door of a house, that stood by the wayside, and asked for a draught of water. A damsel came out and looked at him; then, going back into the house, pressed the juice from a sugar-cane into a tankard and mixed it with water; after which she strewed on the top somewhat of perfume, as it were dust, and carried it to the King. He took it and seeing in it what resembled dust, drank it, little by little, till he came to the end. Then said he to her, 'O damsel, the drink is good and sweet, but for this dust in it, that troubles it.' 'O guest,' answered she, 'I put that in, of intent.' 'And why didst thou thus?' asked he; and she replied, 'I saw that thou wast exceeding thirsty and feared that thou wouldst swallow the whole at one draught and that this would do thee a mischief; and so hadst thou done, but for this dust that troubled the drink.' The King wondered at her wit and good sense and said to her, 'How many sugar-canes didst thou press for this draught?' 'One,' answered she; whereat the King marvelled and calling for the roll of the taxes of the village, saw that its assessment was but little and bethought him to increase it, on his return to his palace, saying in himself, 'Why is a village so lightly taxed, where they get this much juice out of one sugar-cane?'

Then he left the village and pursued his chase. As he came back at the end of the day, he passed alone by the same door and called again for drink; whereupon the same damsel came out and knowing him, went in to fetch him drink. It was some time before she returned and the King wondered at this and said to her, 'Why hast thou tarried?' Quoth she, 'Because one sugar- cane yielded not enough for thy need. So I pressed three; but they yielded not so much as did one aforetime.' 'What is the cause of that?' asked the King; and she answered, 'The cause of it is that the King's mind is changed.' Quoth he, 'How knewst thou that?' 'We hear from the wise,' replied she, 'that, when the King's mind is changed against a folk, their prosperity ceaseth and their good waxeth less.' Anoushirwan laughed and put away from his mind that which he had purposed against the people of the village. Moreover, he took the damsel to wife then and there, being pleased with her much wit and acuteness and the excellence of her speech.

The Water-carrier and the Goldsmith's Wife.

THERE was once, in the city of Bokhara, a water-carrier, who used to carry water to the house of a goldsmith and had done thus thirty years. Now the goldsmith had a wife of exceeding beauty and elegance and withal renowned for modesty, chastity and piety. One day, the water-carrier came, as of wont, and poured the water into the cisterns. Now the woman was standing in the midst of the court; so he went up to her and taking her hand, stroked it and pressed it, then went away and left her. When her husband came home from the bazaar, she said to him, 'I would have thee tell me what thou hast done in the bazaar, today, to anger God the Most High.' Quoth he, 'I have done nothing.' 'Nay,' rejoined she, 'but, by Allah, thou hast indeed done something to anger God; and except thou tell me the truth, I will not abide in thy house, and thou shalt not see me, nor will I see thee.' 'I will tell thee the truth,' answered he. 'As I was sitting in my shop this day, a woman came up to me and bade me make her a bracelet. Then she went away and I wrought her a bracelet of gold and laid it aside. Presently, she returned and I brought her out the bracelet. She put out her hand and I clasped the bracelet on her wrist; and I wondered at the whiteness of her hand and the beauty of her wrist and recalled what the poet says:

Bracelets, upon her wrists, of glittering virgin gold
She hath, like fire ablaze on running water cold.
It is as if the wrists and bracelets thereabout
Were water girt with fire, right wondrous to behold.

So I took her hand and pressed it and squeezed it.' 'God is Most Great!' exclaimed the woman. 'Why didst thou this ill thing? Know that the water-carrier, who has come to our house these thirty years, nor sawst thou ever any treason in him, took my hand to day and pressed and squeezed it.' Quoth her husband, 'O woman, let us crave pardon of God! Verily, I repent of what I did, and do thou ask forgiveness of God for me.' 'God pardon me and thee,' said she, 'and vouchsafe to make good the issue of our affair!'

Next day, the water-carrier came in to the jeweller's wife and throwing himself at her feet, grovelled in the dust and besought pardon of her, saying, 'O my lady, acquit me of that which Satan deluded me to do; for it was he that seduced me and led me astray.' 'Go thy ways,' answered she; 'the fault was not in thee, but in my husband, for that he did what he did in his shop, and God hath retaliated upon him in this world.' And it is related that the goldsmith, when his wife told him how the water-carrier had used her, said, 'Tit for tat! If I had done more, the water-carrier had done more.' And this became a current byword among the folk.

So it behoveth a wife to be both outward and inward with her husband, contenting herself with little from him, if he cannot give her much, and taking pattern by Aaisheh the Truthful and Fatimeh the Clean Maid, (may God the Most High accept of them), that she may be of the company of the righteous.

Khusrau and Shirin With the Fisherman.

KING Khusrau of Persia loved fish; and one day, as he sat in his saloon, he and Shirin his wife, there came a fisherman, with a great fish, and presented it to the King, who was pleased and ordered the man four thousand dirhems. When he was gone, Shirin said to the King, 'Thou hast done ill.' 'Wherefore?' asked he; and she answered, 'Because if, after this, thou give one of thy courtiers a like sum, he will disdain it and say, "He hath but given me the like of what he gave the fisherman." And if thou give him less, he will say, "He makes light of me and gives me less than he gave the fisherman."' 'Thou art right,' rejoined Khusrau; 'but the thing is done and it ill becomes a king to go back on his gift.' Quoth Shirin, 'An thou wilt, I will contrive thee a means to get it back from him.' 'How so?' asked he; and she said, 'Call back the fisherman and ask him if the fish be male or female. If he say, "Male," say thou, "We want a female," and if he say, "Female," say, "We want a male."'

So he sent for the fisherman, who was a man of wit and discernment, and said to him, 'Is this fish male or female?' The fisherman kissed the ground and answered, 'It is of the neuter gender, neither male nor female.' The King laughed and ordered him other four thousand dirhems. So the fisherman went to the treasurer and taking his eight thousand dirhems, put them in a bag he had with him. Then, throwing the bag over his shoulder, he was going away, when he dropped a dirhem; so he laid the bag off his back and stooped down to pick it up. Now the King and Shirin were looking on, and the latter said, 'O King, didst thou note the meanness and greediness of yon man, in that he must needs stoop down, to pick up the one dirhem, and could not bring himself to leave it for one of the King's servants?' When the King heard this, he was wroth with the fisherman and said, 'Thou art right, O Shirin!' So he called the man back and said to him, 'Thou low-minded fellow! Thou art no man! How couldst thou put the bag off thy shoulder and stoop to pick up the one dirhem and grudge to leave it where it fell?' The fisherman kissed the earth before him and answered, 'May God prolong the King's life! Indeed, I did not pick up the dirhem, because of its value in my eyes; but because on one of its faces is the likeness of the King and on the other his name; and I feared lest any should unwittingly set his foot upon it, thus dishonouring the name and presentment of the King, and I be blamed for the offence.' The King wondered at his wit and shrewdness and ordered him yet other four thousand dirhems. Moreover, he let cry abroad in his kingdom, saying, 'It behoveth none to order himself by women's counsel; for whoso followeth their advice, loseth, with his one dirhem, other two.'

Yehya Ben Khalid the Barmecide and the Poor Man.

YEHYA ben Khalid the Barmecide was returning home, one day, from the Khalif's palace, when he saw a man at the gate of his house, who rose at his approach and saluted him, saying, 'O Yehya, I am in need of that which is in thy hand, and I make God my intermediary with thee.' So Yehya caused set apart a place for him in his house and bade his treasurer carry him a thousand dirhems every day and that his food should be of the choicest of his own meat. The man abode thus a whole month, at the end of which time, having received in all thirty thousand dirhems, he departed by stealth, fearing lest Yehya should take the money from him, because of the greatness of the sum; and when they told Yehya of this, he said, 'By Allah, though he had tarried with me to the end of his days, yet had I not scanted him of my largesse nor cut off from him the bounties of my hospitality!' For, indeed, the excellences of the Barmecides were past count nor can their virtues be told; especially those of Yehya teen Khalid, for he abounded in noble qualities, even as saith the poet of him:

I asked munificence, "Art free?" It answered, "No, perdie!
Yehya ben Khalid's slave am I; my lord and master he."
"A boughten slave?" asked I; but, "Nay, so heaven forfend!" quoth it.
"From ancestor to ancestor he did inherit me."

Mohammed El Amin and Jaafer Ben El Hadi.

JAAFER ben Mousa el Hadi once had a slave-girl, a lute player, called El Bedr el Kebir, than whom there was not in her time a fairer of face nor a better-shaped nor a more elegant of manners nor a more accomplished in singing and smiting the strings; she was indeed perfect in beauty and charm. Mohammed el Amin, son of Zubeideh, heard of her and was instant with Jaafer to sell her to him; but he replied, 'Thou knowest it beseems not one of my rank to sell slave-girls nor traffic in concubines; but, were it not that she was reared in my house, I would send her to thee, as a gift, nor grudge her to thee.'

Some days after this, El Amin went to Jaafer's house, to make merry; and the latter set before him that which it behoves to set before friends and bade El Bedr sing to him and gladden him. So she tuned the lute and sang right ravishingly, whilst El Amin fell to drinking and making merry and bade the cupbearers ply Jaafer with wine, till he became drunken, when he took the damsel and carried her to his own house, but laid not a finger on her. On the morrow, he sent to invite Jaafer; and when he came, he set wine before him and bade the girl sing to him, from behind the curtain. Jaafer knew her voice and was angered at this, but, of the nobleness of his nature and the greatness of his mind, he dissembled his vexation and let no change appear in his demeanour.

When the carousel was at an end, El Amin commanded one of his servants to fill the boat, in which Jaafer had come, with dirhems and dinars and all manner jewels and jacinths and rich clothes and other treasures of price. So he laid therein a thousand myriads of money and a thousand fine pearls, each worth twenty thousand dirhems; nor did he give over loading the barge with all manner of precious things, till the boatmen cried out for quarter, saying, 'The boat cannot hold any more;' whereupon he bade them carry all this to Jaafer's palace. Such are the fashions of the magnanimous, may God have mercy on them!

The Sons of Yehya ben Khalid and Said Ben Salim el Bahili.

(QUOTH Said ben Salim el Bahili), I was once, in the days of Haroun er Reshid, in very narrow case and greatly oppressed with debts, that had accumulated upon me and that I had no means of discharging. My doors were blocked up with creditors and I was without cease importuned for payment by claimants, who dunned me in crowds, till I was at my wits' end what to do. At last, being sore perplexed and troubled, I betook myself to Abdallah ben Malik el Khuzai and besought him to aid me with his judgment and of his good counsel direct me to the door of relief; and he said, "None can quit thee of this thy strait but the Barmecides." Quoth I, "Who can brook their pride and put up with their arrogance?" And he answered, "Thou must put up with it, for the sake of amending thy case." So I left him and went straight to El Fezl and Jaafer, sons of Yehya ben Khalid, to whom I related my case. "God give thee His aid," answered they, "and enable thee by His bounties to dispense with the aid of His creatures and vouchsafe thee abundant good and bestow on thee what shall suffice thee, without the need of any but Himself; for He can what He will and is gracious and provident with His servants."

I went out from them and returned to Abdallah, disappointed and perplexed and heavy at heart, and told him what they had said. Quoth he, "Thou wouldst do well to abide with us this day, that we may see what God the Most High will decree." So I sat with him awhile, and lo, up came my servant, who said to me, "O my lord, there are at our door many laden mules, and with them a man, who says he is the agent of Fezl and Jaafer ben Yehya." Quoth Abdallah, "I trust that relief is come to thee: go and see what is to do." So I left him and running to my house, found at the door a man, who gave me a letter, wherein was written the following: "Know that, after thou hadst been with us and acquainted us with thy case, we betook ourselves to the Khalif and informed him that the case had reduced thee to the humiliation of begging; whereupon he ordered thee a million dirhems from the Treasury. We represented to him that thou wouldst spend this money in paying thy creditors and said, 'Whence shall he provide for his subsistence?' So he ordered thee other three hundred thousand, and we have sent thee, of our own money, a million dirhems each, so that thou hast now three millions and three hundred thousand dirhems, wherewithal to order thine affair and amend thine estate."

See, then, the munificence of these generous men; may
God the Most High have mercy on them!

The Woman's Trick Against Her Husband.

A MAN brought his wife a fish one Friday and bidding her cook it against the end of the congregational prayers, went out to his business. Meanwhile, there came in her friend, who bade her to a wedding at his house; so she agreed and laying the fish in a jar of water, went off with him and was absent a whole week, whilst her husband sought her from house to house and enquired after her; but none could give him any news of her.

On the following Friday, she came home, [and he fell to chiding and reproaching her;] but she brought out to him the fish alive from the jar and assembled the folk against him. He told them his case; but they credited him not and said, 'It cannot be that the fish should have remained alive all this while.' So they caused adjudge him mad and imprisoned him and laughed at him, whereupon he wept sore and recited the following verses:

A hag, that holds high rank, indeed, in lewdness! In her face
Are witnesses that testify to filth and wantonness.
When she's unclean, she bawds; and when she's clean, she plays the whore:
So, all her time, she's either bawd or else adulteress.

The Devout Woman and the Two Wicked Elders.

THERE was once, of old time, a virtuous woman among the children of Israel, who was pious and devout and used every day to go out to the place of prayer, first entering a garden, which adjoined thereto, and there making the ablution. Now there were in this garden two old men, its keepers, who fell in love with her and sought her favours; but she refused, whereupon said they, 'Except thou yield thyself to us, we will bear witness against thee of fornication.' Quoth she, 'God will preserve me from your wickedness!' Then they opened the garden-gate and cried out, and the folk came to them from all sides, saying, 'What ails you?' Quoth they, 'We found this damsel in company with a youth, who was doing lewdness with her; but he escaped from our hands.'

Now it was the use of the people of those days to expose an adulteress to public ignominy for three days and after stone her. So they pilloried her three days, whilst the two old men came up to her daily and laying their hands on her head, said, 'Praised be God who hath sent down His vengeance on thee!'

On the fourth day, they carried her away, to stone her; but a lad of twelve years old, by name Daniel, followed them to the place of execution and said to them, 'Hasten not to stone her, till I judge between them.' So they set him a chair and he sat down and caused bring the old men before him separately. (Now he was the first that separated witnesses.) Then said he to the first, 'What sawest thou?' So he repeated to him his story, and Daniel said, 'In what part of the garden did this befall?' 'On the eastern side,' replied the elder, 'under a pear-tree.' Then he called the other old man and asked him the same question; and he replied, 'On the western side of the garden, under an apple-tree.' Meanwhile the damsel stood by, with her hands and eyes uplift to heaven, imploring God for deliverance. Then God the Most High sent down His vengeful thunder upon the two old men and consumed them and made manifest the innocence of the damsel.

This was the first of the miracles of the Prophet Daniel, on whom and on the Prophet be blessing and peace!

Jaafer the Barmecide and the Old Bedouin.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid went out one day, with Abou Yousuf the minion and Jaafer the Barmecide and Abou Nuwas, into the desert, where they fell in with an old man, leant upon his ass. The Khalif bade Jaafer ask him whence he came; so he said to him, 'Whence comest thou?' 'From Bassora,' answered the Bedouin. 'And whither goest thou?' asked Jaafer. 'To Baghdad,' said the other. 'And what wilt thou do there?' asked Jaafer. 'I go to seek medicine for my eye,' replied the old man. Quoth the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, make us sport with him.' 'If I jest with him,' answered Jaafer, 'I shall hear what I shall not like.' But Er Reshid rejoined, 'I charge thee, on my authority, jest with him.'

So Jaafer said to the Bedouin, 'If I prescribe thee a remedy that shall profit thee, what wilt thou give me in return?' Quoth the other, 'God the Most High will requite thee for me with better than I can give thee.' 'Harkye, then,' said Jaafer, 'and I will give thee a prescription, which I have given to none but thee.' 'What is that?' asked the Bedouin; and Jaafer answered, 'Take three ounces of wind-wafts and the like of sunbeams and moonshine and lamp-light; mix them together and let them lie in the wind three months. Then bray them three months in a mortar without a bottom and laying them in a cleft platter, set it in the wind other three months; after which use three drachms every night in thy sleep, and (God willing) thou shalt be cured.'

When the Bedouin heard this, he stretched himself out on the ass's back and letting fly a terrible great crack of wind, said to Jaafer, 'Take this, in payment of thy prescription. When I have followed it, if God grant me recovery, I will give thee a slave-girl, who shall serve thee in thy lifetime a service, wherewith God shall cut short thy term; and when thou diest and God hurries thy soul to the fire, she shall blacken thy face with her ordure, of her mourning for thee, and lament and buffet her face, saying, "O frosty-beard, what a ninny thou wast!"' The Khalif laughed till he fell backward, and ordered the Bedouin three thousand dirhems.

The Khalif Omar Ben Khettab and the Young Bedouin.

THE sheriff Hussein ben Reyyan relates that the Khalif Omar ben Khettab was sitting one day, attended by his chief counsellors, judging the folk and doing justice between his subjects, when there came up to him two handsome young men, haling by the collar a third youth, perfectly handsome and well dressed, whom they set before him. Omar looked at him and bade them loose him; then, calling him near to himself, said to them, 'What is your case with him?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered they, 'we are two brothers by one mother and known as followers of the truth. We had a father, a very old man of good counsel, held in honour of the tribes, pure of basenesses and renowned for virtues, who reared us tenderly, whilst we were little, and loaded us with favours, when we grew up; in fine, a man abounding in noble and illustrious qualities, worthy of the poet's words:

"Is Abou es Sekr of Sheiban?" they questioned of me; and
"No," I answered, "my life upon it! But Sheiban's of him, I trow.
How many a father hath ris'n in repute by a noble son,
As Adnan, by God's Apostle, to fame and glory did grow!"

He went forth this day to his garden, to take his pleasure amongst its trees and pluck the ripe fruits, when this young man slew him and swerved from the road of righteousness; wherefore we demand of thee the retribution of his crime and call upon thee to pass judgment upon him, according to the commandment of God.'

The Khalif cast a terrible look at the accused youth and said to him, 'Thou hearest the complaint of these young men; what hast thou to say in reply?' Now he was stout of heart and ready of speech, having doffed the wede of faint-heartedness and put off the apparel of affright; so he smiled and after paying the usual ceremonial compliment to the Khalif, in the most eloquent and elegant words, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have given ear to their complaint, and they have said sooth in that which they avouch, so far as they have set out what befell; and the commandment of God is a decreed decree. But I will state my case before thee, and thine be it to decide thereon.

Know then, O Commander of the Faithful, that I am a very Arab of the Arabs, the noblest of those that are beneath the skies. I grew up in the dwellings of the desert, till evil and hostile times fell upon my tribe, when I came to the utterward of this town, with my children and good and household. As I went along one of the paths between the gardens, with my she-camels, high in esteem with me and precious to me, and midst them a stallion of noble race and goodly shape, a plenteous getter, by whom the females bore abundantly and who walked among them, as he were a crowned king, — behold, one of the she-camels broke away and running to the garden of these young men's father, began to crop the branches that showed above the wall. I ran to her, to drive her away, when there appeared, at a breach of the wall, an old man, whose eyes sparkled with anger, holding a stone in his right hand and swaying to and fro, like a lion preparing for a spring. He cast the stone at my stallion, and it struck him in a vital part and killed him. When I saw the stallion drop dead beside me, live coals of anger

were kindled in my heart; so I took up the stone and throwing it at the old man, it was the cause of his end: thus his own wrongful act returned against him and the man was slain of that wherewith he slew. When the stone struck him, he cried out with a terrible great cry, and I hastened from the spot; but these young men hurried after me and laying hands on me, carried me before thee.'

Quoth Omar, (may God the Most High accept of him), 'Thou hast confessed thy crime and acquittal is impossible; for [the law of] retaliation is imperative and there is no time of escape.' 'I hear and obey the judgment of the Imam,' answered the Bedouin, 'and am content to submit me to the requirement of the law of Islam; but I have a young brother, whose old father, before his death, appointed to him great store of wealth and much gold and committed his affair to me, saying, "I give this into thy hand for thy brother; keep it for him with thy might." So I took the money and buried it; nor doth any know of it but I. Now, if thou adjudge me to die forthright, the money will be lost and thou wilt be the cause of its loss; wherefore the little one will sue thee for his due on the day when God shall judge His creatures. But, if thou wilt grant me three days' delay, I will appoint one to undertake the boy's affair, in my stead, and return to answer my debt; and I have one who will be my surety for this my word.'

The Khalif bowed his head awhile, then raised it and looking round upon those present, said, 'Who will be surety to me for his return?' The Bedouin looked at the faces of those who were in company and pointing to Abou Dherr, said, 'This man will answer for me and be my surety.' 'O Abou Dherr,' said Omar, 'dost thou hear what this youth says and wilt thou be surety to me for his return?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Abou Dherr, 'I will be surety for him three days.' So the Khalif accepted his guarantee and let the young man go.

Now, at the appointed time, when the days of grace were nearly or quite at end and still the Bedouin came not, the Khalif sat in his council, with the Companions surrounding him, like the stars about the moon, Abou Dherr and the plaintiffs being also present; and the latter said, 'O Abou Dherr, where is the defendant and how shall he return, having once escaped? But we will not stir hence, till thou bring him to us, that we may take our wreak of him.' 'As the All-Wise King liveth,' replied Abou Dherr, 'if the days of grace expire and the young man return not, I will fulfil my warranty and surrender myself to the Imam.' 'By Allah,' rejoined Omar, 'if the young man tarry, I will assuredly execute on Abou Dherr that which is prescribed by the law of Islam!' Thereupon the eyes of the bystanders ran over with tears; those who looked on raised groans, and great was the clamour. Then the chiefs of the Companions were instant with the plaintiffs to accept the bloodwit and win the thanks of the folk, but they refused and would nothing but the talion. However, as the folk were swaying to and fro and clamorously bemoaning Abou Dherr, up came the young Bedouin, with face beaded with sweat and shining like the new moon, and standing before the Imam, saluted him right fairly and said to him, 'I have given the boy in charge to his mother's brothers and have made them acquainted with all that pertains to his affairs and let them into the secret of his good; after which I braved the heats of midday and am come to redeem the promise of a free-born man.'

The folk marvelled at his good faith and loyalty and his intrepid offering himself to death; and one said to him, 'How noble a youth art thou and how loyal to thy

promise and thy duty!' 'Are ye not certified,' rejoined he, 'that when death presenteth itself none can escape from it? And indeed I have kept faith, that it be not said, "Loyalty is gone from among men."' 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Abou Dherr, 'I became warrant for this young man, without knowing to what tribe he belonged, nor had I seen him before that day; but when he turned away from all else who were present and singled me out, saying, "This man will answer for me and be my surety," I thought ill to refuse him, and humanity forbade to baulk his expectation, there being no harm in compliance with his desire, that it be not said, "Benevolence is gone from among men."' Then said the two young men, 'O Commander of the Faithful, we forgive this youth our father's blood, — seeing that [by his noble behaviour] he hath changed desolation into cheer, — that it be not said, "Humanity is gone from among men."'

The Khalif rejoiced in the acquittance of the young Bedouin and his truth and good faith; moreover, he extolled the humanity of Abou Dherr, over all his companions, and approved the benevolent resolve of the two young men, giving them grateful praise and applying to their case the saying of the poet:

He who doth good among the folk shall be repaid again; For works of Good are never lost betwixten God and men.

Then he offered to pay them, from the Treasury, the bloodwit for their father; but they refused, saying, 'We forgave him but of our desire unto God the Bountiful, the Exalted; and he who is thus minded followeth not his benefits with reproach neither mischief.'

The Khalif El Mamoun and the Pyramids of Egypt.

IT is told that the Khalif El Mamoun, son of Haroun er Reshid, when he entered the [God-]guarded city of Cairo, was minded to pull down the Pyramids, that he might take what was therein; but, when he went about to do this, he could not avail thereto, for all his endeavour. He expended great sums of money in the attempt, but only succeeded in opening up a small gallery in one of them, wherein he found treasure, to the exact amount of the money he had spent in the works, neither more nor less; at which he marvelled and taking what he found there, desisted from his intent.

Now the Pyramids are three in number, and they are one of the wonders of the world; nor is there on the face of the earth their like for height and fashion and skilful ordinance; for they are builded of immense rocks, and they who built them proceeded by piercing one block of stone and setting therein upright rods of iron; after which they pierced a second block of stone and lowered it upon the first. Then they poured melted lead upon the joints and set the blocks in geometrical order, till the building was complete. The height of each pyramid was a hundred cubits, of the measure of the time, and it was four- square, each side three hundred cubits long, at the bottom, and sloping upward thence to a point. The ancients say that, in the western Pyramid, are thirty chambers of vari-coloured granite, full of precious stones and treasures galore and rare images and utensils and costly arms, which latter are anointed with magical unguents, so that they may not rust till the day of Resurrection. Therein, also, are vessels of glass, that will bend and not break, containing various kinds of compound drugs and medicinal waters. In the second Pyramid are the records of the priests, written on tablets of granite, — to each priest his tablet, on which are set out the wonders of his craft and his achievements; and on the walls are figures like idols, working with their hands at all manner crafts and seated on thrones. To each pyramid there is a guardian, that keeps watch over it and guards it, to all eternity, against the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of events; and indeed the marvels of these pyramids astound all who have eyes and wit. Many are the poems that describe them, thou shalt profit no great matter thereby, and among the rest, quoth one of them:

The high resolves of kings, if they would have them to abide
In memory, after them, are in the tongues of monuments.
Dost thou not see the Pyramids? They, of a truth, endure
And change not for the shifts of time or chances of events.

And again:

Consider but the Pyramids and lend an ear to all
They tell of bygone times and that which did of yore befall.
Could they but speak, assuredly they would to us relate
What time and fate have done with first and last and great and small.

And again:

I prithee, tell me, friend of mine, stands there beneath the sky
A building with the Pyramids of Egypt that can vie
In skilful ordinance? Behold, Time's self's afraid of them,
Though of all else upon the earth 'tis dreaded, low and high.
My sight no longer rests upon their wondrous ordinance,
Yet are they present evermore unto my spirit's eye.

And again:

Where's he the Pyramids who built? What was his tribe,
His time and what the place where he was stricken dead?
The monuments survive their lords awhile; then death
O'ertaketh them and they fall prostrate in their stead.

The Thief Turned Merchant and the Other Thief.

THERE was once a thief who repented to God the Most High and making good his repentance, opened himself a shop for the sale of stuffs, where he continued to trade awhile. One day, he locked his shop and went home; and in the night there came to the bazaar a cunning thief, disguised in the habit of the merchant, and pulling out keys from his sleeve, said to the watchman of the market, 'Light me this candle.' So the watchman took the candle and went to get a light, whilst the thief opened the shop and lit another candle he had with him. When the watchman came back, he found him seated in the shop, looking over the account-books and reckoning with his fingers; nor did he leave to do thus till point of day, when he said to the man, 'Fetch me a camel-driver and his camel, to carry some goods for me.' So the man fetched him a camel, and the thief took four bales of stuffs and gave them to the camel-driver, who loaded them on his beast. Then he gave the watchman two dirhems and went away after the camel-driver, the watchman the while believing him to be the owner of the shop.

Next morning, the merchant came and the watchman greeted him with blessings, because of the two dirhems, much to the surprise of the former, who knew not what he meant. When he opened his shop, he saw the droppings of the wax and the account-book lying on the floor, and looking round, found four bales of stuffs missing. So he asked the watchman what had happened and he told him what had passed in the night, whereupon the merchant bade him fetch the camel-driver and said to the latter, 'Whither didst thou carry the stuffs?' 'To such a wharf,' answered the driver; 'and I stowed them on board such a vessel.' 'Come with me thither,' said the merchant. So the camel-driver carried him to the wharf and showed him the barque and her owner. Quoth the merchant to the latter, 'Whither didst thou carry the merchant and the stuff?' 'To such a place,' answered the master, 'where he fetched a camel-driver and setting the bales on the camel, went I know not whither.' 'Fetch me the camel-driver,' said the merchant; so he fetched him and the merchant said to him, 'Whither didst thou carry the bales of stuffs from the ship?' 'To such a khan,' answered he. 'Come thither with me and show it to me,' said the merchant.

So the camel-driver went with him to a khan at a distance from the shore, where he had set down the stuffs, and showed him the mock merchant's magazine, which he opened and found therein his four bales untouched and unopened. The thief had laid his mantle over them; so the merchant took the bales and the cloak and delivered them to the camel-driver, who laid them on his camel; after which the merchant locked the magazine and went away with the camel-driver. On the way, he met the thief, who followed him, till he had shipped the bales, when he said to him, 'O my brother (God have thee in His keeping!), thou hast recovered thy goods, and nought of them is lost; so give me back my cloak.' The merchant laughed and giving him back his cloak, let him go unhindered.

Mesrour the Eunuch and Ibn El Caribi

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid was very restless one night; so he said to his Vizier Jaafer, 'I am sleepless tonight and my heart is oppressed and I know not what to do.' Now his henchman Mesrour was standing before him, and he laughed. Quoth the Khalif, 'Dost thou laugh in derision of me or art thou mad?' 'Neither, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Mesrour, 'by thy kinship to the Prince of Apostles, I did it not of my free-will; but I went out yesterday to walk and coming to the bank of the Tigris, saw there the folk collected about a man named Ibn el Caribi, who was making them laugh; and but now I recalled what he said, and laughter got the better of me; and I crave pardon of thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'Bring him to me forthright,' said the Khalif. So Mesrour repaired in all haste to Ibn el Caribi and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the droll. 'But on condition,' added Mesrour, 'that, if he give thee aught, thou shalt have a fourth and the rest shall be mine.' 'Nay,' replied the other, 'thou shalt have half and I half.' 'Not so,' insisted Mesrour; 'I will have three- quarters.' 'Thou shalt have two-thirds, then,' rejoined Ibn el Caribi; 'and I the other third.' To this Mesrour agreed, after much haggling, and they returned to the palace together.

When Ibn el Caribi came into the Khalif's presence, he saluted him, as became his rank, and stood before him; whereupon said Er Reshid to him, 'If thou do not make me laugh, I will give thee three blows with this bag.' Quoth Ibn el Caribi in himself, 'Three strokes with that bag were a small matter, seeing that beating with whips irketh me not;' for he thought the bag was empty. Then he clapped into a discourse, such as would make a stone laugh, and gave vent to all manner of drolleries; but the Khalif laughed not neither smiled, whereat Ibn el Caribi marvelled and was chagrined and affrighted. Then said the Khalif, 'Now hast thou earned the beating,' and gave him a blow with the bag, in which were four pebbles, each two pounds in weight. The blow fell on his neck and he gave a great cry, then calling to mind his compact with Mesrour, said, 'Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful! Hear two words from me.' 'Say on,' replied the Khalif. Quoth Ibn el Caribi, 'Mesrour made it a condition with me that, whatsoever might come to me of the bounties of the Commander of the Faithful, one-third thereof should be mine and the rest his; nor did he agree to leave me so much as one-third save after much haggling. Now thou hast bestowed on me nothing but beating; I have had my share and here stands he, ready to receive his; so give him the two other blows.'

When the Khalif heard this, he laughed till he fell backward; then calling Mesrour, he gave him a blow, whereat he cried out and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, one-third sufficeth me: give him the two-thirds.' The Khalif laughed at them and ordered them a thousand diners each, and they went away, rejoicing.

The Devout Prince.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid had a son, who, from the time he attained the age of sixteen, renounced the world and walked in the way of ascetics and devotees. He was wont to go out to the tombs and say, 'Behold, ye that lie here once possessed the world, but that was no deliverer for you [from death], and now are ye come to your graves! Would God I knew what ye say and what is said to you!' And he wept, as one weeps that is troubled and fearful, and repeated the words of the poet:

Whene'er the funerals pass, my heart with fear is torn, And the wailing of the mourners maketh me to mourn.

One day, as he sat among the tombs, according to his wont, his father passed by, in all his state, surrounded by his viziers and grandees and the officers of his household, who saw the Khalif's son, with a gown of woollen stuff on his body and a cowl of the same on his head, and said to one another, 'This youth dishonours the Commander of the Faithful among Kings: but, if he reproved him, he would leave his present way of life.' The Khalif heard what they said; so he bespoke his son of this, saying, 'O my son, thou puttest me to shame by thy present way of life.' The young man looked at him and made no reply: then he beckoned to a bird, that was perched on the battlements of the palace, and said to it, 'O bird, I conjure thee, by Him who created thee, alight upon my hand.' And straightway it flew down and perched on his hand. Quoth he, 'Return to thy place;' and it did so. Then he said, 'Alight on the hand of the Commander of the Faithful;' but it refused, and he said to his father, 'It is thou that puttest me to shame, amongst the friends of God, by thy love of the world; and now I am resolved to depart from thee, never to return to thee, save in the world to come.' Then he went down to Bassora, where he fell to working with those that wrought in mud, taking, as his day's hire, but a dirhem and a danic. With the danic he fed himself and gave alms of the dirhem.

(Quoth Abou Aamir of Bassora), There fell down a wall in my house: so I went out to the station of the artisans, to find one who should set it up for me, and my eyes fell on a handsome youth of a radiant countenance. So I accosted him and said to him, "O my friend, dost thou seek work?" "Yes," answered he; and I said, "Come with me and build a wall." "On two conditions," replied he. Quoth I, "What are they, O my friend?" "First," said he, "that my hire be a dirhem and a danic, and secondly, that, when the Muezzin calls to prayer, thou shalt let me go pray with the congregation." "It is well," answered I and carried him to my house, where he fell to work, such work as I never saw the like of. Presently, I named to him the morning meal; but he said, "No;" and I knew that he was fasting. When he heard the call to prayer, he said to me, "Thou knowest the condition?" "Yes," answered I. So he loosed his girdle and applying himself to the ablution, made it after a fashion than which I never saw a goodlier; then went to the mosque and prayed with the congregation and returned to his work. He did the like upon the call to afternoon-prayer, and when I saw him fall to work again thereafterward, I said to him, "O my friend, the hours of labour are over for to-day; a workman's day is but till the time of afternoon-prayer." "Glory be to God," answered he, "my service is till the night." And he ceased not to work till nightfall, when I gave

him two dirhems. Quoth he, "What is this?" "By Allah," answered I, "this is [but] part of thy wage, because of thy diligence in my service." But he threw me back the two pieces, saying, "I will have no more than was agreed upon between us." I pressed him to take them, but could not prevail upon him; so I gave him the dirhem and the danic, and he went away.

Next morning early, I went to the station, but found him not; so I enquired for him and was told that he came thither only on Saturdays. So, when Saturday came, I betook me to the market and finding him there, said to him, "In the name of God, do me the favour to come and work for me." ["Willingly,"] said he, "upon the conditions thou wottest of." "It is well," answered I and carrying him to my house, stood watching him, unseen of him, and saw him take a handful of mud and lay it on the wall, when, behold, the stones ranged themselves one upon another; and I said, "On this wise are the friends of God." He worked out his day and did even more than before; and when it was night, I gave him his hire, and he took it and went away.

When the third Saturday came round, I went to the standing, but found him not; so I enquired for him and was told that he lay sick in the hut of such a woman. Now this was an old woman, renowned for piety, who had a hut of reeds in the burial-ground. So I went thither and found him lying on the naked earth, with a brick for a pillow and his face beaming with light. I saluted him and he returned my salute; and I sat down at his head, weeping over his tenderness of years and strangerhood and submission to the will of his Lord. Then said I to him, "Hast thou any need?" "Yes," answered he; and I said, "What is it?" He replied, "Come hither tomorrow in the forenoon and thou wilt find me dead. Wash me and dig my grave and tell none thereof: but shroud me in this my gown, after thou hast unsewn it and taken out what thou shalt find in the bosom, which keep with thee. Then, when thou hast prayed over me and laid me in the dust, go to Baghdad and watch for the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, till he come forth, when do thou bear him my salutation and give him what thou shalt find in the breast of my gown." Then he made the profession of the Faith and glorified his Lord in the most eloquent of words, reciting the following verses:

Carry the trust of him on whom the wished-for death hath come
To Er Reshid, and thy reward with thy Creator stand!
"An exile greets thee," say, "who longed full sorely for thy sight;
With long desire he yearned for thee, far in a foreign strand.
Nor hate nor weariness from thee estranged him, for, indeed,
To God Most High he was brought near by kissing thy right hand.
But, O my father, 'twas his heart, shunning the vain delights
Of this thy world, that drove him forth to seek a distant land!"

Then he betook himself to prayer, asking pardon of God and blessing the Lord of the Just and repeating verses of the Koran; after which he recited the following:

Let not prosperity delude thee, father mine;
For fortune wastes and life itself must pass away.
Whenas thou com'st to know of folk in evil plight,
Think thou must answer it upon the Judgment Day;

And when thou bearest forth the dead unto the tombs,
Think that thou, too, must pass upon the self-same way!

Then I left him and went home. On the morrow, I returned, at the appointed hour, and found him indeed dead, the mercy of God be on him! So I washed him and unsewing his gown, found in the bosom a ruby worth thousands of diners and said to myself, "By Allah, this youth was indeed abstracted from the things of this world!" After I had buried him, I made my way to Baghdad and going to the Khalif's palace, waited till he came forth, when I accosted him in one of the streets and gave him the ruby, which when he saw, he knew and fell down in a swoon. His attendants laid hands on me, but he revived and bade them unhand me and bring me courteously to the palace. They did his bidding, and when he returned, he sent for me and carrying me into his closet, said to me, "How doth the owner of this ruby?" Quoth I, "He is dead;" and told him what had passed; whereupon he fell a-weeping and said, "The son hath profited, but the father is disappointed." Then he called out, saying, "Ho, such an one!" And behold, a woman came out to him. When she saw me, she would have withdrawn; but he said to her, "Come; and heed him not." So she entered and saluted, and he threw her the ruby, which when she knew, she gave a great shriek and fell down in a swoon. As soon as she came to herself, she said, "O Commander of the Faithful, what hath God done with my son?" And he said to me, "Do thou tell her;" for he could not speak for weeping. So I repeated the story to her, and she began to weep and say in a failing voice, "How I have longed for thy sight, O consolation of my eyes! Would I might have given thee to drink, when thou hadst none to tend thee! Would I might have companied with thee, whenas thou foundest none to cheer thee!" And she poured forth tears and recited the following verses:

I weep for one to whom death came, an exile and in pain:
Alone he died, without a friend to whom he might complain.
Puissant and honoured and conjoined with those that loved him dear,
To live alone and seeing none, unfriended, he was fain.
That which the days conceal shall yet be manifest to us:
Not one of us by death, indeed, unsmitten may remain.
O absent one, the Lord of all decreed thy strangerhood,
And thou left'st far behind the love that was betwixt us twain!
Though death, my son, forbid me hope to see thee in this life,
Tomorrow, on the Reckoning-Day, we two shall meet again.

Quoth I, "O Commander of the Faithful, was he indeed thy son?" "Yes," answered he; "and indeed, before I succeeded to this office, he was wont to visit the learned and company with the devout; but, when I became Khalif, he grew estranged from me and withdrew himself apart. Then said I to his mother, 'This thy son is absorbed in God the Most High, and it may be that tribulations shall befall him and he be smitten with stress of evil chance; wherefore, do thou give him this ruby, that it may be to him a resource in the hour of need.' So she gave it him, conjuring him to take it, and he obeyed her. Then he left the things of our world to us and removed himself from us; nor did he cease to be absent from us, till he went to the presence of God (to whom belong might and majesty) with a holy and pure mind." Then said he,

"Come, show me his grave." So we repaired to Bassora and I showed him his son's grave. When he saw it, he wept and lamented, till he fell down in a swoon; after which he came to himself and asked pardon of God, saying, "We are God's, and to Him we return!" and invoked blessings on the dead. Then he besought me of companionship; but I said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, verily, in thy son's case is for me the gravest of admonitions!" And I recited the following verses:

'Tis I am the stranger! None harbours the wight,
Though he lie in his native city by night.
'Tis I am the exile! Nor children nor wife
Nor comrades have I, to take ruth on my plight.
The mosques are my refuge; I haunt them indeed:
My heart from their shelter shall never take flight.
To the Lord of all creatures, to God be the praise,
Whilst yet in the body abideth the spright!

The Schoolmaster Who Fell in Love by Report.

(QUOTH one of the erudite), I passed once by a [school, in which a] schoolmaster, comely of aspect and well dressed, was teaching children; so I entered, and he rose and made me sit with him. Then I examined him in the Koran and in syntax and poetry and lexicography, and found him perfect in all that was required of him and said to him, "God strengthen thy purpose! Thou art indeed versed in all that is sought of thee." So I frequented him awhile, discovering daily some new excellence in him, and said to myself, "This is indeed a wonder in a schoolmaster; for the understanding are agreed upon the lack of wit of those that teach children." Then I separated myself from him and sought him out and visited him [only] every few days, till, one day, coming to see him as of wont, I found the school shut and made enquiry of the neighbours, who said, "Some one is dead in his house." So I said to myself, "It behoves me to pay him a visit of condolence," and going to his house, knocked at the door. A slave-girl came out to me and said, "What dost thou want?" "I want thy master," answered I. Quoth she, "He is sitting alone, mourning." "Tell him," rejoined I, "that his friend so and so seeks to condole with him." She went in and told him; and he said, "Admit him." So she brought me in to him, and I found him seated alone and his head bound [with the fillets of mourning]. "May God amply requite thee!" said I. "This is a road all must perforce travel, and it behoves thee to take patience. But who is dead unto thee?" "One who was dearest and best beloved of the folk to me," answered he. Quoth I, "Perhaps thy father?" He replied, "No;" and I said, "Thy mother?" "No," answered he. "Thy brother?" "No." "One of thy kindred?" "No." "Then," asked I, "what relation was the dead to thee?" "My mistress," answered he. Quoth I to myself, "This is the first sign of his lack of wit." Then I said to him, "There are others than she and fairer;" and he answered, "I never saw her, that I might judge whether or no there be others fairer than she." Quoth I to myself, "This is another sign" Then I said to him, "And how couldst thou fall in love with one thou hast never seen?" Quoth he, "I was sitting one day at the window, when there passed by a man, singing the following verse:

Umm Amri, God requite thee thy generosity! Give back my heart, prithee, wherever it may be!

When I heard this, I said to myself, 'Except this Umm Amri were without equal in the world, the poets had not celebrated her in amorous verse.' So I fell in love with her; but, two days after, the same man passed, singing the following verse:

The jackass with Umm Amri departed; but, alas, Umm Amri! She returned not again, nor did the ass.

Thereupon I knew that she was dead and mourned for her. This was three days ago, and I have been mourning ever since." So I left him and went away, having assured myself of the feebleness of his wit.

The Foolish Schoolmaster

A MAN of elegant culture once entered a school and sitting down by the master, entered into discourse with him and found him an accomplished theologian, poet, grammarian and lexicographer, intelligent, well bred and pleasant; whereat he wondered, saying in himself, 'It cannot be that a man, who teaches children in a school, should have a perfect wit.' When he was about to go away, the schoolmaster said to him, 'Thou art my guest to-night;' and he consented and accompanied him to his house, where he made much of him and set food before him. They ate and drank and sat talking, till a third part of the night was past, when the host spread his guest a bed and went up to his harem. The other lay down and addressed himself to sleep, when, behold, there arose a great clamour in the harem. He asked what was to do, and they said, 'A terrible thing hath befallen the sheikh, and he is at the last gasp.' 'Take me up to him,' said he. So they carried him to the schoolmaster, whom he found lying insensible, with his blood streaming down. He sprinkled water on his face and when he revived, he said to him, 'What has betided thee? When thou leftest me, thou west in all good cheer and sound of body.' 'O my brother,' answered the schoolmaster, 'after I left thee, I sat meditating on the works of God the Most High and said to myself, "In every thing God hath created for man there is an use; for He (to whom be glory) created the hands to seize, the feet to walk, the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the yard to do the deed of kind; and so on with all the members of the body, except these two cullions; there is no use in them." So I took a razor I had by me and cut them off; and there befell me what thou seest.' So the guest left him and went away, saving, 'He was in the right who said, "No schoolmaster who teaches children can have a perfect wit, though he know all sciences."

The Ignorant Man Who Set up for a Schoolmaster.

THERE was once, among the hangers-on of the collegiate mosque, a man who knew not how to read and write and got his bread by gulling the folk. One day, he bethought him to open a school and teach children; so he got him tablets and written scrolls and hung them up in a [conspicuous] place. Then he enlarged his turban and sat down at the door of the school. The people, who passed by and saw his turban and the tablets and scrolls, thought he must be a very learned doctor; so they brought him their children; and he would say to this, 'Write,' and to that, 'Read;' and thus they taught one another.

One day, as he sat, as of wont, at the door of the school, he saw a woman coming up, with a letter in her hand, and said to himself, 'This woman doubtless seeks me, that I may read her the letter she has in her hand. How shall I do with her seeing I cannot read writing?' And he would fain have gone down and fled from her; but, before he could do this, she overtook him and said to him, 'Whither away?' Quoth he, 'I purpose to pray the noontide-prayer and return.' 'Noon is yet distant,' said she; 'so read me this letter.' He took the letter and turning it upside down, fell to looking at it, now shaking his head and anon knitting his eyebrows and showing concern. Now the letter came from the woman's husband, who was absent; and when she saw the schoolmaster do thus, she said, 'Doubtless my husband is dead, and this learned man is ashamed to tell me so.' So she said to him, 'O my lord, if he be dead, tell me.' But he shook his head and held his peace. Then said she, 'Shall I tear my clothes?' 'Tear,' answered he. 'Shall I buffet my face?' asked she; and he said, 'Buffet.' So she took the letter from his hand and returning home, fell a-weeping, she and her children.

One of her neighbours heard her weeping and asking what ailed her, was answered, 'She hath gotten a letter, telling her that her husband is dead.' Quoth the man, 'This is a lying saying; for I had a letter from him but yesterday, advising me that he is in good health and case and will be with her after ten days.' So he rose forthright and going in to her, said, 'Where is the letter thou hast received?' She brought it to him, and he took it and read it; and it ran as follows, after the usual salutations, 'I am well and in good health and case and will be with thee after ten days. Meanwhile, I send thee a quilt and an extinguisher.' So she took the letter and returning with it to the schoolmaster, said to him, 'What moved thee to deal thus with me?' And she repeated to him what her neighbour had told her of her husband's well-being and of his having sent her a quilt and an extinguisher. 'Thou art in the right,' answered he. 'But excuse me, good woman; for I was, at the time, troubled and absent-minded and seeing the extinguisher wrapped in the quilt, thought that he was dead and they had shrouded him.' The woman, not smoking the cheat, said, 'Thou art excused.' and taking the letter, went away.

The King and the Virtuous Wife

A CERTAIN King once went forth in disguise, to look into the affairs of his subjects. Presently, he came to a great village and being athirst, stopped at the door of a house and asked for water. There came out to him a fair woman, with a pitcher of water, which she gave him, and he drank. When he looked at her, he was ravished with her and required her of love. Now she knew him; so she brought him into the house and making him sit down, brought out a book and said to him, 'Look in this book, whilst I order my affair and return to thee.' So he looked into the book, and behold, it treated of the Divine prohibition against adultery and of the punishments that God hath prepared for those that do it. When he read this, his flesh quaked and he repented to God the Most High: then he called the woman and giving her the book, went away. Now her husband was absent and when he returned, she told him what had passed, whereat he was confounded and said in himself, 'I fear lest the King's desire have fallen upon her.' And he dared not have to do with her after this.

After awhile, the wife told her kinsfolk of her husband's conduct, and they complained of him to the King, saying, 'May God advance the King! This man hired of us a piece of land, for tillage, and tilled it awhile; then left it fallow and tilled it not, neither forsook it, that we might let it to one who would till it. Indeed, harm is come to the field, and we fear its corruption, for that land, if it be not tilled' spoileth.' Quoth the King to the man, 'What hinders thee from tilling thy land?' 'May God advance the King!' answered he. 'It came to my knowledge that a lion entered the field, wherefore I stood in awe of him and dared not approach it, seeing that I know I cannot cope with the lion, and I stand in fear of him.' The King understood the parable and rejoined, saying, 'O fellow, the lion trampled not thy land, and it is good for tillage; so do thou till it and God prosper thee in it, for the lion hath done it no hurt.' Then he bade give the man and his wife a handsome present and sent them away.

Abdurrehman the Moor's Story of the Roc.

THERE was once a man of the people of Morocco, called Abdurrehman the Moor, and he was known, to boot, as the Chinaman, for his long sojourn in Cathay. He had journeyed far and wide and traversed many seas and deserts and was wont to relate wondrous tales of his travels. He was once cast upon an island, where he abode a long while and returning thence to his native country, brought with him the quill of the wing-feather of a young roe, whilst yet unhatched and in the egg; and this quill was big enough to hold a skinful of water, for it is said that the length of the young roe's wing, when it comes forth of the egg, is a thousand fathoms. The folk marvelled at this quill, when they saw it, and Abdurrehman related to them the following adventure.

He was on a voyage in the China seas, with a company of merchants, when they sighted a great island so they steered for it and casting anchor before it, saw that it was large and spacious. The ship's people went ashore to get wood and water, taking with them skins and ropes and axes, and presently espied a great white gleaming dome, a hundred cubits high. So they made towards it and drawing near, found that it was a roe's egg and fell on it with axes and stones and sticks, till they uncovered the young bird and found it as it were a firm-set mountain. They went about to pluck out one of its wing-feathers, but could not win to do so, save by helping one another, for all the feathers were not full grown; after which they took what they could carry of the young bird's flesh and cutting the quill away from the feather-part, returned to the ship. Then they spread the canvas and putting out to sea, sailed with a fair wind all that night, till the sun rose, when they saw the old roc come flying after them, as he were a vast cloud, with a rock in his talons, like a great mountain, bigger than the ship. As soon as he came over the vessel, he let fall the rock upon it; but the ship, having great way on her, forewent the rock, which fell into the sea with a terrible crash. So God decreed them safety and delivered them from destruction; and they cooked the young bird's flesh and ate it. Now there were amongst them old grey bearded men; and when they awoke on the morrow, they found that their beards had turned black, nor did any who had eaten of the young roc ever grow grey. Some held the cause of the return of youth to them and the ceasing of hoariness from them to be that they had heated the pot with arrow-wood, whilst others would have it that it came of eating the young roe's flesh; and this is indeed a wonder of wonders.

Adi Ben Zeid and the Princess Hind.

IN Numan ben el Mundhir, King of the Arabs [of Irak], had a daughter named Hind, who was eleven years old and was the loveliest woman of her age and time. She went out one Easter, which is a feast-day of the Nazarenes, to the White Church, to take the sacrament. Now that day came to El Hireh a young man called Adi ben Zeid, with presents from Chosroës, to En Numan, and he also went into the White Church, to communicate. He was tall and well-favoured, with handsome eyes and smooth cheeks, and had with him a company of his people. Now there was with Hind a slave-girl named Mariyeh, who was enamoured of Adi, but had not been able to win to him. So, when she saw him in the church, she said to Hind, 'Look at yonder youth. By Allah, he is handsomer than all thou seest!' 'And who is he?' asked Hind. 'Adi ben Zeid,' answered Mariyeh Quoth the princess, 'I fear lest he know me, if I draw near, to look on him closelier.' 'How should he know thee,' said Mariyeh, 'when he has never seen thee?' So she drew near him and found him jesting with his companions; and indeed he surpassed them all, not only in his beauty, but in the excellence of his speech and the eloquence of his tongue and the richness of his apparel. When the princess saw him, she was ravished with him, her reason was confounded and her colour changed; and Mariyeh, seeing her inclination to him, said to her, 'Speak to him.' So she spoke to him and went away.

When he saw her and heard her speech, he was captivated by her and his wit was dazed; his colour changed and his heart fluttered, so that his companions misdoubted of him, and he whispered one of them to follow her and find out who she was. The man followed her and returning to his master, informed him that she was the princess Hind, daughter of En Numan. So Adi left the church, knowing not whither he went, for stress of love, and reciting the following verses:

Companions mine, yet one more favour I entreat:
Address ye to the ways once more your travelling feet.
Turn me towards the lands, the lands where Hinda dwells;
Then go and her I love with tidings of me greet.

Then he went to his lodging and lay that night, restless nor tasting sleep. On the morrow, Mariyeh accosted him, and he received her kindly, though before he would not hearken to her, and said to her, 'What is thy will?' Quoth she, 'I have a suit to thee.' 'Name it,' answered he; 'for, by Allah, thou shalt not ask me aught, but I will give it thee!' So she told him that she was in love with him, and her suit to him was that he would grant her a lover's privacy; and he agreed to do her will, on condition that she would serve him with Hind and make shift to bring them together. Then he took her into a vintner's shop, in one of the by-streets of Hireh, and lay with her; after which she returned to Hind and said to her, 'Dost thou not long to see Adi?' 'How can this be?' replied the princess. 'Indeed my longing for him makes me restless, and no repose is left me since yesterday, on his account.' Quoth Mariyeh, 'I will appoint him to be in such a place, where thou canst look on him from the palace.' 'Do what thou wilt,' replied Hind and agreed with her upon the place.

So Adi came, and the princess looked out upon him; and when she saw him, she was like to fall down from the top of the palace and said to Mariyeh, 'Except thou bring him in to me this night, I shall die.' So saying, she fell down in a swoon, and her serving-women lifted her up and bore her into the palace; whilst Mariyeh hastened to En Numan and discovered the whole matter to him, saying, 'Verily, she is mad for love of Adi; and except thou marry her to him, she will be put to shame and die of love for him.' The King bowed his head awhile in thought and exclaimed again and again, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!' Then said he, 'Out on thee! How shall the marriage be brought about, seeing it misliketh me to open the matter to him?' 'He is yet more ardently in love and yet more desireful of her than she of him,' answered Mariyeh; 'and I will so order the matter that he shall be unaware that his case is known to thee; but do not betray thyself, O King.'

Them she went to Adi and said to him, 'Make a feast and bid the King thereto; and when wine hath gotten the better of him, ask of him the hand of his daughter, for he will not refuse thee.' Quoth Adi, 'I fear lest this enrage him against me and be the cause of enmity between us.'

But she answered, 'I came not to thee, till I had settled the whole matter with him.' Then she returned to En Numan and said to him, 'Seek of Adi that he entertain thee in his house.' 'There is no harm in that,' replied the King and after three days, besought Adi to give him and his lords the morning-meal in his house. The young man consented, and the King went to him; and when the wine had taken effect on En Numan, Adi rose and sought of him his daughter in marriage. He consented and married them and brought her to him after three days; and they abode at En Numan's court, in all delight and solace of life, three years, at the end of which time the King was wroth with Adi and slew him. Hind mourned for him with an exceeding grief and built her a convent without the city, whither she retired and devoted herself to religious exercises, weeping and bemoaning her husband, till she died. And her convent is extant to this day without El Hireh.

Dibil El Khuzaï With the Lady and Muslim Ben El Welid.

(QUOTH Dibil el Khuzaï), I was sitting one day at the gate of El Kerkh, when a lady came up to me, never saw I a handsomer or better shaped than she, walking with a swaying gait and ravishing, with her flexile grace, all who beheld her. When my eyes fell on her, I was captivated by her and my entrails trembled and meseemed my heart fled forth of my breast; so I accosted her with the following verse:

Unsealed are the springs of tears for mine eyes, heigho!
And sealed are the springs of sleep to my lids, for woe.

She turned her head and looking at me, made answer forthright with the following:

And surely, an ailing eye to have, for him
Whom her looks invite, is a little thing, I trow.

I was astounded at the readiness of her reply and the sweetness of her speech and rejoined with this verse:

And doth then the heart of my fair indeed incline
To favour him whose tears as a river flow?

She answered me, without hesitation, thus:

If thou desire us of love, betwixt us love Is a loan to be returned, I'd have thee know.

Never entered my ears sweeter than her speech nor ever saw I brighter than her face: so I changed the rhyme and measure, to try her, in my wonder at her speech, and repeated the following verse:

Will destiny e'er gladden us with union and delight And one desireful one at last with other one unite?

She smiled at this, (never saw I fairer than her mouth nor sweeter than her lips,) and answered me, without hesitation, as follows:

I prithee, what hath destiny to do betwixt us twain? Thou'rt destiny: rejoice us, then, with union and delight.

At this, I sprang up and kissing her hands, said, "I had not thought that Fortune would vouchsafe me such an opportunity. Do thou follow me, not of command or against thy will, but of thy grace and favour to me." Then I went on and she after me.

Now I had not, at that time, a lodging I deemed fit for the like of her; Muslim ben El Welid was my fast friend, and he had a handsome house. So I made for his abode and knocked at the door, whereupon he came out, and I saluted him, saying, "It is for a time like this that friends are treasured up." "With all my heart," answered he; "enter." So we entered, I and the lady, but found money scarce with him. However, he gave me a handkerchief, saying, "Carry it to the market and sell it and buy meat and

what else thou needest." So I took the handkerchief and hastening to the market, sold it and bought meat and what else we required; but, when I returned, I found that Muslim had retired, with the lady, to an underground chamber. When he heard me, he came out and said to me, "God requite thee the kindness thou hast done me, O Abou Ali, and reckon it of thy good deeds on the Day of Resurrection!" So saying, he took from me the meat and wine and shut the door in my face His words enraged me and I knew not what to do; but he stood behind the door, shaking for mirth; and when he saw me thus, he said to me, "I conjure thee on my life, O Abou Ali, tell me who it was composed this verse?

I lay in the arms of the fair one all night,
Whilst my friend slept, clean-limbed, but polluted of spright."

At this, my rage redoubled, and I replied, "He who wrote this other verse:

One, I wish him in's girdle a thousand of horns, Exceeding the idol Menaf in their height!"

Then I began to revile him and reproach him with the foulness of his conduct and his lack of honour; and he was silent. But, when I had finished, he smiled and said, "Out on thee, O fool! Thou hast entered my house and sold my handkerchief and spent my money: so, with whom art thou wroth, O pimp?" Then he left me and went away to her, whilst I said, "By Allah, thou art right to call me a fool and a pimp!" Then I left his door and went away in sore concern, whereof I feel the trace in my heart to this day; and I never had my desire of her nor ever heard of her more.

Isaac Of Mosul and the Merchant.

(QUOTH Ishac ben Ibrahim el Mausili), One day, being weary of assiduous attendance upon the Khalif, I mounted my horse and went forth, at break of day, having a mind to ride out and take my pleasure in the open country, and I said to my servant, "If there come a messenger from the Khalif or another, say that I set out at daybreak, upon a pressing business, and that thou knowest not whither I am gone." So I rode forth alone and went round about the city, till the sun grew hot, when I halted in a street, known as El Herem, and stood my horse under the spacious jutting porch of one of the houses there, to shelter me from the glare of the sun.

I had not stood long, before there came up a black slave, leading an ass with jewelled housings, on which sat a damsel, clad in the richest of clothes, richness can go no farther; and I saw that she was elegantly made, with languorous looks and graceful carriage. I asked one of the passers-by who she was, and he said, "She is a singer." And I fell in love with her at sight, so that I could scarce keep my seat on my horse's back. She entered the house at whose gate I stood; and as I cast about for a device to gain access to her, there came up two comely young men, who sought admission, and the master of the house gave them leave to enter. So they alighted and entered, and I with them, they supposing that the master of the house had invited me; and we sat awhile, till food was brought and we ate. Then they set wine before us, and the damsel came out, with a lute in her hand. She sang and we drank, till I rose to do an occasion. During my absence, the host questioned the two others of me, and they replied that they knew me not; whereupon quoth he, "This fellow is a spunger, but he is well-bred and pleasant; so entreat him fairly." Then I came back and sat down in my place, whilst the damsel sang the following verses to a pleasing air:

Say thou unto the she-gazelle, who yet is no gazelle,
And the wild heifer, languorous-eyed, who yet no heifer is,
"One, who in dalliance affects the male, no female is,
And he who is effeminate of step's no male, ywis."

She sang it excellent well, and the company drank and her song pleased them. Then she sang various songs to rare tunes, and amongst the rest one of mine, to the following words:

The pleasant girls have gone and left
The homesteads empty and bereft
Of their sweet converse, after cheer,
All void and ruined by Time's theft.

She sang this even better than the first; then she sang other rare songs, old and new, and amongst them, another of mine, with the following words:

To the loved one, who turneth in anger away
And vrithdraweth himself far apart from thee, say,
"The mischief thou wroughtest, thou wroughtest indeed,
For all, per-adventure, thou west but in play."

I asked her to repeat the song, that I might correct it for her; whereupon one of the men turned to me and said, "Never saw I a more brazen-faced parasite than thou. Art thou not content with spunging, but thou must meddle, to boot? Verily, in thee is the saying made true, 'A parasite and a meddler.'" I hung down my head for shame and made him no answer, whilst his companion would have restrained him from me; but he would not be restrained. Presently, they rose to pray, but I hung behind a little and taking the lute, tuned it after a particular fashion and stood up to pray with the rest. When we had made an end of prayer, the same man fell again to flouting and reviling me and persisted in his churlishness, whilst I held my peace. Then the damsel took the lute and touching it, knew that it was other than as she had left it and said, "Who hath touched my lute?" Quoth they, "None of us hath touched it." "Nay, by Allah," rejoined she, "some one hath touched it, and he a past master in the craft; for he hath ordered the strings and tuned them after the fashion of one who is right skilled in the art." Quoth I, "It was I tuned it." "Then, God on thee," answered she, "take it and play on it!" So I took it and playing a rare and difficult measure, that came nigh to deaden the live and raise the dead, sang thereto the following verses:

I had a heart, wherewith of yore I lived:
'Twas seared with fire and all consumed indeed.
Her love, alack I was not vouchsafed to me;
Unto the slave 'twas not of Heaven decreed.
If what I taste be passion's very food,
Then all who love upon its like must feed.

When I had finished, there was not one of the company but sprang from his place and sat down before me, saying "God on thee, O our lord, sing us another song." "With all my heart," said I and playing another measure in masterly fashion, sang thereto the following:

O thou whose heart, for fortune's blows, is all consumed and sped,
Sorrows with whom from every side have taken up their stead,
Unlawful unto her, my heart who pierces with her shafts,
Is that my blood which, breast-bones 'twixt and vitals, she hath shed.
'Twas plain, upon the parting day, that her resolve, our loves
To sunder, unto false suspect must be attributed.
She pours forth blood she had not shed, if passion had not been.
Will none my murderess ensue and wreak me on her head?

When I had made an end of this song, there was not one of them but rose to his feet and threw himself to the ground, for excess of delight. Then I cast the lute from my hand; but they said, "Allah on thee, let us hear another song, so God increase thee of His bounty!" "O folk," replied I, "I will sing you another song and another and another and will tell you who I am. Know that I am Ishac ben Ibrahim el Mausili, and by Allah, I bear myself haughtily to the Khalif, when he seeks me. Ye have today made me hear [abuse from] an unmannerly fellow such as I loathe; and by Allah, I will not speak a word nor sit with you, till ye put yonder quarrelsome churl out from among you!" Quoth the latter's companion to him, "This is what I feared and warned thee against." So they took him by the hand and put him out; and I took the lute and sang

over again the songs of my fashion that the damsel had sung. Then I whispered the host that she had taken my heart and that I had no patience to endure from her. Quoth he, "Thou shalt have her and all that pertains to her of clothes and jewels, on one condition." "What is that?" asked I. "It is," answered he, "that thou abide with me a month." "It is well," rejoined I; "I will do this." So I abode with him a whole month, whilst none knew where I was and the Khalif sought me everywhere, but could come by no news of me; and at the end of this time, the merchant delivered to me the damsel, together with all that pertained to her of things of price and an eunuch to attend her.

I brought her to my lodging, feeling as I were lord of the whole world, for stress of delight in her; then rode forthright to El Mamoun. When he saw me, he said, "Out on thee, O Isaac, where hast thou been all this while?" I acquainted him with the story and he said, "Bring me the man at once." So I told him where he dwelt, and he sent and fetched him and questioned him of the case; whereupon he repeated the story and the Khalif said to him, "Thou art a man of a generous mind, and it is just that thou be upheld in thy generosity." Then he ordered him a hundred thousand dirhems and said to me, "O Isaac, bring me the damsel." So I brought her to him, and she sang and delighted him. He was greatly gladdened by her and ordered her fifty thousand dirhems, saying to me, "I appoint her of service every Thursday, when she must come and sing to me from behind the curtain." So, by Allah, this ride of mine was a source of profit both to me and to others.

The Three Unfortunate Lovers.

(Quoth El Utbi), I was sitting one day with a company of men of culture, telling stories of the folk, when the talk turned upon anecdotes of lovers and each of us said his say thereon. Now there was in our company an old man, who remained silent, till we had all spoken and had no more to say, when he said, "Shall I tell you a thing, the like of which you never heard?" "Yes," answered we; and he said, "Know, then, that I had a daughter, who loved a youth, but we knew it not. The youth in question loved a singing-girl, who, in her turn, was enamoured of my daughter. One day, I was present at an assembly, where were also the young man and the girl; when the latter sang the following verses:

Tears are the token by which, for love,
Abjection in lovers still is shown,
And more by token in one who finds
No friend, to whom he may make his moan.

'By Allah, thou hast said well, O my lady!' exclaimed the youth. 'Doss thou bid me die?' 'Yes,' answered the girl from behind the curtain, 'if thou be in love.' So he laid his head on a cushion and closed his eyes; and when the cup came round to him, we shook him and found that he was dead. Therewith we all flocked to him, and our joy was troubled and we grieved and broke up forthright. When I came home, my people taxed me with returning before the appointed time, and I told them what had befallen the youth, thinking to surprise them. My daughter heard my words and rising, went into another chamber, whither I followed her and found her lying, with her head on a cushion, as I had told of the young man. I shook her and behold, she was dead. So we laid her out and set forth next morning with her funeral, whilst the friends of the young man carried him out, likewise, to bury him. As we were on the way to the burial-place, we met a third funeral and enquiring whose it was, were told that it was that of the singing-girl, who, hearing of my daughter's death, had done even as she and was dead. So we buried them all three on one day, and this is the rarest story that ever was heard of lovers."

The Lovers of the Benou Tai.

QUOTH a man of the Benou Temim (cited by Casim ben Adi), I went out one day in search of a stray beast and coming to the waters of the Benou Tai, saw two companies of people, near one another, and those of each company were disputing among themselves. So I watched them and observed, in one of the companies, a young man, wasted with sickness, as he were a worn-out water-skin. As I looked on him, he repeated the following verses:

What ails the fair that she returneth not to me?
Is't grudgingness in her or inhumanity?
I sickened, and my folk to visit me came all.
Why 'mongst the visitors wast thou then not to see?
Hadst thou been sick, I would have hastened to thy side;
Nor menaces nor threats had hindered me from thee.
I miss thee midst the rest, and desolate am I:
Thy loss, my heart's abode, is grievous unto me.

A damsel in the other company heard his words and hastened towards him. Her people followed her, but she repelled them with blows. Then the youth caught sight of her and ran towards her, whilst his people ran after him and laid hold of him. However, he struggled, till he freed himself from them, and she in like manner loosed herself; and they ran to each other and meeting between the two parties, embraced and fell down dead.

Thereupon there came out an old man from one of the tents and stood over them, weeping sore and exclaiming, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!" Then, "May God the Most High have mercy on you both!" said he. "By Allah, though you were not united in your lives, I will at least unite you after death." And he bade lay them out. So they washed them and shrouded them in one shroud and buried them in one grave, after they had prayed over them; nor were there men nor women in the two parties but I saw weeping over them and buffeting their faces. Then I questioned the old man of them, and he said, "She was my daughter and he my brother's son; and love brought them to this pass." "May God amend thee!" exclaimed I. "But why didst thou not marry them to one another?" Quoth he, "I feared reproach and dishonour; and now I am fallen upon both."

The Mad Lover.

(QUOTH Aboulabbas el Muberred), I set out one day with a company to El Berid on an occasion, and coming to the monastery of Heraclius, we alighted in its shade. Presently a man came out to us and said, "There are madmen in the monastery, and amongst them one who speaketh wisdom; if ye saw him, ye would marvel at his speech." So we arose all and went into the monastery, where we saw a man seated on a leather mat in one of the cells, with bare head and eyes fixed upon the wall. We saluted him, and he returned our greeting, without looking at us; and one said to us, "Repeat some verses to him; for, when he hears verses, he speaks." So I repeated the following verses:

O best of all the race whom Eve gave birth unto,
Except for thee the world were neither sweet nor bright:
Thou'rt he, whose face if God unveil to any man,
Eternity is his; his head shall ne'er grow white.

When he heard this, he turned towards us and repeated these lines:

God indeed knows that I am sore afflicted:
I suffer so, I cannot tell the whole.
I have two souls; one in this place is dwelling;
Another country holds my second soul.
Meseems the absent one is like the present
And wearies under the same weight of dole.

Quoth he, "Have I said well or ill?" "Thou hast said well and excellent well," replied we. Then he put out his hand and took a stone, that was by him; whereupon we fled from him, thinking he would throw it at us; but he fell to beating his breast therewith violently and said to us, "Fear not, but draw near and hear somewhat from me and receive it from me." So we came back, and he repeated the following verses:

When they made their beasts of burden kneel as day drew nigh and nigher,
Then they mounted and the camels bore away my heart's desire, –
When my eyes perceived my loved one through the crannied prison-wall,
Then I cried, with streaming eyelids and a heart for love a-fire,
"Turn thou leader of the camels, let me bid my love farewell!"
For her absence and estrangement, life and hope in me expire.
Still I kept my troth and failed not from her love; ah, would I knew
What she did with that our troth-plight, if she kept her faith entire!

Then he looked at me and said, "Dost thou know what she did?" "Yes," answered I, "she is dead; may God the Most High have mercy on her!" At this his face changed and he sprang to his feet and cried out, "How knowest thou she is dead?" "Were she alive," answered I, "she had not left thee thus." "By Allah, thou art right," said he, "and I care not to live after her." Then his nerves quivered and he fell on his face; and we ran up to him and shook him and found him dead, the mercy of God be on him! At this

we marvelled and mourned sore for him and laid him out and buried him. When I returned to Baghdad and went in to the Khalif El Mutawekkil, he saw the trace of tears on my face and said to me, "What is this?" So I told him what had passed, and it was grievous to him and he said, "What moved thee to deal thus with him? By Allah, if I thought thou didst this with intent, I would punish thee therefor!" And he mourned for him the rest of the day.

The Apples of Paradise.

(QUOTH Abou Bekr Mohammed ibn el Ambari), I once left Ambar, on a journey to Ammouriyeh, in the land of the Greeks, , and alighted midway at the monastery of El Anwar, , in a village near Ammouriyeh, where there came out to me the prior of the monastery and superior of the monks, Abdulmesih by name, and brought me into the monastery. There I found forty monks, who entertained me that night with the most liberal hospitality, and I saw among them such abounding piety and diligence in devotion as I never beheld the like of in any others. On the morrow, I took leave of them and went on to Ammouriyeh, where I did my business and returned to Ambar [without again visiting the monastery].

Next year it befell that I made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and as I was compassing the Holy House, behold, I saw Abdulmesih the monk also making the circuit of the Kaabeh, and with him five of his fellows, the monks. When I was certified that it was indeed he, I accosted him, saying, "Art thou not Abdulmesih er Rahib?" "Nay," answered he; "I am Abdallah er Raghib." Therewith I fell to kissing his hoary hairs and weeping; then, taking him by the hand, I led him aside into a corner of the sanctuary and said to him, "Tell me the manner of thy conversion to Islam." "It was a wonder of wonders," answered he; "and befell thus. Know that, not long after thy visit to us, a company of Muslim devotees came to the village, in which is our monastery, and sent a youth to buy them food. He saw, in the market, a Christian damsel selling bread, who was of the fairest of women, and became then and there so passionately enamoured of her, that his senses failed him and he fell on his face in a swoon. When he revived, he returned to his companions and told them what had happened, saying, 'Go ye about your business; I may not go with you.' They blamed him and exhorted him, but he paid no heed to them; so they left him and went on, whilst he entered the village and seated himself at the door of the woman's shop. She asked him what he wanted, and he told her that he was in love with her, whereupon she turned from him; but he abode in his place three days, without tasting food, with his eyes fixed on her face.

When she saw that he departed not from her, she went to her people and acquainted them with her case, and they set the boys of the village on him, who pelted him with stones and bruised his ribs and broke his head; but, for all this, he would not budge. Then the people of the village took counsel together to kill him; but one of them came to me and told me of his condition, and I went out to him and found him lying prostrate on the ground. So I wiped the blood from his face and carried him to the convent, where I dressed his wounds, and he abode with me fourteen days. But, as soon as he could walk, he left the convent and returned to the door of the woman's shop, where he sat gazing on her as before. When she saw him, she came out to him and said, 'By Allah, thou movest me to pity! If thou wilt enter my faith, I will marry thee.' 'God forbid,' answered he, 'that I should put off the faith of the Unity and enter that of Plurality!' Quoth she, 'Come in with me to my house and take thy will of me and go thy ways in peace.' 'Not so,' answered he, 'I will not barter the pious service of twelve years for the lust of a moment.' 'Then depart from me forthright,' said she; and he rejoined, 'My heart will not suffer me to do that;' whereupon she turned her face

from him. Presently the boys found him out and began to throw stones at him; and he fell on his face, saying, 'Verily, God is my keeper, who sent down the Book and who protecteth the righteous!' At this juncture, I sallied forth and driving away the boys, lifted his head from the ground and heard him say, 'O my God, unite me with her in Paradise!' Then I took him in my arms, to carry him to the monastery; but he died, before I could reach it, and I dug him a grave without the village and buried him there.

In the middle of that night, the people of the village heard the damsel give a great cry, and she in her bed; so they flocked to her and questioned her of her case. Quoth she, 'As I slept, the Muslim [who ye wot of] came in to me and taking me by the hand, carried me to the gate of Paradise; but the keeper denied me entrance, saying, "It is forbidden to unbelievers." So I embraced Islam at his hands and entering with him, beheld therein palaces and trees, such as I cannot describe to you. Moreover, he brought me to a pavilion of jewels and said to me, "This is my pavilion and thine, nor will I enter it except with thee; but, after five nights, thou shalt be with me therein, if it be the will of God the Most High." Then, putting his hand to a tree that grew at the door of the pavilion, he plucked therefrom two apples and gave them to me, saying, "Eat this and keep the other, that the monks may see it." So I ate one of them and never tasted I aught sweeter than it. Then he took my hand and carried me back to my house; and when I awoke, I found the taste of the apple in my mouth and the other in my hand.' So saying, she brought out the apple, and it shone in the darkness of the night, as it were a sparkling star. So they carried her to the monastery, where she repeated to us her vision and showed us the apple; never saw we its like among all the fruits of the world. Then I took a knife and cut the apple into as many pieces as we were folk in the company; and never knew we aught more delicious than its taste nor sweeter than its scent; but we said, 'Haply this was a devil that appeared to her, to seduce her from her faith.' Then her people took her and went away; but she abstained from eating and drinking till the fifth night, when she rose from her bed and going forth the village to the grave of the young Muslim, threw herself upon it and died.

Her people knew not what was come of her; but, on the morrow, there came to the village two Muslim elders, clad in hair- cloth, and with them two women in like garb, and said, 'O people of the village, with you is a woman of the friends of God, who died a Muslim, and we will take charge of her, instead of you.' So the damsel's family sought her and found her dead on the young Muslim's grave; and they said, 'This our sister died in our faith, and we will take charge of her.' 'Not so,' rejoined the two old men; 'she died a Muslim and we claim her.' And the dispute waxed hot between them, till one of the Muslims said, 'Be this the test of her faith. Let the forty monks of the monastery come all and [essay to] lift her from the grave. If they succeed, then she died a Nazarene; if not, one of us shall come and lift her up, and if she yield to him, she died a Muslim.' The villagers agreed to this and fetched the forty monks, who heartened each other and came to her, to lift her, but could not. Then we tied a great rope about her middle and tugged at it with our might; but the rope broke in sunder, and she stirred nor; and the villagers came and joined their endeavour to ours, but could not move her from her place. At last, when all our devices failed, we said to one of the two old Muslims, 'Come thou and lift her.' So he went up to the grave and covering her with his mantle, said, 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the

Merciful, and of the Faith of the Apostle of God, on whom be peace and salvation!' Then he lifted her and taking her in his bosom, betook himself with her to a cave hard by, where they laid her, and the two women came and washed her and shrouded her. Then the two elders bore her to the young Muslim's grave and prayed over her and buried her by his side and went their way.

Now we were witness of all this; and when we were alone with one another, we said, 'Of a verity, the Truth is most worthy to be followed; and indeed it hath been publicly manifested to us, nor is it possible to have a clearer proof of the truth of Islam than that we have seen this day with our eyes.' So I and all the monks embraced Islam and on like wise did the people of the village; and we sent to the people of Mesopotamia for a doctor of the law, to instruct us in the ordinances of Islam and the canons of the Faith. They sent us a pious man, who taught us the rites of devotion and the tenets of the faith and the service of God; and we are now in great good case. To God be the praise and the thanks!"

The Loves Of Abou Isa and Curret El Ain.

(QUOTH Amr ben Mesaadeh), Abou Isa, son or Er Reshid and brother to El Mamoun, was enamoured of a girl called Curret el Ain, belonging to Ali ben Hisham, and she also loved him; but he concealed his passion, complaining of it to none neither discovering his secret to any, of his pride and magnanimity; and he had used his utmost endeavour to buy her of her lord, but in vain. At last, when his patience failed him and his passion was sore on him and he was at his wits' end concerning her affair, he went in, one day of state, to El Mamoun, after the folk had retired, and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, if thou wilt this day make trial of thy governors, by visiting them unawares, thou wilt the men of worth from those that lack of it and note each one's [due] place, after the measure of his faculties." (But he purposed, in saying this, to win to sit with Curret el Ain in her lord's house.) El Mamoun approved his proposal and bade make ready a barge, called the Flyer, in which he embarked, with his brother and a party of his chief officers. The first house he visited was that of Hemid et Tawil of Tous, whom he found seated on a mat and before him singers and players, with lutes and hautboys and other instruments of music in their hands. El Mamoun sat with him awhile, and presently he set before him dishes of nothing but flesh-meat, with no birds among them. The Khalif would not taste thereof and Abou Isa said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, we have taken the owner of this place unawares, and he knew not of thy coming; but now let us go to another place, that is prepared and fitted for thee."

So the Khalif arose and betook himself, with his brother and his suite, to the abode of Ali ben Hisham, who, on hearing of their approach, came out and received them after the goodliest fashion, and kissed the earth before El Mamoun. Then he brought them into his palace and opened to them a saloon, than which never saw eyes a goodlier. Its floors and walls and columns were of vari-coloured marble, adorned with Greek paintings: it was spread with Indian matting, on which were carpets and divans of Bassora make, fitted to the length and breadth of the room. The Khalif sat awhile, examining the house and its roof and walls, then said, "Give us to eat." So they brought him forthwith nigh upon a hundred dishes of fowls, besides other birds and brewises and fricassees and marinades. When he had eaten, he said, "Give us to drink, O Ali;" and the latter set before him raisin-wine, boiled with fruits and spices, in vessels of gold and silver and crystal, served by boys like moons, clad in garments of Alexandrian cloth of gold and bearing on their breasts flagons of crystal, full of rose-water mingled with musk. El Mamoun marvelled exceedingly at all this and said, "Harkye, Aboulhusn!" Whereupon Ali sprang to the carpet [on which the Khalif was seated] and kissing it, said, "At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful!" and stood before him. Quoth El Mamoun, "Let us hear some pleasant songs." "I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful," replied Ali and said to one of his servants, "Fetch the singing-women."

So he went out and returned in a moment, followed by ten eunuchs, bearing ten golden stools, which they set down; and these in their turn were followed by ten damsels, as they were shining full moons or flowerful gardens, clad in black brocade,

with crowns of gold on their heads. They sat down on the stools and sang various songs. Then El Mamoun looked at one of them and captivated by her elegance and the beauty of her aspect, said to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?" "My name is Sejahi, O Commander of the Faithful," answered she; and he said, "Sing to us, O Sejahi!" So she took the lute and playing a lively measure, sang the following verses:

Right stealthily, for fearfulness, I fare, the weakling's gait,
Who sees unto the watering-place two lion-whelps draw near,
With cloak, instead of sword, begirt and bosom love-distraught
And heart for eyes of enemies and spies fulfilled of fear,
Till in to one at last I come, a loveling delicate,
Like to a desert antelope, that's lost its younglings dear.

"Well done, O damsel!" said the Khalif. "Whose is this song?" "The words are by Amr ben Madi Kerib er Zubeidi," answered she, "and the air is Mabid's." Then the Khalif and Ali and Abou Isa drank and the damsels went away and were succeeded by other ten, clad in flowered silk of Yemen, brocaded with gold, who sat down on the chairs and sang various songs. The Khalif looked at one of them, who was like a wild cow of the desert, and said to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?" "My name is Zebiyeh, O Commander of the Faithful," answered she. "Sing to us, O Zebiyeh," said he; so she warbled some roulades and sang the following verses:

Houris, noble ladies, that reck not of disquiet,
Like antelopes of Mecca, forbidden to be slain;
Of their soft speech, they're taken for courtezans; but Islam
Still makes them from unseemliness and lewdness to refrain.

When she had finished, "Bravo!" cried the Khalif. "Whose is this song?" "The words are by Jerir," answered she, "and the air by Suraij." Then the Khalif and his company drank, whilst the girls went away and there came yet another ten, as they were rubies, bareheaded and clad in red brocade, gold inwoven and broidered with pearls and jewels, who sat down on the stools and sang various airs. The Khalif looked at one of them, who was like the sun of the day, and said to her, "What is thy name?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "my name is Fatin." "Sing to us, O Fatin," quoth he. So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

Vouchsafe me of thy grace; 'tis time to yield consent:
Enough have I endured of absence and lament.
Thou'rt he whose face unites all charms, on whose account
My patience have I lost, for very languishment.
I've spent my life for love of thee; ah, would to
God I might receive return for that which I have spent!

"Bravo, O Fatin!" exclaimed the Khalif, when she had finished. "Whose song is that?" "The words are by Adi ben Zeid," answered she, "and the tune is an old one." Then they drank, whilst the damsels retired and were succeeded by other ten, as they were sparkling stars, clad in flowered silk, embroidered with gold, and girt with jewelled zones. They sat down and sang various airs; and the Khalif said to one of them, who was like a willow-wand, "What is thy name, O damsel!" "My name is

Reshaa, O Commander of the Faithful," answered she. "Sing to us, O Reshaa," said he. So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

There's a houri healing passion [with her kiss],
Like a sapling or a wild gazelle at gaze.
Wine I quaff unto the vision of her cheeks
And dispute the goblet with her, till she sways.
Then she lies and sleeps the night long in my arms,
And I say, "This is the wish of all my days."

"Well done, O damsel!" said the Khalif. "More." So she rose and kissing the ground before him, sang the following verse:

She came out to gaze on the bridal at leisure,
In a tunic with ambergris smeared, worth a treasure.

The Khalif was much pleased with this verse, which when Reshaa saw, she repeated it several times. Then said El Mamoun, "Bring up the barge," being minded to embark and depart: but Ali said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have a slave-girl, whom I bought for ten thousand dinars; she hath taken my whole heart, and I would fain show her to the Commander of the Faithful. If she please him and he will accept of her, she is his: and if not, let him hear something from her." "Bring her to me," said the Khalif; and there came forth a damsel, as she were a willow-wand, with heart-seducing eyes and eyebrows like a double bow. On her head she wore a crown of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, under which was a fillet, wrought in letters of chrysolite with the following words:

Behold, a Jinniyeh this is; and Jinn hath she also, I trow, Who teach her men's hearts to transfix, by means of a stringless bow.

She walked, with a gait like that of a fleeing gazelle, till she came to a chair, on which she seated herself. The Khalif marvelled at her beauty and grace; but when Abou Isa saw her, his colour changed and he was in ill case. "O Abou Isa," said the Khalif, "what ails thee, to change colour thus?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered he, "it is because of pain that seizes me bytimes." "Hast thou known yonder damsel before to-day?" asked El Mamoun. "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful," answered he. "Can the moon be hidden?" Then said El Mamoun to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?" "My name is Curret el Ain, O Commander of the Faithful," replied she; and he said, "Sing to us, O Curret el Ain." So she sang the following verses:

The loved ones passed from thee in middle midnight's shade
And fared forth in the dawn, with the pilgrims' cavalcade.
The tents of pride they pitched round their pavilions
And veiled themselves about with hangings of brocade.

Quoth the Khalif, "Bravo, O Curret el Ain! Whose song is that?" "The words are by Dibil el Khuzai," answered she, "and the air by Zourzour es Seghir." Abou Isa looked at her and his tears choked him; so that the company marvelled at him. Then she turned to El Mamoun and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, wilt thou

give me leave to change the words?" "Sing what thou wilt," answered the Khalif. So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses:

If thou please me and he please thee in public, look thou hide
And keep in secret straiter watch o'er love, lest ill betide.
And disregard and put away the tales of slanderers;
For seldom seeks the sland'rer aught but lovers to divide.
They say that when a lover's near, he wearies of his love
And that by absence passion's cured. 'Tis false; for I have tried
Both remedies, but am not cured of that which is with me,
Withal that nearness easier is than distance to abide.
Yet nearness of abode, forsooth, may nowise profit thee,
An If the grace of him thou lov'st be unto thee denied.

When she finished, Abou Isa said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we will be at peace, though we be dishonoured. Dost thou give me leave to reply to her?" "Yes," answered the Khalif. "Say what thou wilt to her." So he swallowed his tears and sang these verses:

I held my peace nor said, "I am in love;" and eke
The passion that I felt even from my heart hid I:
And natheless, if my eyes do manifest my love,
It is because they are the shining moon anigh.

Then Curret el Ain took the lute and rejoined with the following:

If what thou dost pretend were very truth,
Thou woulst not with mere wishing rest content,
Nor couldst endure to live without a girl,
In charms and beauty wonder excellent.
But there is nought in that thou dost avouch,
Save only idle talk and compliment.

When Abou Isa heard this, he fell a-weeping and lamenting and discovered the trouble and anguish of his soul. Then he raised his eyes to her and sighing, repeated the following:

Under my wede there is a wasted body
And in my soul an all-absorbing thought.
I have a heart, whose suffering is eternal,
And eyes with tears like torrents ever fraught.
When a wise man meets me, he rebukes me,
Chiding the love that thou in me hath wrought.
Lord, I've no strength all this my dole to suffer;
Prithee, come Death or quick relief be brought!

When he had ended, Ali ben Hisham sprang up and kissing his feet, said, "O my lord, God hath heard thy prayer and answered thy supplication, and consenteth to thy taking her with all her gear, so the Commander of the Faithful have no mind to her." "Had we a mind to her," answered the Khalif, "we would prefer Abou Isa before

ourselves and help him to his desire." So saying, he rose and embarking, went away, whilst Abou Isa tarried for Curret al Ain, whom he took and carried to his own house, with a breast dilated for gladness. See then the generosity of Ali ben Hisham.

El Amin Ben Er Reshid and His Uncle Ibrahim Ben El Mehdi.

EL Amin, son of Er Reshid, once entered the house of his uncle Ibrahim ben el Mehdi and saw there a slave-girl playing upon the lute. She was one of the fairest of women, and his heart inclined to her. Ibrahim, seeing how it was with him, sent the girl to him, with rich apparel and precious jewels. When he saw her, he thought that his uncle had lain with her; so he was loath to have to do with her, because of this, and sent her back to Ibrahim, accepting the present that came with her. Ibrahim learnt the reason of this from one of El Amin's servants; so he took a shift of flowered silk and let work upon his skirt, in letters of gold, the following lines:

By Him to whom all fronts do bow, of that which is
Beneath her skirt, I swear, I'm ignorant outright;
Nor have I had in aught to meddle with her mouth,
Except it were by way of hearing and of sight.

Then he clad her in the shift and giving her a lute sent her once more to his nephew. When she came into the latter's presence, she kissed the earth before him and tuning the lute, sang thereto the following verses:

By returning the gift, thou showest what's hid in thy breast,
And thine aversion to me is made manifest.
As thou bear malice for aught that hath been, – forgive
The past, for the Khalifate's sake, and let it rest.

When she had made an end of her song, El Amin looked at her and reading that which was wrought upon her skirt, could not control himself, but drew near unto her and kissed her and appointed her a separate lodging in his palace. Moreover, he thanked his uncle for this and bestowed on him the government of Er Reï.

El Feth Ben Khacan and the Khalif El Mutawekkil.

THE Khalid El Mutawekkil was once again taking medicine, and folk sent him all manner of presents and rarities. Amongst others, El Feth ben Khacan sent him a virgin slave, high-bosomed, of the fairest of women of her time, and with her a vase of crystal, containing red wine, and a goblet of red gold, whereon were graven in black the following verses:

When th' Imam's made an end of taking medicine
And health and strength ensue to him thereon, in fine,
There's no medicament befits him but to drink,
From out this cup, a draught of this decocted wine.
And break the seal reserved to him, for this, indeed,
Right salutary is, hard after medicine.

Now the physician Youhenna was with the Khalif, when the damsel entered; and when he read the above verses, he smiled and said, 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, Feth is better versed than I in the art of medicine: so let not the Commander of the Faithful gainsay his prescription.' Accordingly, the Khalif followed El Feth's prescription and was made whole by the blessing of God.

The Man's Dispute With the Learned Woman of the Relative Excellence of the Male and the Female.

(QUOTH a certain man of learning) I never saw a woman sharper- witted, more intelligent, better furnished in learning, more excellent of faculties or more pleasant of ingredients than a female preacher of the people of Baghdad, by name Sitt el Meshayikh. It chanced that she came to the city of Hemah in the year [of the Hegira] 561 and there delivered salutary exhortations to the folk from the pulpits. Now there used to visit her house a number of students of divinity and [other] persons of learning and culture, who would argue with her upon questions of theology and discuss controversial points with her. I went to her one day, with a friend of mine, a man of education; and when we had taken our seats, she set before us a dish of fruit and seated herself behind a curtain. Now she had a [young] brother, a handsome youth, who stood by us, to serve us.

When we had eaten, we fell to disputing upon points of divinity, and I propounded to her a theological question, bearing upon a difference between the Imams. She proceeded to speak in answer, whilst I listened; but my friend fell the while to looking upon her brother's face and considering his charms, without paying any heed to what she said. Now she was watching him from behind the curtain; so, when she had made an end of her exposition, she turned to him and said, "Meseems thou art of those that give men the preference over women!" "Assuredly," answered he. "And why so?" asked she. "Because," replied he, "God hath preferred the male over the female; and I love that which excels and mislike that which is excelled." She laughed and said, "Wilt thou deal fairly with me in argument, if I argue the matter with thee?" "I will," answered he. Then said she, "What is the evidence of the superiority of the male to the female?" "It is of two kinds," answered he, "that which is founded on authority and that which is founded on reason. The authoritative part derives from the Koran and the Sunneh [Traditions of the Prophet]. As for the former, quoth God the Most High, 'Men stand above women, in that God hath given these the preference over those;' and again, 'If there be not two men, then [call] one man and two women;' and again, when treating of the law of inheritance, '[If there be brothers and sisters,] let each male have the like of the portion of two females.' Thus God, blessed and exalted be He, hath in these places preferred the male over the female and teaches that a woman is as the half of a man, for that he is worthier than she. As for the Sunneh, is it not reported of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) that he appointed the blood-wit for a woman to be half that of a man? As for the evidence of reason, the male is the agent and the female the patient."

"Thou hast said well, O my lord," rejoined she; "but, by Allah, thou hast proved my contention with thine own lips and hast advanced arguments that tell against thee, and not for thee. Thus: God (blessed and exalted be He) preferred the male above the female, solely because of the quality of masculinity; and in this, there is no difference between us. Now this quality [of masculinity] is common to the child, the boy, the youth, the adult and the graybeard; nor is there any distinction between them in this. Since, then, the superior excellence of man enures to him solely by virtue of the quality

of masculinity, it behoves that thy heart incline to the graybeard and thy soul delight in him, equally with the boy, seeing that there is no distinction between them, in point of masculinity. But the difference between thee and me turns upon the qualities that are sought as constituting excellence of intercourse and delight of usance; and thou hast adduced no proof of the superiority of the male over the female in this."

"O my lady," answered he, "knowest thou not that which is proper to the boy of symmetry of shape and rosy cheeks and pleasant smile and sweetness of speech? Boys are, in these respects, superior to women; and the proof of this is what is reported of the Prophet, that he said, 'Stay not thy gaze upon the beardless boys, for in them is the similitude of the black-eyed girls of Paradise.' Nor indeed is the superiority of the boy over the girl hidden to any, and how well saith Abou Nuwas:

The least of his virtues it is that thou'rt free From uncleanness with him nor with child can he be.

And what another poet says:

Quoth th' Iman Abou Nuwas, past-master sure was he
In every canon of debauch and jolly knavery,
"O ye that love the downy cheeks of younglings, take your fill
Of a delight, in Paradise that will not founden be."

So if one enlarge in praise of a girl and wish to enhance her value by the mention of her charms, he likens her to a boy, because of the illustrious qualities that belong to the latter, even as saith the poet:

Boylike of buttocks, to and fro, in amorous dalliance, She sways as sway the nodding canes that in the north wind dance.

If boys, then, were not superior to girls, why should the latter be likened to them? And know also, may God the Most High preserve thee, that a boy is easy to be led, adapting himself to the wish, pleasant of commerce and manners, inclining to assent rather than difference, especially when the down on his face creeps lightly and the hair darkens on his lips and the vermilion of early youth runs in his cheeks, so that he is like the full moon; and how goodly is the saying of Abou Temmam:

"The whiskers on his cheek appear;" the slanderers said to me;
Quoth I, "That's none of his defect; so give me no more prate."
What time he came of age to bear buttocks that here and there
Pulled him and over beads of pearl his lips' hair darkened late
And eke the rose a solemn oath, full fast and binding, swore
Its ruddy marvels from his cheek should never separate,
I with my eyelids spoke to him, without the need of speech,
And for reply thereto was what his eyebrows answered straight.
His goodliness still goodlier is than that thou knewst of yore,
And the hair guardeth him from those his charms would violate.
Brighter and sweeter are his charms, now on his cheek the down
Shows and the hair upon his lips grows dark and delicate;

And those who chide me for the love of him, when they take up
Their parable of him and me, say evermore, "His mate."

And quoth El Heriri and saith well:

My censors say, "What is this love and doting upon him?
Seest not the hair upon his cheeks that sprouts? Where is thy wit?"
Quoth I, "By Allah, an ye chide at me, I rede you note
The exposition of the truth that in his eyes is writ.
But for the blackness of the down, that veils his chin and cheeks,
Upon the brightness of his face no mortal gaze might sit.
A man who sojourns in a land, wherein no herbage is,
Whenas the very Spring arrives, shall he depart from it?"

And quoth another:

"He is consoled," say the censors of me; but, by heaven, they lie!
For solace and comfort come hardly to those for longing that sigh.
When the rose of his cheek stood blooming alone, I was not
consoled; So how should I now find solace, that basil has sprung thereby?

And again:

A slender one, whose glances and the down upon his cheeks
Each other, in the slaying of folk, abet and aid.
A sabre of narcissus withal, he sheddeth blood,
The hangers of its scabbard of very myrtle made.

And again:

Not with his wine I'm drunken, but with his tresses bright,
That make all creatures drunken, yea, all beneath the sky.
Each of his charms doth envy the others; ay, and each
To be the down so silky upon his cheek doth sigh.

These are the excellences of the boy, that women do not possess, and these suffice and more to give boys the preference in grace and glory over women."

"God give thee health!" cried she. "Verily, thou hast imposed the discussion upon thyself; and thou hast spoken and hast not stinted and hast adduced these arguments, in support of thy contention. But now is the truth made manifest; so swerve thou not from the path thereof; and if thou be not content with a summary of proof, I will set it out to thee in detail. God on thee, where is the boy beside the girl and who shall liken the kid to the wild cow? The girl is soft of speech, fair of shape, like a stalk of sweet basil, with teeth like chamomile-petals and hair like halters. Her cheeks are like blood-red anemones and her face like an apple; she hath lips like wine and breasts like double pomegranates and a shape flexile as a willow-wand. Her body is rounded and well-formed: she hath a nose like the point of a shining sword and a forehead brilliant with whiteness and joined eyebrows and black and melting eyes. If she speak, fresh pearls are scattered from her mouth and all hearts are ravished by the daintiness of her charms; when she smiles, thou wouldst think the moon shone out from between her lips and

when she gazes, swords flash from her eyes. In her all beauties have their term, and she is the centre of attraction of traveller and stay-at-home. She hath two red lips softer than cream and sweeter of taste than honey, and a bosom, as it were a way between two hills, wherein are a pair of breasts like globes of ivory; likewise, a smooth belly, soft of flanks as palm-flowers and creased with folds and dimples that overlap one another, and luxuriant thighs, like columns of pearl, and buttocks, that beat together like seas of crystal or mountains of light, and two slender feet and hands like ingot of virgin gold. So, O wretched fellow, where are mortal men besides the Jinn? Knowest thou not that mighty kings and captains and noble princes still submit themselves humbly to women and depend on them for delight? Verily, they [women] say, 'We rule over [all] necks and captivate [all] hearts.' How many a rich man have they not made poor, how many a powerful one have they not humbled and how many a noble have they not reduced to servitude! Indeed, they seduce the learned and bring the pious to shame and make poor the rich and plunge the favoured of fortune into misery. Yet, for all this, the wise but redouble in love and honour of them, nor do they count this oppression or dishonour. How many a man for them hath transgressed against his Lord and called down on himself the wrath of his father and mother! And all this because of the preponderance of the love of them over hearts. Knowest thou not, O wretched fellow, that for them are palaces built and slave-girls bought, and over them curtains are let down, that for them do tears flow and for them armies levied and pleasure- houses raised up and riches gathered and heads smitten off? And indeed he spoke sooth who said, 'The world is a commentary upon women.'

As for thy citation from the Holy Traditions, it is an argument against thee and not for thee; for the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) compares boys to the houris of Paradise. Now, without doubt, the subject of comparison is more worthy than the object compared with it; so, except women be the worthier and the goodlier, wherefore should other than they be likened to them? As for thy saying that girls are likened to boys, it is not so, but the contrary: boys are likened to girls; for folk say, 'Yonder boy is like a girl.' As for that thou quotest from the poets, the verses in question were the product of an unnatural complexion in this respect; and as for the confirmed sodomists and debauchees, that sin against religion, whom God hath condemned in His Holy Book, wherein He denounceth their filthy practices, saying, 'Do ye betake you to males from the four corners of the world and forsake that which your Lord hath created for you of your wives? Nay, but ye are a froward folk.' These it is that liken girls to boys, of their exceeding profligacy and frowardness and inclination to follow the devil and their own lusts, so that they say, 'She is apt for two men;' and these are all wanderers from the path of right. Quoth their chief Abou Nuwas:

A slender one, boyish of waist and of wit, For wencher as well as for sodomite fit.

As for what thou sayest of a boy's whiskers and moustaches and how they add to his beauty and grace, by Allah, thou wanderest from the right path and sayest that which is other than the truth; for whiskers change the charms of the comely into ugliness; even as saith the poet:

The whiskers, that sprout on the cheek of the wight,
His lovers avenge, if he 've done them unright.

I see not on 's face what is like unto smoke,
Except that his curls are as coals to the sight.
If the most of his paper thus blackened be, where
Is there room, deemest thou, for the pen to indite?
If any prefer him another above,
'Tis ignorance makes them thus turn from the light.

Glory be to God", continued she, "how is it hidden from thee that the perfection of delight is in women and that abiding pleasure is not to be found but with them? Seeing that God (blessed and exalted be He) hath promised His prophets and saints black-eyed damsels in Paradise and hath appointed them for a recompense of their pious works: and had God the Most High known that the supreme delight was in the possession of other than women, He had rewarded them therewith and promised it to them. And quoth he whom God bless and preserve, 'The things in which I most delight of [the things of] your world are three: women and perfume and the solace of my eyes in prayer.' Verily, God hath appointed boys to serve His prophets and saints in Paradise, because Paradise is the abode of delight and pleasance, which could not be complete without the service of boys; but, as to the use of them for aught but service, it is sin and corruption. How well saith the poet:

Men's turning unto boys is very frowardness; Who noble women loves is noble none the less. What difference 'twixt the lewd and him whose bedfellow A houri is, for looks a very sorceress. He rises from her couch and she hath given him scent; He perfumes all the house therewith and each recess. No boy, indeed, is worth to be compared with her: Shall aloes evened be with what not filthiness?"

Then said she, "O folk, ye have made me overpass the bounds of modesty and the province of free-born women and indulge in idle talk and freedoms of speech, that beseem not people of learning. But the breasts of the noble are the tombs of secrets, and conversations of this kind are in confidence. Moreover, actions are according to intents, and I ask pardon of God for myself and you and all Muslims, seeing that He is forgiving and merciful."

With this she held her peace and thereafter would answer us of nought; so we went our way, rejoicing in that we had profited by her discourses and sorrowing to part from her.

Abou Suweid and the Handsome Old Woman.

(QUOTH Abou Suweid), I entered a garden one day, I and a company of my friends, to buy somewhat of fruit; and we saw, in a corner of the place, an old woman, who was bright of face, but her hair was white, and she was combing it with a comb of ivory. We stopped before her, but she paid no heed to us neither veiled her face So I said to her' "O old woman, wert thou to dye thy hair black, thou wouldst be handsomer than a girl. What hinders thee from this?" She raised her head and looking at me with great eyes, recited the following verses:

That which the years had dyed, I dyed erewhen but, sooth to tell,
My dye endureth not, whilst that of Time's perdurable
Clad in the raiment of my youth and beauty, of old days,
Proudly I walked, and back and front, men had with me to mell

"By Allah," cried I, "bravo to thee for an old woman! How sincere art thou in thy yearning remembrance of sin and how false in thy presence of repentance from for bidden things!"

The Amir Ali Ben Tahir and the Girl Mounis.

THERE was once shown to the Amir Ali ben Mohammed ben Abdallah ben Tahir a slave-girl, who was excellently handsome and well-bred and an accomplished poetess; and he asked her of her name. 'May God advance the Amir,' replied she, 'my name is Mounis.' Now he knew this before; so he bowed his head awhile, then raising his eyes to her, recited the following verse:

What dost thou say of one, on whom sickness and pain have wrought, For love and longing after thee, till he is grown distraught?

'God exalt the Amir!' answered she and recited this verse in reply:

An if we saw a lover true, on whom the pangs of love
Were sore, we would to him vouchsafe the favours that he sought.

Her reply pleased him; so he bought her for threescore and ten thousand dirhems and begat on her Obeidallah teen Mohammed, after police-magistrate [at Baghdad].

The Woman Who Had a Boy and the Other Who Had a Man to Lover.

(QUOTH Abou el Ainaä), There were in our street two women, one of whom had to lover a man and the other a beardless boy, and they foregathered one night on the roof of a house, not knowing that I was within hearing. Quoth one to the other, "O my sister, how canst thou brook the harshness of thy lover's beard, as it falls on thy breast, when he kisses thee, and his moustaches rub thy cheek and lips?" "Silly wench that thou art," replied the other, "what adorns the tree but its leaves and the cucumber but its bloom? Didst ever see aught uglier than a scald-head, with his beard plucked out? Knowest thou not that the beard is to men as the side-locks to women; and what is the difference between the chin and the cheek? Knowest thou not that God (blessed and exalted be He) hath created an angel in heaven, who saith, 'Glory be to Him who adorneth men with beards and women with tresses?' So, were not the beard even as the tresses in comeliness, it had not been coupled with them, O silly woman! How shall I underlie a boy, who will be hasty with me in emission and forestall me in flaccescence, and leave a man, who, when he takes breath, clips close and when he enters, goes leisurely, and when he has done, repeats, and when he pushes, pushes hard, and as often as he withdraws, returns?" The other was edified by her speech and said, "I forswear my lover by the Lord of the Kaabeh!"

The Haunted House in Baghdad.

THERE lived once, in the city of Cairo, a merchant by name Hassan the Jeweller of Baghdad, who had great store of wealth in money and jewels and lands and houses beyond count. God had blessed him with a son of perfect beauty and elegance, rosy-cheeked, fair of face and well-shaped, whom he named Ali of Cairo and taught the Koran and science and elocution and the other branches of polite letters, till he became proficient in all manner of knowledge and was under his father's hand in trade. After awhile, Hassan fell sick and his sickness increased upon him, till he made sure of death and calling his son to him, said, 'O my son, verily this world passeth away; but the next endureth for ever. Every soul must taste of death; and now, O my son, my last hour is at hand and I desire to lay on thee an injunction, which if thou observe, thou shalt abide in peace and prosperity, till thou meet God the Most High; but if thou follow it not, there shall befall thee weariness galore and thou wilt repent of having transgressed my admonitions.' 'O my father,' replied Ali, 'how shall I do other than hearken to thee and do after thine enjoinder, seeing that I am bounden by the law of God to obey thee and give ear to thy word?' 'O my son,' rejoined his father, 'I leave thee lands and houses and goods and wealth past count; wert thou each day to spend thereof five hundred dinars, thou wouldst miss nought of it. But, O my son, look that thou live in the fear of God and follow His Chosen One (whom may He bless and preserve) in what he is reported to have enjoined and forbidden in his traditions. Be thou assiduous in good works and the practice of beneficence and in consorting with men of worth and piety and learning; and look that thou have a care for the poor and needy and shun avarice and meanness and the converse of the wicked or those of doubtful character. Look kindly upon thy servants and family, and also upon thy wife, for she is of the daughters of the notables and is with child by thee; belike God will vouchsafe thee virtuous offspring by her.' And he went on to exhort him thus, weeping and saying, 'O my son, I beseech God the Bountiful, the Lord of the Empyrean, to deliver thee from all straits that may betide thee and grant thee His speedy relief!'

His son wept sore and said, 'O my father, I am consumed by thy words, for they are as the words of one that saith farewell.' 'Yes, O my son,' replied the merchant, 'I am ware of my condition: forget thou not my enjoinder.' Then he fell to repeating the professions of the Faith and reciting [verses of the Koran], until the appointed hour arrived, when he said, 'Draw near unto me, O my son.' So Ali drew near and he kissed him; then he sighed and his soul departed his body and he went to the mercy of God the Most High. Therewith great grief fell upon Ali; the noise of lamentation arose in his house and his father's friends flocked to him. Then he betook himself to preparing him for burial and made him a splendid funeral. They bore him to the place of prayer and prayed over him, then to the cemetery, where they buried him and recited over him what was fitting of the Koran; after which they returned to the house and condoled with the dead man's son and went each his own way. Moreover, Ali prayed the Friday prayers for his father and let make recitations of the whole Koran for the [accustomed] space of forty days, during which time he abode in the house and went not forth, save to the place of prayer; and every Friday he visited his father's tomb.

He ceased not from his prayers and devotions, till, at last, his fellows of the sons of the merchants came in to him one day and saluting him, said, 'How long wilt thou keep up this thy mourning and neglect thy business and the company of thy friends? Verily, this is a fashion that will bring thee weariness, and thy body will suffer greatly for it.' Now, when they came in to him, Iblis the accursed was with them, prompting them, and they went on to press him to accompany them to the bazaar, whilst Iblis incited him to consent to them, till he yielded and went forth the house with them, that the will of God (blessed and exalted be He) might be fulfilled. 'Mount thy mule,' quoth they, 'and ride with us to such a garden, that we may divert us there and that thy grief and melancholy may depart from thee.' So he mounted and taking his slave, went with them to the garden in question, where they entered, and one of them went and making ready the morning- meal, brought it to them there. So they ate and made merry and sat, talking, till the end of the day, when they mounted and returned each to his own lodging, where they passed the night. On the morrow, they said to Ali, 'Come with us.' 'Whither?' asked he, and they answered, 'To such a garden; for it is finer than the first and more pleasant.' So he went with them to the garden, and one of them, going away, made ready the morning-meal and brought it to them, together with strong wine; and Ali said, 'What is this?' Quoth they, 'This is what dispels grief and unveils gladness.' And they went on to commend it to him, till they prevailed upon him and he drank with them. Then they sat, drinking and talking, till the end of the day, when each returned home.

As for Ali, he was giddy with wine and went in, in this plight, to his wife, who said to him, 'What ails thee?' Quoth he, 'We were making merry to-day, when one of my companions brought us liquor; so my friends drank and I with them, and this giddiness came upon me.' 'O my lord,' said she, 'hast thou forgotten thy fathers injunction and done that from which he forbade thee, in consorting with lewd folk?' 'These are of the sons of the merchants,' answered he; 'they are no lewd folk, only lovers of mirth and good cheer.' And he continued to lead this life with his friends, day after day, going from place to place and feasting and drinking with them, till they said to him, 'Our turns are ended, and now it is thy turn.' 'Welcome and fair welcome!' answered he; so, on the morrow, he made ready all that the case called for of meat and drink, double what they had provided, and taking cooks and tent-pitchers and coffee-makers, repaired with the others to Er Rauzeh and the Nilometer, where they abode a whole month, eating and drinking and hearing music and making merry. At the end of the month, Ali found that he had spent a great sum of money; but Satan the Accursed deluded him and said to him, 'Though thou shouldst spend every day a like sum, yet would not thy wealth fail.' So he took no account of expense and continued this way of life three years, whilst his wife remonstrated with him and reminded him of his father's injunctions; but he hearkened not to her, till he had spent all his ready money, when he fell to selling his jewels and spending their price, till they were all gone. Then he sold his houses and lands and farms and gardens, one after another, till they were all gone and he had nothing left but the house in which he lived. So he tore out the marble and wood-work and sold it and spent of its price, till he had made an end of this also, when he bethought himself and finding that he had nothing left to spend, sold the house itself and spent the purchase-money.

Presently, the man who had bought the house came to him and said, 'Look thyself out a lodging, for I have need of my house.' So he bethought himself and considering that he had nothing requiring a house, except his wife, who had borne him a son and daughter, — for he had not a servant left, — hired a room in one of the mean lodging houses and there took up his abode, after having lived in honour and luxury, with many servants and much wealth, and came to lack of one day's bread. Quoth his wife, 'I warned thee of this and exhorted thee to obey thy father's injunction, and thou wouldst not hearken to me; but there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Whence shall the little ones eat? Arise, go round to thy friends, the sons of the merchants: it may be they will give thee somewhat on which we may live this day.' So he went the round of his friends, one by one; but they all hid their faces from him and gave him nothing but injurious and revolting words; and he returned to his wife and said to her, 'They have given me nothing.' Thereupon she went out to beg of her neighbours wherewithal to sustain themselves and came to a woman, whom she had known in former days. When she came in to her and she saw her plight, she rose and receiving her kindly, wept and said, 'What hath befallen thee?' So she told her of her husband's conduct, and the other said, 'Welcome and fair welcome! Whatever thou needest, seek it of me, without price.' 'May God abundantly requite thee!' answered she. Then her friend gave her as much victual as would suffice herself and her family a whole month, and she took it and returned to her lodging. When her husband saw her, he wept and said, 'Whence hadst thou that?' 'I got it of such a woman,' answered she; 'for, when I told her what had befallen us, she failed me not in aught, but said, "Seek of me all thou needest."' 'Since thou hast this,' rejoined her husband, 'I will betake myself to a place I have in my mind; peradventure God the Most High will bring us relief.'

So saying, he took leave of her and kissing the children, went out, not knowing whither he should go, and walked on till he came to Boulac, where he saw a ship about to sail for Damietta. Here he met a man, between whom and his father there had been friendship; and he saluted him and said to him, 'Whither away?' 'To Damietta,' replied Ali; 'I have friends there, whom I would fain enquire after and visit and return.' The man took him home and entreated him hospitably, then, furnishing him with victual [for the voyage] and giving him somewhat of money, embarked him on board the vessel bound for Damietta. When they reached that place, Ali landed, not knowing where to go, but, as he was walking along, a merchant saw him and had pity on him. So he carried him to his house, where he abode awhile, till he said in himself, 'How long shall this sojourning in other folks' houses last?' Then he left the merchant's house and went down to the quay, where he saw a ship ready to sail for Syria. His host provided him with victual and embarked him in the ship; and it set sail and arrived, in due course, at the coast of Syria, where he landed and journeyed till he entered Damascus. As he walked about the town, a benevolent man saw him and took him to his house, where he abode awhile, till, one day, going abroad, he saw a caravan about to start for Baghdad and bethought himself to journey thither with it. So he returned to his host and taking leave of him, set out with the caravan.

Now God (blessed and exalted be He) inclined to him the heart of one of the merchants, so that he took him with him, and Ali ate and drank with him, till they came within one day's journey of Baghdad, where a company of highwaymen fell upon

the caravan and took all they had. But few of the merchants escaped and these made each for a [separate] place of refuge. As for Ali, he made for Baghdad, where he arrived at sundown, as the gatekeepers were about to shut the gates, and said to them 'Let me in with you.' So they admitted him and asked him whence he came and whither he was bound. 'I am a man from the city of Cairo,' replied he, 'and have with me mules laden with merchandise and slaves and servants. I forewent them, to look me out a place wherein to deposit my goods; but as I rode along on my mule, there fell upon me a company of highway robbers, who took my mule and gear; nor did I escape from them but at the last gasp.' The warders entreated him hospitably and bade him welcome, saying, 'Abide with us this night, and in the morning we will look thee out a place befitting thee.' Then he sought in his pocket and finding a dinar remaining of those he had gotten of the merchant at Boulac, gave it to one of the gatekeepers, saying, 'Take this and change it and bring us something to eat.' The man took it and went to the market, where he changed it and brought Ali bread and cooked meat. So he ate, he and the gatekeepers, and he lay the night with them.

On the morrow, one of the warders carried him to a merchant of the town, to whom he told the same story, and he believed him, deeming that he was a merchant and had with him loads of merchandise. So he took him up into his shop and entreated him with honour. Moreover, he sent to his house for a splendid suit of his own apparel for him and carried him to the bath. So, [quoth Ali], I went with him to the bath, and when we came out, he brought me to his house, where he caused set the morning-meal before us, and we ate and made merry.

Then said he to one of his slaves, "Harkye, Mesoud, take this thy lord and show him the two houses in such a place. Whichever pleases him of them, give him the key of it and come back." So I went with the slave, till we came to a place where stood three houses, side by side, new and shut up. He opened the first and the second, and I looked at them; after which he said to me, "Of which of them shall I give thee the key?" "To whom does yon large house belong?" asked I. "To us," answered he; and I said, "Open it, that I may view it." Quoth he, "Thou hast no call to it." "Wherefore?" asked I; and he, "Because it is haunted, and none lodges there but in the morning he is a dead man; nor do we use to open the door, to take out the corpse, but mount the roof of one of the other two houses and take it up thence. For this reason, my master has abandoned the house and says, 'I will never again give it to any one.'" Quoth I, "Open it, that I may view it;" and I said in myself, "This is what I seek. I will pass the night there and in the morning be a dead man and be at peace from this miserable plight of mine." So he opened it and I entered and found it a splendid house, without its like; and I said to the slave, "I will have none other than this house; give me the key." But he answered, "I will not give thee this key till I consult my master," and going to the latter, said to him, "The Egyptian merchant saith, 'I will lodge in none but the great house.'"

When the merchant heard this, he rose and coming to Ali, said to him, 'O my lord, thou hast no need of this house.' But he replied, 'I will lodge in none other than this; for I care nothing for this saying.' 'Then,' said the other, 'write me an acknowledgment that, if aught happen to thee, I am not responsible.' 'So be it,' answered Ali; whereupon the merchant fetched an assessor from the Cadi's court and taking of him the prescribed acknowledgment, delivered him the key, which he took

and entered the house. The merchant sent him bedding by a slave, who spread it for him on the bench behind the door and went away. Presently Ali went into the inner court and seeing there a well with a bucket, let down the latter and drew water, with which he made the ablution and prayed the obligatory prayers. Then he sat awhile, till the merchant's slave brought him the evening meal from his master's house, together with a lamp, a candle and candlestick, a basin and ewer and a gugglet; after which he left him and returned home. Ali lighted the candle and supped at his ease and prayed the evening prayer; after which he said to himself, 'Let us take the bed and go upstairs and sleep there, rather than here.' So he took the bed and carried it upstairs, where he found a splendid saloon, with gilded ceiling and walls and floor of variegated marble. He spread his bed there and sitting down, began to recite somewhat of the sublime Koran, when suddenly he heard one calling to him and saying, 'O Ali, O son of Hassan, shall I send thee down the gold?' And he answered, 'Send away.'

Hardly had he spoken, when pieces of gold began to rain down on him, like [pebbles from] a mangonel, nor stinted till the saloon was full. Then said the voice, 'Set me free, that I may go my way; for I have made an end of my service and have delivered unto thee that which was committed to me for thee.' Quoth Ali, 'I adjure thee by the Most High God to tell me the history of this gold.' 'This is a treasure that was enchanted to thee of old time,' replied the voice; 'and to every one, who entered the house, we used to come and say to him, "O Ali, O son of Hassan, shall we send down the gold?" Whereat he would be affrighted and cry out, and we would come down to him and break his neck and go away. But, when thou camest and we accosted thee by thy name and that of thy father, saying, "Shall we send thee down the gold?" and thou madest answer, saying, "Send away," we knew thee for the owner of it and sent it down. Moreover, there is yet another treasure for thee in the land of Yemen, whither thou wouldst do well to journey and fetch it. And now I would have thee set me free, that I may go my way.' 'By Allah,' said Ali, 'I will not set thee free, till thou bring me hither the treasure from Yemen!' Quoth the voice, 'If I bring it thee, wilt thou release me and the servant of the other treasure also?' 'Yes,' replied Ali; and the genie said, 'Swear to me.' So he swore to him, and he was about to go away, when Ali said to him, 'I have one other service to ask of thee.' 'What is that?' asked the genie. Quoth Ali, 'I have a wife and children at Cairo, in such a place; thou must fetch them to me, at their ease and without hurt.' 'I will bring them to thee in state,' answered the genie, 'in a litter, with a train of slaves and servants, together with the treasure from Yemen, if it be the will of God the Most High.' Then he took of him leave of absence for three days, at the end of which time all this should be with him, and departed.

When it was morning, Ali went round about the saloon, seeking a place wherein to lay the gold, and saw in the wall of the dais a marble panel, with a knob in it. So he pressed the knob and the panel slid back and discovered a door, which he opened and entering, found a great closet, full of linen bags. So he took out the bags and fell to filling them with gold and replacing them in the closet, till he had transported thither the whole treasure, whereupon he shut the door and pressing the knob, the panel returned to its place. Then he went down and seated himself on the bench behind the door. Presently, there came a knock at the door; so he opened it and found the merchant's slave, who, seeing him, returned in haste to his master with the good

tidings, saying, 'O my lord, the merchant, who is lodged in the haunted house, is alive and well and sits on the bench behind the door.' When the merchant heard this, he rose joyfully and went to the house, taking breakfast with him; and when he saw Ali, he embraced him and kissed him between the eyes, saying, 'How hath God dealt with thee?' 'Right well,' answered Ali. 'I slept upstairs in the marble saloon.' Quoth the merchant, 'Did aught come to thee or didst thou see aught?' 'No,' replied Ali; 'I recited some little of the Koran and slept till morning, when I arose and after making the ablution and praying, came down and seated myself on the bench behind the door.' 'Praised be God for safety!' exclaimed the merchant, then left him and presently sent him slaves and servants, black and white and male and female, with furniture. They swept the house from top to bottom and furnished it magnificently, after which three black slaves and the like number of white and four slave-girls abode with him, to serve him, and the rest returned to their master's house. When the merchants heard of him, they sent him presents of all manner of things of price, even to meat and drink and clothes, and took him with them in the market, saying, 'When will thy baggage arrive?' And he answered, 'After three days it will come.'

Accordingly, when the three days had elapsed, the servant of the first treasure came to him and said, 'Go forth and meet thy harem, together with the treasure I have brought thee from Yemen, part of which is by way of costly merchandise; but the slaves, black and white, and the horses and camels and mules are all of the Jinn. (Now the genie, when he betook himself to Cairo, found Ali's wife and children in sore straits for nakedness and hunger; so he carried them forth of the town in a travelling-litter and clad them in sumptuous raiment of that which was in the treasure of Yemen.) When Ali heard this, he rose and repairing to the merchants, said to them, 'Come, go forth the city with me, to meet the caravan, with my merchandise, and honour me with the presence of your harems, to meet my harem.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and sending for their harems, went forth all together and alighted in one of the gardens without the city. As they sat talking, behold, a cloud of dust arose out of the heart of the desert, and they came out to see what it was. Presently, it lifted and discovered mules and muleteers and tent-pitchers and linkmen, who came on, singing and dancing, till they reached the garden, when the chief of the muleteers came up to Ali and kissing his hand, said to him, 'O my lord, we have been long on the way, for we thought to enter some days ago; but we were in fear of the highway-robbers, so abode in our station four days, till God the Most High rid us of them.'

Then the merchants mounted their mules and rode forward with the caravan, wondering at the [number of] mules laden with chests, whilst their harems followed them, with Ali's harem, marvelling at the richness of the apparel of his wife and children and saying to each other, 'Verily, the King of Baghdad hath no such raiment, no, nor any other of the kings or merchants or notables.' So they entered Baghdad in great state and rode on till they came to Ali's house, where they alighted and brought the mules and their burdens into the midst of the courtyard. Then they unloaded them and laid up the goods in the storehouses, whilst the merchants' wives went up with Ali's family to the saloon, which they found as it were a luxuriant garden, spread with magnificent furniture. They sat in mirth and good cheer till noon, when they brought them up the noon meal, of all manner meats and sweetmeats of the best; and they ate

and drank costly sherbets and perfumed themselves thereafter with rose-water and scented woods. Then they took leave and departed, men and women. When the merchants returned home, they all sent presents to Ali, according to their conditions; and their wives likewise sent presents to his wife, so that there came to them great plenty of slaves, black and white and male and female, and store of all manner goods, such as grain and sugar and so forth, beyond count. As for the landlord of the house, he abode with Ali and quitted him not, but said to him, 'Let the slaves and servants take the mules and the other cattle into one of my other houses, to rest.' Quoth Ali, 'They set out again to-night for such a place.' Then he gave them leave to go forth the city, that they might set out on their journey at nightfall; whereupon they took leave of him forthright and departing the city, flew off through the air to their several abodes.

Ali and the merchant sat together till a third of the night was past, when the latter returned to his own house and Ali went up to his wife and children and greeted them, saying, 'What hath befallen you all this time?' So she told him what they had suffered of hunger and nakedness and toil, and he said, 'Praised be God for safety! How did ye come?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'I was asleep, with my children, yesternight, when suddenly one raised us from the ground and carried us through the air, without doing us any hurt, nor did he give over flying with us, till he set us down in a place as it were a Bedouin camping-place, where we saw laden mules and a litter borne upon two great mules, and round them servants, boys and men. So I said to them, "Who are ye and what are these loads and where are we?" And they answered, "We are the servants of the merchant Ali ibn Hassan of Cairo, who has sent us to fetch you to him at Baghdad." Quoth I, "Is it far or near, hence to Baghdad?" "Near," answered they; "there lies but the darkness of the night between us and the city." Then they mounted us in the litter, and on the morrow, we found ourselves with thee, without having suffered any hurt. 'Who gave you these clothes?' asked he, and she said, 'The chief of the caravan opened one of the chests on the mules and taking out the clothes, clad me and the children each in a suit; after which he locked the chest and gave me the key, saying, "Take care of it, till thou give it to thy husband." And here it is, safe.' So saying, she gave him the key, and he said, 'Dost thou know the chest?' 'Yes,' answered she. So he took her down to the magazine and she pointed it out, whereupon he put the key in the lock and opened the chest, in which he found much raiment and the keys of all the other chests. So he took them out and fell to opening the other chests, one after another, and feasting his eyes upon the jewels and precious metals they contained, whose like was not found with any of the kings; after which he locked them again and took the keys, saying to his wife, 'This is of the bounty of God the Most High.'

Then he returned with her to the saloon and bringing her to the secret panel, pressed the knob and opened the door of the closet into which he entered with her and showed her the gold he had laid up there. Quoth she, 'Whence hadst thou all this?' 'It came to me by the grace of my Lord,' answered he and told her all that had befallen him, from first to last. 'O my lord,' said she, 'all this comes of the blessing of thy father's prayers, whenas he prayed for thee, before his death, saying, "I beseech God to cast thee into no strait, except He bring thee speedy deliverance [therefrom]!" So praised be God the Most High for that He hath brought thee relief and hath requited thee with more than thou didst lose! But God on thee, O my lord, return not to thy

sometime fashion and companying with folk of lewd life; but look thou fear God the Most High, both in public and private!' And she went on to admonish him. Quoth he, 'I accept thine admonition and beg God the Most High to remove the wicked from us and stablish us in His obedience and in the observance of the law of His Prophet, on whom be peace and salvation!'

Ali and his wife and children were now in all delight of life and gladness; and he opened him a shop in the merchants' bazaar and stocking it with jewels and precious metals, sat therein with his children and servants. He soon became the most considerable of the merchants of Baghdad, and his report reached the King of that city, who sent a messenger to command his attendance. So he took four trays of red gold and filling them with jewels and precious metals, such as no king possessed, went up to the palace and presenting himself before the prince, kissed the earth before him and wished him continuance of glory and prosperity, in the best words he could command. 'O merchant,' said the King, 'thou honourest our city with thy presence;' and Ali rejoined, saying, 'O King of the age, thy slave hath brought thee a present and hopes for acceptance thereof from thy favour.' So saying, he laid the four trays before the King, who uncovered them and seeing that they contained jewels, whose like he possessed not and whose worth equalled treasuries of money, said, 'O merchant, thy present is accepted, and so God please, we will requite thee with its like.' And Ali kissed his hands and went away. Then the King called his grandees and said to them, 'How many kings have sought my daughter in marriage?' 'Many,' answered they. 'Hath any of them given me the like of this gift?' asked he. 'Not one,' replied they; 'for that none of them hath its like;' and he said, 'I have consulted God the Most High, as to marrying my daughter to this merchant. What say ye?' 'Be it as thou deemest,' answered they. Then he bade the eunuch carry the four trays into his harem and going in to his wife, laid them before her. She uncovered them and seeing therein that whose like she possessed not, — no, nor a fraction thereof, — said to him, 'Of which of the kings hadst thou these? Peradventure of one of those that seek our daughter in marriage?' 'Not so,' answered he, 'I had them of an Egyptian merchant, who is lately come to our city. I heard tell of him and sent to command him to us, thinking to make his acquaintance, so haply we might find with him somewhat of jewels and buy them of him for our daughter's equipment. He obeyed the summons and brought us these four trays, as a present, and I saw him to be a handsome and elegant young man of dignified aspect and accomplished wit, well-nigh as he were of the sons of the kings. Wherefore my heart inclined to him and I rejoiced in him and thought to marry my daughter to him.' Then he told her what had passed between himself and his grandees on the subject and added, 'But what sayst thou?' 'O King of the age,' answered she, 'the affair is in God's hand, and thine, and what God willeth shall come to pass.' 'If it be His will,' rejoined the King, 'I will marry her to none other than this young man.'

So, on the morrow, he went out to his Divan and sending for Ali and the rest of the merchants of Baghdad, bade them be seated. Then he summoned the Cadi of the Divan and said to him, 'O Cadi, draw up the contract of marriage between my daughter and the merchant Ali of Cairo.' But the latter said, 'Thy pardon, O our lord the Sultan! It befits not that a merchant, such as I, be the King's son-in-law.' Quoth the King, 'It is my will to bestow this favour upon thee, as well as the Vizierate.' And he

invested him forthwith in the Vizier's habit. Then Ali sat down in the seat of the Vizierate and said, 'O King of the age, thou hast bestowed on me this; and indeed I am honoured by thy bounties; but hear one word from me.' 'Say on,' answered the King, 'and fear not.' Quoth Ali, 'Since it is thine august will to marry thy daughter, thou wouldst do better to marry her to my son.' 'Hast thou then a son?' asked the King; and Ali replied, 'Yes.' 'Send for him forthright,' said the King; whereupon, 'I hear and obey,' answered Ali and sent a servant to fetch his son, who came and kissing the ground before the King, stood in an attitude of respect. The King looked at him and seeing him to be yet comelier than his daughter and goodlier than she in symmetry and brightness and perfection, said to him, 'O my son, what is thy name?' 'O our lord the Sultan,' replied the young man, who was then fourteen years old, 'my name is Hassan.' Then the Sultan said to the Cadi, 'Write the contract of marriage between my daughter Husn el Wujoud and Hassan, son of the merchant Ali of Cairo.' So he wrote the contract of marriage between them, and the affair was ended on the goodliest wise; after which all in the Divan went their ways and the merchants escorted the Vizier Ali to his house, where they gave him joy of his advancement and departed. Then he went in to his wife, who, seeing him clad in the Vizier's habit, exclaimed, 'What is this?' So he told her all that had passed, and she rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy.

On the morrow, he went up to the Divan, where the King received him with especial favour and seating him beside himself, said to him, 'O Vizier, we purpose to celebrate the wedding festivities and bring thy son in to our daughter.' 'O our lord the Sultan,' replied Ali, 'that thou deemest good is good.' So the Sultan gave orders for the festivities, and they decorated the city and held high festival thirty days, in all cheer and gladness; at the end of which time, the Vizier Ali's son Hassan went in to the princess and enjoyed her beauty and grace. When the queen saw her daughter's husband, she conceived a warm affection for him, and in like manner she rejoiced greatly in his mother. Then the King bade build his son-in-law a palace beside his own; so they built him with all speed a splendid palace, in which he took up his abode; and his mother used to abide with her son some days and then return to her own house. After awhile, the queen said to her husband, 'O King of the age, Hassan's mother cannot take up her abode with her son and leave the Vizier; neither can she abide with her husband and leave her son.' 'Thou sayst sooth,' replied the King and bade build a third palace beside the two others, which being done in a few days, he caused remove thither the Vizier's goods, and the latter and his wife took up their abode there. Now the three palaces communicated with one another, so that, when the King had a mind to speak with the Vizier by night, he would go to him or send to fetch him; and so with Hassan and his father and mother.

They dwelt thus in the greatest happiness and contentment awhile, till the King fell ill and his sickness increased on him. So he summoned the grandees of his realm and said to them, 'There is come upon me a sore sickness, peradventure a mortal one, and I have therefore summoned you to consult you respecting a certain matter, on which I would have you counsel me as you deem well.' 'What is the matter of which thou wouldst take counsel with us, O King?' asked they; and he answered, 'I am old and sickly and I fear for the realm, after me, from the enemies; so I would have you all agree upon some one, that I may proclaim him king in my lifetime and so ye may be at

ease.' Whereupon quoth they all, 'We all approve of thy son-in-law Hassan, son of the Vizier Ali; for we have seen the perfectness of his wit and understanding, and he knows the rank of all, great and small.

'Are ye indeed agreed upon this?' asked the King, and they answered, 'Yes.' 'Peradventure,' quoth he, 'ye say this to my face, of respect for me; but, behind my back, ye will say otherwise.' But they all answered, saying, 'By Allah, our word, in public and in private, is one, varying not; and we accept him frankly and with all our hearts.' 'Since the case is thus,' said the King, 'bring the Cadi of the Holy Law and all the chamberlains and captains and officers of state before me to-morrow, and we will settle the affair on the goodliest wise.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and withdrawing, notified all the doctors of the law and the chief Amirs.

So, on the morrow, they came up to the Divan and saluted the King, who said to them, 'O Amirs of Baghdad, whom will ye have to be king over you after me, that I may invest him in my lifetime, in the presence of you all?' Quoth they all, 'We are agreed upon thy daughter's husband, Hassan, son of the Vizier Ali.' 'If it be so,' said the King, 'go all of you and bring him before me.' So they all arose and repairing to Hassan's palace, said to him, 'Come with us to the King.' 'Wherefore?' asked he, and they answered, 'For a thing that will advantage both us and thee.' So he went in with them to the King and kissed the ground before the latter, who bade him be seated and said to him, 'O Hassan, all the Amirs have approved of thee and agreed to make thee king over them after me; and it is my purpose to proclaim thee, whilst I yet live, and so make an end of the business.' But Hassan arose and kissing the earth once more before the King, said to him, 'O our lord the King, among the Amirs there be [many] who are older than I and greater of worth; hold me quit therefore of this thing.' Quoth all the Amirs, 'We consent not but that thou be king over us.' Then said Hassan, 'My father is older than I, and he and I are one thing; and it befits not to advance me over him.' But Ali said, 'I will consent to nothing but what is pleasing to my brethren; and they have all chosen and agreed upon thee. Wherefore gainsay thou not the King's commandment and that of thy brethren.' And Hassan hung his head in abashment before the King and his father. Then said the King to the Amirs, 'Do ye all accept of him?' 'We do,' answered they and recited thereupon seven Fatihehs.' So the King said to the Cadi, 'Draw up a legal act testifying of these Amirs that they are agreed to make my daughter's husband Hassan king over them.' So the Cadi wrote the act and made it executory, after they had all taken the oath of fealty to Hassan. Then the King invested him with the insignia of royalty and bade him take his seat on the throne; whereupon they all arose and kissed King Hassan's hands and did homage to him.

The new king dispensed justice among the people that day, in right royal fashion, and invested the grandees of the realm in splendid robes of honour. When the Divan broke up, he went in to his father-and-law and kissed his hands; and the old King said to him, 'O my son, look thou govern the people in the fear of God.' 'O my father,' replied Hassan, 'through thy prayers for me, the grace of God will come to me.' Then he entered his own palace and was met by his wife and her mother and their attendants, who kissed his hands and gave him joy of his advancement, saying, 'This is a blessed day.' Then he went in to his father and mother, who rejoiced with an exceeding joy in that which God had vouchsafed him of his advancement to the

kingship, and his father exhorted him to the fear of God and to affectionate solicitude in his dealings with his subjects. He passed the night in joy and gladness, and on the morrow, having prayed the appointed prayers, concluding with the customary recitation of part of the Koran, he repaired to the Divan, whither came all his officers and dignitaries. He passed the day in dispensing justice among his subjects, enjoining to beneficence and forbidding from iniquity and appointing and displacing, till nightfall, when the Divan broke up, after the goodliest fashion, and all present withdrew and went each his own way. Then he arose and went in to the palace, where he found his father-in-law's sickness grown heavy upon him and said to him, 'May no hurt befall thee!' At this the old King opened his eyes and said, 'O Hassan!' 'At thy service, O my lord,' replied the young man. Quoth the old King, 'My last hour is at hand: be careful of thy wife and her mother and look thou fear God and honour thy parents, being still in awe of the majesty of the Requiting King and remembering that He commandeth to justice and beneficence.' And Hassan replied, 'I hear and obey.'

The old King lingered three days after this and was then received into the mercy of God the Most High. They paid him the last offices and buried him and held over him readings and recitations of the Koran, to the end of the [customary] forty days. And King Hassan, son of the Vizier, reigned in his stead, and his subjects rejoiced in him and all his days were gladness. Moreover, his father ceased not to be his chief Vizier on his right hand, and he took to himself another Vizier, to be at his left hand. His reign was a prosperous one and he abode long King in Baghdad. God blessed him, by the old King's daughter, with three sons, who inherited the kingdom after him; and they abode in the enjoyment of all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies. And glory be to Him who is eternal and in whose hand are annulment and confirmation!

The Pilgrim and the Old Woman Who Dwelt in the Desert.

A MAN of the pilgrims once slept a long sleep and awaking, found no trace of the caravan. So he arose and walked on, but lost his way and presently came to a tent, at whose door he saw an old woman and a dog by her, asleep. He went up to the tent and saluting the old woman, sought of her food. 'Go to yonder valley,' said she, 'and catch thy sufficiency of serpents, that I may broil of them for thee and give thee to eat.' 'I dare not catch serpents,' answered the pilgrim; 'nor did I ever eat them.' Quoth the old woman, 'I will go with thee and catch them; fear not.' So she went with him, followed by the dog, to the valley, and catching a sufficient number of serpents, proceeded to broil them. He saw nothing for it but to eat, for fear of hunger and exhaustion; so he ate of the serpents.

Then he was athirst and asked for water to drink. 'Go to the spring and drink,' answered she. So he went to the spring and found the water thereof bitter; yet needs must he drink of it, for all its bitterness, because of the violence of his thirst. Then he returned to the old woman and said to her, 'O old woman, I marvel at thy choosing to abide in this place and putting up with such meat and drink!' 'And how is it then in thy country?' asked she. 'In my country,' answered he, 'are wide and spacious houses and ripe and delicious fruits and sweet and abundant waters and goodly viands and fat meats and plentiful flocks and all things pleasant and all the goods of life, the like whereof are not, save in the Paradise that God the Most High hath promised to His pious servants.' 'All this,' replied she, 'have I heard: but tell me, have you a Sultan who ruleth over you and is tyrannical in his rule and under whose hand you are, who, if one of you commit a fault, taketh his goods and undoth him and who, when he will, turneth you out of your houses and uprooteth you, stock and branch?' 'Indeed, that may be,' answered the man. 'Then, by Allah,' rejoined she, 'these your delicious viands and dainty life and pleasant estate, with tyranny and oppression, are but a corroding poison, in comparison wherewith, our food and fashion, with freedom and safety, are a healthful medicine. Hast thou not heard that the best of all boons, after the true Faith, are health and security?'

Now these [quoth he who tells the tale] may be by the just rule of the Sultan, the Vicar of God in His earth, and the goodness of his policy. The Sultan of times past needed but little awfulness, for that, when the people saw him, they feared him; but the Sultan of these days hath need of the most accomplished policy and the utmost majesty, for that men are not as men of time past and this our age is one of folk depraved and greatly calamitous, noted for folly and hardness of heart and inclined to hatred and enmity. If, therefore, the Sultan that is set over them be (which God the Most High forfend) weak or lack of policy and majesty, without doubt, this will be the cause of the ruin of the land. Quoth the proverb, 'A hundred years of the Sultan's tyranny, rather than one of the tyranny of the people, one over another.' When the people oppress one another, God setteth over them a tyrannical Sultan and a despotic King. Thus it is told in history that there was, one day, presented to El Hejjaj ben Yousuf a docket, in which was written, 'Fear God and oppress not His servants with all manner of oppression.' When he read this, he mounted the pulpit, (for he was ready of

speech,) and said, 'O folk' God the Most High hath set me over you, by reason of your [evil] deeds; and though I die, yet will ye not be delivered from oppression, with your evil deeds; for God the Most High hath created many like unto me. If it be not I, it will be a more fertile than I in mischief and a mightier in oppression and a more strenuous in violence, even as saith the poet:

For no hand is there but the hand of God is over it
And no oppressor but shall be with worse than he oppress.

Tyranny is feared: but justice is the best of all things. We beg God to better our case.'

Aboulhusn and His Slave-girl Taweddud.

THERE was once in Baghdad a man of rank and rich in money and houses and lands, who was one of the chiefs of the merchants, and God had largely endowed him with worldly goods, but had not vouchsafed him what he longed for of offspring; and there passed over him a long space of time, without his being blessed with children, male or female. His years waxed great, his bones became wasted and his back bent, and weakness and trouble increased on him, and he feared the loss of his wealth and possessions, seeing he had no child, whom he might make his heir and by whom he should be remembered. So he betook himself with supplication to God the Most High, fasting by day and rising by night [to pray]. Moreover, he made vows to God the Living, the Eternal, and visited the pious and was instant in supplication to the Most Migh, till He gave ear to him and accepted his prayer and took pity on his striving and complaining; so that, before many days were past, he lay with one of his women and she became with child by him the same night. She accomplished the months of her pregnancy and casting her burden, bore a male child as he were a piece of the moon; whereupon the merchant, in his gratitude to God, (to whom belong might and majesty,) fulfilled his vows and gave alms and clothed the widow and the orphan.

On the seventh night after the boy's birth, he named him Aboulhusn, and the wet-nurses suckled him and the dry-nurses dandled him and the slaves and servants carried him, till he grew up and throve and learnt the sublime Koran and the ordinances of Islam and the things of the True Faith. Moreover, he learned writing and poetry and mathematics and archery and became the pearl of his age and the goodliest of the folk of his time and his day, fair of face and fluent of tongue, bearing himself with a proud and graceful port and glorying in his symmetry and amorous grace. His cheeks were red and his forehead white and brilliant and the tender down of the whiskers darkened upon his face, even as saith one, describing him:

The Spring of the down on his cheeks to the eye shows clear;
And how shall the rose endure, after Spring is here?
Dost thou not see that the growth on his cheek, forsooth,
A violet is, that forth of its leaves doth peer?

He abode awhile with his father, in the best of case, and the latter rejoiced and delighted in him, till he came to man's estate, when the merchant one day made him sit down before him and said to him, 'O my son, the appointed term draws near; my last hour is at hand and it remains but to meet God (to whom belong might and majesty). I leave thee what shall suffice thee, even to thy son's son, of money and farms and houses and gardens; wherefore, O my son, fear thou God the Most High in [dealing with] that which I leave thee and follow none but those who will help thee [in this].' Not long after, he sickened and died; so his son ordered his funeral, after the goodliest fashion, and burying him, returned to his house and sat mourning for him [many] days and nights, till certain of his friends came in to him and said to him, 'Whoso leaveth the like of thee after him is not dead; indeed, what is past is past and

mourning beseemeth none but girls and cloistered women.' And they ceased not from him, till they wrought on him to enter the bath and break off his mourning. Then he forgot his father's injunctions, and his head was turned by his riches; he thought fortune would still abide with him, as it was, and that wealth would never come to an end. So he ate and drank and made merry and took his pleasure and gave gifts of money and raiment and was profuse with gold and gave himself up to eating fowls and breaking the seals of wine-flasks and listening to songs and to the laugh of the wine, as it gurgled from the flagon; nor did he give over this way of life, till his wealth was wasted and the case became straitened [upon him] and he bit his hands [for repentance] and gone was all he had.

In good sooth, he had nothing left, after that which he had squandered, but a slave-girl that his father had bequeathed to him with the rest of his estate: her name was Taweddud and she had no equal in beauty and grace and brightness and symmetry and all perfection. She was past mistress in all manner of arts and accomplishments and endowed with [many] excellences, surpassing all the folk of her age and time. She was grown more notorious than a way-mark, for the versatility of her genius, and outdid the fair both in theory and practice and elegant and flexile grace, more by token that she was five feet high and in conjunction with fair fortune, with strait arched brows, as they were the crescent moon of Shaaban, and eyes like those of gazelles, nose like the point of the sabre and cheeks like blood-red anemones, mouth like Solomon's seal and teeth like necklaces of pearls, navel holding an ounce of benzoin ointment and waist more slender than his body whom love hath wasted and whom concealment [of his passion] hath made sick, and buttocks heavier than two hills of sand; brief, in all she answered to the saying of him who says:

Her fair shape ravisheth, if face to face she did appear,
And if she turn, for severance from her she slayeth sheer.
Sun-like, full-moon-like, sapling-like, unto her character
Estrangement nowise appertains nor cruelty austere.
Under the bosom of her shift the garths of Eden are,
And the full-moon revolveth still upon her neck-rings' sphere.

She seemed [at once] a rising full moon and a browsing gazelle, a girl of nine and five, putting to shame the moon and the sun, even as saith of her the eloquent and ingenious poet:

The likeness of the full-moon, faring o'er
The heavens, five and five and after four;
'Tis not my fault, if she have made of me
Its likeness, when it first in heaven doth soar.

White of skin, odoriferous of breath, it seemed as if she were [at once] fashioned of fire and moulded of crystal; rose-red was the cheek of her and perfect her shape and figure; even as saith of her one, describing her:

Scented with sandal and musk, right proudly doth she go,
With gold and silver and rose and saffron-colour aglow.
A flower in a garden she is, a pearl in an ouch of gold

Or an image in chapel set for worship of high and low.
Slender and shapely she is; vivacity bids her arise,
But the weight of her hips says, "Sit, or softly and slowly go."
Whenas her favours I seek and sue for my heart's desire,
"Be gracious," her beauty says; but her coquetry answers, "No."
Glory to Him who made beauty her portion, and that
Of her lover to be the prate of the censurers, heigho!

Indeed, she captivated all who saw her, with the excellence of her beauty and the sweetness of her smile, and transpierced them with the arrows she launched from her eyes; and withal she was eloquent of speech and excellently skilled in poetry.

When Aboulhusn had squandered all his wealth and there remained to him nought but this slave-girl, when [I say] the wretchedness of his plight became manifest to him, he abode three days without tasting food or taking rest in sleep, and Taweddud said to him, 'O my lord, carry me to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, fifth of the sons of Abbas, and seek of him ten thousand dinars to my price. If he deem me dear at this price, say to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, my slave is worth more than this: do but prove her, and her value will be magnified in thine eyes, for she hath not her equal, and it were unfit that any but thou should possess her." And beware, O my lord, of selling me for less than the sum I have named, for it is but little for the like of me.' (Now Aboulhusn knew not her worth nor that she had no equal in her day.) So he carried her to the Khalif, to whom he repeated what she had bidden him say, and the Khalif said to her, 'What is thy name?' 'Taweddud,' answered she. 'O Taweddud,' asked he, 'in what branches of knowledge dost thou excel?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'I am versed in syntax and poetry and jurisprudence and exegesis and lexicography and music and the knowledge of the Divine ordinances and in arithmetic and geodesy and the fables of the ancients. I know the sublime Koran [by heart] and have read it according to the seven and the ten and the fourteen [modes]. I know the number of its chapters and verses and sections and words and letters and its halves and fourths and eighths and tenths, the number of acts of adoration, that occur in it, and what there is in it of cancelling and cancelled; also what parts of it were revealed at Medina and what at Mecca and the manner of the different revelations. I know the Holy Traditions, their history and variants and the manner of their recitation and interpretation, together with those of them whose chain of descent is unbroken and those for which it is broken; and I have studied the exact sciences, geometry and philosophy and medicine and logic and rhetoric and composition; and I know many things and am passionately fond of poetry. I can play the lute and know its gamut and notation and so forth. If I sing and dance, I ravish, and if I adorn and perfume myself, I slay. In fine, I have reached a pitch of perfection such as can only be estimated by those who are stablished in knowledge.'

When the Khalif heard her words, he wondered at them and at the eloquence of her speech, seeing the tenderness of her age, and turning to Aboulhusn, said to him, 'I will summon those who shall examine her in all she lays claim to; if she answer [correctly,] I will give thee the price thou askest for her and more; and if not, thou art fitter to [possess] her [than I].' 'With all my heart, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Aboulhusn. So the Khalif wrote to the Viceroy of Bassora, to send him Ibrahim

ben Siyyar the poet, who was the first man of his day in argument and eloquence and poetry and logic, and bade him bring with him readers of the Koran and doctors of the law and physicians and astrologers and sages and geometricians and philosophers; and Ibrahim was more learned than all. In a little while they all arrived at the Khalif's palace, knowing not what was to do, and the latter sent for them to his sitting-chamber and bade them be seated. So they sat down and he bade fetch the damsel Taweddud, who came and unveiling, showed herself, as she were a sparkling star. The Khalif caused set her a stool of gold; and she saluted and speaking with an eloquent tongue, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, bid the learned men present contend with me in argument.' So he said to them, 'I desire of you that ye dispute with this damsel on the things of her faith and make void her argument, in all she avoucheth;' and they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey God and thee, O Commander of the Faithful.'

Thereupon Taweddud bowed her head and said, 'Which of you is the doctor of the law, the scholar, versed in the interpretation of the Koran and in the Traditions?' Quoth one of them, 'I am the man thou seekest.' 'Then,' said she, 'ask me of what thou wilt.' Quoth the doctor, 'Hast thou read the precious book of God and dost thou know its abrogating and abrogated parts and hast thou meditated its verses and expressions?' 'Yes,' answered she. 'Then,' said he, 'I will proceed to question thee of the obligatory ordinances and the immutable institutions: so tell me of these, O damsel, and who is thy Lord, who thy prophet, and who thy brethren. Also, what is thy [point of] fronting [in prayer], what thine exemplar, what thy path and what thy highway?' 'Allah is my Lord,' replied she, 'and Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) my prophet and the true-believers are my brethren. The Koran is my exemplar and the Kaabeh my [point of] fronting; the practice of good is my path and the Sunneh my highway.' (Q.) 'With what do we know God the Most High?' (A.) 'With the understanding.' (Q.) 'And what is the understanding?' (A.) 'It is of two kinds, natural and acquired. The first is that which God (to whom belong might and majesty) bestoweth on whom He will of His servants; and the other is that which men acquire by dint of study and fair knowledge.' (Q.) 'Thou hast answered well. Where is the seat of the understanding?' (A.) 'God casteth it in the heart, whence its lustre ascendeth to the brain and there becometh fixed.' (Q.) 'How knowest thou the Prophet of God?' (A.) 'By the reading of God's Holy Book and by signs and proofs and portents and miracles.' (Q.) 'What are the obligatory ordinances and the immutable institutions?' (A.) 'The obligatory ordinances are five in number. (1) Testification that there is no god but God alone, that He hath no partner in divinity and that Mohammed is His servant and His apostle. (2) The scrupulous performance of the enjoined prayers. (3) The payment of the poor-rate. (4) Fasting Ramazan. (5) The performance of the Pilgrimage to God's Holy House [at Mecca] for all to whom it is possible. The immutable institutions are four in number; to wit, night and day and sun and moon, the which build up life and hope, neither knoweth any son of Adam if they will be destroyed on the Day of Judgment.' (Q.) 'What are the obligatory rites of the Faith?' (A.) 'Prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage, fighting for the Faith and abstinence from what is forbidden.' (Q.) 'Why dost thou stand up to pray?' (A.) 'To express the devout intent of the slave submitting himself to [or acknowledging] the Divinity.' (Q.) 'What are the conditions precedent of standing up to pray?' (A.) 'Purification, covering the privy parts, the avoidance of soiled clothes, standing on a clean place, fronting [the Kaabeh,] a standing posture, the intent and the

magnification of prohibition.' (Q.) 'With what shouldest thou go forth thy house to pray? (A.) 'With an intent of worship.' (Q.) 'With what intent shouldest thou enter the mosque?' (A.) 'With an intent of service.' (Q.) 'Why do we front the Kaabeh?' (A.) 'In obedience to three Divine and one Traditional ordinance.' (Q.) 'What is the commencement, the consecration and the dissolution [end] of prayer?' (A.) 'Purification, the magnification of prohibition and the salutation of the angels [concluding prayer].' (Q.) 'What of him who neglecteth prayer?' (A.) 'It is reported, among the authentic (Traditions of the Prophet, that he said), "He, who neglecteth prayer wilfully and without excuse, hath no part in Islam."' (Q.) 'What is prayer?' (A.) 'Prayer is communion between the slave and his Lord, and in it are ten virtues, to wit, (1) it illumines the heart (2) makes the face shine (3) pleases the Merciful One (4) angers Satan (5) conjures calamity (6) wards off the mischief of enemies (7) multiplies mercy (8) forfends vengeance [or punishment] (9) brings the slave nigh unto [or in favour with] his Lord and (10) restrains from lewdness and iniquity. It is one of the written obligatory ordinances and the pillar of the Faith.' (Q.) 'What is the key of prayer?' (A.) 'Ablution.' (Q.) 'What is the key of ablution?' (A.) 'Nomination.' (Q.) 'That of naming God?' (A.) 'Faith.' (Q.) 'That of Faith?' (A.) 'Trust in God.' (Q.) 'That of trust in God?' (A.) 'Hope.' (Q.) 'That of Hope?' (A.) 'Obedience.' (Q.) 'That of obedience?' (A.) 'The confession of the unity and the acknowledgment of the divinity of God.' (Q.) 'What are the Divine ordinances of ablution?' (A.) 'They are six in number, according to the canon of the Imam Es Shafi Mohammed ben Idris (of whom God accept) to wit, (1) intent to wash the face (2) washing the face (3) washing the hands and elbows (4) wiping part of the head (5) washing the feet and heels and (6) observing the prescribed order of ablution, whose statutes are ten in number, to wit, (1) nomination (2) washing the hands before putting them into the vase (3) rinsing the mouth (4) drawing up water through the nostrils (5) wiping the whole head (6) washing the ears within and without with fresh water (7) separating a thick beard (8) separating the fingers and toes (9) washing the right foot before the left and (10) doing each of these thrice and all in unbroken succession. When the ablution is ended, the devotee should (quoth Es Shafi) say, "I testify that there is no god but God alone, who hath no partner, and that Mohammed is His servant and apostle. O my God, make me of those who repent and are made clean! Glory to Thee, O my God, and in Thy praise I testify that there is no god but Thou! I crave pardon of Thee and repent to Thee!" For it is reported, in the Holy Traditions, that the Prophet (whom God bless and keep) said of this prayer, "Whoso ensueth every ablution with this prayer, the eight gates of Paradise are open to him; he shall enter at which he pleases."' (Q.) 'When a man purposes to make the ablution, what betides him from the angels and the devils?' (A.) 'When a man prepares for ablution, the angels come and stand on his right and the devils on his left hand. If he name God, at the beginning of the ablution, the devils flee from him and the angels hover over him with a pavilion of light, having four ropes, to each an angel glorifying God and craving pardon for him, so long as he remains silent or calls upon the name of God. But if he omit to begin with naming God (to whom belong might and majesty) neither remain silent, the angels depart from him and the devils settle upon him and whisper evil thoughts unto him, till he falls into doubt and comes short in his ablution. For (quoth he on whom be blessing and salvation) "A perfect ablution driveth away the devils and assureth against the tyranny of the Sultan; and he who

neglecteth the ablution, if calamity befall him, let him blame none but himself.'" (Q.) 'What should a man do, when he awakes from sleep?' (A.) 'He should wash his hands thrice, before putting them into the vessel.' (Q.) 'What are the ordinances, Koranic and Traditional, of complete ablution?' (A.) 'The Koranic ordinances are intent and covering the whole body with water, so that it shall come at every part of the hair and skin. The Traditional, previous partial ablution [as before prayer,] rubbing the body, separating the hair and deferring in words the washing of the feet till the end of the ablution.' (Q.) 'What are the reasons [or occasions] for making the ablution with other than water, and what are the ordinances thereof, Koranic and Traditional?' (A.) 'The reasons are seven in number, to wit, lack of water, fear, need thereto, going astray on a journey, sickness, having the bones [broken and] in splints and wounds. As for its ordinances, the Koranic are four in number, to wit, intent, dust, applying it to the face and to the hands, and the Traditional two, to wit, nomination and preferring the right before the left hand.' (Q.) 'What are the conditions, the essentials [or fundamentals] and the Traditional statutes of prayer?' (A.) 'The conditions are five in number, to wit, (1) purification of the members (2) covering the privy parts (3) observing the proper hours, either of certainty or to the best of one's belief, (4) fronting the Kaabeh and (5) standing on a clean place. The essentials are twelve in number, to wit, (1) intent (2) the magnification of prohibition (3) standing at the proper distance one from another (4) repeating the first chapter of the Koran and also (according to the Shafiyites) saying, "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate!" a verse thereof (5) bowing the body and tranquillity [or gravity] therein (6) keeping the feet and legs still and in the same position, [whilst the rest of the body moves], and tranquillity therein (7) prostration and tranquillity therein (8) sitting between two prostrations and tranquillity therein (9) repeating the latter profession of the Faith and sitting up therefor (10) invoking benediction on the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) (11) the first Salutation and (12) the intent of making an end of prayer, [expressed] in words. The Traditional statutes are the call to prayer, the repetition of the words of the latter, raising the hands to either side of the face, whilst pronouncing the magnification of prohibition, pronouncing the magnification before reciting the Fatiheh [First chapter of the Koran], seeking refuge with God, saying "Amen," repeating the (obligatory) chapter [of the Koran] after the Fatiheh, repeating the magnifications during change of posture, saying, "May God hear him who praiseth Him!" and "O our Lord, to Thee be the praise!" uttering aloud the prayers in their places and in like manner, under the breath, those so prescribed, the first testification and sitting up thereto, blessing the Prophet therein, blessing his family in the latter profession [or testification] and the second Salutation.' (Q.) 'On what is the poor-rate taxable?' (A.) 'On gold and silver and camels and oxen and sheep and wheat and barley and millet and beans and pulse and rice and raisins and dates.' (Q.) 'What is the poor-rate on gold ?' (A.) 'Below twenty dinars, nothing; but, on that amount and over, half a dinar for every score.' (Q.) 'On silver?' (A.) 'Under two hundred dirhems, nothing; then, five dirhems on every two hundred.' (Q.) 'On camels?' (A.) 'For every five, an ewe, or for every twenty-five a pregnant camel.' (Q.) 'On sheep?' (A.) 'On forty and over, an ewe for every forty head.' (Q.) 'What are the ordinances of the Fast [of Ramazan]?' (A.) 'The Koranic are intent, abstinence from eating, drinking and copulation and stoppage of vomiting. It is incumbent on all who submit to the Law, save women in their

courses and forty days after child-birth; and it becomes obligatory on sight of the new moon or on news of its appearance, brought by a trustworthy person and commending itself as truth to the hearer's heart; and among its requisites is that it be commenced by night. The Traditional ordinances of fasting are, hastening to break the fast, deferring the fore-dawn meal and abstaining from speech, save for good works and for calling on the name of God and reciting the Koran.' (Q.) 'What things vitiate not the fast?' (A.) 'The use of unguents and eye-powders and the dust of the road and the swallowing of one's spittle and the emission of seed in dreams of dalliance or at the sight of a strange woman and cupping and letting blood; none of these things vitiates the fast.' (Q.) 'What are the prayers of the two great [annual] Festivals?' (A.) 'Two one-bow prayers, after the traditional ordinance, without call to prayer or the repetition thereof by the devotee, who shall say, "Prayer is a collector of all folk!" and pronounce the magnification seven times in the first prayer, besides the magnification of prohibition, and in the second, five times, besides that of rising up, (according to the canon of the Imam Es Shafi, on whom God have mercy) and make the profession of the Faith.' (Q.) 'What are the prayers prescribed on the occasion of an eclipse of the sun or moon?' (A.) 'Two one-bow prayers, without call to prayer or repetition thereof by the devotee, who shall make in each two standings up and two inclinations and two prostrations, then sit up and testify and salute.' (Q.) 'What is the ritual of prayer for rain?' (A.) 'Two one-bow prayers, without call to prayer or repetition; then shall the devotee make the profession and salute. Moreover [the Imam] shall deliver an exhortation and (in place of the magnification, as in the two exhortations of the two great Festivals) ask pardon of God and reverse his mantle and pray and supplicate.' (Q.) 'What are the additional or occasional prayers?' (A.) 'The least is a one-bow prayer and the most eleven.' (Q.) 'What is the forenoon prayer?' (A.) 'At least, two one-bow prayers and at most, twelve.' (Q.) 'What is the service of seclusion?' (A.) 'It is a matter of Traditional ordinance.' (Q.) 'What are its conditions?' (A.) '(1) Expression of intent (2) not leaving the mosque save of necessity (3) not having to do with a woman (4) fasting and (5) abstaining from speech.' (Q.) 'Under what conditions is pilgrimage obligatory?' (A.) 'So a man be of full age and understanding and a true-believer and it be possible to him; and it is obligatory [on all], once before death.' (Q.) 'What are the Koranic statutes of the pilgrimage?" (A.) '(1) Assumption of the pilgrim's habit (2) station at Arafat (3) compassing [the Kaabeh] (4) running [between Sefa and Merweh] and (5) [previous] shaving or clipping the hair.' (Q.) 'What are the Koranic statutes of the lesser pilgrimage?' (A.) 'Reassuming the pilgrim's habit and compassing and running [as before].' (Q.) 'What are the Koranic ordinances of the assumption of the pilgrim's habit?' (A.) 'Putting off sewn garments, forswearing perfume and ceasing to shave the head or cut the nails and avoiding the killing of game and copulation.' (Q.) 'What are the Traditional statutes of the pilgrimage?' (A.) '(1) The crying out, "Here I am, O our Lord!" (2) the circuitings [about the Kaabeh] of arrival [at] and departure [from Mecca] (3) the passing the night at Muzdelifeh and Mina and (4) the stone-throwing.' (Q.) 'What is the war in defence of the Faith and its essentials?' (A.) 'Its essentials are (1) the descent of the infidels upon us (2) the existence of the Imam (3) a state of [armed] preparation and (4) firmness in meeting the foe. Its ordinance is incital to battle, in that the Most High hath said, "O my Prophet, incite the faithful to battle!"' (Q.) 'What are the ordinances of buying and selling?' (A.) 'The Koranic are (1) offer and acceptance and (2) if the

thing sold be a (white) slave, by whom one profiteth, to do one's endeavour to convert him to Islam and (3) to abstain from usury; the Traditional, resiliation and option before separating, after the saying of the Prophet, "The parties to a sale shall have the option [of cancelling or altering the terms of a bargain,] whilst they are yet unseparated."' (Q.) 'What is it forbidden to sell [or exchange] for what?' (A.) 'On this point I mind me of an authentic tradition, reported by Nafi of the Apostle of God, that he forbade the sale of dried dates for fresh and fresh figs for dry and jerked for fresh meat and cream for butter; in fine, of all eatables of one and the same kind, it is unlawful to sell some for other some.' When the professor heard her words and knew that she was keen of wit, ingenious and learned in jurisprudence and the Traditions and the interpretation of the Koran and what not else, he said in himself, 'Needs must I go about with her, that I may overcome her in the assembly of the Commander of the Faithful.' So he said to her, 'O damsel, what is the lexicographical meaning of the word wuzou?' And she answered, 'Cleanliness and freedom from impurities.' (Q.) 'And of prayer?' (A.) 'An invocation of good.' (Q.) 'And of ghusl?' (A.) 'Purification.' (Q.) 'And of fasting?' (A.) 'Abstention.' (Q.) 'And of zekat?' (A.) 'Increase.' (Q.) 'And of pilgrimage?' (A.) 'Visitation [or quest].' (Q.) 'And of jehad?' (A.) '[Endeavour in] repelling.' With this the doctor's arguments were exhausted, so he rose to his feet and said, 'Bear witness against me, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I am in the Law. Quoth she, 'I will ask thee somewhat, which do thou answer me speedily, an thou be indeed a learned man.' 'Say on,' quoth he; and she said, 'What are the arrows of the Faith?' 'They are ten in number,' answered he; 'to wit, (1) Testification, that is, religion (2) Prayer, that is, the Covenant (3) Alms, that is, purification (4) Fasting, that is, defensive armour (5) Pilgrimage, that is, the Law (6) Fighting for the Faith, that is, a general duty (7) Enjoining to beneficence and (8) Forbidding from iniquity, both of which are jealousy [for good] (9) The communion of the faithful, that is, sociableness, and (10) Seeking knowledge, that is, the praiseworthy way.' (Q.) 'What are the roots of Islam?' (A.) 'They are four in number, to wit, sincerity of belief, truth of purpose, observance of the limit [prescribed by the Law] and keeping the Covenant.' Then said she, 'I have one more question to ask thee, which if thou answer, [it is well]; else, I will take thy clothes.' Quoth he, 'Speak, O damsel;' and she said, 'What are the branches of Islam?' But he was silent and made no reply; and she said, 'Put off thy clothes, and I will expound them to thee.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Expound them, and I will make him put off his clothes for thee.' 'They are two-and-twenty in number,' answered she, 'to wit, (1) holding fast to the Book of God the Most High (2) taking example by His Apostle (whom God bless and preserve) (3) abstaining from doing evil (4) eating what is lawful and (5) avoiding what is unlawful (6) restoring things wrongfully taken to their owners (7) repentance (8) knowledge of the Law (9) love of [Abraham] the Friend [of God] (10) and of the followers of the Revelation (11) belief in the Apostles (12) fear of apostacy (13) preparation for departure (14) strength of conviction (15) clemency in time of power (16) strength in time of weakness (17) patience under affliction (18) knowledge of God the Most High and (19) of what His Prophet hath made known to us (20) gainsaying Iblis the accursed (21) striving earnestly against the lusts of the soul and gainsaying them and (22) guiltlessness of believing in any other god but God.'

When the Commander of the Faithful heard her words, he bade the doctor put off his clothes and hood; and he did so and went forth, beaten and confounded, from the Khalif's presence. Thereupon arose another man and said to her, 'O damsel, hear a few questions from me.' 'Say on,' quoth she; and he said, 'What are the conditions of valid [purchase by] payment in advance?' 'That the amount [of the thing bought], the kind and the period [of delivery to the purchaser], be [fixed or] known,' replied she. (Q.) 'What are the Koranic canons of eating?' (A.) 'The confession [by the eater] that God the Most High provideth him and giveth him to eat and drink and thanksgiving to Him therefor.' (Q.) 'What is thanksgiving?' (A.) 'The use by the creature of that which God vouchsafeth to him in the manner and to the ends for which He hath created it.' (Q.) 'What are the Traditional canons of eating?' (A.) 'The [preliminary] naming [of God] and washing the hands, sitting on the left buttock, eating with three fingers and eating of that which is chewed.' (Q.) 'What are the civilities of eating?' (A.) 'Taking small mouthfuls and looking little at one's table-companion.' (Q.) 'What are the heart's stays [or articles of faith] and their correlatives?' (A.) 'They are three in number, to wit, (1) holding fast to the Faith, the correlative whereof is the shunning of infidelity, (2) holding fast to the Traditional Law and its correlative, the shunning of innovation [or heresy] and (3) holding fast to obedience and its correlative, the shunning of disobedience.' (Q.) 'What are the conditions of ablution?' (A.) '(1) Submission to the will of God (2) possession of discernment of good and evil [or having attained the age of discretion] (3) purity of the water and (4) absence of legal or material impediments.' (Q.) 'What is belief?' (A.) 'It is divided into nine parts, to wit, (1) belief in the One worshipped (2) belief in the condition of slavery [of the worshipper] (3) belief in one God, to the exclusion of all others (4) belief in the Two Handfuls (5) belief in Providence (6) belief in the Abrogating and (7) in the Abrogated (8) belief in God, His angels and apostles and (9) in fore-ordained Fate, general and particular, its good and ill, sweet and bitter.' (Q.) 'What three things do away other three?' (A.) 'It is told of Sufyan eth Thauri that he said, "Three things do away other three. Making light of the pious doth away the future life, making light of kings doth away [this] life and making light of expenditure doth away wealth."' (Q.) 'What are the keys of the heavens, and how many gates have they?' (A.) 'Quoth God the Most High, "And heaven shall be opened, and it shall be [all] doors," and quoth he whom God bless and keep, "None knoweth the number of the gates of heaven, save He who created it, and there is no son of Adam but hath two gates allotted to him in the skies, one whereby his subsistence cometh down and another where-through his works [good and evil] ascend. The former is not closed, save when his term of life comes to an end, nor the latter, till his soul ascends [for judgment]."' (Q.) 'Tell me of a thing and a half thing and a no-thing.' (A.) 'The thing is the believer, the half thing the hypocrite and the no-thing the infidel.' (Q.) 'Tell me of various kinds of hearts.' (A.) 'There is the whole [or perfect] heart, which is that of [Abraham] the Friend [of God], the sick heart, that of the infidel, the contrite heart, that of the pious, fearful ones, the heart consecrated to God, that of our Lord Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) and the enlightened [or enlightening] heart, that of those who follow him. The hearts of the learned are of three kinds, to wit, those that are in love with this world, with the next and with their Lord; and it is said that hearts are three, the suspended, that of the infidel, the non-existent [or lost], that of the hypocrite, and the constant [or firm], that

of the true-believer. Moreover, it is said that the latter is of three kinds, namely, the heart dilated with light and faith, that wounded with fear of estrangement and that which feareth to be forsaken of God.'

Quoth the second doctor, 'Thou hast said well;' whereupon said she to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he has questioned me, till he is weary, and now I will ask him two questions. If he answer them, it is well, and if not, I will take his clothes and he shall depart in peace.' Quoth the doctor, 'Ask me what thou wilt,' and she said, 'What is religion?' 'Religion,' answered he, 'is confession with the tongue and belief with the heart and doing with the members. Quoth the Prophet, "The believer is not perfect in belief, except five qualities be accomplished in him, namely, trust in God, committal of his affair to Him, submission to His commandment, acquiescence in His decrees and that he do all for His sake; so is he of those who are acceptable to God and who give and withhold for His sake, and he is perfect in belief."' Then said she, 'What is the Koranic ordinance of ordinances and the ordinance which is the preliminary of all ordinances and that of which all others stand in need and that which comprehendeth all others, and what is the Traditional ordinance that entereth into the Koranic, and that whereby the latter is completed?' But he was silent and made no reply; whereupon the Khalif bade her expound and ordered him to doff his clothes and give them to her. 'O doctor,' said she, 'the Koranic ordinance of ordinances is the knowledge of God the Most High; that, which is the preliminary of all others, is the testifying that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His apostle; that, of which all others have need, is ablution; that, which compriseth all others, is that of [total] ablution from [ceremonial] defilement; the Traditional ordinance, that enters into the Koranic, is the separation of the fingers and the thick beard; and that, wherewith all Koranic ordinances are completed, is circumcision.' Therewith was manifest the insufficiency of the doctor, who rose to his feet and said, 'I call God to witness, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I in the Law and what pertains thereto.' So saying, he put off his clothes and went away, defeated.

Then turned she to the rest of the learned men present and said, 'O masters, which of you is the reader, versed in the seven readings and in syntax and lexicography?' Thereupon the professor arose and seating himself before her, said, 'Hast thou read the Book of God the Most High and made thyself throughly acquainted with its verses and its various parts, abrogating and abrogated, equivocal and unequivocal, Meccan and Medinan? Dost thou understand its interpretation and hast thou studied it, according to the various versions and readings?' 'Yes,' answered she; and he said, 'What, then, is the number of its chapters, how many are Meccan and how many Medinan? How many verses and decades does it contain, how many words and how many letters and how many acts of prostration and how many prophets and birds are mentioned in it?' 'It contains a hundred and fourteen chapters,' replied she, 'whereof threescore and ten were revealed at Mecca and forty and four at Medina, six thousand three hundred and thirty-six verses, six hundred and twenty-one decades, seventy-nine thousand four hundred and thirty-nine words and three hundred and twenty- three thousand and six hundred and seventy letters; and to the reader thereof, for every letter, accrue ten benefits. The acts of prostration it contains are fourteen in

number, and five-and-twenty prophets are named therein, to wit, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Elisha, Jonah, Lot, Salih, Houd, Shuaib, David, Solomon, Dhoulkifl, Idris, Elias, Yehya, Zacharias, Job, Moses, Aaron, Jesus and Mohammed, the peace of God and His blessing be on them all! Moreover, nine birds [or flying things] are mentioned in the Koran, namely, the gnat, the bee, the fly, the ant, the hoopoe, the crow, the locust, the bustard and the bird of Jesus (on whom be peace), to wit, the bat.' (Q.) 'Which is the most excellent chapter of the Koran?' (A.) 'That of the Cow.' (Q.) 'Which is the most magnificent verse?' (A.) 'That of the Throne; it has fifty words, in each fifty blessings.' (Q.) 'What verse hath in it nine signs [or wonders]?' (A.) 'That in which quoth God the Most High, "Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day and the ship that runneth in the sea with what profiteth mankind and in what God sendeth down from heaven of water and quickeneth therewith the earth, after its dearth, and spreadeth abroad therein all manner cattle, and the shifting of the winds and the clouds, pressed into service betwixt heaven and earth, are signs for folk who understand."' (Q.) 'Which is the most just?' (A.) 'That in which God saith, "Verily, God commandeth to justice and beneficence and giving to those that are near unto us and forbiddeth from profligacy and iniquity and oppression."' (Q.) 'Which is the most yearnful?' (A.) 'That in which quoth God, "Shall every man of them yearn to enter a garden of delight?"' (Q.) 'Which is the most hopeful?' (A.) 'That in which quoth God the Most High, "Say, 'O ye my servants, that have transgressed against your own souls, despair not of the mercy of God! Indeed, God forgiveth sins, all of them, for He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate.'"' (Q.) 'By what version dost thou read?' (A.) 'By that of the people of Paradise, to wit, the version of Nafi.' (Q.) 'In which verse doth God make prophets lie?' (A.) 'In that wherein He saith, "They [the brothers of Joseph] brought lying blood upon his shirt."' (Q.) 'In which doth He make infidels speak the truth?' (A.) 'In that wherein He saith, "The Jews say, 'The Nazarenes are [grounded] on nought,' and the Nazarenes say, 'The Jews are [grounded] on nought;' and [yet] they [both] read the Scripture." And [in this] both speak the truth.' (Q.) 'In which doth God speak in His own person [in the singular]?' (A.) 'In that in which He saith, "Neither have I created Jinn and men, but that they should worship."' (Q.) 'In which do the angels speak?' (A.) 'In that which saith, "We celebrate Thy praises and hallow Thee."' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the formula, "I seek refuge with God from Satan the Stoned"?' (A.) 'It is obligatory, by commandment of God, on all who read the Koran, as appears by His saying, "When thou readest the Koran, seek refuge with God from Satan the Stoned."' (Q.) 'What are the words and variants of the formula?' (A.) 'Some say, "I take refuge with God the All-hearing and knowing, etc.," and others, "With God the Strong;" but the best is that of which the noble Koran and the Traditions speak. The Prophet was used, whenas he was about to open the Koran, to say, "I take refuge with God from Satan the Stoned." And quoth a Tradition, reported by Nafi on the authority of his [adopted] father, "The apostle of God used, when he rose in the night to pray, to say aloud, 'God is Most Great, with [all] greatness! Praise be to God abundantly! Glory to God morning and evening!' Then would he say, 'I seek refuge with God from Satan the Stoned and from the instigations of the Devils and their evil suggestions."' And it is told of Ibn Abbas (of whom God accept) that he said, "The first time Gabriel came down to the Prophet [with a portion of the Koran,] he taught him [the formula of]

seeking refuge, saying, 'O Mohammed, say, "I seek refuge with God the All-hearing and knowing;" then say, "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful!" And read, in the name of thy Lord who created men from clotted blood.'"' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the verse, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful"? Is it one of the verses of the Koran?' (A.) 'Yes; it is a verse of "The ant" and occurs also [at the head of the first and] between every two [following] chapters; and there is much difference of opinion, respecting this, among the learned.' (Q.) 'Why is not the formula written at the head of the chapter of Immunity?' (A.) 'When this chapter was revealed for the dissolution of the alliance between the Prophet and the idolaters, the former sent Ali ibn Abi Talib (whose face God honour) therewith [from Medina to Mecca] at the season of the greater pilgrimage; and he read the chapter to them, but did not read "In the name, etc."' (Q.) 'What of the excellence of the formula and the blessing that attaches to it?' (A.) 'It is told of the Prophet that he said, "Never is 'In the name, etc.' pronounced over aught, but there is a blessing in it;" and it is reported, on his authority, that the Lord of Glory swore by His glory that never should the formula be pronounced over a sick person, but he should be healed of his sickness. Moreover, it is said that, when God created the empyreal heaven, it was agitated with an exceeding agitation; but He wrote on it, "In the name, etc.," and its agitation subsided. When the formula was first revealed to the Prophet, he said, "I am safe from three things, earthquake and metamorphosis and drowning;" and indeed its virtues are great and its blessings too many to enumerate. It is told of the Prophet that he said, "There will be brought before God, on the judgment day, a man with whom He shall reckon and finding no good deed to his account, shall order him to the fire; but the man will say, 'O my God, Thou hast not dealt justly by me!' Then shall God (to whom belong might and majesty) say, 'How so?' and the man will answer, saying, 'O Lord, for that Thou callest Thyself the Compassionate, the Merciful, yet wilt Thou punish me with the fire!' And God (extolled be His majesty) shall say, 'I did indeed name myself the Compassionate, the Merciful. Carry My servant to Paradise, of My mercy, for I am the most Merciful of those that have mercy.'"' (Q.) 'What was the origin of the use of the formula?' (A.) 'When God revealed the Koran, they wrote, "In Thy name, O my God!"; when He revealed the words, "Say, pray ye to God or pray ye to the Compassionate, what days ye pray, for to Him [belong] the most fair names," they wrote, "In the name of God, the Compassionate;" and when He revealed the words, "Your God is one God, there is no god but He, the Compassionate, the Merciful," they wrote, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!"' (Q.) 'Did God reveal the Koran all at once or at intervals?' (A.) 'Gabriel the Faithful [Spirit] (on whom be peace) descended with it from the Lord of the Worlds upon His Prophet Mohammed, Prince of the Apostles and seal of the Prophets, by detached verses, containing commandment and prohibition, promise and menace, anecdotes and similitudes, as the occasion called for it, in the course of twenty years.' (Q.) 'Which chapter was first revealed?' (A.) 'According to Ibn Abbas, that of the Clot of Blood, and according to Jabir ben Abdallah, that of the Covered [with a cloak].' (Q.) 'Which verse was the last revealed?' (A.) 'That of Usury, and it is said [also], the verse, "When there cometh God's succour and victory."' (Q.) 'Tell me the names of the Companions who collected the Koran, in the lifetime of the Apostle of God.' (A.) 'They were four in number, to wit, Ubaï ibn Kaab, Zeid ibn Thabit, Abou Ubeideh Aamir ben Jerrah and Othman ben Affan, may

God accept of them all!' (Q.) 'Who are the readers, from whom the [accepted] reading of the Koran is taken?' (A.) 'They are four in number, namely, Abdallah ben Mesoud, Ubaï ben Kaab, Maadh ben Jebel and Salim ben Abdallah.' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "That which is sacrificed to stones"?' (A.) 'The stones are idols, which are set up and worshipped, instead of God the Most High, and [from this] we seek refuge with Him.' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "[Quoth Jesus] Thou knowest what is in my soul, and I know not what is in Thy soul"?' (A.) 'They mean "Thou [God] knowest the truth of me and what is in me and I [Jesus] know not what is in Thee;" and the proof of this are his words, "Thou [God] art He that knoweth the hidden things;" and it is said, also, "Thou [God] knowest my essence, but I [man] know not Thine essence."' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "O ye that believe, deny not yourselves the good things that God hath made lawful to you!"?' (A.) 'My master (on whom God have mercy) told me that Ez Zuhak said, "There was a people of the true-believers who said, 'We will dock our yards and don sackcloth;' whereupon this verse was revealed." But El Cutadeh says that it was revealed on account of sundry Companions of the Apostle of God, Ali ibn Abi Talib and Othman ben Musaab and others, who said, "We will dock ourselves and don hair [cloth] and make us monks."' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, "And God took Abraham to friend"?' (A.) 'The friend [of God] is the needy, the poor, and (according to another saying) he is the lover, he who is absorbed in the love of God the Most High and in whose exclusive devotion there is no falling away.'

When the professor saw her pass on in speech with the passing of the clouds and that she stayed not in answering, he rose to his feet and said, 'I take God to witness, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I in Koranic exegesis and what pertains thereto.' Then said she, 'I will ask thee one question, which if thou answer, it is well: but if thou answer not, I will strip off thy clothes.' 'Ask on,' quoth the Khalif; and she said, 'Which verse of the Koran has in it three-and-twenty Kafs, which sixteen Mims, which a hundred and forty Ains, and which section lacks the formula, "To whom [God] belong might and majesty"?' He could not answer, and she said to him, 'Put off thy clothes.' So he doffed them, and she said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the verse of the sixteen Mims is in the chapter Houd and is the saying of the Most High, "It was said, 'O Noah, go down in peace from us, and blessing upon thee!'"; that of the three-and-twenty Kafs is the verse called of the Faith, in the chapter of the Cow; that of the hundred and forty Ains is in the chapter of El Aaraf, "And Moses chose seventy men of his tribe to [attend] our appointed time; to each man a pair of eyes." And the set portion which lacks the formula, "To whom [God] belong might and majesty," is that which comprises the chapters "The Hour draweth nigh and the Moon is cloven in twain," "The Compassionate" and "The Event."' And the professor departed in confusion.

Then came forward the skilled physician and said to her, 'We have done with theology and come now to physiology. Tell me, therefore, how is man made, how many veins, bones and vertebræ are there in his body, which is the chief vein and why Adam was named Adam?' 'Adam was called Adam,' answered she, 'because of the udmeh, to wit, the tawny colour of his complexion and also (it is said) because he was created of the adim of the earth, that is to say, of the soil of its surface. His breast was made of

the earth of the Kaabeh, his head of earth from the East and his legs of earth from the West. There were created for him seven doors [or openings] in his head, to wit, the eyes, the ears, the nostrils and the mouth, and two passages, the urethra and the anus. The eyes were made the seat of the sense of sight, the ears of that of hearing, the nostrils of that of smell, the mouth of that of taste and the tongue to speak forth what is in the innermost heart of man. Adam was originally created of four elements combined, water, earth, fire and air. The yellow bile is the humour of fire, being hot and dry, the black bile that of earth, being cold and dry, the phlegm that of water, being cold and moist, and the blood that of air, being hot and moist. There are in man three hundred and threescore veins, two hundred and forty bones and three souls [or natures], the animal, the rational and the essential or [natural], to each of which is allotted a separate function. Moreover, God made him a heart and spleen and lungs and six guts and a liver and two kidneys and marrow [or brain] and buttocks and bones and skin and five senses, hearing, seeing, smell, taste and touch. The heart He set on the left side of the breast and made the stomach the exemplar [or governor] thereof. He appointed the lungs for a ventilator to the heart and set the liver on the right side, opposite thereto. Moreover, He made, besides this, the midriff and the intestines and set up the bones of the breast and ribbed them with the ribs.' (Q.) 'How many ventricles are there in a man's head?' (A.) 'Three, which contain five faculties, styled the intrinsic senses, i.e. common sense, fancy, thought, apperception and memory.' (Q.) 'Describe to me the scheme of the bones.' (A.) 'It consists of two hundred and forty bones, which are divided into three parts, the head, the trunk and the extremities. The head is divided into skull and face. The skull is constructed of eight bones, and to it are attached the teeth, two-and- thirty in number, and the hyoïd bone, one. The trunk is divided into spinal column, breast and basin. The spinal column is made up of four-and-twenty bones, called vertebræ, the breast of the breastbone and the ribs, which are four-and-twenty in number, twelve on each side, and the basin of the hips, the sacrum and the coccyx. The extremities are divided into arms and legs. The arms are again divided into shoulder, comprising shoulder-blades and collar-bone, the upper- arm, one bone, the fore-arm, composed of two bones, the radius and the ulna, and the hand, consisting of the wrist, the metacarpus and the fingers. The wrist is composed of eight bones, ranked in two rows, each comprising four bones; the metacarpus of five and the fingers, which are five in number, of three bones each, called the phalanges, except the thumb, which has but two. The lower extremities are divided into thigh, one bone, leg, composed of three bones, the tibia, the fibula and the kneepan, and the foot, divided like the hand, with the exception of the wrist, which is composed of seven bones, ranged in two rows, two in one and five in the other.' (Q.) 'Which is the root of the veins?' (A.) 'The aorta from which they ramify, and they are many, none knoweth the tale of them save He who created them; but, as I have before observed, it is said that they are three hundred and threescore in number. Moreover, God hath appointed the tongue to interpret [for the thought], the eyes to serve as lanterns, the nostrils to smell with, and the hands for prehensors. The liver is the seat of pity, the spleen of laughter and the kidneys of craft; the lungs are the ventilators, the stomach the storehouse and the heart the pillar [or mainstay] of the body. When the heart is sound, the whole body is sound, and when the heart is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt.' (Q.) 'What are the outward signs and symptoms of disease in the members of the body, both internal and external?' (A.) 'A

physician, who is a man of understanding, looks into the state of the body and is guided by the feel of the hands, according as they are firm [or flabby], hot or cool, moist or dry. Internal disorders are also indicated by external symptoms, such as yellowness of the [whites of the] eyes, which denotes jaundice, and bending of the back, which denotes disease of the lungs.' (Q.) 'What are the internal symptoms of disease?' (A.) 'The science of the diagnosis of disease by internal symptoms is founded upon six canons, to wit, (1) the actions [of the patient] (2) what is evacuated from his body (3) the nature and (4) site of the pain he feels (5) swelling and (6) the effluvia given off by his body.' (Q.) 'How cometh hurt to the head?' (A.) 'By the introduction of food upon food, before the first be digested, and by satiety upon satiety; this it is that wasteth peoples. He who will live long, let him be early with the morning-meal and not late with the evening-meal; let him be sparing of commerce with women and chary of cupping and blood-letting and make of his belly three parts, one for food, one for drink and the third for air; for that a man's intestines are eighteen spans in length and it befits that he appoint six for food, six for drink, and six for air. If he walk, let him go gently; it will be wholesomer for him and better for his body and more in accordance with the saying of God the Most High, "Walk not boisterously [or proudly] upon the earth."' (Q.) 'What are the symptoms of yellow bile and what is to be feared there-from?' (A.) 'The symptoms are, sallow complexion and dryness and bitter taste in the mouth, failure of the appetite, and rapid pulse; and the patient has to fear high fever and delirium and prickly heat and jaundice and tumour and ulceration of the bowels and excessive thirst.' (Q.) 'What are the symptoms of black bile and what has the patient to fear from it, if it get the mastery of the body?' (A.) 'The symptoms are deceptive appetite and great mental disquiet and care and anxiety; and it behoves that it be evacuated, else it will generate melancholy and leprosy and cancer and disease of the spleen and ulceration of the bowels.' (Q.) 'Into how many branches is the art of medicine divided?' (A.) 'Into two: the art of diagnosing diseases and that of restoring the diseased body to health.' (Q.) 'When is the drinking of medicine more efficacious than otherwhen?' (A.) 'When the sap runs in the wood and the grape thickens in the cluster and the auspicious planets are in the ascendant, then comes in the season of the efficacy of drinking medicine and the doing away of disease.' (Q.) 'What time is it, when, if a man drink from a new vessel, the drink is wholesomer and more digestible to him than at another time, and there ascends to him a pleasant and penetrating fragrance?' (A.) 'When he waits awhile after eating, as quoth the poet:

I rede thee drink not after food in haste, but tarry still;
Else with a halter wilt thou lead thy body into ill.
Yea, wait a little after thou hast eaten, brother mine;
Then drink, and peradventure thus shalt thou attain unto thy will.'

(Q.) 'What food is it that giveth not rise to ailments?' (A.) 'That which is not eaten but after hunger, and when it is eaten, the ribs are not filled with it, even as saith Galen the physician, "Whoso will take in food, let him go slowly and he shall not go wrong." To end with the saying of the Prophet, (whom God bless and preserve,) "The stomach is the home of disease, and abstinence is the beginning of cure, for the origin of every disease is indigestion, that is to say, corruption of the meat in the stomach."' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the bath?' (A.) 'Let not the full man enter it. Quoth the

Prophet, "The bath is the delight of the house, for that it cleanseth the body and calleth to mind the fire [of hell]."' (Q.) 'What waters are best for bathing?' (A.) 'Those whose waters are sweet and plains wide and whose air is pleasant and wholesome, its climate [or seasons] being fair, autumn and summer and winter and spring.' (Q.) 'What kind of food is the most excellent?' (A.) 'That which women make and which has not cost overmuch trouble and which is readily digested. The most excellent of food is brewis, according to the saying of the Prophet, "Brewis excels other food, even as Aaïsheh excels other women."' (Q.) 'What kind of seasoning is most excellent?' (A.) 'Flesh meat (quoth the Prophet) is the most excellent of seasonings; for that it is the delight of this world and the next.' (Q.) 'What kind of meat is the most excellent?' (A.) 'Mutton; but jerked meat is to be avoided, for there is no profit in it.' (Q.) 'What of fruits?' (A.) 'Eat them in their prime and leave them when their season is past.' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of drinking water?' (A.) 'Drink it not in large quantities nor by gulps, or it will give thee the headache and cause divers kinds of harm; neither drink it immediately after the bath nor after copulation or eating (except it be after the lapse of fifteen minutes for a young and forty for an old man) or waking from sleep.' (Q.) 'What of drinking wine?' (A.) 'Doth not the prohibition suffice thee in the Book of God the Most High, where He saith, "Verily, wine and casting lots and idols and divining arrows are an abomination of the fashion of the Devil: shun them, so surely shall ye thrive." And again, "If they ask thee of wine and casting lots, say, 'In them are great sin and advantages to mankind, but the sin of them is greater than the advantage.'" Quoth the poet:

O wine-bibber, art not ashamed and afraid
To drink of a thing that thy Maker forbade?
Come, put the cup from thee and mell with it not,
For wine and its drinker God still doth upbraid.

And quoth another:

I drank the sweet sin till my wit went astray: 'Tis ill drinking of that which doth reason away.

As for the useful qualities that are therein, it disperses gravel from the kidneys and strengthens the bowels, banishes care, moves to generosity and preserves health and digestion. It assains the body, expels disease from the joints, purifies the frame of corrupt humours, engenders cheerfulness and gladdens and keeps up the natural heat. It contracts the bladder, strengthens the liver and removes obstructions, reddens the face, clears away cobwebs from the brain and defers gray hairs. In short, had not God (to whom belong might and majesty) forbidden it, there were not on the face of the earth aught fit to stand in its place. As for drawing lots, it is a game of hazard.' (Q.) 'What wine is the best?' (A.) 'That which is pressed from white grapes and ferments fourscore days or more: it resembleth not water and indeed there is nothing on the surface of the earth like unto it.' (Q.) 'What of cupping?' (A.) 'It is for him who is [over] full of blood and has no defect therein. Whoso will be cupped, let it be at the wane of the moon, on a day without cloud or wind or rain and the seventeenth of the month. If it fall on a Tuesday, it will be the more efficacious, and nothing is more salutary for the brain and eyes and for clearing the memory than cupping.' (Q.) 'What

is the best time for cupping?' (A.) 'One should be cupped fasting, for this fortifies the wit and the memory. It is reported of the Prophet that, when any one complained to him of a pain in the head or legs, he would bid him be cupped and not eat salt [meat] fasting, for it engendered scurvy, neither eat sour milk immediately after [cupping].' (Q.) 'When is cupping to be avoided?' (A.) 'On Wednesdays and Saturdays, and let him who is cupped on these days blame none but himself. Moreover, one should not be cupped in very hot nor in very cold weather; and the best season for cupping is Spring.' (Q.) 'Tell me of copulation.'

At this Taweddud hung her head, for shame and confusion before the Khalif; then said, 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, it is not that I am at fault, but that I am ashamed, though, indeed, the answer is on the tip of my tongue.' 'Speak, O damsel,' said the Khalif; whereupon quoth she, 'Copulation hath in it many and exceeding virtues and praiseworthy qualities, amongst which are, that it lightens a body full of black bile and calms the heat of love and engenders affection and dilates the heart and dispels sadness; and the excess of it is more harmful in summer and autumn than in spring and winter.' (Q.) 'What are its good effects?' (A.) 'It doth away trouble and disquiet, calms love and chagrin and is good for ulcers in a cold and dry humour; but excess of it weakens the sight and engenders pains in the legs and head and back: and beware, beware of having to do with old women, for they are deadly. Quoth the Imam Ali, (whose face God honour), "Four things kill and ruin the body: bathing on a full stomach, eating salt meat, copulation on a plethora [of blood] and lying with an ailing woman; for she will weaken thy strength and infect thy body with sickness; and an old woman is deadly poison." And quoth one of them, "Beware of taking an old woman to wife, though she be richer in goods than Caroun."' (Q.) 'What is the best copulation?' (A.) 'If the woman be young, well-shaped, fair of face, swelling-breasted and of honourable extraction, she will add to thee strength and health of body; and let her be even as saith the poet, describing her:

Even by thy looks, I trow, she knows what thou desir'st,
By instinct, without sign or setting forth of sense;
And when thou dost behold her all-surpassing grace,
Her charms enable thee with gardens to dispense.'

(Q.) 'At what time is copulation good?' (A.) 'If by day, after the morning-meal, and if by night, after food digested.' (Q.) 'What are the most excellent fruits?' (A.) 'The pomegranate and the citron.' (Q.) 'Which is the most excellent of vegetables?' (A.) 'The endive.' (Q.) 'Which of sweet-scented flowers?' (A.) 'The rose and the violet.' (Q.) 'How is sperma hominis secreted?' (A.) 'There is in man a vein that feeds all the other veins. Water [or blood] is collected from the three hundred and threescore veins and enters, in the form of red blood, the left testicle, where it is decocted, by the heat of man's temperament, into a thick, white liquid, whose odour is as that of the palm-spathe.' (Q.) 'What bird [or flying thing] is it that emits seed and menstruates?' (A.) 'The bat, that is, the rere-mouse.' (Q.) 'What is that which, when it is shut out [from the air], lives, and when it smells the air, dies?' (A.) 'The fish.' (Q.) 'What serpent lays eggs?' (A.) 'The dragon.'

With this the physician was silent, being weary with much questioning, and Taweddud said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he hath questioned me till he is weary, and now I will ask him one question, which if he answer not, I will take his clothes as lawful prize.' 'Ask on,' quoth the Khalif. So she said to the physician, 'What is that which resembles the earth in [plane] roundness, whose resting-place and spine are hidden, little of value and estimation, narrow-chested, its throat shackled, though it be no thief nor runaway slave, thrust through and through, though not in fight, and wounded, though not in battle; time eats its vigour and water wastes it away; now it is beaten without a fault and now made to serve without stint; united after separation, submissive, but not to him who caresses it, pregnant without a child in its belly, drooping, yet not leaning on its side, becoming dirty yet purifying itself, cleaving to [its mate], yet changing, copulating without a yard, wrestling without arms, resting and taking its ease, bitten, yet not crying out, [now] more complaisant than a boon-companion and [anon] more troublesome than summer-heat, leaving its wife by night and clipping her by day and having its abode in the corners of the mansions of the noble?' The physician was silent and his colour changed and he bowed his head awhile in perplexity and made no reply; whereupon she said to him, 'O physician, speak or put off thy clothes.' At this, he rose and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, bear witness against me that this damsel is more learned than I in medicine and what else and that I cannot cope with her.' And he put off his clothes and fled forth. Quoth the Khalif to Taweddud, 'Expound to us thy riddle,' and she replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, it is the button and the button loop.'

Then said she, 'Let him of you who is an astronomer come forward.' So the astronomer came forward and sat down before her. When she saw him, she laughed and said, 'Art thou the astronomer, the mathematician, the scribe?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'Ask of what thou wilt,' quoth she; 'success rests with God.' So he said, 'Tell me of the sun and its rising and setting?' And she replied, 'The sun rises in the Eastern hemisphere and sets in the Western, and each hemisphere comprises ninescore degrees. Quoth God the Most High, "Verily, I swear by the Lord of the places of the sunrise and of the sunsetting." And again, "He it is who appointed the sun for a splendour and the moon for a light and ordained to her mansions, that ye might know the number of the years and the reckoning." The moon is Sultan of the night and the sun Sultan of the day, and they vie with one another in their courses and follow each other in uninterrupted succession. Quoth God the Most High, "It befits not that the sun overtake the moon nor that the night prevent the day, but each glides in [its own] sphere."' (Q.) 'When the day cometh, what becomes of the night, and what of the day, when the night cometh?' (A.) 'He maketh the night to enter into the day and the day into the night.' (Q.) 'Enumerate to me the mansions of the moon.' (A.) 'They are eight-and-twenty in number, to wit, Sheretan, Butain, Thureya, Deberan, Hecaäh, Henaäh, Dhiraa, Nethreh, Terf, Jebheh, Zubreh, Serfeh, Awwaa, Simak and Ghefr, Zubaniya, Iklil, Kelb, Shauleh, Naaïm, Beldeh, Saad edh Dhabih, Saad el Bulaa, Saad el Akhbiyeh, Saad es Suwoud, Fergh the Former and Fergh the Latter and Rishaa. They are disposed in the order of the letters of the alphabet, according to their numerical power, and there are in them secret virtues which none knoweth save God (glorified and exalted be He) and those who are firmly stablished in science. They are divided among the twelve signs of the Zodiac, in the ratio of two mansions and a third of a mansion to each

sign. Thus Sheretan, Butain and one-third of Thureya belong to Aries, the other two-thirds of Thureya, Deberan and two thirds of Hecaäh to Taurus, the other third of Hecaäh, Henaäh and Dhiraa to Gemini, Nethreh, Terf, and a third of Jebheh to Cancer, the other two-thirds of Jebheh, Zubreh and two-thirds of Serfeh to Leo, the other third of Serfeh, Awwaa and Simak to Virgo, Ghefr, Zubaniya and one-third of Iklil to Libra, the other two-thirds of Iklil, Kelb and two- thirds of Shauleh to Scorpio, the other third of Shauleh, Naaïm and Beldeh to Sagittarius, Saad edh Dhabih, Saad el Bulaa and one-third of Saad es Suwoud to Capricorn, the other two-thirds of Saad es Suwoud, Saad el Akbiyeh and two-thirds of Fergh the Former to Aquarius, the other third of Fergh the Former, Fergh the Latter and Rishaa to Pisces.' (Q.) 'Tell me of the planets and their natures, also of their sojourn in the signs of the Zodiac, their aspects, favourable and sinister, their houses, ascendants and descendants.' (A.) 'The sitting is narrow [for so comprehensive a matter], but they are seven in number, to wit, the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The sun is hot and dry, sinister in conjunction, favourable in opposition, and abides thirty days in each sign. The moon is cold and moist, favourable of aspect, and abides two days in each sign and a third of another day. Mercury is of a mixed nature, favourable [in conjunction] with the favourable and sinister [in conjunction] with the sinister [asterisms], and abides in each sign seventeen and a half days. Venus is temperate, favourable and abides in each sign five-and-twenty days. Mars is sinister and abides in each sign ten months. Jupiter is favourable and abides in each sign a year. Saturn is cold and dry and sinister and abides in each sign thirty months. The house of the sun is Leo, its ascendant is Aries and its descendant Aquarius. The moon's house is Cancer, its ascendant Taurus, its descendant Scorpio and its sinister aspect Capricorn. Saturn's house is Capricorn and Aquarius, its ascendant Libra, its descendant Aries and its sinister aspects Cancer and Leo. Jupiter's house is Pisces and Sagittarius, its ascendant Cancer, its descendant Capricorn and its sinister aspects Gemini and Leo. Venus's house is Taurus, its ascendant Pisces, its descendant Libra and its sinister aspects Aries and Scorpio. Mercury's house is Gemini and Virgo, its ascendant Virgo, its descendant Pisces and its sinister aspect Taurus. Mars's house is Aries and Scorpio, its ascendant Capricorn, its descendant Cancer and its sinister aspect Libra.'

When the astronomer saw her acuteness and skill and heard her fair answers, he bethought him for a device to confound her before the Commander of the Faithful and said to her, 'O damsel, will rain fall this month?' At this she bowed her head and pondered so long, that the Khalif thought her at a loss for an answer and the astronomer said to her, 'Why dost thou not speak?' Quoth she, 'I will not speak except the Commander of the Faithful give me leave.' The Khalif laughed and said, 'How so?' Said she, 'I would have thee give me a sword, that I may strike off his head, for he is an infidel.' At this the Khalif and those about him laughed, and she said, 'O astronomer, there are five things that none knoweth save God the Most High;' and she repeated the following verse: 'Verily, with God is the knowledge of the hour; He sendeth down the rain and knoweth what is in the wombs. None knoweth what the morrow shall bring forth for him nor in what land he shall die. Verily, God is the All-wise, the All-knowing.'

Quoth the astronomer, 'Thou hast said well, and by Allah, I thought but to try thee.' 'Know,' rejoined she, 'that the almanack-makers have certain signs and tokens, referring to the planets, relative to the coming in of the year, and in which are tribulations for the folk.' (Q.) 'What are they?' (A.) 'Each day hath a planet that rules it. So, if the first day of the year fall on a Sunday, that day is the sun's and this portends (though God alone is All-knowing) oppression of kings and sultans and governors and much miasma and lack of rain and that the folk will be in great disorder and the grain-crop will be good, except lentils, which will perish, and the vines will rot and flax will be dear and wheat cheap from the beginning of Toubeh to the end of Beremhat. Moreover, in this year there will be much fighting among kings, and there shall be great plenty of good in this year.' (Q.) 'What if the first day fall on Monday?' (A.) 'That day belongs to the moon and portends righteousness in administrators and deputies and that it will be a year of much rain and grain-crops will be good, but linseed will decay and wheat will be cheap in the month Keyehk; also that plagues will be rife and that half the sheep and goats will die, that grapes will be plentiful and honey scarce and cotton cheap.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Tuesday?' (A.) 'That is Mars's day and portends death of great men and much destruction and outpouring of blood and dearness of grain, lack of rain and scarcity of fish, which will anon be in excess and anon fail [altogether]. In this year, lentils and honey will be cheap and linseed dear and only barley will thrive, to the exception of all other grain: great will be the fighting among kings and death will be in the blood and there will be much mortality among asses.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Wednesday?' (A.) 'That is Mercury's day and portends great anarchy among the folk and much enmity and rotting of some of the green crops and moderate rains; also that there will be great mortality among cattle and infants and much fighting by sea, that wheat will be dear from Burmoudeh to Misra and other grains cheap: thunder and lightning will abound and honey will be dear, palm-trees will thrive and bear apace and flax and cotton will be plentiful, but radishes and onions will be dear.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Thursday?' (A.) 'That is Jupiter's day and portends equity in viziers and righteousness in Cadis and fakirs and the ministers of religion and that good will be plentiful: rain and fruits and trees and grain and fish will abound and flax, cotton, honey and grapes be cheap.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Friday?' (A.) 'That day belongs to Venus and portends oppression in the chiefs of the Jinn and talk of forgery and calumny; there will be much dew, the autumn crops will be good in the land and there will be cheapness in one town and not in another: lewdness will be rife by land and sea, linseed will be dear, also wheat, in Hatour, but cheap in Amshir: honey will be dear and grapes and melons will rot.' (Q.) 'What if it fall on Saturday?' (A.) 'That is Saturn's day and portends the preferment of slaves and Greeks and those in whom there is no good, neither in their neighbourhood; there will be great drought and scarcity; clouds will abound and death will be rife among mankind and woe to the people of Egypt and Syria from the oppression of the Sultan and failure of blessing upon the green crops and rotting of grain.'

With this, the astronomer hung his head, [being at an end of his questions], and she said to him, 'O astronomer, I will ask thee one question, which if thou answer not, I will take thy clothes.' 'Ask on,' replied he. Quoth she, 'Where is Saturn's dwelling place?' And he answered, 'In the seventh heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Jupiter?' (A.) 'In the sixth heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Mars?' (A.) 'In the fifth heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of the

sun?' (A.) 'In the fourth heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Venus?' (A.) 'In the third heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of Mercury?' (A.) 'In the second heaven.' (Q.) 'And that of the moon?' (A.) 'In the first heaven.' Quoth she, 'Well answered; but I have one more question to ask thee. Into how many parts are the stars divided?' But he was silent and answered nothing; and she said to him, 'Put off thy clothes.' So he put them off and she took them; after which the Khalif said to her, 'Tell us the answer to thy question.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'the stars are divided into three parts, one whereof is hung in the sky of the earth, as it were lamps, to give light to the earth, another suspended in the air, to give light to the seas and that which is therein, and the third is used to transfix the demons withal, when they draw near by stealth to [listen to the talk of the angels in] heaven. Quoth God the Most High, "Verily, we have decked the sky of the earth with lamps and have appointed them for projectiles against the demons."' Quoth the astronomer, 'I have one more question to ask, which if she answer, I will avow myself beaten.' 'Say on,' answered she. Then said he, 'What four incompatible things are based upon other four incompatibles?' 'The four elements,' replied she; 'for of heat God created fire, which is by nature hot and dry; of dryness, earth, which is cold and dry; of cold, water, which is cold and moist; of moisture, air, which is hot and moist. Moreover, He created twelve signs of the Zodiac, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces and appointed them of four [several] humours, three, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, fiery, Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn, earthy, Gemini, Libra and Aquarius, airy, and Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces, watery.' With this, the astronomer rose, and saying, 'Bear witness against me that she is more learned than I,' went away beaten.

Then said the Khalif, 'Where is the philosopher?' whereupon one came forward and said to Taweddud, 'What is Time?' 'Time,' answered she, 'is a name applied to the [lapse of the] hours of the day and night, which are but the measures of the courses of the sun and moon in their several orbits, even as God the Most High telleth us, when he saith, "And a sign to them [is] the night, from which we strip off the day, and behold, they are in darkness, and the sun runneth to a fixed abode, [appointed] to it; this is the ordinance of the Sublime, the All-knowing."' (Q.) 'How comes unbelief to the son of Adam?' (A.) 'It is reported of the Prophet that he said, "Unbelief runs in a man, as the blood runs in the veins, when he reviles the world and Time and night and the hour." And again, "Let none of you revile Time, for Time is God; neither the world, for it saith, 'May God not help him that reviles me!' neither the hour, for 'Verily, the hour cometh, without doubt;' neither the earth, for it is a portent, according to the saying of the Most High, 'From it we created you, to it we will return you and from it we will bring you forth yet again.'"' (Q.) 'What are the five that ate and drank, yet came not out of loins nor belly?' (A.) 'Adam and Simeon and Salih's she-camel and Ishmael's ram and the bird that Abou Bekr the Truth-teller saw in the cave.' (Q.) 'Tell me of five that are in Paradise and are neither mortals, Jinn nor angels?' (A.) 'Jacob's wolf and the Seven Sleepers' dog and Esdras's ass and Salih's camel and the Prophet's mule.' (Q.) 'What man prayed a prayer neither on earth nor in heaven?' (A.) 'Solomon [son of David], when he prayed on his carpet, borne by the wind.' (Q.) 'A man once looked at a handmaid in the morning, and she was unlawful to him; but, at noonday, she became lawful to him. By mid-afternoon, she was again unlawful, but at sundown, she was lawful to him. At evensong, she was a third time unlawful, but by

daybreak, she became once more lawful to him.' (A.) 'This was a man who looked at another's handmaid in the morning, and she was then unlawful to him, but at midday he bought her, and she became lawful to him. At mid-afternoon he enfranchised her, and she became unlawful to him, but at sundown he married her and she was again lawful to him. At evensong, he divorced her and she was then a third time unlawful to him, but, next morning, at daybreak, he took her back, and she became once more lawful to him.' (Q.) 'Tell me what tomb fared on with him that lay buried therein?' (A.) 'The whale, when it had swallowed Jonah.' (Q.) 'What spot of ground is it, upon which the sun shone once, but will never again shine till the Day of Judgment?' (A.) 'The bottom of the Red Sea, when Moses smote it with his staff, and the sea clove asunder in twelve places, according to the number of the tribes; then the sun shone on the bottom and will do so never again till the Day of Judgment.' (Q.) 'What was the first skirt that trailed upon the surface of the earth?' (A.) 'That of Hagar, out of shame before Sarah, and it became a custom among the Arabs.' (Q.) 'What is that which breathes without life?' (A.) 'Quoth God the Most High, "By the morning, when it breathes!"' (Q.) 'A number of pigeons came to a high tree and lighted, some on the tree and others under it. Said those on the tree to those on the ground, "If one of you come up to us, ye will be a third part of us [all] in number; and if one of us descend to you, we shall be like unto you in number." How many pigeons were there in all?' (A.) 'Twelve: seven alighted on the tree and five beneath.'

With this the philosopher put off his clothes and fled forth: whereupon she turned to those present and said, 'Which of you is the rhetorician that can discourse of all kinds of knowledge?' There came forward Ibrahim ben Siyyar and said to her, 'Think me not like the rest.' Quoth she, 'It is the more sure to me that thou wilt be beaten, for that thou art a boaster, and God will help me against thee, that I may strip thee of thy clothes. So, if thou sentest one to fetch thee wherewithal to clothe thyself, it would be well for thee.' 'By Allah,' cried he, 'I will assuredly conquer thee and make thee a byword among the folk, generation after generation!' 'Do penance [in advance] for thy [void] oath,' rejoined she. Then said he, 'What five things did God create, before He made man?' And she replied, 'Water and earth and light and darkness and the fruits [of the earth].' (Q.) 'What did God create with the hand of omnipotence?' (A.) 'The empyreal heaven and the tree Touba and Adam and the garden of Eden; these God created with the hand of His omnipotence; but to all other created things He said, "Be," — and they were.' (Q.) 'Who is thy father in Islam?' (A.) 'Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!' (Q.) 'Who was the father [in Islam] of Mohammed?' (A.) 'Abraham the Friend of God.' (Q.) 'What is the Faith of Islam?' (A.) 'The professing that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the apostle of God.' (Q.) 'What is thy first and thy last?' (A.) 'My first is troubled water and my last filthy carrion. The first of me is dust and the last dust. Quoth the poet:

Created wast thou of the dust and didst a man become,
Ready in question and reply and fluent in debate.
Then to the dust return'dst anon and didst become of it,
For that, in very deed, of dust at first thou wast create.'

(Q.) 'What thing was it, whose first [state] was wood and its last life?' (A.) 'Moses' rod, when he cast it on the ground and it became, by permission of God, a writhing

serpent.' (Q.) 'What is the meaning of the verse in the Koran, "And I have other need [or occasion] for it"?' (A.) 'He [Moses] was wont to plant his staff in the ground, and it would flower and fruit and shade him from the heat and the cold. Moreover, it would carry him, when he was weary, and guard his sheep from the wild beasts, whilst he slept.' (Q.) 'What woman was born of a man alone and what man of a woman alone?' (A.) 'Eve of Adam and Jesus of Mary.' (Q.) 'What fire eats and drinks, what fire eats but drinks not, what fire drinks but eats not and what other neither eats nor drinks?' (A.) 'Hellfire eats and drinks, the fire of the world eats but drinks not, the fire of the sun drinks but eats not, and that of the moon neither eats nor drinks.' (Q.) 'Which is the open [door] and which the shut [door]?' (A.) 'The Traditional Ordinances are the open, the Koranic the shut [door].' (Q.) 'Of what does the poet speak, when he says:

A dweller in the sepulchre, at 's head his victual lies;
Whenas he tastes thereof, he speaks and questions and replies.
He rises up and walks and talks, yet silent is the while,
And turns anon unto the tomb wherefrom he did arise.
No living one is he, that hath a title to respect,
Nor dead, that folk should say of him, "God's mercy him comprise!"?'

(A.) 'The pen.'

(Q.) 'What does the poet refer to in these verses:

Two breasts in one it hath; its blood is eath and quick of flow,
Wide-mouthed, though all the rest be black, its ears are white as snow.
It hath an idol like a cock, that doth its belly peck,
And half a dirhem is its worth, if thou its price wouldst know?'

(A.) 'The inkhorn.'

(Q.) 'And in these:

Say to men of wit and learning and to doctors everywhere,
Skilled to find the hidden meanings riddles and enigmas bear,
Come expound to me what is it that ye see a bird produce,
'Mongst the Arabs and barbarians and wherever else ye fare;
Neither flesh nor blood, I warrant, hath the thing whereof I speak;
Neither down nor feathers, birdwise, for a garment doth it wear.
Boiled it is and likewise roasted, eaten hot and eaten cold;
Yea, to boot, and when 'tis buried in the glowing embers' flare,
Colours twain in it are noted, one as silver clear and white,
And the other lucent yellow, gold therewith may not compare.
Living can it not be reckoned, neither may we count it dead:
Tell me, then, what is this wonder, rarity of all things rare?'

(A.) 'Thou makest long the questioning of an egg worth a doit.'

(Q.) 'How many words [or times] did God speak to Moses?'

(A.) 'It is related of the Prophet that he said, "God spoke to Moses fifteen hundred and fifteen words [or times]."'

(Q.) 'Tell me of fourteen things that speak to the Lord of the Worlds?'

(A.) 'The seven heavens and the seven earths, when they say, "We come, obedient."'

(Q.) 'How was Adam created?'

(A.) 'God created Adam of clay: the clay He made of foam and the foam of the sea, the sea of darkness, darkness of light, light of a fish, the fish of a rock, the rock of a ruby, the ruby of water, and the water He created by the exertion of His omnipotent will, according to His saying (exalted be His name!), "His commandment is only when He willeth aught, that He say, 'Be,' — and it is."'

(Q.) 'What is meant by the poet in the following verses:

A things sans mouth or maw that eats in wondrous wise;
On trees and beasts it feeds and all beneath the skies.
Give it to eat, it thrives and flourishes amain;
But give it not to drink of water, or it dies?'

(A.) 'Fire.'

(Q.) 'And in these:

Two lovers, that are still estopped from all delight:
Embracing, each with each, they pass the livelong night.
They guarantee the folk from all calamity,
And with the risen sun they're torn apart forthright?'

(A.) 'The leaves of a gate.'

(Q.) 'Tell me of the gates of Hell?'

(A.) 'They are seven in number and their names are comprised in the following verses:

Jehennem first, then Leza comes and eke Hetim as well;
Then must thou count Saïr, and fifth comes Seker, sooth to tell:
Sixth comes Jehim and last of all, Hawiyeh; thus thou hast,
In compass brief of doggrel rhyme, the seven rooms of Hell.'

(Q.) 'To what does the poet refer in these verses:

A pair of ringlets long she hath, that trail for aye
Behind her, as she comes and goes upon her way,
And eye that never knows the taste of sleep nor sheds
A tear, for none it hath for shedding, sooth to say;
Nor wears it aught of clothes, from year to ended year;
Yet in all manner wede it doth the folk array?'

(A.) 'A needle.'

(Q.) 'What is the length and breadth of the bridge Es Sirat?'

(A.) 'Its length is three thousand years' journey, a thousand in descent, a thousand level and a thousand in ascent: it is sharper than a sword and finer than a hair.'

(Q.) 'How many intercessions [with God] hath the Prophet [for each soul]?'

(A.) 'Three.'

(Q.) 'Was Abou Bekr the first that embraced Islam?'

(A.) 'Yes.'

(Q.) 'Yet Ali became a Muslim before him?'

(A.) 'All came to the Prophet, when he was a boy of seven years old, for God vouchsafed him the knowledge of the truth in his tender youth, so that he never prostrated himself to idols.'

(Q.) 'Which is the more excellent, Ali or Abbas?'

Now she knew that, in propounding this question, Ibrahim was laying a trap for her; for, if she said, 'Ali is the more excellent,' she would fall in disgrace with the Khalif; so she bowed her head awhile, now reddening, now paling, then said, 'Thou askest me of two excellent men, each having [his own especial] excellence. Let us return to what we were about.' When the Khalif heard her reply, he rose to his feet and said, 'By the Lord of the Kaabeh, thou hast said well, O Taweddud!' Then said Ibrahim, 'What means the poet, when he says:

Slender of skirts and slim of shape and sweet of taste it is,
Most like unto the spear, except it lacks of the spontoon.
In all the countries of the world the folk make use of it,
And eaten 'tis in Ramazan, after mid-afternoon?'

She answered, 'The sugar-cane;' and he said, 'Tell me of many things.' 'What are they?' asked she; and he said, 'What is sweeter than honey, what is sharper than the sword, what is swifter than poison, what is the delight of a moment and what the contentment of three days, what is the pleasantest of days, what is the joy of a week, what is the debt that the worst payer denieth not, what is the prison of the tomb, what is the joy of the heart, what is the snare of the soul, what is death in life, what is the malady that may not be healed, what is the reproach that may not be done away, what is the beast that harbours not in cultivated fields, but lodges in waste places and hates mankind and hath in it somewhat of the make of seven strong beasts?' Quoth she, 'Hear what I shall say in answer; then put off thy clothes, that I may expound to thee.' Then the Khalif said, 'Expound, and he shall put off his clothes.' So she said, 'That, which is sweeter than honey, is the love of pious children to their parents; that, which is sharper than the sword, is the tongue; that, which is swifter than poison, is the evil eye; the delight of a moment is coition and the contentment of three days is the depilatory for women; the pleasantest of days is that of profit on merchandise; the joy of a week is the bride; the debt, which the worst payer denieth not, is death; the prison of the tomb is an ill son; the joy of the heart is a woman obedient to her husband, (and it is said also that, when fleshmeat descends upon the heart, it rejoiceth therein); the snare [or vexation] of the soul is a disobedient slave; death in life is poverty; the malady, that may not be healed, is an ill nature and the reproach, that may not be done

away, is an ill daughter; lastly, the beast that harbours not in cultivated fields, but lodges in waste places and hates mankind and hath in it somewhat of the make of seven strong beasts, is the locust, whose head is as the head of the horse, its neck as the neck of the bull, its wings as the wings of the vulture, its feet as the feet of the camel, its tail as the tail of the serpent, its body as the body of the scorpion and its horns as the horns of the gazelle.'

The Khalif was astounded at her quickness and understanding and said to Ibrahim, 'Put off thy clothes.' So he rose and said, 'I call all who are present in this assembly to witness that she is more learned than I and all the learned men.' And he put off his clothes and gave them to her, saying, 'Take them and may God not bless them to thee!' The Khalif ordered him fresh clothes and said to Taweddud, 'There is one thing left of that for which thou didst engage, namely, chess.' And he sent for professors of chess and draughts and backgammon. The chess-player sat down before her, and they set the pieces, and he moved and she moved; but, every move he made she speedily countered, till she beat him and he found himself check-mated. Quoth he, 'I did but lead thee on, that thou mightest think thyself skilful; but set up again, and I will show thee.' So they placed the pieces a second time, and he said to himself, 'Open thine eyes, or she will beat thee.' And he fell to moving no piece, save after calculation, and ceased not to play, till she said, 'Check-mate.' When he saw this, he was confounded at her quickness and skill; but she laughed and said, 'O master, I will make a wager with thee on this third game. I will give thee the queen and the right-hand rook and the left-hand knight; if thou beat me, take my clothes, and if I beat thee, I will take thine.' 'I agree to this,' replied he, and they replaced the pieces, she giving him the queen, rook and knight. Then said she, 'Move, O master.' So he moved, saying in himself, 'I cannot but win, with such an advantage,' and made a combination; but she moved on, little by little, till she made one of her pawns a queen and pushing up to him pawns and other pieces, to take off his attention, set one in his way and tempted him with it. Accordingly, he took it and she said to him, 'The measure is meted out and the equilibrium established. Eat, O man, till thou pass repletion; nought shall be thy ruin but greediness. Knowest thou not that I did but tempt thee, that I might beguile thee? See: this is check-mate: put off thy clothes.' 'Leave me my trousers,' quoth he, 'so God requite thee;' and he swore by Allah that he would contend with none, so long as Taweddud abode at the Court of Baghdad. Then he took off his clothes and gave them to her and went away.

Then came the backgammon-player, and she said to him, 'If I beat thee, what wilt thou give me?' Quoth he, 'I will give thee ten suits of brocade of Constantinople, figured with gold, and ten suits of velvet and a thousand dinars, and if I beat thee, I ask nothing but that thou write me an acknowledgment thereof.' 'To it, then,' replied she, 'and do thy best.' So they played, and he lost and went away, jabbering in the Frank jargon and saying, 'By the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful, there is not her like in all the world!' Then the Khalif summoned players on instruments of music and said to her, 'Dost thou know aught of music?' 'Yes,' answered she. So he bade bring a peeled and polished lute, whose owner [or maker] was ground down by exile [or estrangement from the beloved] and of which quoth one, describing it:

God watered a land and straight a tree sprang up on its root:
It cast forth branches and throve and flourished with many a shoot.
The birds, when the wood was green, sang o'er it, and when it was dry,
Fair women sang to it in turn, for lo, 'twas a minstrel's lute!

So they brought a bag of red satin, with tassels of saffron-coloured silk: and she opened the bag, and took out a lute, on which were graven the following verses:

Full many a tender branch a lute for singing-girl has grown,
Wherewith at banquets to her mates she makes melodious moan.
She sings; it follows on her song, as 'twere to teach her how
Heart's troubles in clear perfect speech of music to make known.

She laid her lute in her lap and letting her breasts hang over it, bent to it as bends a mother, suckling her child; then preluded in twelve different modes, till the whole assembly was agitated with delight, and sang the following verses:

Leave your estrangement, I pray, and bid your cruelty hold,
For, by your life, my heart will never for you be consoled.
Have pity on one who weeps, afflicted and ever sad,
A slave of passion, who burns for thee with longings untold.

The Khalif was ravished and exclaimed, 'May God bless thee and receive him who taught thee into His mercy!' Whereupon she rose and kissed the earth before him. Then he sent for money and paid her master Aboulhusn a hundred thousand dinars to her price; after which he said to her, 'O Taweddud, ask a boon of me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied she, 'I ask of thee that thou restore me to my lord who sold me to thee.' 'It is well,' answered the Khalif and restored her to her master and gave her five thousand dinars for herself. Moreover, he appointed Aboulhusn one of his boon-companions and assigned him a monthly stipend of a thousand dinars so long as he should live, and he abode with the damsel Taweddud in all delight of life.

Marvel then, O King, at the eloquence of this damsel and the greatness of her learning and understanding and her perfect excellence in all branches of knowledge, and consider the generosity of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, in that he gave her master this money and said to her, 'Ask a boon of me;' and she besought him to restore her to her lord. So he restored her to him and gave her five thousand dinars for herself and made him one of his boon-companions. Where is such generosity to be found after the Abbaside Khalifs, may God the Most High have mercy upon them all!

VOLUME V.

The Angel of Death With the Proud King and the Devout Man.

A CERTAIN king of the ancients was once minded to ride out in state with the officers of his court and the grandees of his realm and show forth to the folk the wonders of his magnificence. So he bade his lords and Amirs and grandees equip them to this end and commanded his keeper of the wardrobe to bring him of the richest of raiment, such as befitted the King in his state and [his master of the horse] to bring his steeds of the finest breeds and most renowned pedigrees, which being done, he chose out of the raiment what liked him and of the horses that which he deemed good and donning the clothes, together with a collar set with pearls and rubies and all manner jewels, mounted and set forth in state, making his horse prance and curvet among his troops and glorying in his pride and magnificence. And Satan came to him and laying his hand upon his nose, blew into his nostrils the breath of pride and conceit, so that he magnified himself and said in his heart, 'Who among men is like unto me?' And he became so puffed up with arrogance and conceit and so taken up with the thought of his own glory and magnificence, that he would not vouchsafe a glance to any. Presently, there came up a man clad in tattered clothes and saluted him, but he returned not his greeting, whereupon the stranger laid hold of his horse's bridle. 'Lift thy hand,' said the King, 'thou knowest not whose bridle-rein it is whereof thou takest hold.' Quoth the other, 'I have an occasion to thee.' 'Wait till I alight,' replied the King, 'and then name it.' 'Nay,' rejoined the stranger, 'it is a secret and I will not tell it but in thine ear.' So the King bowed his head to him and he said, 'I am the Angel of Death and I purpose to take thy soul.' 'Have patience with me a little,' said the King, 'whilst I return to my house and take leave of my people and children and neighbours and wife.' 'Not so,' answered the angel; 'thou shalt never return nor look on them again, for the term of thy life is past.' So saying, he took the soul of the King, — who fell off his horse's back, dead, — and departed thence.

Presently, he met a devout man, of whom God the Most High had accepted, and saluted him. He returned his salute, and the Angel of Death said to him, 'O pious man, I have a privy occasion to thee.' 'Tell it in my ear,' said the devotee. Quoth the other, 'I am the Angel of Death.' 'Welcome to thee!' replied the man. 'Praised be God for thy coming! I am weary of awaiting thee; for indeed long hath been thine absence from him who longeth for thee.' Quoth the angel, 'If thou have any business, make an end of it.' But the other answered, saying, 'There is nothing urgent to me as the meeting with my Lord, to whom belong might and majesty!' And the angel said, 'How wouldst thou liefer have me take thy soul? I am bidden to take it as thou willest and choosest.' 'Wait till I make the ablution and pray,' replied the devotee; 'and when I prostrate myself, then take my soul in the act.' Quoth the angel, 'Verily, my Lord commanded me not to take thy soul but with thy consent and as thou shouldst wish; so I will do thy will.' Then the devout man rose and made the ablution and prayed: and the Angel of Death took his soul in the act of adoration, and God transported it to the place of mercy and acceptance and forgiveness.

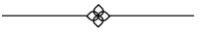
The Angel of Death and the Rich King.

A CERTAIN king had heaped up treasure beyond count and gathered store of all [precious] things, that God the Most High hath created, that he might take his pleasure thereof, against such time as he should have leisure to enjoy all this abounding wealth that he had collected. Moreover, he builded him a wide and lofty palace, such as beseemeth kings, and set thereto strong doors of cunning fashion and appointed for its service and guard servants and soldiers and doorkeepers. One day, he bade the cooks dress him somewhat of the goodliest of food and assembled his household and retainers and lords and servants to eat with him and partake of his bounty. Then he sat down upon the throne of his kingship and the chair of his state and leaning back upon his cushion, bespoke himself, saying, 'O soul, behold, thou hast gathered together all the riches of the world; so now take thy leisure therein and eat of this good at thine ease, in long life and abounding prosperity!'

Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when there came so terrible a knock at the gate that the whole palace shook and the king's throne trembled. The servants were affrighted and ran to the door, where they saw a man clad in tattered raiment, with a cadger's wallet hanging at his neck, as he were one who came to beg food. When they saw him, they cried out at him, saying, 'Out on thee! What unmannerly fashion is this? Wait till the king eateth and [after] we will give thee of what is left.' Quoth he, 'Tell your lord to come out and speak with me, for I have a pressing errand to him and a weighty matter.' 'Away, fool!' replied they. 'Who art thou that we should bid our lord come out to thee?' But he said, 'Tell him of this.' So they went in and told the king, who said, 'Did ye not rebuke him and draw upon him and chide him!' But, as he spoke, behold, there came another knock at the gate, louder than the first, whereupon the servants ran at the stranger with staves and weapons, to fall upon him; but he cried out at them, saying, 'Abide in your places, for I am the Angel of Death.' When they heard this, their hearts quaked and their wits forsook them; their understandings were dazed and their nerves trembled for fear and their limbs lost the power of motion. Then said the King to them, 'Bid him take a substitute in my stead.' But the Angel answered, saying, 'I will take no substitute, and I come not but on thine account, to make severance between thee and the good thou hast gathered together and the riches thou hast heaped up and treasured.' When the king heard this, he wept and groaned, saying, 'May God curse the treasure that has deluded and undone me and diverted me from the service of my Lord! I deemed it would profit me, but to-day it is a regret for me and an affliction unto me, and behold, I [must] go forth, empty-handed of it, and leave it to mine enemies.'

Therewith God caused the treasure to speak and it said, 'Why dost thou curse me? Curse thyself, for God created both me and thee of the dust and appointed me to be in thine hand, that thou mightest provide thee with me for the next world and give alms with me to the poor and sick and needy and endow mosques and hospices and build bridges and aqueducts, so might I be a succour unto thee in the life to come. But thou didst garner me and hoard me up and bestowedst me on thine own lusts, neither gavest thanks for me, as was due, but wast ungrateful; and now thou must leave me to thine

enemies and abidest in thy regret and thy repentance. But what is my fault, that thou shouldest revile me?' Then the Angel of Death took the soul of the King, before he ate of the food, and he fell from his throne, dead. Quoth God the Most High, 'Even while they rejoiced in what had been given to them, we took them unawares and behold, they were stricken with despair."



The Angel of Death and the King of the Children of Israel.

THERE was once a proud and puissant king of the children of Israel, who sat one day upon the throne of his kingship, when he saw come in to him, by the gate of the hall, a man of terrible and forbidding aspect. The King was affrighted at his sudden intrusion upon him and his look terrified him; so he sprang up and said to him, 'Who art thou, O man? Who gave thee leave to come in to me and who sent thee to my house?' Quoth the stranger, 'The Lord of the house sent me to thee and I need no leave to come in to kings, nor can any door- keeper exclude me, for I reck not of a Sultan's majesty neither of the multitude of guards. I am he from whom no tyrant is at rest, nor for any is there escape from my grasp: I am the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.'

When the King heard this, trembling crept over his body and he fell on his face in a swoon; but, presently coming to himself, he said, 'Art thou then the Angel of Death?' 'Yes,' answered the stranger. 'I conjure thee by Allah,' quoth the King, 'grant me one day's respite, that I may ask pardon of my sins and seek absolution of my Lord and restore to their rightful owners the treasures that are in my storehouses, so I may not be burdened with the woe of a reckoning nor suffer the misery of punishment therefor.' 'Away! away!' replied the Angel. 'This may nowise be. How can I grant thee a respite, whenas the days of thy life are counted and thy breaths numbered and thy moments fixed and written?' 'Grant me an hour,' said the King; but the Angel answered, saying, 'The hour was in the account and hath passed, and thou unheeding, and hath expired, and thou taking no thought: and now thy moments are accomplished, and there remains to thee but one breath.' 'Who will be with me, when I am transported to my grave?' asked the King. Quoth the Angel, 'Nought will be with thee but thy work.' 'I have no work,' said the King; and the Angel, 'Doubtless, thine abiding place will be in the fire and thy departure to the wrath of the Almighty.' Then he took the soul of the King, and he fell off his throne and dropped on the earth [dead]. And there arose a mighty weeping and wailing and clamour of lamentation for him among the people of his court, and had they known that to which he went of the wrath of his Lord, their weeping for him had been [yet] sorer and their lamentation louder and more abounding.

Iskender Dhoulkernein and a Certain Tribe of Poor Folk.

IT is related that Iskender Dhoulkernein came once, in his travels, upon a tribe of poor folk, who owned nought of the goods of the world and who dug their graves over against the doors of their houses and were wont at all times to frequent them and sweep the earth from them and keep them clean and visit them and worship God the Most High in them; and they had no food save herbs and the fruits of the earth. Iskender sent a man to them, to bid their king to him, but he refused to come, saying, 'I have no occasion to him.' So Iskender went to him and said to him, 'How is it with you and what manner of folk are you? For I see with you nothing of gold or silver nor aught of the good things of the world.' 'None hath his fill of the goods of the world,' answered the king. 'Why do you dig your graves before the doors of your houses?' asked Iskender. 'That they may be the cynosure of our eyes,' replied the king, 'so we may look on them and still take thought unto death neither forget the world to come. Thus is the love of the world banished from our hearts and we are not distracted thereby from the service of our Lord, exalted be His name!' Quoth Iskender, 'Why do ye eat herbs?' And the other answered, 'Because it misliketh us to make our bellies the tombs of beasts and because the pleasure of eating overpasseth not the gullet.'

Then he brought out a human skull and laying it before Iskender, said to him, 'O Dhoulkernein, knowest thou whose was this skull?' 'Nay,' answered Iskender; and the other rejoined, 'He whose skull this is was a king of the kings of the world, who dealt tyrannously with his subjects, oppressing the weak and passing his days in heaping up the perishable goods of the world, till God took his soul and made the fire his abiding-place; and this is his head.'

Then he produced another skull and laying it before Iskender, said to him, 'Knowest thou this?' 'No,' answered the prince; and the other rejoined, 'This is the skull of another king, who dealt justly by his subjects and was tenderly solicitous for the people of his realm and his dominions, till God took his soul and lodged him in His Paradise and made high his degree [among His blessed].' Then he laid his hands on Iskender's head and said, 'Whether of these twain art thou?' Whereupon Iskender wept sore and straining the king to his bosom, said, 'An thou be minded to consort with me, I will commit to thee the government of my affairs and share with thee in my kingdom.' 'Away! away!' replied the other. 'I have no mind to this.' 'Why so?' asked Iskender, and the King answered, 'Because all men are thine enemies by reason of the wealth and possessions thou hast gotten, and all men are my friends in verity, because of my contentment and poverty, for that I possess nothing, neither covet aught of the goods of the world; I have no desire unto them nor wish for them, neither reck I of aught save contentment.' So Iskender pressed him to his bosom and kissed him between the eyes and went his way.

The Righteousness of King Anoushirwan.

IT is told of the just King Anoushirwan that he once feigned himself sick and bade his stewards and intendants go round about the provinces of his empire and the quarters of his realm and seek him out a rotten brick from some ruined village, that he might use it as medicine, avouching that the physicians had prescribed this to him. So they went the round of the provinces of his realm and of all the lands under his dominion and returned and said to him, 'In all the realm we have found no ruined place nor old rotten brick.' At this he rejoiced and returned thanks to God, saying, 'I was but minded to prove my kingdom and try my empire, that I might know if there were therein any ruined [or deserted] place, so I might rebuild [or repeople] it; but, since there is no place in it but is inhabited, the affairs of the realm are well ordered and accomplished and [its] prosperity hath reached the pitch of perfection.'

'And know, O king,' [added Shehrzad] 'that these kings of time past were not solicitous for the peopling of their kingdoms, but because they knew that the more populous a country is, the more abundant is that which is desired therein, and for that they knew the saying of the wise and the learned to be without doubt true, namely, 'Religion depends on the King, the King on the troops, the troops on the treasury, the treasury on the populousness [or prosperity] of the country and the latter on the justice of the government.' Wherefore they upheld no one in tyranny or oppression neither suffered their dependents to do injustice, knowing that kingdoms are not stablished upon tyranny, but that cities and places fall into ruin, when oppressors get the mastery over them, and their inhabitants disperse and flee to other governments, wherefore ruin falls upon the realm, the imports fail, the treasuries become empty and the lives of the subjects are troubled; for that they love not a tyrant and cease not to offer up prayers against him, so that the King hath no ease of his dominion and the shifts of fortune speedily bring about his destruction.'

The Jewish Cadi and His Pious Wife.

A CERTAIN Cadi of the children of Israel had a wife of surpassing beauty, who was withal exceeding virtuous, chaste and patient, and being minded to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, appointed his brother Cadi in his stead, during his absence, and commended his wife to his charge. Now this brother had heard of her beauty and grace and had fallen in love with her. So, his brother being gone, he went in to her and sought her favours; but she denied him and clave fast unto her chastity. The more she repelled him, the more urgently he pressed his suit upon her, till, despairing of her and fearing lest she should acquaint his brother with his conduct, when he returned, he suborned false witnesses to testify against her of adultery and cited her before the King of the day, who adjudged her to be stoned. So they dug a pit and making her sit therein, stoned her, till she was covered with stones, and [the wicked brother] said, 'Be the pit her grave.'

But, when it was dark night, a passer-by, making for a neighbouring hamlet, heard her groaning and pulling her out of the pit, carried her home to his wife, who dressed her wounds and tended her till she recovered. The peasant's wife had a child, which she gave to the woman to nurse, and the latter used to lodge with the child in another house by night. Now a certain thief saw her and lusted after her. So he sent to her, to require her of love, but she denied herself to him; wherefore he resolved to kill her and making his way into her chamber by night, whilst she slept, thought to strike at her with a knife; but it smote the child and killed it; which when he knew, fear overtook him and he went forth the house and God preserved her from him.

When she awoke in the morning, she found the child by her side slain; and presently his mother came and seeing the boy dead, said to her, 'It was thou didst murder him.' Therewith she beat her grievously and would have killed her; but her husband interposed and delivered the woman, who fled forth for her life, knowing not whither she should go. Presently, she came to a village, where she saw a crowd of people collected about the trunk of a tree, on which was a man crucified, but still in the chains of life. She asked what he had done and they said, 'He hath committed a crime, which nothing can expiate but death or the payment of such a fine by way of alms.' Now she had with her somewhat of money, so she said to them, 'Take the money and let him go.' Accordingly, they set him free and he repented at her hands and vowed to serve her, for the love of God the Most High, till death should release him. Then he built her a hermitage and lodged her therein; moreover, he betook himself to woodcutting and brought her her daily bread. As for her, she was instant in the service of God, so that there came no sick man or demoniac to her, but she prayed for him and he was straightway made whole.

Now it befell, by the ordinance of God the Most High, that He sent down upon her husband's brother a cancer in the face and smote the villager's wife with leprosy and afflicted the murderer of the boy with paralysis. When the Cadi returned home from his pilgrimage, he asked his brother of his wife, and he told him that she was dead, whereat he mourned sore and accounted her with God. After awhile, the folk heard of the pious recluse and flocked to her cell from all parts of the length and

breadth of the earth. And the Cadi said to his brother, 'O my brother, wilt thou not seek out yonder pious woman? It may be God shall appoint thee healing at her hands.' 'O my brother,' replied he, 'carry me to her.' Moreover, the husband of the leprous woman heard of the pious woman and carried his wife to her, as did also the paralytic's family; and they all met at the door of her cell, where they waited, till her servant came, and begged him to ask leave of her to admit them; and he did so.

Now she had a place wherefrom she could look out upon those who came to her, without their seeing her, and thence she saw them all and recognized them. So, when her servant came in to her, she veiled herself and went out and stood in the door, looking at them; but they knew her not. Then said she to them, 'O folk, ye shall not be rid of what is with you, till ye confess your sins; for, when the creature confesses his sins, God relenteth towards him and granteth him that for which he resorteth to Him.' Quoth the Cadi to his brother, 'O my brother, repent to God and persist not in thy frowardness, for it will be the more helpful to thy relief.' And the tongue of the case spoke as follows:

Behold, oppressor and oppressed assembled are to-day,
And God the secret hath unveiled, till now that hidden lay.
This is a case in which, indeed, the sinners are brought low
And God exalteth those that be assiduous in His way.
Yea, and our Master and our Lord discovereth the truth,
Whether the sinner froward be or bow him to obey.
Woe unto those who strive with God and answer Him, as 'twere
They knew not what He doth prepare for those that Him gainsay!
O thou that power and glory seek'st, know, only in the fear
Of God true glory lies; so cleave thou fast to Allah aye.

Then said the brother, 'Now will I tell the truth. I did thus and thus with thy wife;' and he confessed the whole matter, adding, 'And this is my sin.' Quoth the leprous woman, 'As for me, I had a woman with me and imputed to her [a crime,] of which I knew [her] not [to be guilty], and beat her grievously; and this is my offence.' And the paralytic said, 'And I went in to a woman to kill her, after I had solicited her to commit adultery and she had refused; and I slew [instead] a boy that lay beside her; and this is my offence.' Then said the pious woman, 'O my God, even as Thou hast made them to feel the misery of disobedience, so show Thou them [now] the excellence of obedience, for Thou canst all things!' And God (to whom belong might and majesty) made them whole. Then the Cadi fell a-looking on the pious woman and considering her straitly, till she asked him why he did thus and he said, 'I had a wife, were she not dead, I had said that thou wast she.' With this, she made herself known to him and they both betook themselves to rendering thanks to God (to whom belong might and majesty) for that which He had vouchsafed them of the reunion of their loves; but the brother and the thief and the villager's wife began to implore her forgiveness. So she forgave them, and they all worshipped God in that place, and were assiduous in her service, till Death sundered them.

The Shipwrecked Woman and Her Child.

(QUOTH one of the Seyyids) I was going round about the Kaabeh one dark night, when I heard a plaintive voice, speaking from a contrite heart and saying, 'O Bountiful One, Thy past favours! Indeed, my heart is constant to the covenant.' When I heard this, my heart fluttered, so that I was nigh upon death, but I followed the voice and found that it came from a woman, to whom I said, 'Peace be on thee, O handmaid of God!' 'And on thee be peace,' answered she, 'and the mercy of God and His blessings!' Quoth I, 'I conjure thee, by the Most Great God, tell me what is the covenant to which thy heart is constant.' 'But that thou adjurest me by the Almighty,' replied she, 'I would not tell thee my secret. See what is before me.' So I looked and saw a child lying asleep before her and breathing heavily in his slumber. 'Know,' said she, 'that I set forth, being big with this child, to make the pilgrimage to this [Holy] House and took passage in a ship; but the waves rose against us and the winds were contrary and the ship broke up under us. I saved myself on a plank, and in this situation, I gave birth to the child.

'As I sat on the plank, with the boy on my lap and the waves beating upon me, there swam up to me one of the sailors, who climbed on to the plank and said to me, 'By Allah, I desired thee, whilst thou was yet in the ship, and now I have come at thee. So yield thyself to me, or I will throw thee into the sea.' 'Out on thee!' cried I. 'Hast thou no thought of that which thou hast seen, and is it no warning to thee?' Quoth he, 'I have seen the like of this many a time and come off safe and reck not.' 'O fellow,' rejoined I, 'we are now in a strait whence we hope to be delivered by obedience and not by disobedience [of God's commandments].' But he was instant with me, and I feared him and thought to put him off; so I said to him, 'Wait till the child sleeps.' And he took the child off my lap and threw him into the sea. When I saw this, my heart throbbed and anguish was sore upon me; but I raised my eyes to heaven and said, 'O Thou that intervenest between a man and his heart, intervene between me and this wild beast!' And by Allah, hardly had I spoken when a beast rose out of the sea and snatched him off the plank. When I found myself alone, my affliction redoubled and my grief and longing for my child, and I recited the following verses:

The solace of my eyes, my child, my dear,
Is lost, and I am racked with pain and fear;
I see my body wrecked, and all my heart
On coals of love and dole is wasting sheer.
No help is there for me in this my need,
Save at Thy hands on whom my hope I rear.
Thou, O my Lord, hast seen my sore distress,
For loss of him, my child, my suckling dear.
Take ruth on us and give him back to me!
Thou art my stay: incline to me Thine ear.

In this condition I abode a day and a night, and on the morrow I caught sight of the sails of a ship shining afar off, nor did the winds cease to drive me and the waves to

bear me on, till I reached the vessel whose sails I had seen. The sailors took me up into the ship, and I looked and behold, my child amongst them. So I threw myself upon him and said, 'O folk, this is my child: how came ye by him?' 'As we were sailing along [yesterday],' quoth they, 'the ship suddenly stood still in the sea and behold, [that which stayed us was] a [sea] beast, as it were a great city, and this child on its back, sucking his thumbs; so we took him up into the ship.' When I heard this, I told them all that had befallen me and returned thanks to my Lord and vowed to Him that I would never stir from His House nor swerve from His service [whilst I lived]; and since then, I have never required of Him aught but He hath given it me.'

When she had made an end of her story (adds the Seyyid), I put my hand to my alms-pouch and would have given to her, but she exclaimed, 'Away, idle man! Have I not told thee of His bounties and the graciousness of His dealings [with me] and shall I take an alms from other than His hand?' And I could not prevail with her to take aught of me; so I left her and went away, reciting the following verses:

How many secret favours are there not in God!
His mysteries elude the most enlightened sight.
How often by His grace doth ease come after stress,
How oft the broken heart is solaced by His might!
How often in the morn is one oppressed by care,
Yet gladness follows on the coming of the night!
If things go hard with thee, trust in the Most High God,
The ever-living One that is in Heaven's height.
Claim thou the Prophet's voice to intercede for thee:
Through him each faithful soul shall have his heart's delight.

And she ceased not from the service of her Lord, cleaving unto His [Holy] House, till death came to her.

The Pious Black Slave.

(QUOTH Malik ben Dinar, on whom God have mercy), We were once afflicted with drought at Bassora and went forth repeatedly to pray for rain, but saw no sign of our prayers being answered. So I went, I and Itaa es Selemi and Thabit el Benani and Neja el Bekkaa and Mohammed ben Wasi and Eyoub es Sukhtiyani and Hebib el Farsi and Hassan ben Abou Sinan and Otbeh el Ghulam and Salih el Muzeni, till we reached the place of prayer, when the boys came out of the schools and we offered up prayers for rain, but could see no sign of acceptance. So about mid-day the people went away and I and Thabit el Benani abode till nightfall, when we saw a black of comely visage, slender-shanked and big-bellied, come up, clad in a pair of woollen drawers; if all he wore had been priced, it would not have fetched a couple of dirhems. He fetched water and made the ablution, then, going up to the prayer-niche, prayed two inclinations deftly, his standing and bowing and prostration being [well-nigh] simultaneous. Then he raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'O my God and my Master and my Lord, how long wilt thou reject the prayers of Thy servants in that which offereth no hurt to Thy sovereignty? Is that which is with Thee expended or are the treasuries of Thy kingdom exhausted? I conjure Thee, by Thy love to me, to pour out upon us Thy rain-clouds forthwith!'

Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when the sky clouded over and there came a rain, as of the emptying of waterskins. When we left the oratory, we were up to our knees in water, and we were lost in wonder at the black. So I accosted him and said to him, 'Out on thee, O black, art thou not ashamed of what thou saidst?' 'How so?' asked he. 'Didst thou not adjure God by His love for thee?' said I. 'What giveth thee to know that He loveth thee?' 'Away from me,' replied he, 'O thou that art distracted [by the love of the world] from [the care of] thine own soul! Where was I, when He gave me strength to identify myself with Him and of His special favour vouchsafed unto me the knowledge of Him? How deemest thou that He aided me thus except of His love to me? Verily, His love to me is after the measure of my love to Him.' Quoth I, 'Tarry awhile with me, may God have mercy on thee!' But he said, 'I am a slave and the Book of God enjoins me to obey my lesser master.' So he went away and we followed him afar off, till we saw him enter a slave-dealer's house.

Now the first half of the night was passed and the last half was long upon us, so we went away; but next morning, we repaired to the slave-dealer and said to him, 'Hast thou a boy to sell us for service?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'I have nigh upon a hundred boys, and they are all for sale.' Then he showed us slave after slave, till he had shown us threescore and ten; but my friend was not amongst them, and the dealer said, 'These are all I have.' But, as we were going away, we espied a ruinous hut behind his house and going in, saw the black standing there. 'It is he, by the Lord of the Kaabeh!' cried I and turning back to the dealer, said to him, 'Sell me yonder slave.' 'O Abou Yehya,' replied he, 'this is a plaguy, morose, unprofitable fellow, who hath no concern by night but weeping and by day but repentance.' 'It is for that I want him,' said I. So the dealer called him, and he came out, feigning drowsiness. Quoth his master, 'Take him at thine own price, so thou hold me quit of all his faults.' So I bought him for twenty

dinars and said, 'What is his name?' 'Maimoun,' answered the dealer; and I took him by the hand and went out with him, intending for my house; but he turned to me and said, 'O my lesser lord, why didst thou buy me? By Allah, I am not fit for the service of the creature!' 'On my head be it,' replied I; 'I bought thee that I might serve thee myself.' 'Why so?' asked he, and I said, 'Wast thou not in company with us yesterday in the place of prayer?' 'And didst thou hear me?' quoth he; and I answered, 'It was I accosted thee yesterday and spoke with thee.'

Then we went on till we came to a mosque, where he entered and prayed a two-bow prayer; after which he said, 'O my God and my Master and my Lord, the secret that was between Thee and me Thou hast discovered unto men and hast betrayed me therein among Thy creatures. How then shall life be sweet to me, now that others than Thou have happened upon that which is between Thee and me? I conjure Thee to take my soul to Thee forthright.' So saying, he prostrated himself, and I waited awhile till, seeing that he did not raise his head, I went up to him and moved him and found that he was indeed dead, the mercy of God the Most High be upon him! I laid him out and looked at him, and behold, he was smiling. More-over, whiteness had gotten the better of blackness in his face, and it was radiant with light.

As we wondered at his affair, the door opened and a young man came in to us and said, 'Peace be on you! May God make great our reward and yours for our brother Maimoun! Here is his shroud: wrap him in it.' So saying, he gave us two robes, never had we seen their like, and we shrouded him therein. And now his tomb is a place whither the folk resort to pray for rain and ask favours of God; and how excellently well saith the poet on this subject:

The pleasaunce of the just is in a garden of the skies,
About whose gates God's doorkeepers hold ever watch and ward.
Behold, there drink they of old wine, and mingled therewithal
Tesnim, that is, the wine of close communion with the Lord.
The secret of their hearts is safe from other than God's sight;
For that their sprights with His are blent in one supreme accord.

The Devout Platter-maker and His Wife.

THERE was once among the children of Israel a worthy man, who was strenuous in the service of his Lord and abstained from the things of this world and had put them away from his heart. He had a wife who helped him in his endeavour and was still obedient to him. They earned their living by making platters and fans, at which they wrought all day, and at nightfall the man went out into the streets and highways, to sell what they had made. They were wont to fast continually, and one morning, they arose, fasting, and wrought at their trade till the end of the day, when the man went forth, according to custom, to seek purchasers for his wares, and fared on, till he came to the door of the house of a certain man of wealth and condition.

Now the platter-maker was fair of face and comely of aspect, and the wife of the master of the house, who was then absent, saw him and fell in love with him and her heart inclined to him with an exceeding inclination; so she called her handmaid and said to her, 'Make shift to bring yonder man to me.' Accordingly the maid went out to him and said, 'Come in; my lady hath a mind to buy some of thy wares, after she hath tried them and looked at them.' The man thought she spoke truly and seeing no harm in this, entered and sat down, as she bade him. The maid shut the door upon him, whereupon her mistress, came out and taking him by the gown, drew him into her chamber and said to him, 'How long shall I seek of thee [a lover's] privacy? Verily, my patience is at an end on thine account. See now, the place is perfumed and food ready and the master of the house is absent this night, and I give myself to thee, I whose favours kings and captains and men of fortune have sought this long while, but I have hearkened to none of them.' And she went on talking thus to him, whilst he raised not his eyes from the ground, for shame before God and fear of the pains of His punishment, even as saith the poet:

'Twas shamefastness, I trow, and nothing else, that came
'Twixt me and dalliance with many a noble dame.
The antidote it was to them, and should it pass,
I'm lost; for antidote was none but very shame.

He strove to free himself from her, but could not; so he said to her, 'I want one thing of thee.' 'What is that?' asked she, and he answered, 'I wish for pure water and that I may carry it to the highest place of thy house and do an occasion therewith and cleanse myself of a defilement, which I may not discover to thee.' Quoth she, 'The house is spacious and hath closets and privy places and lavatories at command.' But he replied, 'I want nothing but to be at a height.' So she said to her handmaid, 'Carry him up up to the belvedere at the top of the house.' Accordingly the maid took him up thither and giving him a vessel of water, went away and left him.

He made the ablution and prayed a two-bow prayer; after which he looked at the ground, thinking to throw himself down, but, seeing it afar off, feared to be torn to pieces in the fall. Then he bethought him of the consequence of his disobedience to God, and it became a light matter to him to offer up his life and shed his blood, [rather than sin]; so he said, 'O my God and my Lord, Thou seest that which is fallen

on me; neither is my case hidden from Thee. Thou indeed canst all things, and the tongue of my case reciteth and saith as follows:

My heart doth sign to Thee and eke my vitals too;
The soul within my soul is open to Thy view.
Lo, if I speak with Thee, I cry indeed aloud,
Or, if I'm mute, my signs my speech to Thee renew.
O Thou to whom indeed no second is conjoined,
A wretched lovesick soul and sad to Thee doth sue.
I have a heart that pants for woe, as well Thou knowst;
But yet a hope have I, my thoughts confirm it true.
The sacrifice of life, for all its worth be small,
Is yet the hardest thing of all that can ensue;
So, an it be Thy will to save me, of Thy grace,
Thou, surely, O my hope, art able thereunto!'

Then he cast himself down from the belvedere; but God sent an angel, who bore him up on his wings and brought him to the earth, whole and unhurt. When he found himself safe on the ground, he returned thanks to God (to whom belong might and majesty) for His merciful protection and went straight to his wife, empty-handed. When she saw him, she asked him why he had tarried so long and what was come of that he had taken with him and why he returned empty-handed; whereupon he told her all that had befallen him, and she said, 'Praised be God, who delivered thee from seduction and intervened between thee and calamity!' Then she added, 'O man, the neighbours use to see us light our brasier every night; and if they see us to-night without fire, they will know that we are destitute. Now it behoves us, in gratitude to God, to hide our destitution and join the fast of this night to that of yesterday and continue it for the sake of God the Most High.' So she rose and filling the brasier with wood, lighted it, to give the neighbours the change, reciting the following verses:

I will conceal what is with me of trouble and distress
And light my fire, that so my strait the neighbours may not guess.
What God decreeth I accept, so haply He may see
My humbleness to Him and so accept of me no less.

Then they made the ablution and stood up to pray. Presently, one of the neighbours' wives came in and asked leave to take a light from the fire. 'At thy service,' answered they: but, when she came to the fire, she cried out, saying, 'Ho, such an one, (to the platter-maker's wife,) take up thy bread before it burns!' Quoth the wife to her husband, 'Hearest thou what she says?' 'Go and look,' answered he. So she went up to the oven, and behold, it was full of fine white bread. She took up the loaves, thanking God (to whom belong might and majesty) for the abounding good and great bounty He had bestowed on them, and carried them to her husband; and they ate of the bread and drank water and praised God the Most High. Then said the woman to her husband, 'Come, let us pray to God the Most High, so haply He may vouchsafe us what will quit us of necessity and enable us to dispense with the weariness of toil for daily bread and devote ourselves [wholly] to worshipping Him and keeping His commandments.' So the man rose and prayed, whilst his wife said 'Amen' to his prayer,

when, behold, the roof clove in sunder and down fell a ruby, which lit the whole house with its lustre. At this, they rejoiced greatly and redoubled in praise and thanksgiving to God, praying what the Most High willed.

Then, the night being far spent, they lay down to sleep and the woman dreamt that she entered Paradise and saw therein many chairs and stools ranged in rows. She asked what these were and it was answered her, 'These are the chairs of the prophets and the stools of the just and the pious.' 'Which is the stool of such an one, my husband?' asked she; and it was said to her, 'Yonder one.' So she looked and seeing a hole in its side, asked what it was. Quoth they, 'It is the place of the ruby that came down to you from the roof of your house.' Thereupon she awoke, weeping and bemoaning the defect in her husband's stool among the seats of the just; so she told him the dream and said to him, 'Let us pray God to restore the ruby to its place, for to suffer hunger and poverty during the few days [of our life here] were easier than a default in thy seat among the just in Paradise.' Accordingly, he prayed to his Lord, and behold, the ruby flew up to the roof [and disappeared,] whilst they looked at it. And they ceased not from their poverty and piety, till they went to the presence of God, to whom belong might and majesty.

El Hejjaj and the Pious Man.

IT is told that El Hejjaj ben Yousuf eth Thekefi had been long in pursuit of a certain man of the notables, and when he [was at last taken and] came before him, he said to him, 'O enemy of God, He hath given thee into my hand.' Then he bade his men hale him to prison and said to them, 'Lay him in strait and heavy fetters and build a cage over him, that he may not come forth of it nor any go in to him.' So they bore him to prison and summoned the blacksmith, who came and laid him in irons. Every time the smith gave a stroke with his hammer, the prisoner raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'Verily, to Him belong creation and commandment!' Then they built the cage over him and left him therein, deserted and lonely, whereupon longing and consternation entered into him and the tongue of his case recited the following verses:

Wish of the wistful, unto Thee my wishes tend;
My trust is in Thy grace, that all doth comprehend.
My case from Thee unhidden is; a look from
Thee Is all the goal of my desires, my wishes' end.
They've prisoned me and tried me sore with many a woe:
Woe's me, my strangerhood forlorn, without a friend!
Lone as I am, the thought of Thee my solace is
And cheer, though slumber from mine eyes my woes forfend.
Ay, an Thou but accept of me, I reck not, I;
What in my heart Thou seest of Thee right well is kenned.

At nightfall, the gaoler left his men to watch him and went to his house. On the morrow, when he repaired to the prison, he found the prisoner gone and the fetters lying on the ground; whereat he was affrighted and made sure of death. So he returned to his house and bade his family farewell, after which he took his shroud and the perfumes for his corpse, in his sleeve, and went in to El Hejjaj. The latter smelt the perfumes and said, 'What is that?' 'O my lord,' replied the gaoler, 'it is I who have brought it.' 'And what moved thee to that?' asked the governor; whereupon he told him his case, and El Hejjaj said, 'Out on thee! Didst thou hear him say aught?' 'Yes,' answered the gaoler. 'Whilst the blacksmith was riveting his irons, he ceased not to look up to heaven and say, "Verily to Him belong creation and commandment."' 'Woe to thee!' rejoined El Hejjaj. 'Dost thou not know that He, on whom he called in thy presence, delivered him in thine absence?' And the tongue of the case recited the following verses on the subject:

O Lord, how many a trouble Thou away from me hast done!
Yea, but for Thee I should nor sit nor stand beneath the sun.
Ay, from how many a parlous case, that I might not endure,
Hast Thou, indeed, delivered me, how many and many an one!

The Blacksmith Who Could Handle Fire Without Hurt.

A CERTAIN pious man once heard that there abode in such a town a blacksmith who could put his hand into the fire and pull out the red-hot iron, without its doing him any hurt. So he set out for the town in question and enquiring for the blacksmith, watched him at work and saw him do as had been reported to him. He waited till he had made an end of his day's work, then, going up to him, saluted him and said to him, 'I would fain be thy guest this night.' 'With all my heart,' replied the smith, and carried him to his house, where they supped together and lay down to sleep. The guest watched his host, but found no sign of [special] devoutness in him and said to himself, 'Belike, he concealeth himself from me.' So he lodged with him a second and a third night, but found that he did no more than observe the ordinary letter of the law and rose but little in the night [to pray]. At last he said to him, 'O my brother, I have heard of the gift with which God hath favoured thee and have seen the truth of it with mine eyes. Moreover, I have taken note of thine assiduity in religious exercises], but find in thee no special fervour of piety, such as distinguisheth those in whom such miraculous gifts are manifest. Whence, then, cometh this to thee?' 'I will tell thee,' answered the smith.

'Know that I was once passionately enamoured of a certain damsel and required her many a time of love, but could not prevail upon her, for that she still crave fast unto chastity. Presently there came a year of drought and hunger and hardship; food failed and there befell a sore famine in the land. I was sitting one day in my house, when one knocked at the door: so I went out and found her standing there; and she said to me, "O my brother, I am stricken with excessive hunger, and I lift mine eyes to thee, beseeching thee to feed me for God's sake!" Quoth I, "Dost thou not know how I love thee and what I have suffered for thy sake! I will give thee no whit of food, except thou yield thyself to me." But she said, "Better death than disobedience to God." Then she went away and returned after two days with the same petition for food. I made her a like answer, and she entered and sat down, being nigh upon death. I set food before her, whereupon her eyes ran over with tears, and she said, "Give me to eat for the love of God, to whom belong might and majesty!" "Not so, by Allah," answered I, "except thou yield thyself to me." Quoth she, "Better is death to me than the wrath of God the Most High." And she left the food untouched and went away, repeating the following verses:

O Thou the Only God, whose grace embraceth all that be,
Thine ears have heard my moan, Thine eyes have seen my misery;
Indeed, privation and distress are heavy on my head;
I cannot tell of all the woes that do beleaguer me.
I'm like a man athirst, that looks upon a running stream,
Yet may not drink a single draught of all that he doth see.
My flesh would have me buy its will: alack, its pleasures flee!
The sin that pays their price abides to all eternity.

I saw no more of her for two days, when she came a third time and knocked at the door. I went out to her, and lo, hunger had taken away her voice; but, [after a little,] she said, "O my brother, I am worn out with want and know not what to do, for I cannot show my face to any but thee. Wilt thou feed me for the love of God the Most High?" "Not so," answered I, "except thou yield to me." And she entered and sat down. Now I had no food ready, [so I went out to prepare some]; but, when the meat was dressed and I had laid it in a platter, behold, the grace of God the Most High entered into me and I said to myself, "Out on thee! This woman, weak of wit and faith, hath forborne food, till she can endure from it no longer, for stress of hunger; and lo, she refuseth time after time, and thou still persistest in disobedience to God the Most High!" And I said, "O my God, I repent to Thee of that which I purposed!" Then I took the food and carrying it in to her, said, "Eat and [fear not:] no harm shall betide thee. It is for the love of God, to whom belong might and majesty." When she heard this, she raised her eyes to heaven and said, "O my God, if this man be sincere, I pray Thee forbid fire to do him hurt in this world and the next, for Thou art He that answereth prayer and art powerful to do whatsoever thou wilt!"

Then I left her and went to put out the fire in the brasier. Now the time was the winter-cold, and a hot coal fell on my body; but, by the ordinance of God, (to whom belong might and majesty), I felt no pain and it was borne in upon me that her prayer had been answered. So I took the coal in my hand, (and it burnt me not,) and going in to her, said, "Rejoice, for God hath granted thy prayer!" And she dropped the morsel from her hand and said, "O my God, now that Thou hast shown me my desire of him and hast granted me my prayer for him, take Thou my soul, for Thou art Almighty!" And straightway He took her soul to Him, the mercy of God be upon her! And the tongue of the case recited and spoke the following verses on the subject:

She prayed and God answered the voice of her prayer
And the sinner, who wooed her to lewdness, did spare.
He showed her her wishes accomplished on him
And gave her the death that she sought then and there.
She came to his door, hoping succour to get,
And sought of him solace to ease her despair.
But he clave to his error and followed his lusts
And thought to enjoy her perforce, unaware
Of that which God willed to him. Sudden there came
Repentance on him, though he purposed it ne'er.
Fast fated, O God, are men's fortunes;
To man If his destiny fare not, to it he must fare.

The Devotee to Whom God Gave a Cloud to Serve Him and the Devout King.

THERE was once among the children of Israel a man of the devout, renowned for piety and continence and asceticism. He was a wanderer in the mountains and was used to pass the night in prayer; and God answered his prayers and gave him all he asked. Moreover, He had subjected to him a cloud, that journeyed with him, wherever he went, and poured water on him copiously, that he might make his ablutions and drink. After a time, his fervour abated, whereupon God took the cloud away from him and ceased to answer his prayers. Great was his grief because of this, and he ceased not to regret the time of grace and divine favour and to lament and bemoan himself, till, one night, he saw in a dream one who said to him, 'An thou wouldst have God restore thee thy cloud, seek out such a king, in such a town, and beg him to pray for thee: so will God give thee back thy cloud, by virtue of his pious prayers.' And he repeated the following verses:

I rede thee to the pious prince repair,
Who's powerful to order thine affair.
An he pray God for thee, the thing thou seekst
Of rain galore shall reach thee at his prayer.
Among the Kings in worth he doth excel
And is illustrious beyond compare.
Yea, thou with him shalt surely light on that
Shall gladden thee and do away thy care;
Fare, then, o'er plains and deserts to his stead
And leave not journeying till thou find him there.

When the hermit awoke, he set out for the town, to which he had been directed by the dream, and coming thither, enquired for the King's palace. At the gate he found an officer sitting on a great chair and clad in splendid apparel; so he saluted him and he returned his salutation and said to him, 'What is thy business?' 'I am a wronged man,' answered the devotee, 'and come to prefer my complaint to the King.' Quoth the officer, 'Thou mayst not win to him to-day; for he hath appointed unto petitioners such a day in every seven, on which they may go in to him; so go thy ways soberly till then.' The hermit was vexed with the King for thus sequestering himself from the folk and said in himself, 'How shall this man be of the friends of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and be on this wise?' Then he went away and awaited the day of audience.

When it came, he repaired to the palace, where he found a number of folk at the gate, awaiting admission, and stood with them, till there came out a Vizier, clad in rich raiment and attended by guards and servants, who said, 'Let those, who have petitions to present, enter.' So the hermit entered with the rest and found the King seated in the midst of his officers and grandees. The Vizier took up his post before him and brought forward the petitioners, one by one, till it came to the hermit's turn, when the King

looked on him and said, 'Welcome to the lord of the cloud! Sit down, till I be at leisure for thee.'

The hermit was confounded at his words and confessed his dignity and excellence; and when the King had made an end with the petitioners, he rose and dismissed his Viziers and grandees; then, taking the stranger by the hand, he carried him to the door of the [inner] palace, where they found a black slave, splendidly arrayed, with a helmet on his head and on his right hand and his left bows and coats of mail. He rose and hastening to obey the King's commandment, opened the door, and they went in, hand in hand, till they came to a low door, which the King opened himself and brought the hermit into a ruinous and neglected building and a chamber, wherein was nought but a prayer-carpet, an ewer for ablution and some mats of palm-leaves. Here the King put off his royal habit and donned a gown of coarse white wool and a tall cap of felt. Then he sat down and making the hermit sit, called out to his wife, who answered from within, saying, 'Here am I.' Quoth he, 'Knowst thou who is our guest to-day?' 'Yes,' replied she; 'it is the lord of the cloud.' And the King said, 'Come in: it matters not for him.' So there entered a woman, as she were a vision, with a face that glittered like the new moon; and she was clad in a gown and veil of coarse wool. Then said the King, 'O my brother, dost thou desire to hear our story or that we should pray for thee and let thee go?' 'Nay,' answered the hermit; 'I wish to hear your story, for I long to know it.'

'Know then,' said the King, 'that my forefathers handed down the throne, one to the other, and it descended from great one to great one, in unbroken succession, till it came to me. Now God had made this hateful to me, for I would fain have gone a-wandering, a pilgrim, over the earth and left the folk to govern themselves; but I feared lest they should fall into temptation and anarchy and swerve from the law of God, and the union of the Faith be broken up. Wherefore I took upon me the kingship and appointed to every head of them a set stipend and donned the royal robes and posted officers at the doors, as a terror to evil doers and for the defence of honest folk and the maintenance of law and order. When I had made an end of this, I entered this place and putting off my royal habit, donned these clothes thou seest; and this my uncle's daughter is agreed with me to renounce the world and helps me to serve God. So we use to weave these palm-leaves [into mats or baskets] and earn, in the course of the day, wherewithal to break our fast at night- fall; and thus have we lived nigh upon forty years. Abide thou with us, so God have mercy on thee, till we sell our mats; so shalt thou sup and sleep with us this night and on the morrow go thy ways with that thou desirest, so it please God the Most High.'

So he abode with them till the end of the day, when there came a boy five [feet] high, who took the mats they had made and carrying them to the market, sold them for a carat. With this he bought bread and beans and returned with them to the King. The hermit supped and lay down to sleep with them; but, in the middle of the night, they both arose and fell to praying and weeping. When daybreak was near, the King said, 'O my God, this Thy servant beseeches Thee to return him his cloud; and Thou art able to this; so, O my God, answer Thou his prayer and restore him his cloud.' The Queen said 'Amen' to his prayer and behold, the cloud appeared in the sky; whereupon the King gave the hermit joy and the latter took leave of them and went away, the

cloud following him as of old. Moreover, whatsoever he required of God after this, in the names of the pious King and Queen, He granted it to him; and he made thereon the following verses:

God 'mongst His servants hath elect, whose pious souls,
I ween, Range in the gardens of His love, untroubled and serene.
Their bodies' lusts at peace are grown and trouble them no more,
For that which harbours in their breasts of hearts made pure and clean.
One sees them silent, bearing them right humbly to their Lord,
For they His mysteries behold, unseen as well as seen.

The Muslim Champion and the Christian Damsel.

THE Khalif Omar ben el Khettab (whom God accept) once levied an army of Muslims, to encounter the enemy before Damascus, and they laid strait siege to one of the Christians' strengths. Now there were among the Muslims two men, brothers, whom God had gifted with valour and daring against the foe, so that the commander of the besieged fortress said to his captains and champions, 'Were but yonder two taken or slain, I would warrant you against the rest of the Muslims.' Wherefore they set for them all manner of snares and ambushes and ceased not to lie in wait for them, till, at last, they took one of them prisoner and slew the other, who died a martyr. They carried the prisoner to their general, who looked at him and said, 'To kill this man were pity; but his return to the Muslims would be a calamity. Would he might be brought to embrace the Christian Faith and be to us an aid and a support!' 'O Amir,' answered one of his knights, 'I will bring him to abjure his faith, and on this wise. We know that the Arabs are passionately fond of women, and I have a daughter of surpassing beauty and grace, whom when he sees, he will be ravished by her.' Quoth the general, 'I give him into thy charge: take him.'

So he carried him to his house and set food before him. Moreover, he clad his daughter in raiment, such as added to her beauty and grace, and made her stand before the Muslim, as she were a handmaid obedient to her lord and awaiting his commandment, that she might fulfil it. When the prisoner saw the snare that was set for him, he commended himself to God the Most High for protection and closing his eyes, applied himself to prayer and reciting the Koran. Now he had a mellow voice and a penetrating wit; and the young lady fell passionately in love with him and said in herself, 'Would God he would consent to admit me into the Faith of Islam! And the tongue of her case recited the following verses:

Wilt turn away, from me whose soul is thrall to thee, thy face,
From me whose life thy ransom is, whose heart thy dwelling-place?
Indeed, my people I will well to leave and leave a faith
Other than that of the sharp sword; yea, Islam I embrace
And testify that there's no Lord save God and God alone;
For constant is the proof thereof and doubt can find no place.
Union, mayhap, will He decree with one that is averse
And ease a heart distressed for love and longing, of His grace.
For oft-times doors are open thrown, that erst were shut, and he
Is granted his desires, whom woe hath brought to sorry case.

She abode thus seven days, till her patience failed her and her breast was straitened and she threw herself at his feet, saying, 'I conjure thee by thy faith, give ear unto my words!' 'What are they?' asked he; and she said, 'Expound unto me Islam.' So he expounded to her the tenets of the Faith, and she became a Muslim, after which she purified herself and he taught her to pray. Then said she to him, 'Know, O my brother, that I did but embrace Islam for thy sake and to win thy favour.' Quoth he, 'The law of Islam forbids sexual commerce between man and woman, save after a marriage before

two legal witnesses, and a dowry and next friend [for the woman] are also requisite. Now I know not where to find witnesses or next friend or dowry; but, if thou canst make shift to bring us out of this place, I hope to win to the land of Islam, and I vow to thee that none other in Islam shall be wife to me than thou.' 'I will contrive this,' answered she and calling her father and mother, said to them, 'This Muslim's heart is softened and he inclineth to enter our faith, so I will grant him that which he desireth of me; but he says, "It were not fitting for me to do this in a town where my brother was slain. Could I but come without it, my heart would be diverted [from the thought of him] and I would do that which is required of me." Now there is no harm in letting me go forth with him to another place, and I will be warrant to you and to the Amir for that which ye require of him.'

So her father went to their chief and told him of this, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bade carry them forth the town to a village that she named. So they went out to the village, where they abode the rest of that day, and at nightfall, they made ready to set out and fare upon their way, even as saith the poet:

"The time of departure," quoth they, "draweth nigh:"
And "How oft will ye threat me with parting?" I cry.
No business have I but to traverse the earth,
Mile by mile and o'er deserts forever to hie.
If the loved ones prick forth tow'rds a land, for their sake,
Once again of the sons of the road become I.
On my longing, to guide me to them, I rely,
And it shows me the way nor directs me awry.

The young Muslim mounted a swift horse and took the girl up behind him, and they set out and fared on all that night till morning, when he turned aside with her from the highway and alighting, they made the ablution and prayed the morning prayer. As they were thus engaged, they heard the clank of arms and ring of bridles and men's voices and tramp of horse; whereupon he said to her, 'O such an one, the Christians are upon us! What shall we do? For the horse is jaded, so that he cannot go another step.' 'Out on thee!' exclaimed she. 'Art thou then afraid?' 'Yes,' answered he; and she said, 'What didst thou tell me of the power of thy Lord and His readiness to succour those who cry to Him? Come, let us make supplication to Him and beseech Him: surely, He will vouchsafe us His succour and visit us with His grace, glorified and exalted be He!' 'By Allah,' rejoined he, 'thou sayst well!' So they betook themselves to prayer and supplication to God the Most High, and he recited these verses:

Indeed, I stand in need of Thee all seasons, foul or fair,
What though with diadem and crown my brows encompassed were.
Thou art the chiefest of my wants, and could my hand but win
This its desire, no other want were left to me whate'er.
Nought that Thou hast withholdest Thou; the outflow of
Thy grace Is as a torrent or a shower, that's lavished everywhere.
By my transgression am I shut therefrom, yet is the light Of
Thy compassion, Clement One, resplendent past compare.

O Care-Dispeller, that, wherewith I stricken am, dispel;
For there is none save Thou alone can do away this care.

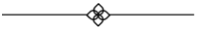
Whilst he was praying and she saying, 'Amen,' and the tramp of horse nearing them the while, behold, he heard the voice of his dead brother, the martyr, speaking and saying, 'O my brother, fear not, but be of good cheer; for these thou hearest are the host of God and His angels, whom He hath sent to serve as witnesses to your marriage. Verily, the angels of God the Most High are emulous of you, and He bestoweth on you the recompense of the blessed and the martyrs and hath rolled up the earth for you [as it were a carpet], so that, by morning, you will be in the mountains of Medina. And thou [O man], whenas thou foregatherest with Omar ben el Khettab, (of whom God accept,) give him my salutation and say to him, "May God abundantly requite thee for Islam, for thou hast dealt faithfully and striven diligently."' Thereupon the angels lifted up their voices in salutation to him and his wife, saying, 'Verily, God the Most High appointed her in marriage to thee two thousand years before your father Adam (on whom be peace) was created.' Then joy and gladness and peace and cheer overcame the twain; assurance was confirmed and stablished was the vocation of the God-fearing pair. So they prayed the fore-dawn prayer and fared forward; and when the day broke and the light appeared to them, they saw [in the distance] the standards of Medina and the Khalif and a company of Muslims issuing forth to meet them.

Now it was Omar's wont to rise for morning-prayer in the darkness before dawn, and bytimes he would proceed to the mosque, followed by two men, and standing in the prayer-niche, begin by reciting the chapter of the Cattle or that of Women; whereupon the sleeper awoke and he who was in act to make the ablution accomplished it and he who was afar came to prayer; nor had he made an end of [the prayers of] the first inclination, before the mosque was full of people; then would he pray his second inclination, repeating a short chapter in haste. But, on the morning in question, he hurried over his devotions, both first and second inclinations, repeating in each a short chapter; then, turning to his companions, said to them, 'Come, let us go out to meet the bride and bridegroom;' at which they wondered, understanding not his words; but he went out and they followed him, till they came to the gate of the city, where they met the young Muslim and his bride coming towards them and saluted them. Omar carried the bride and bridegroom into Medina and bade make a marriage-feast; and the Muslims came and ate. Then the young Muslim went in to his bride, and God the Most High vouchsafed him children by her, who fought in His way and preserved their genealogies, for they gloried therein. And how excellent is what is said on the subject:

I saw thee weeping at the gates and moaning passing sore,
Whilst all, except the curious, to answer thee forbore.
Hath evil eye ensorcelled thee or hath misfortune fall'n
On thee and doth a barrier keep thee from the loved one's door?
Awake, O wretch, devote thyself this day to God His praise;
Repent and turn thee to the Lord, as men have turned of yore.
The rains of the Forgiving One, belike, shall wash away
The past and on the sinner's head the grace of God shall pour;

Ay, and the captive, shackled though he be, shall yet escape,
And in the prison of God's wrath the slave shall pine no more.

And they ceased not to be in all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.



Ibrahim Ben El Khawwas and the Christian King's Daughter.

(QUOTH Sidi Ibrahim ben el Khawwas, on whom be the mercy of God), My soul was instant with me, once upon a time, to go forth into the country of the infidels; and I strove with it and essayed to put away this thought from me, but it persisted and would not be denied. So I went forth and journeyed about the land of the unbelievers and traversed it in all its parts, for the grace of God enveloped me and His protection encompassed me, so that I met not a Christian, but he turned away his eyes and held aloof from me, till I came to a great city at whose gate I found a company of black slaves, clad in armour and bearing iron maces in their hands. When they saw me, they rose to their feet and said to me, 'Art thou a physician?' I said, 'Yes.' Quoth they, 'By order of the King,' and carried me before their monarch, who was a handsome man of majestic aspect. When I came into his presence, he looked at me and said, 'Art thou a physician?' 'Yes,' answered I; and he said to his officers, 'Carry him to her and acquaint him with the condition, ere he enter.' So they took me out and said to me, 'Know that the King hath a daughter, who is stricken with a sore distemper, which no physician hath availed to cure: and none goeth in to her and treateth her, without curing her, but the King putteth him to death. So bethink thee what thou wilt do?' Quoth I, 'The King sent me to her; so carry me to her.' Accordingly, they brought me to her door and knocked; and I heard her cry out from within, saying, 'Admit the physician, lord of the wondrous secret!' And she recited the following verses:

Open the door, for the physician's here;
And see, I have a secret wonder-dear.
How many near in spirit distant are!
How many spirit-distant yet are near!
I was an exile midst you, but the Truth
Willed that my solace should eftsoon appear.
Religious kinship bound us and we met,
As lover and belov'd, in joy and cheer.
He summoned me to meeting; but the spy
And censor 'twixt our loves did interfere.
Out on ye! Leave your chiding and your prate;
For unto you I may not lend an ear.
With that which passes by I've no concern;
Upon the eternal things my hopes I rear.

And behold, an old man opened the door in haste and said to me, 'Enter.' So I entered and found myself in a saloon strewn with sweet-scented herbs and with a curtain drawn across one corner, from behind which came a sound of groaning, weak as from an emaciated body. I sat down before the curtain and was about to pronounce the salutation, when I bethought me of the words of him whom God bless and preserve, 'Accost not a Jew nor a Christian with the salutation, and when ye meet them in the way, constrain them to the straitest part thereof.' So I held my peace, but she cried out from behind the curtain, saying, 'Where is the salutation, that is due from

one true believer in the Unity of God and His indivisibility to another, O Khawwas?' I was astonished at her speech and said, 'How knowest thou me?' 'When the heart and thoughts are pure,' answered she, 'the tongue speaks clearly from the secret places of the soul. I besought Him yesterday to send me one of His saints, at whose hands I might have deliverance, and behold, it was cried to me from the recesses of my house, "Grieve not; for we will send thee Ibrahim el Khawwas."' Then said I to her, 'What ails thee?' 'It is now four years,' answered she, 'since there appeared to me the manifest Truth, and He [or it] is the story-teller, the comrade, the ally; whereupon my folk looked upon me with evil eyes and taxed me with madness, and there came not in to me physician or visitor from them, but terrified and confounded me.' 'And who led thee to the knowledge of the true faith?' asked I. 'God's manifest signs and His visible portents,' replied she; 'and when the road is patent to thee, thou seest with thine own eyes both proof and prover.'

Whilst we were talking, in came the old man affected to her guard and said to her, 'What doth thy physician?' Quoth she, 'He knoweth the disease and hath hit upon the remedy.' When he heard this, he manifested joy and gladness and accosted me with a cheerful favour, then went and told the King, who bade him entreat me with all consideration. So I visited her daily for seven days, at the end of which time she said to me, 'O Abou Ishac, when shall be our flight to the land of Islam?' 'How canst thou go forth,' replied I, 'and who would dare to attempt thine escape?' 'He,' rejoined she, 'who sent thee to me.' 'Thou sayst well,' answered I. So on the morrow, we went out by the gate of the city and [men's] eyes were veiled from us, by His commandment, [who] when He desireth aught, saith to it, 'Be,' and it is; so that I journeyed with her in safety to Mecca, where she abode by the House of God seven years, till the days of her life came to an end. The earth of Mecca was her tomb, and never saw I any more steadfast in prayer and fasting than she, may God send down His mercies upon her and have compassion on him who saith:

When they brought me the physician (and indeed upon my face
Sickness and constant floods of tears had left full many a trace,)
He drew the veil away and saw nought neath it but a soul
Sans life or body or aught else to fill the empty place.
"Indeed," said he to them, "a thing uneath is this to cure;
Love hath a secret not to win by sheer conjecture's grace."
Quoth they, "An one know not what is therein and if there be
No way its nature to define and symptoms to embrace,
How then shall medicine thereon have anywise effect?"
Leave me; indeed, I will not judge, by guess-work, of the case.

The Justice of Providence.

A CERTAIN prophet once worshipped on a high mountain, at whose foot was a spring of running water, and he was wont to sit by day on the mountain-top, where none could see him, calling upon the name of God the Most High and watching those who came to the spring. One day, as he sat looking on the spring, there came up a horseman, who dismounted thereby and taking a bag from his neck, laid it down beside him, after which he drank of the water and rested awhile, then mounted and rode away, leaving the bag behind him. Presently up came another man, to drink of the spring, who saw the bag and finding it full of gold, took it up and made off with it in safety, after he had drunken. A little after, came a woodcutter, with a heavy faggot on his back, and sat down by the spring to drink, when, behold, back came the horseman, in great concern, and said to him, 'Where is the bag [with the thousand dinars] that was here?' 'I know nothing of it,' replied the woodcutter, whereupon the other drew his sword and smote him and killed him. Then he searched his clothes, but found nothing; so he left him and went away.

When the prophet saw this, he said, 'O Lord, this man hath been slain unjustly, for another had the thousand dinars.' But God answered him, saying, 'Busy thyself with thy service, for the ordering of the affairs of the universe is none of thine affair. Know that the horseman's father had despoiled the second man's father of a thousand dinars; so I gave the son possession of his father's money. As for the woodcutter, he had slain the horseman's father, wherefore I enabled the son to avenge himself.' Then said the prophet, 'Verily, there is none other god than Thou! Glory to Thee! Thou [alone] knowest the hidden things.' Moreover, one of the poets hath made the following verses on the matter:

The prophet saw what to the eyes of men was evident
And fell a-questioning of that which mortal sight outwent.
When what they apprehended not his eyes beheld,
"O Lord, What is this thing?" quoth he.
"Yon man that's slain was innocent.
One, without travail or fatigue, to riches did attain,
Although in poor and needy guise himself he did present;
And, O Creator of mankind, this other one was slain,
For all he had committed nought that called for punishment."
"Know," answered God, "his father's good it was thou sawst him take;
It came to him by heritage, by right of free descent.
The woodcutter the horseman's sire had slain; so, when his son
The occasion found, he took his wreak of him, incontinent.
Put off this thought from thee, for We have, in created things,
A secret that of human sight transcendeth the extent.
Submit thee to Our laws and bow unto Our might, for know,
Our ordinance for profit works and eke for detriment."

The Ferryman of the Nile and the Hermit.

(QUOTH a certain pious man), I was once a ferryman on the Nile and used to ply between the eastern and the western banks. One day, as I sat in my boat, waiting for custom, there came up to me an old man of a bright countenance, clad in a patched gown and bearing in his hand a gourd- bottle and a staff. He saluted me and I returned his greeting; and he said to me, 'Wilt thou ferry me over and give me to eat for the love of God the Most High?' 'With all my heart,' answered I. So he entered the boat and I rowed him over to the eastern side. When he was about to land, he said to me, 'I desire to lay a trust on thee.' Quoth I, 'What is it?' 'Know,' rejoined he, 'that God hath revealed to me that [my end is at hand and that] thou wilt come to me to-morrow, after the hour of noon, and wilt find me dead under yonder tree. Wash me and wrap me in the shroud thou wilt find under my head and bury me in the sand, after thou hast prayed over me and taken my gown and bottle and staff, which do thou deliver to one who will come and require them of thee.' And I marvelled at his word.

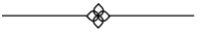
Next day, I forgot what he had said till near the hour of afternoon-prayer, when I remembered and hastening to the appointed place, found him under the tree, dead, with a new shroud by his head, exhaling a fragrance of musk. So I washed him and shrouded him and prayed over him, then dug a hole in the sand and buried him, after I had taken his gown and bottle and staff, with which I rowed back to the western side and passed the night there.

On the morrow, as soon as the city gate was opened, there came to me a young man, whom I had known as a lewd fellow, clad in fine clothes and his hands stained with henna, and said to me, 'Art thou not such an one [the ferryman]?' 'Yes,' answered I; and he said, 'Give me what thou hast in trust for me.' Quoth I, 'What is that?' 'The gown, the bottle and the staff,' replied he. 'Who told thee of them?' asked I; and he answered, 'I know nothing save that I was yesterday at the wedding of one of my friends and spent the night singing [and making merry,] till hard upon day, when I lay down to sleep and take rest; and behold, there stood by me one who said to me, 'God the Most High hath taken such an one the hermit to Himself and hath appointed thee to fill his place; so go to so and so, the ferryman, and take of him the dead man's gown and bottle and staff, that he left with him for thee.' So I brought them out and gave them to him, whereupon he put off his clothes and donned the gown, then taking the gourd and staff, went his way and left me.

I fell a-weeping for wonder and pity; but, that night, whilst I slept, the Lord of Glory (blessed and exalted be He) appeared to me in a dream and said to me, 'O My servant, is it grievous to thee that I have granted to one of My servants to return to Me? Indeed, this is of My bounty, that I vouchsafe to whom I will, for I am able to do all things.' And I repeated the following verses:

The lover with the Loved of will's bereaved quite;
All choice to thee's forbid, an but thou know aright.
Whether to thee He grant favour and grace or hold
Aloof from thee nowise may blame upon Him light.

His very rigours, e'en, except thou glory in, Away!
Thou hast no call to stand with the contrite.
Knowst not His presence from His absence? Then art thou
In real and that thou seek'st in front and out of sight.
If I be haled away to slaughter for Thy sake Or yearning yield
Thee up the last spark of my spright,
'Tis in Thy hand; hold off, grant or deny, 'tis one;
At that which Thou ordainst 'tis vain to rail or flite.
No aim in this my love have I but Thine approof;
So, an thou choose to hold aloof, 'tis good and right.



The King of the Island.

THERE was once a rich and notable man of the children of Israel, who had a pious and blessed son. When the former's last hour drew nigh, his son sat down at his head and said to him, 'O my lord, give me an injunction.' 'Dear my son,' replied his father, 'I charge thee, swear not by God, whether truly or falsely.' Then he died and certain lewd fellows of the children of Israel heard of the injunction he had laid on his son and fell to coming to the latter and saying, 'Thy father had such and such monies of mine, and thou knowest it; so give me what is due to me or else make oath [to the contrary].' The man would not disobey his father's injunction, so gave them all they claimed; and they ceased not to deal thus with him, till his wealth was exhausted and he fell into sore distress.

Now he had a pious and blessed wife, who had borne him two little sons; so he said to her, 'The folk have multiplied claims on me and what while I had wherewithal to quit myself of them, I stinted not to give it up; but now there is nothing left us, and if others make claim upon me, we shall be distressed and tormented, I and thou; so it were better for us to flee to some place, where none knows us, and earn our bread among the uttermost of the folk.' Accordingly, he took ship with her and his two children, knowing not whither he should go; but God decreeth; there is no reverser of His decrees; and quoth the tongue of the case:

O thou, that thy dwelling departest for fear of the foe
And ease in thy flight overtakes thee and freedom from woe,
Grudge not at estrangement, for often the exile, by length
Of distance from homestead and country, right puissant doth grow.
If the pearls in the prison abided for aye of their shells,
Kings' crowns to them never were given for dwelling, I trow.

The ship was wrecked, but the man and his wife and children saved themselves, each on a plank. The waves separated them and the wife was cast up in one country and the elder son in another. The second son was picked up by a ship, and the waves threw the father on a desert island, where he landed and made the ablution. Then he pronounced the call to prayer and fell to his devotions, when, behold, there came up out of the sea creatures of various colours and prayed with him. When he had finished, he went up to a tree and stayed his hunger with its fruits; after which he found a spring of water and drank thereof and praised God, to whom belong might and majesty. He abode thus three days and whenever he stood up to pray, the sea-creatures came out and prayed like as he prayed.

On the fourth day, he heard one crying aloud and saying, 'O just man, that didst so piously honour thy father and so reverest the decrees of thy Lord, grieve not, for God requiteth thee that which thou hast lost. In this island are treasures and things of price, which God willeth thou shalt inherit, and they are in such a place; so bring thou them to light. Moreover, we will send ships unto thee; and do thou bestow largesse on the folk and bid them to thee, and we will incline their hearts unto thee.' So he sought out the appointed place, and God (to whom belong might and majesty) discovered to

him the treasures in question. Then ships resorted to him, and he gave abundant largesse to the crews, saying to them, 'Direct the folk unto me and I will give them such and such things and appoint to them this and that.' Accordingly, there came folk from all parts and countries, nor had ten years passed over him, before the island was peopled and he became its king. None repaired to him, but he entreated him with munificence, and his report was noised abroad throughout the length and breadth of the earth.

Now his elder son had fallen into the hands of a man, who reared him and instructed him in all manner of polite accomplishments; and in like manner, the younger was adopted by one who gave him a good education and brought him up for a merchant. As for their mother, she happened upon a merchant, who gave her charge over his property and made a covenant with her that he would not deal traitorously by her, but would aid her to obey God (to whom belong might and majesty); and he used to carry her with him in his travels by sea and land. Now the elder son heard the report of the King, without knowing who he was; so he made for the island and was well received by the King, who made him his private secretary. After awhile, the other son also sought out the King, attracted by the fame of his piety and justice, and was made by him his steward.

They abode awhile in his service, neither knowing other, till it chanced that the merchant aforesaid, hearing of the King's beneficence and generous dealing with the folk, freighted a ship with rich stuffs and other of the best of the produce of the country, and taking the woman with him, set sail for the island. He arrived there in due course and landing, presented himself before the King with his gift. The latter rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and ordered him a splendid recompense. Now there were, among the gifts, certain drugs, of which he would have the merchant acquaint him with the names and uses; so he said to him, 'Abide with us this night.' Quoth he, 'I have in the ship a pious woman whom God hath committed to my ward, and I have promised her to entrust the care of her to none but myself; for indeed I build upon her prayers and have felt the blessing of her counsels.' 'I will send her two trusty men,' rejoined the King, 'who shall pass the night in the ship and guard her and all that is with her.' The merchant agreed to this and abode with the King, who called his secretary and steward and said to them, 'Go and pass the night in this man's ship and keep it safe, if it please God the Most High.'

So they went up into the ship and seating themselves, one in the bows and the other on the poop, passed a part of the night in repeating the praises of God (to whom belong might and majesty). Then said one to the other, 'Harkye, such an one! The King bade us keep watch and I fear lest sleep overtake us; so, come, let us discourse of stories of fortune and of the good and evil chances we have seen.' 'O my brother,' replied the other, 'as for my tribulations, fate parted me from my mother and a brother of mine, whose name was even as thine; and it befell thus. My father took ship with us from such a place, and the winds and waves rose against us and were contrary, so that the ship was wrecked and God sundered our union.' 'What was the name of thy mother, O my brother?' asked the first. 'So and so,' answered the other. 'And of thy father?' 'So and so.' When the first one heard this, he threw himself upon the other's neck, saying, 'By Allah, thou art my very brother!' And each fell to telling the other what had

befallen him in his youth, whilst their mother heard all they said, but held her peace and constrained her soul to patience.

When it was morning, one brother said to the other, 'Come, brother, let us go to my lodging and talk there.' 'It is well,' replied the other. So they went away and presently, the merchant came back and finding the woman in great concern, said to her, 'What hath befallen thee?' Quoth she, 'Thou sentest to me yesternight men who purposed ill to me, and I have been sore troubled with them.' At this, he was wroth and going in to the King, made his complaint to him. Now the King loved the two brothers, for that which he had noted in them of virtue and trustworthiness; so he summoned them forth- with and sending for the woman, that he might hear from her own lips what she had to say against them, said to her, 'O woman, what complaint hast thou against these two men?' 'O King,' replied she, 'I conjure thee, by the Great God, the Bountiful One, the Lord of the Ninth heaven, bid them repeat the words they spoke yesternight.' So he said to them, 'Repeat what ye said and conceal nought thereof.' Accordingly, they repeated their conversation, and behold, the King gave a great cry and rising from his throne, threw himself upon them, saying, 'By Allah, ye are my very sons!' Therewith the woman discovered her face and said, 'And I am their mother.' So they were all united and abode in all delight and solace of life, until death separated them. So glory be to Him who delivereth His servant, whenas he resorteth to Him, and disappointeth not his hope and his trust in Him! And how well saith the poet on the subject:

Each thing hath its appointed time, to its predestinate:
With God, my brother, to confirm it lies or abrogate.
Repine thou not at any thing wherewith thou stricken art;
For troubles oft in prosperous times do lie for us in wait.
How many an one lies down to sleep, afflicted with what seems
A strait, but is at heart a cause of joy and fortunate!
How many a wretch, on whom men's eyes look hatred and contempt,
Is by God's wonder-working grace redeemed from low estate!
Lo, this is one who did endure affliction aforetime;
Hurt and distress were sore on him and unrelenting fate.
Time severed him from those he held most dear, and each from each,
After long union of their loves, was forced to separate.
But his Lord gave him fortune fair and brought him those he loved.
In all God doth are monishments for men to meditate.
Glory to Him whose providence embraces all that be,
Whose presence ever near to us, clear proofs do intimate.
He is the Near One, whom no wit conceiveth nor indeed
Days' journeys nearer bring to us nor of His distance bate!

Aboulhusn Ed Durraj and Abou Jaafer the Leper.

(QUOTH Aboulhusn ed Durraj), I had been many times to Mecca (which God increase in honour) and the folk used to follow me by reason of my knowledge of the road and the watering-places. It chanced one year that I was minded to make the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God and visit the tomb of His prophet (on whom be peace and blessing), and I said to myself, 'I know the road and will go alone.' So I set out and journeyed till I came to El Cadesiyeh and entering the mosque there, saw a leper seated in the prayer-niche. When he saw me, he said to me, 'O Aboulhusn, I crave thy company to Mecca. Quoth I to myself, 'I wished to avoid companions, and how shall I company with lepers?' So I said to him, 'I will bear no one company.' And he was silent.

Next day I continued my journey alone, till I came to Acabeh, where I entered the mosque and was amazed to find the leper seated in the prayer-niche. 'Glory be to God!' said I in myself. 'How hath this fellow foregone me hither?' But he raised his eyes to me and said, smiling, 'O Aboulhusn, He doth for the weak that which the strong wonder at!' I passed that night in perplexity, confounded at what I had seen, and in the morning set out again by myself; but when I came to Arafat and entered the mosque, behold, there was the leper seated in the niche! So I threw myself upon him and kissing his feet, said, 'O my lord, I crave thy company.' But he said, 'This may nowise be.' Whereupon I fell a-weeping and lamenting, and he said, 'Peace: weeping will avail thee nothing.' And he recited the following verses:

For my estrangement dost thou weep, – whenas it came from thee, –
And restoration dost implore, when none, alas! may be?
Thou sawst my weakness and disease, as it appeared, and saidst,
"He goes nor comes, or night or day, for this his malady."
Seest not that God (exalted be His glory) to His slave
Vouchsafeth all he can conceive of favours fair and free!
If I, to outward vision, be as it appears and eke
In body, for despite of Fate, e'en that which thou dost see,
And eke no victual though I have, unto the holy place
Where crowds unto my Lord resort, indeed, to carry me,
I have a Maker, hidden are His bounties unto me;
Yea, there's no parting me from Him, and without peer is He.
Depart from me in peace and leave me and my strangerhood;
For with the lonely exile still the One shall company.

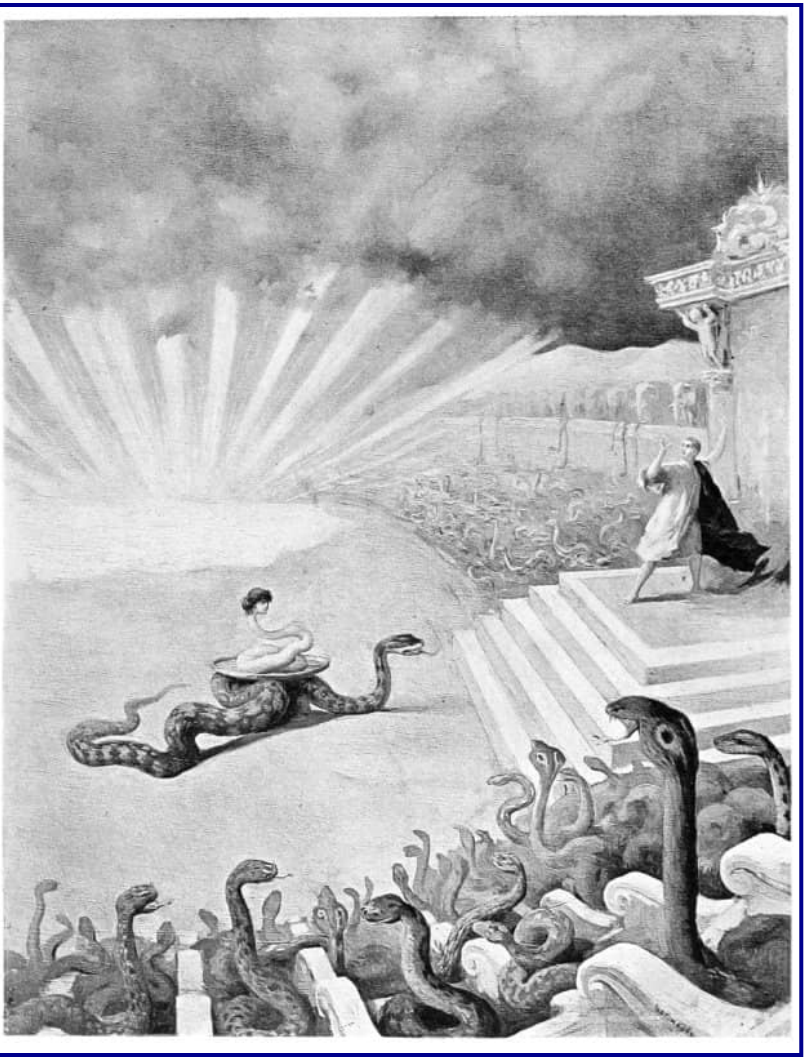
So I left him and continued my journey; and every stage I came to, I found him before me, till I came to Medina, where I lost sight of him and could hear no news of him. Here I met Abou Yezid el Bustani and Abou Bekr es Shibli and a number of other doctors, to whom I told my case and they said, 'God forbid that thou shouldst gain his company after this! This was Abou Jaafer the leper, in whose name, at all tides, the folk pray for rain and by whose blessing prayers are answered.' When I heard this, my longing for his company redoubled and I implored God to reunite me with him.

Whilst I was standing on Arafat, one plucked me from behind, so I turned and behold it was Abou Jaafer. At this sight, I gave a loud cry and fell down in a swoon; but, when I came to myself, he was gone.

This increased my yearning for him and the ways were straitened upon me and I prayed God to give me sight of him; nor was it but a few days after, when one pulled me from behind, and I turned and behold, it was he again. Quoth he, 'I conjure thee, ask thy desire of me.' So I begged him to pray three prayers to God for me; first, that He would make me love poverty; secondly, that I might never lie down to sleep upon known provision; and thirdly, that He the Bountiful One would vouchsafe me to look upon His face. So he prayed for me, as I wished, and departed from me. And indeed God hath granted me the first two prayers; for He hath made me in love with poverty, so that, by Allah, there is nought in the world dearer to me than it, and since such a year, I have never lain down upon assured provision; yet hath He never let me lack of aught. As for the third prayer, I trust that He will vouchsafe me that also, even as He hath granted the two others, for He is bountiful and excellently beneficent. And may God have mercy on him who saith:

Renouncement, lowliness, the fakir's garments be;
In patched and tattered clothes still fares the devotee.
Pallor adorneth him, as, on their latest nights,
The moons with pallor still embellished thou mayst see.
Long rising up by night to pray hath wasted him,
And from his lids the tears stream down, as 'twere a sea.
The thought of God to him his very housemate is;
For bosom-friend, by night, th' Omnipotent hath he.
God the Protector helps the fakir in his need,
And birds and beasts no less to succour him agree.
On his account, the wrath of God on men descends,
And by his grace, the rains fall down on wood and lea.
And if he pray one day to do away a plague,
The oppressor's slain and men from tyrants are made free;
For all the folk are sick, afflicted and diseased,
And he's the pitying leach withouten stint or fee.
His forehead shines; an thou but look upon his face,
Thy heart is calmed, the lights of heaven appear to thee.
O thou that shunnest these, their virtues knowing not,
Woe's thee! Thou'rt shut from them by thine iniquity.
Thou think'st them to o'ertake, for all thou'rt fettered fast;
Thy sins from thy desire do hinder thee, perdie.
Thou wouldst to them consent and rivers from thine eyes
Would run for them, if thou their excellence couldst see.
Uneath to him to smell, who's troubled with a rheum,
Are flowers; the broker knows what worth the garments be.
So supplicate thy Lord right humbly for His grace,

And Providence, belike, shall help thy constancy;
And thou shalt win thy will and from estrangement's stress
And eke rejection's pains shall be at rest and free.
The asylum of His grace is wide enough for all That seek:
The One True God, the Conqueror is He!



The Queen of Serpents

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a Grecian sage called Daniel, who had scholars and disciples, and the wise men of Greece were obedient to his commandment and relied upon his learning; but God had denied him a son. One night, as he lay musing and weeping over the lack of a son, to whom he might bequeath his learning, he bethought himself that God (blessed and exalted be He) gives ear unto the prayer of those who resort to him and that there is no doorkeeper at the gate of His bounties and that He favours whom He will without stint and sends none empty away. So he besought the Most High, the Bountiful, to vouchsafe him a son, to succeed him, and to endow him abundantly with His favours. Then he returned and lay with his wife, who conceived by him the same night.

A few days after this he took ship for a certain place, but the ship was wrecked and he saved himself on a plank, with the loss of all his books, save only five leaves thereof. When he returned home, he laid the five leaves in a chest and locking it, gave the key to his wife, who was then big with child, and said to her, 'Know that my last hour is at hand and that the time of my translation from this temporary abiding-place [of the world] to that which is eternal draws nigh. Now thou art with child and wilt haply bear a son after my death. If this be so, name him Hasib Kerimeddin and rear him well. When the boy grows up and says to thee, "What inheritance did my father leave me?" give him these five leaves, which when he has read and digested, he will be the most learned man of his time' Then he bade her farewell and heaving one sigh, departed the world and all that is therein, the mercy of the Most High God be upon him! His family and friends wept over him and washed him and bore him forth in great state and buried him.

After awhile, his widow bore a handsome boy and named him Hasib Kerimeddin, as her husband had charged her; then she summoned the astrologers, who took the altitude of the planets and drawing the boy's horoscope, said to her, 'Know that this boy will live many years; but a great peril will befall him in the early part of his life, from which if he escape, he will be given the knowledge of wisdom.' She suckled him two years, then weaned him, and when he was five years old, she sent him to school, but he would learn nothing. So she took him from school and set him to learn a trade; but he would not learn and there came no work from his hands. She wept over this and the folk said to her, 'Marry him: peradventure he will take thought for his wife and learn a trade.' So she sought out a girl and married him to her; but marriage wrought no change in him and he still remained idle as before.

One day, some neighbours of hers, who were woodcutters, came to her and said, 'Buy thy son an ass and cords and a hatchet, and let him go with us to the mountain and cut wood. The price of the wood shall be his and ours, and with his share he shall provide thee and his wife.' When she heard this, she rejoiced greatly and bought Hasib an ass and hatchet and cords; then, carrying him to the woodcutters, delivered him into their hands and commended him to their care. 'Have no concern for the boy,' answered they; 'he is the son of our Sheikh [Daniel,] and our Lord will provide him.' So they carried him to the mountain, where they cut firewood and loaded their asses

therewith; then returned to the city and selling what they had cut, spent the price on their families. This they did every day for some time, till one day, as they were cutting wood on the mountain as usual, a violent storm of rain broke over them, and they took refuge in a great cave, till the storm should be past. It chanced that Hasib went apart from the rest into a corner of the cavern and sitting down, fell to smiting the earth [idly] with his axe. Presently, he noted that the ground gave out a hollow sound under the axe; so he dug there awhile and came to a round flagstone, with a ring in it. When he saw this, he was glad and called his comrades the woodcutters, who came to him and speedily clearing away the earth from the stone, pulled it up and found under it a trap door, which, being opened, discovered a cistern full of bees' honey. Then said they to each other, 'We must return to the city and fetch vessels, in which to carry away the honey, and sell it and divide the price, whilst one of us stays by the cistern, to guard it from other than ourselves.' Quoth Hasib, 'I will stay and keep watch over it.' So they left him there and repairing to the city, fetched vessels, which they filled with honey and loading their asses therewith, carried them to the city and sold the contents.

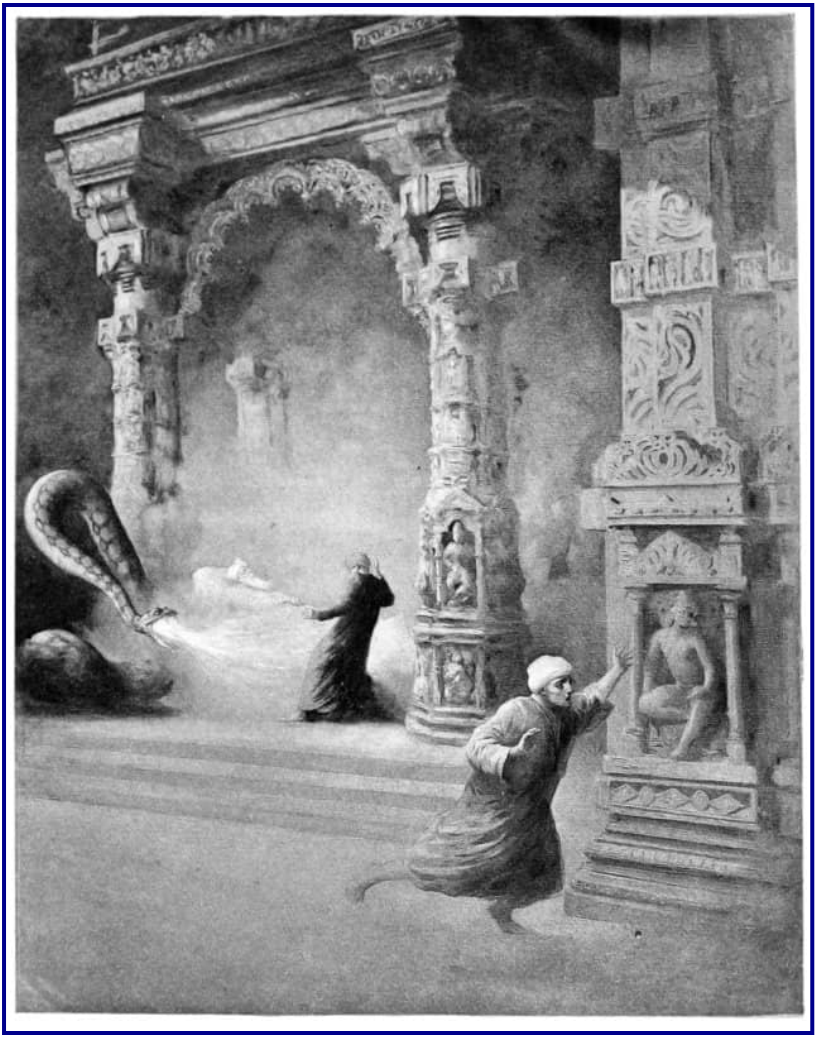
Thus they did several days in succession, sleeping in the city by night, whilst Hasib abode on guard by the cistern, [till but little remained,] when they said to one another, 'It was Hasib found the honey, and to-morrow he will come down to the city and claim the price of it, saying, "It was I found it;" nor is there any means of quitting ourselves of this but that we let him down into the cistern, to get the rest of the honey, and leave him there; so will he perish miserably, and none will know of him.' They all fell in with this and returning to the cavern, said to Hasib, "Go down into the well and get us the rest of the honey.' So he went down and passed up to them the rest of the honey, after which he said to them, 'Draw me up, for there is nothing left.' They made him no answer, but, loading their asses, went away and left him alone in the cistern. When they reached the city, they repaired to Hasib's mother, weeping, and said to her, 'May thy head outlive thy son Hasib!' 'How did he die?' asked she. Quoth they, 'We were cutting wood in the mountain, when there fell on us a great storm of rain and we took shelter from it in a cavern. Presently, thy son's ass broke loose and fled into the valley, and he ran after it, to turn it back, when there came out upon them a great wolf, who tore thy son in pieces and ate the ass.' When she heard this, she buffeted her face and strewed dust on her head and fell a-mourning for her son, whilst the woodcutters sold the honey, with the proceeds of which they opened shops and became merchants and passed their lives in eating and drinking and making merry; but, every day, they brought Hasib's mother meat and drink.

Meanwhile, when Hasib found himself alone, he began to weep and call for help and say, 'There is no god but God, the Most High, the Supreme! I shall surely perish miserably!' As he was thus bemoaning himself, a great scorpion fell upon him; so he rose and killed it. Then he bethought him and said, 'The cistern was full of honey; how came this scorpion here?' Therewith he rose and examined the well right and left, till he found the crevice from which the scorpion had fallen and saw light shining through it. So he took out his knife and enlarged the opening, till it was big enough to allow him to pass, when he crept through it and found himself in a passage in the rock. Following this passage, he came to a vast gallery, which led him to a great iron door, made fast with a padlock of silver, in which was a golden key. He looked through the

chink of the door and saw a great light shining within; so he took the key and opening the door [found himself in an open space and] walked on till he came to a great pond, full of something that glistened like water. Hard by he saw a high mound of green jasper and on the top of the mound a throne of gold, inlaid with all manner jewels, round which were set many stools, some of gold, some of silver and others of emerald. He climbed the mound and counting the stools, found them twelve thousand in number. Then he mounted the throne and seating himself thereon, sat marvelling at the pond and the stools, till drowsiness overcame him and he fell asleep.

Presently, he was aroused by a great snorting and hissing and rustling, and opening his eyes, saw seated on each stool a great serpent, a hundred cubits in length, with eyes that blazed like live coals. At this sight, great fear got hold on him; his spittle dried up, for the excess of his affright, and he despaired of life. Then he turned towards the pond and saw [that what he had taken for water was none other than a multitude of] small serpents, none knoweth their number save God the Most High. After awhile, there came a serpent as big as a mule, bearing on its back a charger of gold, wherein lay another serpent, that shone like crystal and whose face was as that of a woman. Thereupon, one of the serpents seated there came up and lifting her off the dish, set her on one of the stools. Then she cried out to the other serpents in their language, whereupon they all fell down from their stools and did her homage. But she signed to them to sit, and they did so.

Then she saluted Hasib in human speech and he returned her salutation; and she said to him with fluent speech, 'Have no fear of us, O youth. I am the Queen of the Serpents and their Sultaness.' When he heard this, he took heart and she bade the serpents bring him food. So they brought apples and grapes and pomegranates and pistachio-nuts and filberts and walnuts and almonds and bananas and set them before him, and the Queen said, 'Welcome, O youth! What is thy name?' 'My name is Hasib Kerimeddin,' answered he; and she rejoined, 'O Hasib, eat of these fruits, for we have no other meat, and fear nothing from us.' So he ate his fill and praised God the Most High. Then they took away the tray from before him, and the Queen said to him, 'O Hasib, tell me whence thou art and how camest thou hither.' So he told her his story from first to last, adding, 'God [only] knows what will betide me after this!' Quoth the Queen, 'Nothing but good shall betide thee: but, O Hasib, I would have thee abide with me awhile, that I may tell thee my history and acquaint thee with the rare adventures that have come to my knowledge.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; and she said, 'Know then, O Hasib, that



The Adventures of Beloukiya

THERE was once in the city of Cairo a wise and pious king of the children of Israel, who was devoted to the study of books of learning, and he had a son named Beloukiya. When he grew old and weak and was nigh upon death, his grandees and officers of state came in to him, to salute him, and he said to them, "O folk, know that the hour is at hand of my departure from this world to the next, and I have no charge to lay on you, save to commend my son to your care." Then said he, "I testify that there is no god save God," and heaving one sigh, departed the world, the mercy of God be on him! They laid him out and washed him and buried him in great state. Then they made his son Beloukiya king in his stead; and he ruled the kingdom justly and the people had peace in his time.

It befell one day that he entered his father's treasures, to look about him, and coming upon a hidden door, opened it and found himself in a little closet, wherein stood a column of white marble. On the top of the column was a coffer of ebony, which he opened and saw therein a casket of gold, containing a book. He read the book and found therein a description of our lord Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) and how he should be sent in the latter days and be the lord of the first and the last: and his heart was taken with love of him. So he assembled all the notables of the scribes and diviners and priests of the children of Israel and read the book to them, adding, "O folk, needs must I bring my father out of his grave and burn him." "Why wilt thou burn him?" asked they, and he answered, "Because he hid this book from me and imparted it not to me. (Now the old king had compiled it from the Pentateuch and the Book of Abraham and had hidden it in his treasury and imparted it to none.) "O King," rejoined they, "thy father is dead; his body is in the dust and his affair is in the hands of his Lord; thou shalt not take him forth of his tomb." So he knew that they would not suffer him to do this thing and leaving them, repaired to his mother, to whom said he, "O my mother, I have found, in one of my father's treasuries, a book containing a description of Mohammed (whom God bless and keep), a prophet who shall be sent in the latter days, and my heart is taken with his love; wherefore I am resolved to wander over the earth, till I foregather with him; else I shall die of longing for the love of him." Then he doffed his clothes and donned a pilgrim's gown of striped goat's hair cloth and sandals, saying to his mother, "Forget me not in thy prayers." She wept and said, "O my son, what will become of us after thee?" But he answered, saying, "I can endure no longer, and I commit my affair and shine to God the Most High."

Then he set out in the direction of Syria, without the knowledge of any of his people, and coming to the seashore, took passage in a ship, which he found there. They sailed till they came to an island, where they cast anchor and Beloukiya landed with the crew, but, becoming separated from the rest, sat down under a tree and fell asleep. When he awoke, he found that the ship had set sail without him, and in that island he saw serpents as big as camels and palm-trees, who sang he praises of Allah and blessed Mohammed, proclaiming the unity of God and glorifying the Most High; whereat he wondered greatly. When they saw him, they flocked to him and one of them said to

him, “Who and whence art thou and whither goest thou?” Quoth he, “My name is Beloukiya; I am of the children of Israel, and am come out in quest of Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve), being distracted for love of him. But who are ye, O noble creatures?” “We are of the dwellers in Hell,” answered they; “and God the Most High created us for the punishment of unbelievers.” “And how came ye hither?” asked he, and they answered, “Know that Hell, of the greatness of its boiling, breathes twice a year, exhaling in the summer and inhaling in the winter, and hence the summer heat and the winter cold. When it exhales, it casts us forth of its maw, and we are drawn in again with the inhaled breath.” Quoth Beloukiya, “Are there greater serpents than you in Hell?” And they said, “We are cast out with the expired breath but by reason of our smallness; for in Hell every serpent is so great, that, were the biggest of us to pass over its nose, it would not be ware of us.” “Ye sing the praises of God,” said Beloukiya, “and invoke blessings on Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve! Whence know ye of Mohammed?” O Beloukiya,” answered they, “the name of Mohammed is written on the gates of Paradise; and but for him, God had not created Paradise nor heaven nor hell nor earth for He made all things that be, solely on his account, and hath coupled his name with His own in every place: wherefore we love Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!”

The serpent’s converse did but inflame Beloukiya’s love for Mohammed and yearning for his sight; so he took leave of them and making his way to the sea-shore, found there a ship lying at anchor, in which he embarked and sailed till he came to another island. Here he landed and walking about, found there serpents, great and small, none knoweth their number save God the Most High and amongst them a white serpent, more brilliant than crystal, seated in a golden charger borne on the back of another serpent as big as an elephant. Now this was none other than myself; so, when I saw Beloukiya, I saluted him and he returned my salutation, and I said to him, “Who and what art thou and whither goest thou?” I am of the children of Israel,” answered he “My name is Beloukiya, and I am a wanderer for the love of Mohammed, whose description I have read in the revealed scriptures and of whom I go in quest. But what art thou and what are these serpents about thee?” Quoth I, “I am the Queen of the Serpents; and when thou foregatherest with Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve),bear him my salutation.” Then he took leave of me and journeyed till he came to Jerusalem.

Now there was in that City a man by name Uffan, who was deeply versed in all sciences, more especially in geometry and astronomy and mathematics, as well as in white magic and the Cabala; and he had studied the Pentateuch and the Evangel and the Psalms and the Book of Abraham and had read in certain books that whoso should wear the ring of our lord Solomon, men and Jinn and birds and beasts and all created things would be subject to him. Moreover, he had discovered that Solomon lay buried in a cavern beyond the Seven Seas, with the ring on his finger, which none, man nor genie, could take therefrom, and that none could sail upon the Seven Seas in ships; and he had found out by study that there was a certain herb, whose juice if one expressed and anointed therewith the soles of his feet, he should walk dryshod upon the surface of any sea that God the Most High had created; but none could come at this herb, except he had with him the Queen of the Serpents.

When Beloukiya arrived at Jerusalem, he [entered the temple and] sat down to do his devotions. Presently, Uffan came up and seeing him reading the Pentateuch and worshipping God the Most High, accosted him and asked him who and whence he was and whither bound? "My name is Beloukiya," answered the prince. "I am from the city of Cairo and am come forth, wandering, in quest of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!" Quoth Uffan, "Come with me to my house, that I may entertain thee." "I hear and obey," cried Beloukiya. So the sage took him by the hand and carried him to his house, where he entreated him with the utmost honour and said to him, "O my brother, tell me thy history and how thou camest by the knowledge of Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) and who directed thee in this road." So he related to him his story, from first to last, at which Uffan well-nigh lost his wits for wonder and said to him, "O my brother, bring me to the Queen of the Serpents and I will bring thee in company with Mohammed, albeit the time of his coming is yet far distant. For thou must know that I have found in my books that there is a certain herb whose juice if one express and anoint therewith the soles of his feet, he shall go dryshod upon whatsoever sea God the Most High hath made; and if one have with him the Queen of the Serpents and traverse the mountains where the herbs grow, each herb by which he passes will speak and proclaim its virtues, by the ordinance of God the Most High. So, if we can take the Queen of the Serpents, we will put her in a cage and carry her to the mountains aforesaid; and when we have found the magical herb, we will let her go her way. Then will we anoint our feet with the juice of the herb and fare over the Seven Seas, till we come to the burial-place of our lord Solomon, when we will take the ring off his finger and rule even as he ruled and come to our desire; for, with the aid of the ring, we will enter the Ocean of Darknesses and drink of the Water of Life, and so God will let us tarry till the latter days and we shall foregather with Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve!"

Beloukiya consented to lead him to my abiding-place so Uffan made him a cage of iron and providing himself with two bowls, one full of milk and the other of wine, took ship with Beloukiya and sailed till they came to the island, where they landed and walked on inland. Then Uffan set up the cage, in which he laid a snare, and placing in it the two bowls, withdrew, he and Beloukiya, and concealed themselves afar off. Presently, up came the Queen of the Serpents (that is, myself) and examined the cage. When I smelt the milk, I slid off the back of my bearer and entering the cage, [drank up the milk. Then I] went to the bowl of wine and drank of it, whereupon my head became giddy and I slept. When Uffan saw this, he ran up and locking the cage upon me, set it on his head and made for the ship, he and Beloukiya. After awhile I awoke and finding myself in a cage of iron on a man's head and seeing Beloukiya walking beside the bearer, said to him, "This is the reward of those who do no hurt to men." "O Queen," answered he, "have no fear of us, for we will do thee no hurt. We would but have thee guide us to the herb whose juice, rubbed upon the soles of the feet, confers the power of walking dry-shod upon what sea soever God the Most High hath created; which when we have found, we will return thee to thy place and let thee go thy way."

Then they fared on till they came to the hills where grew the herbs, and as they went, each herb they passed began to speak and avouch its virtues by permission of

God the Most High. As they were going along and the herbs speaking right and left, one of the latter spoke out and said, "I am the herb, which if one gather and press and anoint his feet with my juice, he shall fare dry-shod over what sea soever God the Most High hath created." When Uffan heard this, he set down the cage and gathering what might suffice them of the herb, bruised it and filled two vials with the juice; and with what was left they anointed their feet. Then they took up the cage and journeyed days and nights, till they reached the island, where they opened the cage and let me out. When I found myself at liberty, I asked them what use they thought to make of the juice of the herb; and they answered, saying, "We purpose to traverse the Seven Seas to the burial-place of our lord Solomon and take the ring from his finger " Quoth I, "Far is it from your power to possess yourselves of the ring!" "Wherefore?" asked they, and I replied. "Because God the Most High vouchsafed unto our lord Solomon the gift of this ring and peculiarly favoured him therewith, for that he said to Him, 'O my Lord, bestow upon me a dominion, that shall beseem none after me; for Thou art the Giver of gifts.' So the ring is not for you. Had ye taken the herb, whereof whoso eateth shall not die until the first blast [of the last trumpet], it had better availed you than this ye have gotten; for ye shall nowise come at your desire of it."

When they heard this, they repented them exceedingly and went their ways, whilst I went in quest of my subjects and found them fallen in piteous plight, the weaker of them having died in my absence and the stronger grown weak. When they saw me, they rejoiced and flocking about me, enquired what had befallen me. So I told them what had passed, after which I gathered them together and repaired with them to the mountain Caf, where I use to winter, spending the summer in the place where thou now seest me, O Hasib. This, then, is my story and what befell me [with Beloukiya and Uffan].'

Hasib marvelled at her words and said to her, 'I beseech thee, of thy favour, bid one of thy subjects bring me out to the surface of the earth, that I may go to my people.' 'O Hasib,' replied she, 'thou shalt not depart from us till winter come, and needs must thou go with us to the mountain Caf and divert thyself with the sight of hills and sands and trees and birds magnifying the One God, the Victorious, besides Marids and Afrits and Jinn, whose number none knoweth save God the Most High.' When Hasib heard this, he was sore chagrined and concerned; then he said to her, 'Tell me of Uffan and Beloukiya; when they departed from thee and went their way, did they win to the burial-place of our lord Solomon or not; and if they won thither, did they avail to take the ring or not? 'Know,'answered she, 'that, when they left me, they anointed their feet with the juice of the magical herb, and walking over the water, fared on from sea to sea, beholding the wonders of the deep, till they had traversed the Seven Seas and came in sight of a mighty mountain, soaring high into the air, whereat they rejoiced and said to one another, "Verily we have attained our desire." So they landed and found that the stones of the mountain were of emerald and its dust of musk, and in it was a stream of running water. They entered the passes of the mountain and walked on, till they saw a cavern afar off, surmounted by a great dome, and light shining therefrom. So they made for the dome and entering the cavern, beheld therein a throne of gold set with all manner jewels, and about it stools innumerable, none knoweth their number save God the Most High. On the throne they saw our lord

Solomon lying, clad in robes of green silk, gold inwoven and broidered with all manner jewels and precious stones: his right hand was folded upon his breast and on the middle finger was the seal-ring, whose lustre outshone that of all the other jewels in the place.

Then Uffan taught Beloukiya charms and conjurations and said to him, "Repeat these conjurations and stint not therefrom till I take the ring." Then he went up to the throne; but, as he drew near unto it, a mighty serpent issued from beneath it and cried out at him with so terrible a cry that the whole place trembled and sparks flew from its mouth, saying, "Begone, or thou art a dead man!" But Uffan paid no heed to it and busied himself with his incantations. Then the serpent blew such a fiery blast at him, that the place was like to be set on fire, and said to him, "Woe to thee! Except thou turn back, I will consume thee!" Yet was he not troubled at this, but put out his hand to the ring and touched it and strove to draw it off Solomon's finger; whereupon the serpent blew on him [once more] and he became a heap of ashes.

When Beloukiya saw this, he fell down in a swoon. and the Lord (exalted be His majesty) bade Gabriel descend [and save him], before the serpent should blow on him. So Gabriel descended to the earth and finding Uffan reduced to ashes and Beloukiya fallen of a swoon, aroused the latter and saluting him, enquired how he had come thither. Beloukiya related to him his history, telling him how he had not come thither but for the love of Mohammed, and besought him to tell him where the latter was to be found. "O Beloukiya," replied the angel, "go thy ways, for the time of Mohammed's coming is yet far distant." Then he ascended to heaven, and Beloukiya wept sore and repented of that which he had done, calling to mind my words, whenas I said to them, "Far is it from your power to possess yourselves of the ring." Then he returned to the sea-shore and passed the night there, marvelling at the mountains and seas and islands, that encompassed him, and weeping over his case.

When it was day, he anointed his feet with the magical juice and descending to the water, set out and fared on over the surface of the sea nights and days, marvelling at the terrors and wonders of the deep, till he came to an island as it were Paradise. So he landed and found himself in a great and pleasant island, spacious and goodly, abounding in good things. Its dust was saffron and its gravel cornelian and precious stones; its hedges were of jessamine, its brushwood Comorin and Sumatra aloes-wood and its reeds sugar-cane. Its vegetation was of the goodliest of trees and of the brightest and sweetest of odoriferous flowers, of all kinds and colours: round about it were roses and narcissus and amaranths and gilly-flowers and camomiles and lilies and violets, and therein gazelles frisking and wild cattle coming and going. Its trees were tall and the singing of its birds, as they warbled on the branches and solaced the afflicted lover, was sweeter than the voices of those that chant the Koran. Its streams were flowing and its springs welling with sweet water; brief, it comprised all beauty and charms.

Beloukiya marvelled at the goodliness of the place, but knew that he had wandered from the road he had come, on his way over the Seven Seas in Uffan's company. He spent the day in exploring the island and at nightfall he climbed into a tree, to sleep; but, as he sat there, pondering the beauty of the place, the sea became troubled and there rose to the surface a great beast, which gave such a terrible cry that the isle trembled to its foundations. As Beloukiya gazed upon him and marvelled at

the vastness of his bulk, he came ashore, followed by a multitude of other sea-beasts, each holding in his paw a jewel that shone like a lamp, so that the whole island became as light as day for the lustre thereof. After awhile, there appeared from the inward of the island lions and panthers and lynxes and other beasts of the land, none knoweth their number save God the Most High, who flocked down to the shore and foregathering with the beasts of the sea, conversed with them till daybreak, when they separated and went each his own way.

As soon as it was day, Beloukiya, terrified by what he had seen during the night, came down from the tree and anointing his feet with the magical juice, set out once more upon the surface of the water and fared on days and nights over the second sea, till he came to a great mountain, through whose midst ran a valley without end, the stones whereof were loadstone and its beasts lions and hares and panthers. He landed and wandered from place to place till nightfall, when he sat down on a rock by the seaside, to eat of the dried fish thrown up by the sea. Presently, he turned and saw a huge panther making for him, to devour him; so he anointed his feet in haste with the juice and descending to the surface of the water, fled over the third sea, in the darkness, for it was black night and there was a high wind, nor did he stay his course till he reached another island, on which he landed and found there trees, [bearing fruits] both soft and hard of skin. So he took of these fruits and ate and praised God the Most High; after which he walked about the island till nightfall, when he lay down to sleep.

He spent ten days in exploring the place, after which he again anointed his feet and setting out over the fourth sea, travelled nights and days, till he came to a third island of fine white sand, without trees or grass. He landed and balked about the island awhile, but, finding its only inhabitants sakers, that nested in the sand, he again anointed his feet and sped on over the fifth sea, till he came to a little island, whose soil and hills were of crystal. Therein were the veins wherefrom gold is wrought and marvellous trees with flowers in hue like gold, never had he seen their like in his wanderings. He landed and walked about, till it became dark, when the flowers began to shine like stars. When he saw this, he marvelled and said, "Assuredly, the flowers of this island are of those which wither from the sun and fall to the earth, where the wind smites them and they gather under the rocks and become hermetic powder which the folk collect and make gold thereof."

He lay there that night and at sunrise he again anointed his feet and descending to the shore, fared on over the sixth sea days and nights, till he came to a fifth island. Here he landed and found mountains covered with trees, whose fruits were as human heads hanging by the hair, and others whose fruits were green birds hanging by the feet; also a third kind, which burnt like fire and whose fruits were like prickly pears, — if a drop [of the juice] thereof fell on a man, he was consumed, — and others, whose fruits wept and laughed, besides many other marvels which he saw there. Then he returned to the sea-shore and finding there a great tree, sat down beneath it till dusk, when he climbed up into the branches to sleep. As he sat pondering the wonderful works of God, the sea became troubled, and there rose therefrom the daughters of the ocean, each holding in her hand a jewel that shone like the morning. They came ashore and sitting down under the tree, danced and sported and made merry, whilst Beloukiya watched them and marvelled at their gambols, till the morning, when they returned to

the sea and disappeared. Then he came down and anointing his feet, set out on the surface of the seventh sea, over which he journeyed two whole months, without getting sight of land, what while he suffered exceeding hunger, so that he was fain to snatch up fish from the surface of the sea and devour them raw, for stress of want.

At the end of this time, he came to a sixth island abounding in trees and streams, where he landed, it being the forenoon. He walked about, looking right and left, till he came to an apple-tree and put out his hand to pluck of the fruit, when, behold, one cried out to him from the tree, saying, "An thou draw near to this tree, I will cut thee in twain." So he looked and saw a giant forty cubits high, after the measure of the people of that day, whereat he was sore affrighted and drew back from the tree. Then he said to the giant, "Why dost thou forbid me to eat of this tree?" "Because," replied the other, "thou art a son of Adam and thy father Adam forgot the covenant of God and disobeyed Him and ate of the tree." Quoth Beloukiya, "Who art thou and to whom doth this island, with its trees, belong?" "My name is Sherahiya," replied the giant, "and I am of the guards of King Sekher, to whom the island belongs and who hath given me charge over it. But who art thou and how comest thou hither?" Beloukiya told him his story and Sherahiya bade him be of good cheer and brought him to eat. So he ate his fill and taking leave of the giant, set out again and fared on over mountains and sandy deserts for ten days, at the end of which time he saw, in the distance, a cloud of dust hanging like a canopy in the air and making towards it, came presently to a great valley, two months' journey in length, where he heard a mighty clamour of cries and clash of arms and tramp of horse. As he drew near, he saw a multitude of horsemen engaged in sore battle and the blood running from them like a river. Their voices were like thunder and they were armed with bows and javelins and swords and spears and maces of iron and fought with the utmost fury.

At this sight, he was sore affrighted and knew not what to do; but, as he hesitated, they caught sight of him and held their hands from one another and left fighting. Then a troop of them came up to him, wondering at his make, and said to him, "What art thou and how camest thou hither?" Quoth he, "I am of the sons of Adam and am come out, distraught for the love of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve; but I have wandered from my road." They marvelled at his speech and said, "Never saw we a son of Adam till now, nor did any ever come to this land." "But what are ye, O creatures?" asked Beloukiya. "We are of the Jinn," answered they; and he said, "What is the cause of the fighting amongst you and where is your abiding-place and what is the name of this valley and this land?" "Our abiding-place is the White Country," replied they. "This place is called the land of Sheddad, son of Aad, and every year God the Most High commandeth us to come hither and wage war upon the unbelieving Jinn." "And where is the White Country?" asked Beloukiya. "It is distant five-and-seventy years' journey behind the mountain Caf," answered they, "and we have no other business, when we are not doing battle with the unbelieving Jinn, than to magnify God and hallow Him. Moreover, we have a king called Sekher, and needs must thou go with us to him, that he may divert himself with thy sight."

Then they took him and fared on with him, till they came to their abiding-place, where he saw a multitude of tents of green silk, none knoweth their number save God the Most High, and in their midst a pavilion of red satin, a thousand cubits in

compass, with cords of blue silk and pickets of gold and silver. This was the royal pavilion; so they made their way thither and carried Beloukiya into the presence of King Sekher, whom he found seated upon a throne of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, with the kings and princes of the Jinn on his right hand and on his left his councillors and Amirs and officers of state. So he went up to him and kissing the earth before him, saluted him. The King returned his salute and commending a chair to be set for him beside himself, bade him sit down and asked him who he was and how he came thither; whereupon Beloukiya related to him all that had befallen him in his wanderings and he marvelled thereat. Then he called for food and the servants spread the tables and set on fifteen hundred platters of gold and silver and brass, some containing twenty and some fifty boiled camels, and other some fifty head of sheep; at which Beloukiya marvelled exceedingly. Then they ate and he ate with them, till he was satisfied, and returned thanks to God the Most High; after which they cleared the tables and set on fruits, and they ate thereof, glorifying God and invoking blessings on His prophet Mohammed.

When Beloukiya heard them make mention of Mohammed, he wondered and said to King Sekher, "I have a mind to ask thee some questions." "Ask what thou wilt," rejoined the King, and Beloukiya said, "O King, what are ye and what is your origin and how come ye to know and love Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve?" "Know," answered the King, "that God created the fire in seven stages, one above the other, at a distance of a thousand years' journey between each two stages. The first stage he named Jehennem and appointed for the punishment of the transgressors of the true-believers, who die unrepentant, and the second he named Lezza and appointed for unbelievers. The name of the third is Jehim and is appointed for Gog and Magog. The fourth is called Saair and is appointed for the host of Iblis. The fifth is called Seker and is prepared for those who neglect prayer. The sixth is called Hutemeh and is appointed for Jews and Christians. The seventh is named Hawiyeh and is prepared for hypocrites. The most endurable of them all is Jehennem, being the topmost; yet in it are a thousand mountains of fire, in each mountain seventy thousand valleys of fire, in each valley seventy thousand cities of fire, in each city seventy thousand citadels of fire, in each citadel seventy thousand houses of fire, in each house seventy thousand couches of fire and in each couch seventy thousand kinds of torment. As for the other hells, none knoweth the number of kinds of torment that be therein save God the Most High."

When Beloukiya heard this, he fell down in a swoon and when he came to himself, he wept and said, "O King, what will our case be?" "Fear not," answered Sekher; "whoso loveth Mohammed and believeth in his religion, the fire shall not burn him, for he is made free therefrom for his sake, whom God bless and preserve! As for us, God created us of the fire; for the first that he made in Jehennem were two creatures, whom He called Melit and Khelit. Now Melit was made in the likeness of a pied wolf, with a tail after the likeness of a woman, and Khelit in that of a lion, with a tail like a tortoise, twenty years' journey in length. God commanded their tails to couple and do the deed of kind, and of them were born serpents and scorpions, whose dwelling is in the fire, that therewith God may torment those whom He casteth therein; and these increased and multiplied. Then God commanded the tails of Khelit

and Melit to couple a second time, and Melit's tail conceived by that of Khelit and bore fourteen children, seven male and seven female, who grew up and intermarried, one with the other. They all were obedient to their father, except one of then, Iblis to wit, who disobeyed him and was changed into a worm. Now Iblis was one of the Cherubim, for he had served God till he was raised to the heavens and taken into the especial favour of the Merciful One, who made, him chief of the Cherubim. When God created Adam, He commanded Iblis to prostrate himself to him, but he refused; so God expelled him [from heaven] and cursed him. Of his lineage are the devils; and as for the other six males, they are the ancestors of the true-believing Jinn, and we are their descendants."

Beloukiya marvelled at the King's words and besought him to bid one of his officers carry him back to his native land. "That may we not do," answered Sekher, "save by commandment of God the Most High; but, an thou desire to return to thine own country, I will set thee on one of my mares and bid her carry thee to the farthest limit of my dominions, where thou wilt meet with the troops of another king, Berakhiya by name, who will recognize the mare and take thee off her back and send her back to me; and this is all we can do for thee." When Beloukiya heard this, he wept and said, "Do what thou wilt, O King." So Sekher caused bring the mare and setting Beloukiya on her back, said to him, "Beware lest thou alight or strike the mare or cry out in her face; else she will kill thee; but abide quiet on her back till she stop with thee; then dismount and go thy way." Then Beloukiya took leave of the King and setting out, rode on a long while between the rows of tents, till he came to the royal kitchens, where he stopped and gazed in wonderment or the great cauldrons, each holding fifty camels, hung up over the fire that blazed fiercely under them. King Sekher saw him from afar gazing on the cauldrons, and thinking him to be anhungred, commanded some of his officers to bear him two roasted camels. So they carried them to him and bound them behind him on the mare's back.

Then he took leave of them and fared on, till he came to the limit of King Sekher's dominions, where the mare stood still and Beloukiya dismounted and began to shake the dust of the journey from his clothes. As he was thus engaged, there accosted him a party of men, who recognizing the mare, carried her and Beloukiya before their King, whom he found seated in a splendid pavilion, in the midst of his troops and champions and vassal princes, in like state to that of King Sekher. So he saluted him, and the King returned his greeting and seated him beside himself; after which he called for food and they ate their fill and returned thanks to God. Then they set on fruits, and when they had eaten thereof, King Berakhiya said to his guest, "When didst thou leave King Sekher?" "Two days ago," replied Beloukiya. "Dost thou know," asked Berakhiya, "how many days' journey thou hast come in these two days?" "No," answered he, and the King rejoined, "Thou hast come threescore and ten months' journey; and when thou mountedst the mare, she was affrighted at thee, knowing thee for a son of Adam, and would have cast thee off; so they bound on her back these two camels, to steady her." When Beloukiya heard this, he marvelled and thanked God for safety. Then said the King, "Tell me thy story and what brought thee hither." So he told him his story from first to last, and the King marvelled at his words.'

Here the Queen of the Serpents broke off, and Hasib, after he had marvelled at her story, again besought her to let one of her subjects conduct him to the surface of the earth, that he might go to his family; but she answered, 'O Hasib, I know that the first thing thou wilt do, after greeting thy family, will be to go to the bath and wash thyself; and as surely as thou dost this, it will be the cause of my death.' Quoth Hasib, 'I swear that I will never again enter the bath, so long as I live, but will wash at home, when washing is incumbent on me.' 'I would not trust thee,' rejoined the Queen, 'though thou shouldst swear to me a hundred oaths; for I know thou art a son of Adam and that to thee no oath is sacred. Thy father Adam made a covenant with God the Most High, who kneaded the clay whereof He fashioned him forty days and made His angels prostrate themselves to him; yet did he perjure himself and forgot his promise and disobeyed the commandment of his Lord.' When Hasib heard this, he held his peace and burst into tears nor did he leave weeping for the space of ten days, at the end of which time he begged the Queen to acquaint him with the rest of Beloukiya's adventures. Accordingly, she began again as follows:

"Beloukiya tarried two months with King Berakhiya, then took leave of him and fared on over wastes and deserts nights and days, till he came to a high mountain, on whose summit he beheld a great angel seated, celebrating the praises of God and invoking blessings on Mohammed. Before him lay a tablet covered with black characters and white, on which his eyes were fixed, and his wings were outspread, one to the western and the other to the eastern horizon. Beloukiya ascended the hill and saluted the angel, who returned his salute and enquired who he was and what brought him thither. Accordingly, he repeated to him his history, from beginning to end, and besought him, in turn, to acquaint him with his own name and occupation and the meaning of the tablet that lay before him. "My name is Michael," replied the angel, "and I am charged with the alternation of night and day; and this is my occupation till the Day of Judgment."

The prince wondered at his words and at his aspect and the greatness of his size and taking leave of him, fared onward till he came to a vast meadow, full of trees, through which ran seven rivers. In one part of the meadow, he saw a great tree and under it four angels, the first in the likeness of a man, the second in the likeness of a wild beast, the third in the likeness of a bull and the fourth in the likeness of a bird, engaged in magnifying God the Most High and saying, "O my God and my Master and my Lord, I conjure Thee, by Thy splendour and by the glory of Thy prophet Mohammed (on whom be blessing and peace) to vouchsafe Thy mercy and forgiveness to all things created in my likeness; for Thou canst do all things!"

Beloukiya continued his journey, till he came to another mountain and ascending it, found a great angel seated on the summit, glorifying God and hallowing Him and invoking blessings on Mohammed; and he was continually opening and shutting his hands and closing and extending his fingers. The prince accosted him and saluted him; whereupon the angel returned his greeting and enquired who he was and how he came thither. So Beloukiya acquainted him with his adventures and besought him to tell him, in turn, who he was and what was his function and what mountain was that. Quoth the angel, "This is the mountain Caf, that encompasseth the world, and in my grasp are all countries that God hath made. When He is minded to afflict any country

with earthquake or famine or slaughter or to bless it with plenty and prosperity, He bids me execute His commandment, and this I do without stirring from my place; for my hands lay hold upon the roots of the earth." "Hath God created other worlds than this within the mountain Caf?" asked Beloukiya. "Yes," answered the angel; "He hath made a world white as silver, whose vastness none knoweth but Himself, and hath peopled it with angels, whose meat and drink are the praise and magnification of God and the continual invocation of blessings upon His prophet Mohammed. Every Friday night they assemble on this mountain and worship God until the morning, and the recompense of their devotions they give to the sinners of the faith of Mohammed (whom God bless and keep) and to all who make the [complete] ablution of Friday; and this is their function until the Day of Resurrection." "And hath God created other mountains behind the mountain Caf?" asked Beloukiya. "Yes," replied the angel. "Behind this mountain is a range of mountains of snow and ice, five hundred years' journey in extent, and this it is that wards off the heat of Jehennem from the world, which would else be consumed thereby. Moreover, behind the mountain Caf are forty worlds, each the bigness of this world forty times told, some of gold, some of silver and other some of cornelian. Each of these worlds hath its own colour, and God hath peopled them with angels, that know not Adam nor Eve nor night nor day and have no other business than to celebrate His praises and hallow and magnify Him and make proclamation of His unity and supplicate Him on behalf of the followers of Mohammed (whom God bless and keep).

Thou must know also," continued the angel, " that God hath made the worlds in seven stages, one upon another, and hath created one of His angels, whose size and attributes none knoweth but Himself and who beareth the seven stages upon his shoulders. Under this angel God the Most High hath created a rock and under the rock, a bull, and under the bull, a great fish, and under the fish, a mighty ocean. God once told Jesus (on whom be peace) of this fish, and he said, 'O Lord, show me the fish, that I may look upon it.' So God commanded an angel to take Jesus and show him the fish. Accordingly, he carried the prophet to the sea, wherein the fish dwelt, and bade him look upon it. He looked, but [at first] saw nothing, when, suddenly, the monster darted past like lightning. At this sight, Jesus swooned away, and when he came to himself, God spoke to him, saying, 'O Jesus, hast thou seen the fish and noted its length and breadth?" 'By Thy splendour and majesty, O Lord,' replied Jesus, 'I saw no fish; but there passed me by a great bull, whose length was three days' journey, and I know not what manner of thing this is.' 'O Jesus,' rejoined the Almighty, 'this that thou sawest and which was three days in passing by thee, was [but] the head of the fish; and know that every day I create forty fish like unto this.' And Jesus marvelled at the power of God the Most High."

Quoth Beloukiya, "What hath God made beneath this nether sea?" "Under the sea," replied the angel, "God created a vast [abyss of] air, under the air the fire and under the fire a mighty serpent, by name Felec; and were it not for the fear of God the Most High, this serpent would swallow up all that is above it, without feeling it. When God created this serpent, He said to it, 'Open thy mouth and I will give thee somewhat to keep for me.' So it opened its mouth and God put Hell into its maw, saying, 'Keep it until the Day of Resurrection.' When that day comes, God will send His angels to

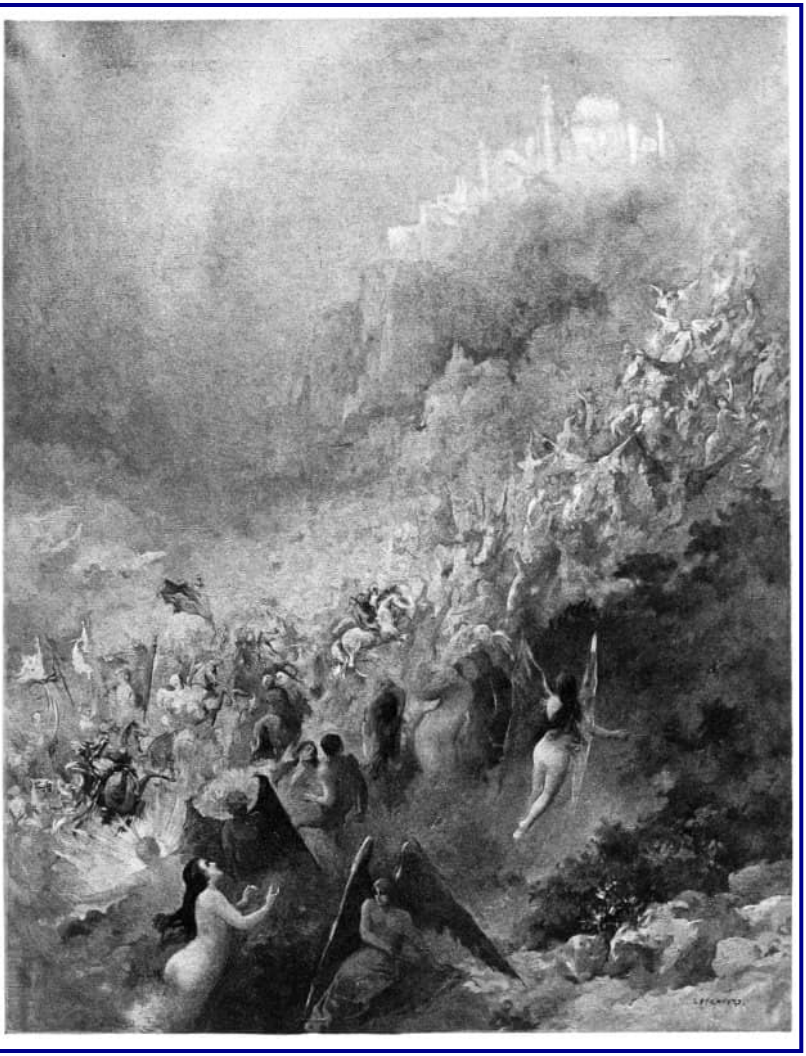
bring Hell and chain it up until the Day of Judgment, when, at His commandment, it will open its gates and there will issue therefrom sparks bigger than mountains."

When Beloukiya heard these things, he wept sore and taking leave of the angel, fared on westward, till he came In sight of a great shut gate, before which sat two creatures. When he drew near, he saw that one of the gate-keepers had a lion's favour and the other that of a bull; So he saluted them and they returned his greeting and enquired who and whence he was and whither he was bound. Quoth he, "I am of the sons of Adam, a wanderer for the love of Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve; and I have strayed from my road." Then he asked them what they were and what was the gate before which they sat. "We are the guardians of this gate," answered they, "and we have no other business than the praise and glorification of God and the invocation of blessings on Mohammed (whom may He bless and keep)." "What is within the gate?" asked Beloukiya; and they answered, "We know not." Then said he, "I conjure you, by the virtue of your glorious Lord, open to me the gate, that I may see that which is therein." "None may open this gate, of all created beings," replied they, "save Gabriel, the Faithful One, on whom be peace." Then Beloukiya lifted up his voice in supplication to God and besought Him to send down His messenger Gabriel, to open for him the gate; and God gave ear unto his prayer and commanded the angel to descend and open to him the gate of the confluence of the Two Seas. So Gabriel descended and saluting the prince, opened the gate to him, saying, "Enter, for God commandeth me to open to thee." So he entered and Gabriel locked the gate behind him and flew back to heaven.

When Beloukiya found himself within the gate, he looked and beheld a vast ocean, whose water was half salt and half fresh, bounded on either side by ranges of mountains of red cornelian, whereon he saw angels singing the praises of God and hallowing Him. So he went up to these latter and exchanging salutations with them, questioned them of the sea and the mountains. "This place is situate under the empyreal heaven," replied they, "and all the waters of the world fall into this ocean, whence we are appointed to distribute them to the various parts of the earth, the salt to the seas and the fresh to the lakes and rivers; and this is our employ until the Day of Ressurrection. But thou, whence comest thou and whiter art thou bound?" So he told them his story and asked them of the road. They bade him traverse the ocean, that lay before him; so he anointed his feet with the juice of the magical herb and taking leave of the angels, set out upon the surface of the sea and sped on over the water nights and days, till he met a handsome youth journeying along like himself, whereupon he saluted him and he returned his greeting. After this, he espied four great angels faring over the surface of the sea, and their going was like the blinding lightning; so he stationed himself in their road, and when they came up to him, he saluted them and conjured them by the Almighty, the Glorious One, to tell him their names and whither they were bound. "My name is Gabriel," replied the first angel, "and these my companions are called Israfil and Michael and Azrael. Know that there has appeared in the East a mighty dragon, which has laid waste a thousand cities and devoured their inhabitants; wherefore God the Most High hath commanded us to go to him and seize him and cast him into Jehennem."

Beloukiya marvelled at the vastness of their stature and fared on, as before, days and nights, till he came to an island, where he landed and walked about, till he saw a comely young man of shining visage, sitting weeping and lamenting between two stately tombs. So he saluted him, and he returned his salutation, and Beloukiya said to him, "Who art thou and what are these two tombs, and why sittest thou here between them, weeping?" The stranger looked at him and wept sore, till he wet his clothes with his tears; them said, "O my brother, mine is a strange and wonderful story; but thou first tell me who thou art and what brought thee hither, and after I will, in turn, relate to thee my history." So Beloukiya sat down by him and related to him all that had befallen him from his father's death, adding, "This is my whole history, and God [alone] knoweth what will betide me after this." When the other heard his story, he sighed and said, "Alas, unhappy one! What things thou hast seen in thy life! [But my experiences are yet more surprising,] for know that I have looked upon lord Solomon, in his life, and have seen what is past count or reckoning. Indeed, may story is marvellous and my cas extraordinary, and I would have thee tarry with me, till I tell thee my history and how I come to be sitting here."'

Here Hasib interrupted the Queen of Serpents and said to her, 'I conjure thee by God, O Queen, release me and bid one of thy servants carry me forth to the surface of the earth, and I will swear an oath to thee that I will never enter the bath as long as I live.' But she said, 'This is a thing that may not be, nor will I credit thee upon thine oath.' When he heard this, he wept and all the serpents wept on his account and fell to interceding for him with their Queen and saying, 'We beseech thee, bid one of us carry him forth to the surface of the earth, and he will swear an oath to thee never to enter the bath his life long.' Thereupon the Queen (whose name was Yumeleika) turned to Hasib and made him swear to her, 'I would fain have thee tell me the history of the young man, whom Baloukiya found sitting between the two tombs.' So she said, 'Know, O Hasib, that the young man said to Beloukiya, "Know, O my brother, that



The Story of Janshah

MY father was a king called Teigmous, who reigned over the land of Kabul and the Benou Shehlan, the thousand warlike chieftains, ruling each over a hundred walled cities and a hundred citadels; and he was suzerain also over seven vassal princes, and tribute came to him from the East and from the West. He was just and equitable in his rule and God the Most High had given him all this and had bestowed on him this mighty empire, yet had He not vouchsafed him a son, to inherit the kingdom after him, though this was his dearest wish. So one day he summoned the astrologers and men of learning and art and mathematicians and bade them draw his horoscope and look if he should be vouchsafed a son to succeed him. Accordingly, they consulted their books and calculated his nativity and made an observation of the stars on his account; after which they informed him that he would be blessed with a son, but by none other than the daughter of the King of Khorassan. At this news he rejoiced greatly and bestowing the astrologers treasure beyond count or reckoning, dismissed them. Then he summoned his chief Vizier, a renowned warrior, by name Ain Zar, who was held equal to a thousand cavaliers in battle, and repeating to him what the astrologers had said, bade him make ready to set out for Khorassan and demand the hand of King Behrwan's daughter for him.

The Vizier at once proceeded to equip himself for the journey and encamped without the town with his retinue, whilst King Teigmous made ready the most costly presents for the King of Khorassan, amongst the rest fifteen hundred bales of silk and pearls and rubies and other precious stones, besides gold and silver and a prodigious quantity of all that goes to the equipment of a bride, and loading them upon camels and mules, delivered them to Ain Zar, with a letter to the following purport. 'King Teigmous to King Behrwan, greeting. Know, O King, that we have taken counsel with the astrologers and sages and mathematicians, and they tell us that we shall have a son, and that by none other than thy daughter. Wherefore I have despatched unto thee my Vizier Ain Zar, with great plenty of bridal gear, to demand her of thee in marriage, and I appoint him to stand in my stead and to enter into the marriage contract in my name. Yea, and I desire that thou wilt grant him his request without delay or equivocation, for it is my own, and all the favour thou showest him, I take for myself; but beware of crossing me in this, for God hath bestowed upon me the kingdom of Kabul and vouchsafed me a mighty empire; and if I marry thy daughter, we will be as one thing in the kingship, thou and I, and I will send thee every year as much treasure as will suffice thee. And this is my desire of thee.'

So the Vizier departed with a great company and journeyed till he drew near the capital of Khorassan. When King Behrwan heard of this approach, he despatched his principal officers to meet him, with a convoy of provisions and fodder. The two parties foregathered and alighting without the city, exchanged salutations and abode there, eating and drinking, ten days, at the end of which time they mounted and rode on into the town, where they were met by King Behrwan, who came out to receive King Teigmous's Vizier and alighting, embraced him and carried him to his palace. Then Ain Zar brought out the presents and laid them before King Behrwan, together with

King Teigmous's letter, which when the King read, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bade the Vizier welcome, saying, 'Rejoice in the accomplishment of thine errand, for if King Teigmous sought of me my life, I would not deny it to him.' Then he went in forthright to his daughter and her mother and his kinsfolk and acquainting them with the King of Kaul's demand, sought council of them, and they said, 'Do what seemeth good to thee.' So he returned straightway to Ain Zar and notified him his concent; and the Vizier abode with him two months, at the end of which time he said to him, 'We beseech thee to bestow upon us that for which we came and that we may depart to our own country.' 'I her and I obey,' answered the Kingand assembled his Viziers and officers and the grandees of his realm and the monks and priests. The latter performed the ceremony of marriage between his daughter and the King Teigmous [by proxy] and King Behrwan bade decorate the city after the goodliest fashion and spread the streets with carpets [in honour of the occasion]. Then he equipped his daughter for the journey and gave her all manner of presents and rarities and precious metals, and Ain Zar departed with the princess to his own country.

When the news of their approach reached King Teigmous, he bade celebrate the wedding festivities and decorate the city; after which he went in to the princess and did away her maidenhead; nor was it long before she conceived by him and accomplishing her months, bore a male child like the moon at its full. When King Teigmous knew that his wife had given birth to a goodly son, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and calling the sages and astrologers and mathematicians, bade them draw the horoscope of the new-born child and tell him what would befall him in his lifetime. So they made their calculations and found that he would, in his fifteenth year, be exposed to great perils and hardships, which if he survived, he would be happy and fortunate during the rest of his life and become a greater and more powerful king than his father. The king rejoiced greatly in this prediction and named the boy Janshah. Then he delivered him to the nurses, who reared him on goodly wise, till he reached his fifth year, when his father taught him to read the Evangel and instructed him in horsemanship and the use of arms, so that, to King Teigmous's exceeding delight, he became, in less than seven years, a doughty cavalier, proficient in all martial exercises, and was wont to ride a-hunting.

It chanced one day that King Teigmous and his son rode out, a-hunting, into the plains and deserts and hunted till mid-afternoon of the third day, when the prince started a gazelle of a rare colour, which fled before him. So he gave chase to it, followed by seven of King Teigmous's men, all mounted on swift horses, and rode after the gazelle, which fled before them till she brought them to sea-shore. They all run at her, to take her; but she escaped from them and plunging into the waves, swam out to a fishing bark, that was moored near the shore, and leapt on board. Janshah and his followers dismounted and boarding the boat, made prize of the gazelle and were about to return to shore with her, when the prince espied a great island in the offing and said to his men, 'I have a mind to visit yonder island.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and launching out, sailed till they came to the island, where they landed and explored the place. Then they again embarked and set out to return homeward, but the night overtook them and they lost their way on the sea. Moreover, a contrary wind arose and

drove the boat into the mid-ocean, so that, when they awoke in the morning, they found themselves out of sight of land.

Meanwhile, King Teigmous missed his son and commanded his troops to make search for him. So they dispersed on all sides and a company of them, coming to sea-shore, found there one of the prince's attendants, whom he had left in charge of the horses. They asked him what was come of his master and the other six servants, and he told them what had passed; whereupon they returned with him to the King and told him what they had learnt. When Teigmous heard their report, he wept sore and cast the crown from his head, biting his hands for vexation. Then he rose forthright and wrote letters and despatched them to all the islands of the sea. Moreover, he fitted out a hundred ships and filling them with troops, sent them in quest of Janshah. They cruised about for ten days, but finding no trace of the prince, returned and told the King, who withdrew with his troops to his capital city, where he abode in sore concern. As for Janshah's mother, when she heard of his loss, she buffeted her face and fell a-mourning for her son [as if he were dead].

Meanwhile Janshah and his companions drove before the wind till they came to a second island, where they landed and walked about. Presently they came upon a spring of running water in the midst of the island and saw a man sitting thereby. So they went up to him and saluted him, and he returned their greeting in a voice like the pipe of birds. Whilst they were marvelling at the man's speech, he suddenly split himself in twain, and each half went a different way. Then there came down from the hills a multitude of men of all kinds, who no sooner reached the spring, than they divided into two halves and rushed on Janshah and his companions, to eat them. When the latter saw this, they turned and fled seaward; but the cannibals pursued them and caught and ate three of the huntsmen. Janshah and the other three reached the boat in safety and putting out to sea, sailed days and nights, without knowing whither they went. Being pressed by hunger, they killed the gazelle and lived on her flesh, till the winds drove them to a third island, as it were Paradise, full of trees and waters and orchards laden with all manner fruits and streams running under the trees.

The place pleased the prince and he sent his three companions ashore to explore it, whilst he himself remained by the boat. So they landed and searched the island, East and West, but found none; then they fared on inland, till they came to a castle of pure crystal, compassed about with ramparts of white marble, within which was a garden, full of all manner sweet-scented flowers and fruits beyond description, both hard and soft of skin, and trees and birds singing upon the branches. Midmost the garden was a vast basin of water, and beside it a great estrade, on which stood a throne of red gold, set with all kinds of jewels and surrounded by a number of stools. They entered and explored the place in all directions, but found none there, so returned to Janshah and told him what they had seen. When he heard their report, he landed and accompanied them to the palace, which he entered and explored in every part, marvelling at the goodliness of the place. They walked about the gardens and ate of the fruits, till it grew dark, when they returned to the estrade and sat down, Janshah on the throne and the three others on the stools around him. Then the prince called to mind his separation from his father's throne and country and friends and kinsfolk and fell a-weeping and lamenting over their loss, whilst his men wept round him.

Presently, they heard a mighty clamour, that came from seaward, and looking in the direction of the sound, were ware of a multitude of apes, as they were a swarm of locusts. Now the palace and island belonged to these apes, who, finding the boat moored to the strand, had scuttled it and after repaired to the palace, where they found Janshah and his servants. The latter were sore affrighted at the sudden appearance of the apes, but a company of them came up to the throne and kissing the earth before the prince, stood before him, with their paws upon their breasts [in token of homage]. Then they brought gazelles, which they slaughtered and skinned; then, roasting pieces of the flesh, they laid them on platters of gold and silver and spreading the table, made signs to Janshah and his men to eat. So the prince and his followers came down and ate, and the apes with them, till they were satisfied, when he apes took away the meat and set on fruits, of which they ate and praised God the Most High. Then Janshah questioned the apes by signs what they were and to whom the place belonged, and they signed to him in reply, as who should say, 'This island belonged aforetime to our lord Solomon son of David (on whom be peace) and he used to come hither once a year for his pleasance. And know, O King, that thou art become our Sultan and we are thy servants; so eat and drink, and whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do.' So saying, they kissed the earth before Janshah and went their ways.

The prince lay the night on the throne and his men on the stools about him, and on the morrow, at daybreak, the four Viziers [or chiefs of the apes] presented themselves before him, attended by their followers, who ranged themselves about him, rank upon rank, until the place was full. Then the Viziers exhorted him by signs to do justice amongst them and rule them with equity; after which the apes cried out to each other and went away, all but a few who remained to serve him. After awhile, there came up a company of apes with huge dogs, bridled and saddled like horses, and signed to Janshah and his followers to mount and go with them. So they mounted, marvelling at the greatness of the dogs, and rode forth, attended by the four Viziers and a swarm of apes like locusts, some on foot and others riding [on dogs,] till they came to the sea-shore. Janshah looked for the boat and finding it not, turned to the Viziers and enquired what was come of it, to which they answered, 'Know, O King, that, when thou camest to our island, we knew that thou wouldst be Sultan over us and we feared lest thou shouldst embark in the boat and flee from us, in our absence; so we sank it.'

When Janshah heard this, he turned to his men and said to them, 'There is nothing for it but to submit patiently to what God the Most High hath ordained; for we have no means of escaping from these apes.' Then they fared on inland, till they came to the banks of a river, on the other side of which was a high mountain, whereon Janshah saw a multitude of ghouls, riding on horses, and marvelled at the vastness of their bulk and the strangeness of their favour; for some of them had heads like oxen and others like camels. So he turned to the apes and said to them, 'What are these ghouls?' And they answered, saying, 'Know, O King, that these ghouls are our mortal enemies and we come hither to do battle with them.' As soon as the ghouls espied the army of the apes, they rushed down to the river-bank and standing there, fell to pelting them with stones as big as maces, and there befell a sore battle between them. Presently, Janshah, seeing that the ghouls were getting the better of the apes, cried out to his men, saying, 'Take your bows and arrows and shoot at them and keep them off from us.' So

they shot at the ghouls and slew of them much people, whereupon there befell them sore dismay and defeat and they turned to flee, which when the apes saw, they forded the river and chased the ghouls, killing many of them in the pursuit, to the top of the hill, where they disappeared.

Here Janshah found a tablet of alabaster, whereon were written these words, 'O thou that enterest this land, know that thou wilt become Sultan over these apes and that, so long as thou abidest with them, they will be victorious over the ghouls; nor is there any escape for thee from them, except by the passes that run east and west through the mountains. If thou take the eastern pass, it will lead thee through a country swarming with ghouls and wild beasts and Marids and Afrits, and thou wilt come, after three months' journeying, to the ocean that encompasses the earth; but, if thou follow the western pass, it will bring thee, after four months' journeying, to the Valley of Ants. When thou comest thither, beware of the ants and fare on, till thou come to a high mountain that burns like fire. After thou hast followed the road, that leads through this mountain, ten days, thou wilt come to a great river, whose current is so swift that it dazzles the eyes. Now this river dries up every Saturday, and on the [opposite] bank is a city inhabited by Jews, who reject the faith of Mohammed; there is not a Muslim amongst them nor is there other than this city in the country. And know also that he who wrote this tablet was the lord Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace!' When Janshah read these words, he wept sore, and repeated them to his men. Then they mounted again and returned with the apes, in triumph, to the castle, where Janshah abode, Sultan over them, for a year and a half.

At the end of this time, he one day commanded the apes to mount and go forth a-hunting with him, and they rode out into the wastes and wilds and fared on from place to place, till they drew near the Valley of Ants, which Janshah knew by the description of it in the tablet of Solomon. Here he called a halt and they all abode there, eating and drinking, ten days, after which Janshah took his men apart by night and said to them, 'I purpose to flee through the Valley of Ants and make for the town of the Jews; it may be God will deliver us from these apes and we will go our ways.' And they replied, 'We hear and obey.' So they waited till some little of the night was spent, then, donning their armour and girding themselves with swords and daggers and so forth, they set out and fared on westward till morning.

When the apes awoke and missed Janshah and his men, they knew that they had fled. So they mounted and pursued them, some taking the eastern road and others that which led to the Valley of Ants, nor was it long before the latter came in sight of the fugitives, as they were about to enter the valley, and hastened after them. When Janshah and his men saw them, they fled into the Valley of Ants; but their pursuers soon overtook them and would have slain them, when, behold, a multitude of ants, like swarming locusts, as big as dogs, rose out of the earth and rushed upon the apes. They devoured many apes and the latter killed many of the ants; but help came to the latter and there ensued a sore battle between them till the evening. Now an ant would go up to an ape and smite him and cut him in twain, whilst it was all that half a score apes could do to master one ant and tear him in sunder.

As soon as it became dark, Janshah and his men took to flight and fled along the heart of the valley till the morning. With the break of day, the apes were upon them,

which when the prince saw, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Smite with your swords.' So they drew their swords and laid about them right and left, till there ran at one of them an ape, with tusks like an elephant, and smote him and cut him in sunder. Then the apes redoubled upon Janshah and he fled with his followers into the lower part of the valley, where he saw a vast river and by its side, a great host of ants. When the latter espied Janshah, they surrounded him, and one of the huntsmen fell to smiting them with his sword and cutting them in twain; whereupon they all set upon him and killed him. At this pass, up came the apes from over the mountain and fell upon Janshah; but he tore off his clothes and plunging into the river, with his remaining servant, struck out for the middle of the stream. Presently, he caught sight of a tree on the other bank of the river; so he swam up to it and laying hold of one of its branches, swung himself ashore, where he fell to wringing his clothes and spreading them in the sun to dry. As for the huntsman, the current carried him away and dashed him in pieces against the rocks, what while there befell a sore battle between the ants and the apes, until the latter gave up the pursuit and returned to their own land.

Janshah abode alone on the river-bank, weeping, till nightfall, when he took refuge in a cavern and passed the night there, in great fear and grief for the loss of his companions. At daybreak, he set out again and fared on days and nights, eating of the herbs of the earth, till he came to the mountain that burnt like fire, and thence to the river that dried up every Saturday. Now it was a mighty river and on the opposite bank stood a great city, which was the city of the Jews mentioned in the tablet of Solomon. Here he abode till the next Saturday, when the river dried up and he walked over to the other side [dry-shod] and entered the city, but saw none in the streets. However, after awhile, he came to the door of a house, so he opened it and entering, saw within the people of the house [sitting] in silence and speaking not. Quoth he, 'I am a stranger and hungry;' and they signed to him, as who should say, 'Eat and drink, but speak not.' So he ate and drank and slept till the morning, when the master of the house bade him welcome and asked him whence he came and whither he was bound. Janshah wept sore and told him all that had befallen him and how his father was King of Kabul; whereat the Jew marvelled and said, 'Never heard we of that city, but we have heard from the merchants of the caravans that in that direction lies a country called Yemen.' 'How far is that country from this place?' asked Janshah, and the Jew said, 'The merchants pretend that it is seven-and-twenty months' journey from their land hither.' 'And when does the caravan come?' asked Janshah. 'Next year it will come,' replied his host; whereat the prince wept and fell a-sorrowing for himself and his followers and lamenting his separation from his father and mother and all that had befallen him in his wanderings. Then said the Jew, 'O young man, do not weep, but abide with us till the caravan comes, when we will send thee with it to thine own country.' So he abode with the Jew two whole months and every day he went out a-walking in the streets of the city for his diversion.

One day, as he walked about the streets, as of wont, he heard a man crying aloud and saying, 'Who will earn a thousand dinars and a slave-girl of surpassing beauty and grace, at the price of half a day's labour?' But none answered him and Janshah said in himself, 'Were not the work perilous and difficult, he would not offer such a price for half a day's labour.' Then he accosted the crier and said to him, 'I will do the work.' So

the man took him by the hand and carried him to a lofty and splendid house, where they found a Jew merchant seated on a chair of ebony, to whom said the crier, 'O merchant, I have cried [for thee] every day these three months, and none hath answered, save this young man.' The Jew bade Janshah welcome and taking him by the hand, carried him into a magnificent saloon and called for food. So the servants spread the table and set on all manner meats, of which the merchant and Janshah ate and washed their hands. Then wine was set on and they drank; after which the Jew rose and bringing Janshah a purse of a thousand dinars and a slave-girl of ravishing beauty, said to him, 'Take the girl and money to thy hire. The work thou shalt do to-morrow.' So saying, he withdrew and Janshah lay with the damsel that night.

On the morrow, the merchant bade his slaves carry him to the bath and clothe him in a costly suit of silk, whenas he came out. So they did as he bade them and brought him back to the house, whereupon the merchant called for wine and harp and lute, and they drank and played and made merry till the half of the night was past, when the Jew retired to his harem and Janshah lay with the fair slave till the morning. Then he went to the bath and on his return, the merchant came to him and said, 'Now must thou do the work for me.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Janshah. So the merchant let bring two mules and setting Janshah on one, mounted the other himself. Then they [rode forth the city and] fared on from morn till noon, when they came to a lofty mountain, to whose height there was no limit. Here the Jew halted and alighting, bade Janshah do the same. The latter obeyed and the merchant gave him a knife and a cord, saying, 'I desire that thou slaughter this [thy] mule.' So Janshah tucked up his sleeves and skirts and going up to the mule, bound her legs with the cord, then threw her down and cut her throat; after which he skinned her and lopped off her head and legs and she became a [shapeless] heap of flesh. Then said the Jew, 'Slit open the mule's belly and enter it and I will sew it up on thee. There must thou abide awhile and whatsoever thou seest in her belly, acquaint me therewith.' So Janshah slit the mule's belly and crept into it, whereupon the merchant sewed it up on him and withdrawing to a distance, hid himself in the skirts of the mountain.

Presently a huge bird swooped down on the dead mule and snatching it up, flew up with it to the top of the mountain, where it set it down and would have eaten it; but Janshah, being ware of this, slit the mule's belly and came forth. When the bird saw him, it took fright at him and flew away; whereupon he stood up and looking right and left, saw nothing but the carcases of dead men, dried in the sun, and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he looked down and saw the merchant standing at the mountain-foot, looking for him. As soon as the Jew caught sight of him, he called out to him, saying, 'Throw me down of the stones that are about thee, that I may direct thee to a way by which thou mayst descend.' So Janshah threw him down nigh upon two hundred of the stones, with which the summit was strewn and which were all rubies and chrysolites and other precious stones; after which he called out to him, saying, 'Show me the way down and I will throw thee some more.' The Jew made him no answer, but gathered up the stones and binding them on the back of his mule, went his way, leaving Janshah alone on the mountain-top.

When the latter found himself deserted, he began to weep and implore help, and thus he abode three days, after which he rose and fared on over the mountain two months' space, feeding upon herbs, till he came to its skirts and espied afar off a valley, full of trees and streams and birds singing the praises of God, the One, the Victorious. At this sight he rejoiced greatly and stayed not his steps till he came to a cleft in the rocks, through which [in the season of the rains] a torrent fell down into the valley. He made his way down [the dry bed of the water-course] into the valley and walked on therein, gazing right and left, until he came in sight of a great castle, rising high into the air. As he drew near, he saw an old man of comely aspect and face shining with light standing at the gate, with a staff of cornelian in his hand, and going up to him, saluted him. The old man returned his greeting and bade him welcome, saying, 'Sit down, O my son.' So he sat down at the door of the castle and the other said to him, 'How camest thou to this land, that no son of Adam hath trodden before thee, and whither art thou bound?' When Janshah heard his words, he wept sore at the memory of all he had suffered and his tears choked his speech. 'O my son,' said the old man, 'leave weeping; for indeed thou makest my heart ache.' So saying, he rose and set food before him and bade him eat. He ate and praised God the Most High, after which the old man besought him to tell him his history.

So Janshah related to him all that had befallen him, from first to last, at which he marvelled exceedingly. Then said the prince, 'I prithee, tell me who is the lord of this valley and to whom doth this great castle belong?' 'O my son,' answered the old man, 'this valley and castle and all that is therein belong to the lord Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace! As for me, my name is Sheikh Nesr, king of the birds; for thou must know that the lord Solomon committed this castle to my charge and taught me the language of birds and made me king over all the birds that be in the world; wherefore they all come hither once in every year, and I pass them in review. Then they depart; and this is why I dwell here.' When Janshah heard this, he wept sore and said to the Sheikh, 'O my father, how shall I do to win to my native land?' 'Know, o my son,' replied Sheikh Nesr, 'that thou art near the Mountain Caf; and there is no departing for thee from this place; but tarry with me here and eat and drink and divert thyself with viewing the apartments of this castle, till the birds come, when I will give thee in charge to one of them, and he will bring thee to thy native country.'

So Janshah abode with Sheikh Nesr in all delight of life, taking his pleasance in the valley and eating of its fruits and laughing and making merry with the old man, till the day appointed for the coming of the birds, when the Sheikh gave him the keys of the castle, bidding him amuse himself with exploring all its apartments and viewing what was therein, but charging him straitly not to open such a door, else he would never again know fair fortune. Then he went forth to meet the birds, which came up, kind by kind, and kissed his hands; and he said to them, 'With me is a youth, whom destiny hath brought hither from a far land, and I desire of you that you take him up and carry him to his own country.' And they answered, 'We hear and obey.'

Meanwhile, Janshah went round about the castle, opening the various doors and viewing the apartments into which they led, till he came to the door which Sheikh Nesr had warned him not to enter. Its fashion pleased him, for it had on it a lock of gold, and he said in himself, 'This door is goodlier than all the others; I wonder what is

behind it, that Sheikh Nesr should forbid me to open it. Come what may, needs must I enter and see what is in this apartment; for that which is decreed unto the creature, he must perforce fulfil.' So he unlocked the door and entering, found himself in a vast garden, full of streams and trees, laden with fruits, both hard and soft of skin, whose branches swayed gracefully, whenas the zephyr blew upon them. Midmost the garden was a great lake, the gravel of whose bed was gems and jewels and precious stones; and hard by the lake stood a little pavilion, builded all of gold and silver and crystal, with lattice-windows of jacinth. The floor of this pavilion was paved with green beryl and balass rubies and emeralds and other jewels, set mosaic-fashion, and in its midst was a golden basin, full of water and compassed about with figures of birds and beasts, wroughten of gold and silver and casting water from their mouths. When the zephyr blew on them, it entered their ears [and passed through pipes hidden in their bodies,] and therewith the figures sang out, each in its own tongue. Beside the fountain was a great estrade, and thereon stood a vast throne of cornelian, inlaid with pearls and jewels, over which was a tent of green silk set up, fifty cubits in compass and embroidered with jewels and precious metals. Within this tent was a closet containing the [magical] carpet of the lord Solomon (on whom be peace), and the pavilion was compassed about with beds of roses and basil and eglantine and all manner sweet-smelling herbs and flowers.

Janshah explored the marvels of the place, till he was weary of wonder, when he returned to the pavilion and mounting the throne, fell asleep under the tent set up thereon. He slept there awhile and presently awaking, went forth and sat down on a stool before the door. As he sat, marvelling at the goodliness of the place, there flew up three birds like doves [but as big as vultures] and lighted on the brink of the lake, where they sported awhile. Then they put off their feathers and became three maidens, as they were moons, that had not their like in the world. They plunged into the lake and swam about and toyed and laughed, while Janshah marvelled at their beauty and grace and the justness of their shapes.

Presently, they came up out of the water and fell to walking about and taking their pleasure in the garden; whereat Janshah's reason was like to depart from him and he rose and followed them. When he overtook them, he saluted them and they returned his salute; after which quoth he, 'Who are ye, O illustrious ladies, and whence come ye?' 'We are from the invisible world of God the Most High,' replied the youngest damsel, 'and come hither to divert ourselves. And he marvelled at their beauty and said to the youngest, 'Have compassion on me and incline unto me and take pity on my case and on all that has befallen me in my life.' 'Leave this talk,' rejoined she, 'and go thy ways;' whereat the tears streamed from his eyes, and he sighed heavily and repeated the following verses.

She shone out in the garden in garments all of green,
With open vest and collars and flowing hair beseen.
"What is thy name?" I asked her, and she replied, "I'm she
Who roasts the hearts of lovers on coals of love and teen."
Of passion and its anguish to her I made my moan;
"Upon a rock," she answered, "thy plaints are wasted clean."

"Even if thy heart," I told her, "be rock in very deed,
Yet hath God made fair water well from the rock, I ween."

When the maidens heard his verses, they laughed and played and sang and made merry. Then he brought them somewhat of fruit, and they ate and drank and lay with him till the morning, when they donned their feather-vests and becoming doves once more, flew away and disappeared from his sight. His reason well-nigh fled with them, and he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, in which he lay all that day.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Nesr returned from the assembly of the birds and sought for Janshah, that he might send him with the latter to his native land, but found him not and knew that he had entered the forbidden door. So he went thither and seeing it open, entered and found the prince lying aswoon under a tree. He fetched scented waters and sprinkled them on his face, whereupon he revived and turned right and left, but seeing none by him, save the old man, sighed heavily and repeated the following verses:

Like the full moon she shines, upon a night of fortune fair,
Slender of shape and charming all with her seductive air.
She hath an eye, whose sorcery enchanteth every wit,
A mouth, as agates, set a-row midst roses red, it were.
The night-black torrent of her locks falls down unto her hips;
Beware the serpents of her curls, I counsel thee beware!
Indeed, her glance, her sides are soft, but harder is her heart
Than rock to him who loveth her; there is no softness there.
The arrows of her looks she darts from out her eyebrows' bow;
They hit and never miss the mark, though from afar they fare.
Alas, her beauty! it outdoes all other loveliness;
No maid of mortal mould there is that can with her compare.

When the Sheikh heard this, he said, 'O my son, did I not warn thee not to open the door? But now tell me what hath befallen thee.' So Janshah told him all that had passed between him and the three maidens, and Sheikh Nesr said, 'Know, O my son, that these three maidens are of the daughters of the Jinn and come hither every year [for a day], to divert themselves and make merry until mid-afternoon, when they return to their own country.' 'And where is their country?' asked Janshah. 'By Allah, O my son,' answered the old man, 'I know not: but now take heart and put away this love from thee and come with me, that I may send thee to thine own land with the birds.' When Janshah heard this, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon; and presently, coming to himself, said, 'O my father, I care not to return to my native land. I conjure thee by Allah, let me abide with thee, that I may again foregather with the maidens and look upon the face of her I love, though it be but once a year. And know, O my father, that I will never again name my people, though I die before thee.' And he sighed and repeated the following verses:

Would that the phantom never came to mock the lover's pain
Anights, and would this love were not created for men's bane!
Except my heart were all afire with memories of thee,

The tears adown my wasted cheeks would not in torrents rain.
My soul to patience I exhort forever, day and night,
Whilst still my body is consumed with fires of love in vain.

So saying, he fell at Sheikh Nesr's feet and kissed them and wept sore. 'Have compassion on me,' exclaimed he, 'so God take pity on thee!' 'By Allah, O my son,' replied the old man, 'I know nothing of the maidens nor of their country; but, if thy heart be indeed set on one of them, abide with me till this time next year, and when the day of their coming arrives, hide thyself under a tree in the garden. As soon as they have alighted and laid aside their feather-garments and plunged into the lake and are swimming about at a distance from their clothes, run up and seize the vest of her to whom thou hast a mind. When they see thee, they will come ashore and she, whose vest thou hast taken, will accost thee and say to thee with the sweetest of speech and the most bewitching smiles, "Give me my clothes, O my brother, that I may don them and cover my nakedness withal." But be not thou persuaded; for, if thou yield to her wishes and give her back the vest, she will don it and fly away and thou wilt never see her again; but, when thou hast gotten the vest, put it under thine armpit and hold it fast, till I return from the assembly of the birds, when I will make accord between you and send thee back to thy native land, and the maiden with thee. And this, O my son, is all I can do for thee.' When Janshah heard this, his heart was solaced and he abode with Sheikh Nesr yet another year, counting the hours until the day of the coming of the birds.

At last the appointed time arrived and the old man said to him, 'Do as I enjoined thee with the maidens, for I go to meet the birds.' So saying, he departed, whilst Janshah repaired to the garden and hid himself under a tree, where none could see him. Here he abode a first day and a second and a third, but the maidens came not; whereat he was sore troubled and wept and groaned without ceasing, till he swooned away. When he came to himself, he sat, looking now at the lake and now at the sky, and anon at the earth and anon at the open country, whilst his heart fluttered for stress of love and longing. As he was in this case, behold, the three doves appeared in the distance and flew till they reached the garden and lighted down beside the lake. They turned right and left, but saw no one; so they put off their feathers and became three naked maidens, as they were ingots of virgin silver. Then they plunged into the lake and swam about, laughing and frolicking. Quoth the eldest, 'O my sister, I fear lest there be some one lying in wait for us in the pavilion.' 'O sister, answered the second, 'since the days of King Solomon, none hath entered the pavilion, be he man or genie. 'By Allah, O my sisters,' added the youngest, laughing, 'if there be any hidden there, he will assuredly take none but me.'

Then they swam out to the middle of the lake, and when Janshah, who was watching them, with a heart fluttering for stress of passion, saw them at a distance from their clothes, he sprang to his feet and running like the darting lightning [to the brink of the lake,] snatched up the feather-vest of the youngest damsel, her on whom his heart was set and whose name was Snemseh. At this, the girls turned and seeing him, were affrighted and veiled themselves from him with the water. Then they swam towards the shore and looking on him, saw that he was bright of face as the moon at her full and said to him, 'Who art thou and how comest thou hither and why hast

thou taken the clothes of the lady Shemseh?' 'Come hither to me,' replied he, 'and I will tell you my story.' Quoth Shemseh, 'Why hast thou taken my clothes, rather than those of my sisters?' 'O light of mine eyes,' answered he. 'come forth of the water, and I will tell thee my case and why I chose thee out.' 'O my lord and solace of my eyes and fruit of my heart,' rejoined she, 'give me my clothes, that I may put them on and cover my nakedness withal; then will I come forth to thee.' But he replied, saying, 'O princess of fair ones, how can I give thee back thy clothes and slay myself for love-longing? Verily, I will not give them to thee, till Sheikh Nesr, the king of the birds, returns.' 'If thou wilt not give me my clothes,' quoth she, 'withdraw a little apart from us, that my sisters may come forth and dress themselves and give me somewhat wherewith to cover myself.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and retired into the pavilion, whereupon the two eldest princesses came out and donning their clothes, gave Shemseh somewhat thereof, not enough to fly withal, and she put it on and came forth of the water, as she were the moon at her full or a browsing gazelle.

Then they entered the pavilion, where they found Janshah sitting on the throne; so Shemseh saluted him and sitting down near him, said to him, 'O fair of face, thou hast undone thyself and me; but tell us thy history, that we may know how it is with thee.' At these words, he wept till he wet his clothes with his tears; and when she saw that he was distracted for love of her, she rose and taking him by the hand, made him sit by her side and wiped away his tears with her sleeve. Then said she to him, 'O fair of face, leave this weeping and tell us thy story.' So he related to her all that had befallen him, whereupon she sighed and said, 'O my lord, since thou lovest me so dear, give me my clothes, that I may fly to my people and tell them what has passed between thee and me, and after I will come back to thee and carry thee to thine own country.' When he heard this, he wept and replied, 'Is it lawful to thee before God to slay me wrongfully?' 'O my lord,' said she, 'and how shall I do that?' 'If I give thee thy clothes,' rejoined he, 'thou wilt fly away from me, and I shall die forthright.'

At this she and her sisters laughed and she said to him, 'Take comfort and be of good cheer, for I must needs marry thee.' So saying, she bent down to him and embraced him and kissed him between the eyes and on his cheeks. They clipped each other awhile, after which they drew apart and sat down on the throne. Then the eldest princess went out into the garden and gathering fruits and flowers, brought them into the pavilion, and they ate and drank and sported and made merry. Now Janshah was accomplished in beauty and grace and slender and elegant of shape, and the princess Shemseh said to him, 'By Allah, O my beloved, I love thee with an exceeding love and will never leave thee!' When he heard her words, his heart dilated and he laughed for joy; and they abode thus awhile in mirth and gladness.

Whilst they were laughing and taking their pleasure in the pavilion, Sheikh Nesr returned from the assembly of the birds and came in to them; whereupon they all rose to him and saluted him and kissed his hands. He gave them welcome and bade them be seated. So they sat down and he said to Shemseh, 'Verily, this youth loves thee with an exceeding love; so, God on thee, deal kindly with him, for he is of the great ones of mankind and of the sons of the kings, and his father rules over the land of Kabul and is possessed of a mighty empire.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she and kissing the Sheikh's hands, stood before him [in token of respect and obedience]. 'If thou speak

truly,' said he, 'swear to me by Allah that thou wilt never betray him, what while thou abidest in the chains of life.' So she swore a great oath that she would never betray Janshah, but would assuredly marry him, and added, 'I will never forsake him.' The Sheikh believed in her oath and said to Janshah, 'Thanks be to God, who hath made you at one!' At this the prince rejoiced with an exceeding great joy, and he and Shemseh abode three months with Sheikh Nesr, feasting and making merry.

At the end of that time, the princess said to Janshah, 'I wish to go with thee to thy native land, that we may marry and abide there.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and took counsel with Sheikh Nesr, who bade him go and commended the princess to his care. Then said she, 'O Sheikh Nesr, bid him give me my feather-vest.' So the Sheikh bade Janshah give it to her, and he did so; where upon she donned it and said to the prince, 'Mount my back and keep fast hold of my feathers, lest thou fall off; and do thou shut thine eyes and stop thine ears, so thou mayst not hear the roar of the revolving sphere, as we pass through the air.' He did as she bade him and Sheikih Nesr described to her the land of Kabul, that she might not miss her way, and bade them farewell, commending the prince to her care. She took leave of her sisters and bade them return to her people and tell them what had befallen her with Janshah; then, rising into the air, she flew off, like the wafts of the wind or the dazzling lightning, and stayed not her course from the forenoon till the hour of afternoon prayer, when she espied afar off a valley abounding in trees and streams and alighted there to rest. Janshah dismounted and kissing her between the eyes, sat with her awhile on the bank of a river there; then they rose and explored the valley, taking their pleasure therein and eating of the fruits of the trees, till nightfall, when they lay down under a tree and slept till the morning.

As soon as it was day, the princess arose and taking Janshah on her back, flew on with him till mid-day, when she perceived, by the appearance of the landmarks that Sheikh Nesr had described to her, that they were nearing the city of Kabul and alighted in a wide and blooming champaign, wherein were gazelles feeding and springs welling and rivers flowing and trees laden with ripe fruits. So Janshah dismounted and kissed her between the eyes; and she said to him, 'O my beloved and solace of mine eyes, knowst thou how many days' journey we have come [since yesterday]?' 'No,' answered he, and she said. 'We have come thirty months' journey.' Quoth he, 'Praised be God for safety!' Then they sat down side by side and ate and drank and toyed and laughed.

Presently, there came up to them two of the King's servants, of those who had been of the prince's company in the chase, and one of them was he whom he had left by the horses, when he embarked in the fishing-boat. As soon as they saw Janshah, they knew him and saluted him; then said they, 'With thy leave, we will go to thy father and bear him the glad tidings of thy coming.' 'Go,' replied the prince, 'and fetch us tents, for we will abide here seven days to rest ourselves, till he make ready and come forth to meet us, that we may enter in due state.' So the officers hastened back to King Teigmous and said to him, 'Good news, O King of the age!' 'What is it?' asked he. 'Is my son Janshah come back?' 'Yes,' answered they; 'he has returned from his absence and is now near at hand in the Kerani meadow.'

When the King heard this, he rejoiced greatly and fell down in a swoon for excess of joy; then, coming to himself, he bade his Vizier give each of the men a splendid

dress of honour and a sum of money and said to them, 'Take this, in reward for your good tidings, whether ye lie or speak sooth.' 'Indeed, we lie not,' replied the slaves, 'for but now we sat with him and saluted him and kissed his hands, and he bade us go and fetch him tents for that he would abide in the meadow seven days, till such time as the Viziers and Amirs and grandees should come out to meet him.' Quoth the King, 'How is it with my son?' And they answered, 'He hath with him a houri, as he had brought her out of Paradise.' At this, the King bade beat the drums and sound the trumpets for gladness and despatched messengers to announce the good news to Janshah's mother and to the wives of the Amirs and notables. So the criers spread themselves about the city and acquainted the people with the glad tidings of the prince's coming.

Then the King made ready and setting out, with his officers and troops, for the meadow, came upon Janshah and Shemseh sitting there. When the prince saw them, he rose and went to meet them; and the troops knew him and dismounted, to salute him and kiss his hands; after which they escorted him to his father, who, at sight of his son, threw himself from his horse's back and clipped him in his arms and wept sore. Then they took horse again and rode till they came to the banks of a river, when the troops alighted and pitched the tents and pavilions and standards, to the sound of trumpets and cymbals and drums and flutes. Moreover, the King caused set up a pavilion of red silk for the princess Shemseh, who put off her feather raiment and entering the pavilion, sat down there.

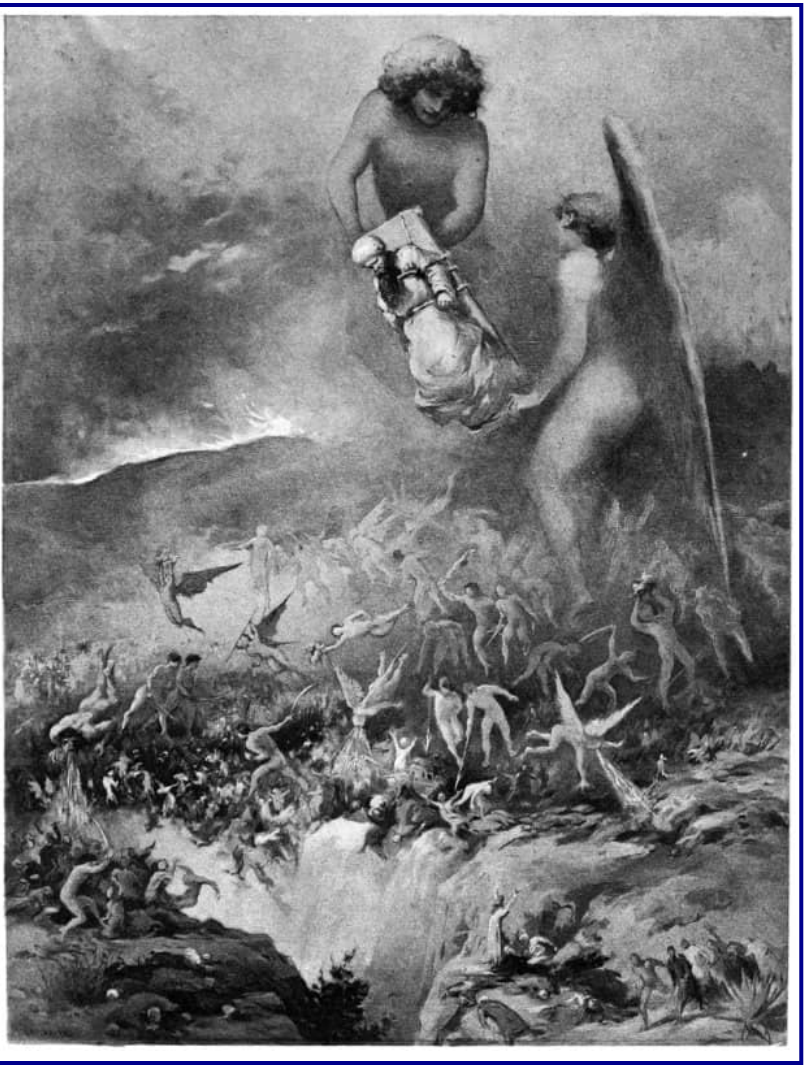
Presently, the King and his son came in to her, and when she saw Teigmous, she rose and kissed the earth before him. The King sat down and seating Janshah on his right hand and Shemseh on his left, bade her welcome and said to his son, 'Tell me all that hath befallen thee in thine absence.' So Janshah related to him all his adventures, whereat he marvelled greatly and turning to the princess, said, 'Praised be God for that He hath put it into thy heart to reunite me with my son! Verily this is of [His] exceeding bounty! And now I would have thee ask of me what thou wilt, that I may do it in thine honour.' Quoth she, 'I ask of thee that thou build me a palace in the midst of a garden, with water running under it.' And the King answered, 'I hear and obey.'

As they sat talking, up came Janshah's mother, attended by all the wives of the Viziers and Amirs and notables of the city. When the prince caught sight of her, he rose and leaving the tent, went to meet her and they embraced a long while, whilst the queen wept for excess of joy and repeated the following verses:

Joy hath o'ercome me so, that, for the very stress
Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become, as 'twere, your nature, O my eyes,
So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Then the King departed to his pavilion and Janshah carried his mother to his own tent, where they sat talking and complaining, one to the other, of all they had suffered for separation, till there came up some of Shemseh's attendants, to announce the coming of the princess. When the queen heard this, she rose and going to meet Shemseh, saluted her and seated her by her side. They sat awhile and presently the queen and her attendants returned with Shemseh to the latter's tent and sat there.

Meanwhile King Teigmous gave great largesse to his troops and subjects and rejoiced in his son with an exceeding joy, and they abode there ten days, feasting and making merry. At the end of this time, the King commanded to depart, and they all mounted and returned in state to the city, which was decorated after the goodliest fashion, for the folk had adorned the houses with precious stuffs and jewellery and spread costly brocades under the horses' feet. The drums beat for glad tidings and the notables of the kingdom rejoiced and brought rich gifts, and the lookers on were filled with amazement. Moreover, they fed the poor and needy and held high festival for the space of ten days; and the lady Shemseh rejoiced with an exceeding joy, whenas she saw this.



Then King Teigmous summoned architects and builders and men of art and bade them build a magnificent palace in such a garden. So they straightway proceeded to do his bidding, and when Janshah knew of this, he bade the workmen fetch a block of white marble and hollow it out in the likeness of a chest; which being done, he took the feather-vest of the princess Shemseh and laid it therein; then, closing the opening with melted lead, he commanded them to bury the marble chest in the foundations and build over it the arches on which the palace was to rest. They did as he bade them, nor was it long before the palace was finished on the goodliest wise. Then they furnished it and it was a magnificent palace, standing in the midst of the garden, with streams running from under it. As soon as it was ready, the King caused Janshah's wedding to be celebrated with the greatest magnificence and they brought the bride to the castle in state and went their ways.

When Shemseh entered, she smelt the scent of the feather-vest and knew where it was and had a mind to take it. However, she waited till midnight, when Janshah was drowned in sleep; then rose and going straight to the place where the marble coffer was buried, dug till she came upon it and took it up. She did away the leaden stopper and taking out the feather-vest, put it on. Then she flew up into the air and perching on the summit of the palace, cried out to those who were therein, saying, 'Fetch me Janshah, that I may bid him farewell.' So they told him and he came out and seeing her on the roof of the palace, clad in her feather raiment, said to her, 'Why hast thou done this thing?' 'O my beloved and solace of mine eyes and fruit of my heart,' replied she, 'by Allah, I love thee passing dear and I rejoice with an exceeding joy in that I have brought thee to thy friends and country and seen thy father and mother. And now, if thou love me as I love thee, come to me at the Castle of Jewels.'

So saying, she flew away and Janshah fell down in a swoon, being well-nigh dead for despair. His people carried the news to King Teigmous, who mounted at once and riding to the palace, found his son lying on the ground, senseless, whereat he wept and sprinkled rose-water on his face. When the prince came to himself and found his father at his head, he wept passing sore, and the King asked what had befallen him. So he told him what had happened, and the King said, 'O my son, be not concerned, for I will assemble all the merchants and pilgrims in the land and enquire at them of the Castle of Jewels. If we can find out where it is, we will journey thither and demand the Princess Shemseh of her people, and I hope in God the Most High, that He will give her back to thee.'

Then he went out and calling his four Viziers, bade them assemble all the merchants and travellers in the town and question them of the Castle of Jewels, adding, 'Whoso knows it and can direct us thither, I will give him fifty thousand dinars.' The Viziers accordingly went forth and did as the King bade them, but none could give them news of the Castle of Jewels; so they returned and told the King, who bade bring beautiful slave-girls and concubines and singers and players upon instruments of music, whose like are not found but with kings, and lent them to Janshah, so haply they might divert him from the love of the lady Shemseh. Moreover, he despatched couriers and spies to all the [neighbouring] lands and islands and climes, to enquire for the Castle of Jewels, and they made quest for it two months long, but none could give them news of it. So they returned and told the King, whereupon he wept sore and going in to his

son, found him sitting in the midst of the concubines and singers and players on harp and psaltery and so forth, none of whom could avail to console him for the lady Shemseh. 'O my son,' said Teigmous, 'I can find none who knows the Castle of Jewels; but I will bring thee a fairer than she.' When Janshah heard this, his eyes ran over with tears and he recited the following verses;

Patience hath fled, but passion abideth and desire,
And all my body's wasted with love and longing dire.
When will the days unite me with Sheinseh? Lo, my bones
Are all consumed and rotted for separation's fire.

Now there was a King of Hind, by name Kefid, who reigned over a thousand cities, in each of which were as many citadels; he had four Viziers and under him were kings and princes and Amirs. Moreover, he had great plenty of troops and warriors and champions and under his hand were a thousand chieftains, each ruling over a thousand tribes, that could muster each four thousand cavaliers; and indeed he was a king of great might and prowess and his armies filled the whole earth. Between him and King Teigmous there was a fierce feud, for that the latter had made war upon him and ravaged his kingdom and slain his men and carried off his treasures. So, when it came to King Kefid's knowledge that King Teigmous was occupied with the love of his son and with concern and care for his sake, so that he neglected the affairs of the state and his troops were grown few and weak, he summoned his viziers and officers and said to them, 'Ye all know that King Teigmous invaded our dominions and plundered our goods and slew my father and brothers, nor indeed is there one of you, but he hath ravaged his lands and carried off his goods and made prize of his women and slain some kinsman of his. Now to-day I have heard that he is taken up with the love of his son Janshah and that his troops are grown few and weak; and this is the time to take our wreak on him. So don ye your harness of battle forthright and make ready for war without delay, and we will go to him and fall upon him and slay him and his son and possess ourselves of his kingdom.' They all answered with one voice, saying, 'We hear and obey,' and proceeded at once to equip themselves and levy troops.

The preparations occupied three months, at the end of which time the King set out at the head of his army, with drums beating and trumpets sounding and banners flying, and fared on till they reached the frontiers of the land of Kabul and entered the dominions of King Teigmous, where they began to ravage the country and do havoc among the folk, slaying the old and taking the young prisoners.

When the news reached King Teigmous, he was exceeding wroth and assembling his grandees and officers of state, said to them, 'Know that Kefid hath come to our country with troops and champions and warriors, whose number none knoweth save God the Most High, and is minded to do battle against us; what deem ye?' 'O King of the age,' replied they, 'let us go out to him and give him battle and drive him forth of our country.' So he commanded them to prepare for battle and brought forth to them hauberks and cuirasses and helmets and swords and all manner warlike gear, such as slay warriors and do to death the champions of mankind. So the troops and warriors and champions flocked to the standards and King Teigmous marched out at the head

of his army, with drums and cymbals beating and flutes and clarions sounding and banners flying, to meet the army of Hind.

When he drew near the foe, he called a halt and encamping with his host in the Valley of Zehran, hard by the frontier, despatched to King Kefid the following letter:'Know that what thou hast done is of the fashion of the lewd rabble and wert thou indeed a king, the son of a king, thou hadst not thus invaded my kingdom and slain my subjects and done unright upon them. Knowest thou not that all this is the fashion of a tyrant? Verily, had I known that thou wouldst dare to invade my dominions, I had come to thee and prevented thee therefrom this long while since. Yet, even now, if thou wilt retire and leave mischief between us and thee, well and good; but if not, come out to me in the listed field and measure thyself with me in fair fight.' This letter he committed to an officer of his army and sent with him spies to spy him out news.

When the messenger drew near the enemy's camp, he saw a multitude of tents of silk and satin, with pennons of blue silk, and amongst them a great pavilion of red satin, surrounded by guards. He made for this tent and found that it was that of King Kefid and saw therein the latter seated on a chair set with jewels, in the midst of his Viziers and captains and grandees. So he displayed the letter and straightway there came up to him a company of guards, who took it from him and carried it to the King. Kefid read it and wrote the following reply; 'King Kefid to King Teigmous. Know that I mean to take my wreak of thee and wash out the stain on my honour by laying waste thy lands and dishonouring thy women and slaying the old and carrying the young into slavery; and tomorrow, come thou out to combat in the open field, and I will show thee war and battle.' Then he sealed the letter and delivered it to the messenger, who carried it to King Teigmous and informed the latter that he had seen in the enemy's camp warriors and horsemen and footmen beyond count, there was no bound to them. When Teigmous read the answer, he was beyond measure enraged and bade his Vizier Ain Zar take a thousand horse and fall upon the army of Kefid in the middle watch of the night.

Meanwhile, King Kefid commanded one of his Viziers, Ghetrefan by name, to take five thousand horse and attack King Teigmous's camp in like manner. So the two parties set out and meeting halfway, man cried out against man and there befell a sore battle between them till daybreak, when Ghetrefan's men were routed and fled back to their camp in confusion. When Khefid saw this, he was exceeding wroth and said to the fugitives, 'What hath befallen you, that ye have lost your captains?' 'O King of the age,' answered they, 'there met us halfway the Vizier Ain Zar, with champions and cavaliers, so that, before we were ware, we found ourselves in the enemy's midst, face to face with them, and fought a sore battle with them from midnight till morning. Then the Vizier and his men fell to smiting the elephants on the face and shouting out at them, till they took fright and turning tail to flee, trampled down the horsemen, whilst none could see other for the clouds of dust. The blood ran like a torrent and much folk were slain, and indeed, had we not fled, we had all been cut off to the last man.' When Kefid heard this, he exclaimed, 'May the sun not bless you and may his wrath be sore upon you!'

Meanwhile, Ain Zar returned to King Teigmous and told him what had happened. The King gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced greatly and bade beat the drums and sound the trumpets, in honour of the victory; after which he called the roll of his troops and found that two hundred of his stoutest champions had fallen. Then King Kefid marched his army into the field and drew them out in order of battle in fifteen lines of ten thousand horse each, under the commandment of three hundred captains and princes, mounted on elephants and chosen from amongst the doughtiest of his warriors. So he set up his standards and banners and blew the trumpets and beat the drums, whilst the champions sallied forth, offering battle. As for King Teigmous, he drew out his troops in ten lines of ten thousand horse each, and with him were a hundred champions, riding on his right hand and on his left. Then rode forward to the fight each renowned cavalier, with drums. and cymbals beating and pipes and hautboys sounding and trumpets blaring, and the two hosts clashed together, whilst the earth for all its wideness was straitened for the multitude of the cavaliers and ears were deafened for the tramp of the horses and the shouting of the men. The dust volleyed up in clouds and hung vaulted over them, and they fought a sore battle from the first of the day till the coming of the darkness, when they separated and each army drew off to its own camp. Then the two kings mustered their troops and found that they had lost, Kefid five thousand men and Teigmous three thousand of the flower of his braves, whereat they were sore concerned. On the morrow, the two hosts again drew out in battle array, and Kefid cried out to his men, saying, 'Which of you will sally forth into the field and open us the chapter of war and battle?' Thereupon came out from the ranks a warrior named Berkaik, a mighty man of war, riding on an elephant. When he reached the King, he alighted and kissing the earth before him, sought of him leave to challenge the foe to single combat. Then he mounted his elephant and pricking into the middle of the field, cried out, 'Who is for jousting, who is for foining, who is for fighting?' When King Teigmous heard this, he said to his troops, 'Which of you will do battle with this champion?' Whereupon a cavalier came out from the ranks, mounted on a charger, mighty of make, and dismounting, kissed the earth before the King and craved his permission to engage Berkaik. Then he mounted again and drove at Berkaik, who said to him, 'Who art thou, that thou makest mock of me by coming out against me, alone?' 'My name is Ghezenfer ben Kemkhil,' replied the Kabul champion; and the other, 'I have heard tell of thee in my own country; so up and do battle between the ranks of the champions.'

Then Ghezenfer drew a mace of iron from under his thigh and Berkaik took his sword in his hand, and they fought a sore battle, till Berkaik smote Ghezenfer on the head with his sword, but the helmet turned the blow and no hurt betided him therefrom; whereupon Ghezenfer, in his turn, dealt Berkaik so terrible a buffet on the head with his mace, that he beat him down on to his elephant's back [and killed him]. With this out sallied another horseman and saying to Ghezenfer, 'Who art thou that thou shouldst slay my brother?' hurled a javelin at him with such force that it pierced his thigh and nailed his greaves to his flesh. The Kabul champion, feeling himself wounded, took his sword in his hand and smote at Berkaik's brother and cut him in sunder, and he fell to the earth, wallowing in his blood, whilst Ghezenfer rode back to King Teigmous.

When Kefid saw the death of his champions, he cried out to his troops to set on, as also did the King of Kabul; and the two armies drove at each other. Horse neighed against horse and man cried out upon man and the swords flashed from the scabbards, whilst the drums beat and the trumpets sounded. Then horseman charged upon horseman and every renowned champion pricked forward, whilst the faintheart fled from the push of pike and men heard nought but the clang of arms and the roar of the battle. Slain were the warriors that were slain and they stinted not from the fight till the going down of the sun in the pavilion of the heavens, when the two hosts drew asunder and returned each to its own camp. Then King Teigmous numbered his men and found that he had lost five thousand men and four standards, whereat he was sore concerned; whilst King Kefid in like manner counted his troops and found that he had lost six hundred of the flower of his horsemen and nine standards.

The two armies rested on their arms three days' space, after which Kefid wrote a letter to a king called Facoun el Kelb (to whom he claimed kinship by his mother) and the latter forthwith assembled his troops and marched to the succour of the King of Hind. So, as King Teigmous was sitting at his pleasance, there came one in to him and said, 'I see a cloud of dust rising into the air in the distance.'So he despatched a company, to learn the meaning of this, who presently returned and said to him, 'O King, when we drew near the cloud of dust, the wind smote it and it lifted and discovered seven standards and under each standard three thousand horse, making for King Kefid's camp.' Then King Facoun joined himself to the King of Hind and saluting him, enquired how it was with him and what was this war in which he was engaged. 'Knowest thou not,' answered Kefid, 'that King Teigmous is my enemy and the murderer of my father and brothers? Wherefore I am come forth to do battle with him and take my wreak on him.' Quoth Facoun, 'The blessing of the sun be upon thee!' And the King of Hind carried King Facoun to his tent and rejoiced in him with an exceeding great joy.

To return to Janshah. He abode shut up in his palace, without seeing his father or allowing one of the damsels or singing-women in his service to come in to him, for two months' space, at the end of which time he grew troubled and restless at not seeing the King and said to his attendants, 'What ails my father that he cometh not to visit me?' They told him that he had gone forth to do battle with the King of Hind, whereupon quoth Janshah, 'Bring me my horse, that I may go to my father.' But he said in himself, 'I am taken up with the thought of my beloved, and I deem well to journey to the city of the Jews, where haply God shall grant me to meet the merchant, and maybe he will hire me once more and deal with me as before, for none knoweth wherein is good.' So he took with him a thousand horse and set out, the folk. deeming that he purposed to join his father in the field, and they fared on till dusk, when they halted for the night in a vast meadow. As soon as he knew that all his men were asleep, the prince rose and girding his middle, mounted his horse and rode out, intending for Baghdad, for that he had heard from the Jews that a caravan came thence their city once in every two years and thought to journey thither therewith.

When his men awoke and missed the prince and his horse, they mounted and sought him right and left, but finding no trace of him, rejoined his father and told him what his son had done; whereat he was beyond measure concerned and cast the crown

from his head, whilst the sparks were like to fly from his mouth, and he said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! I have lost my son, and the enemy is before me.' But his Viziers and vassals said to him, 'Patience, O King of the age! Nought but good ensueth patience.' Then he collected his forces and abandoning his camp, retired to his capital, where he armed the inhabitants and fortified the place, setting up mangonels and other engines upon the walls. King Kefid followed him and sat down before the town, offering battle seven nights and eight days, after which he withdrew to his tents, to tend his wounded. On this wise he did every month, and they ceased not to beleaguer the place thus seven years.

Meanwhile, Janshah arrived at Baghdad, where he heard from a merchant that the city of the Jews was situate in the extreme Orient and that a caravan would start that very month for the city of Mizrecan in Hind, 'whither do thou accompany us,' said the merchant, 'and we will fare on to Khorassan and thence to the city of Shimaoun and Khouarezm, from which latter place the city of the Jews is distant a year and three months' journey.' So Janshah waited till the time of the departure of the caravan, when he joined himself thereto and journeyed, till he reached the city of Mizrecan, whence he again set out and after enduring great hardships and perils and the extreme of hunger and thirst, arrived at the town of Shimaoun. Nor did he fail in every city to which he came to enquire after the Castle of Jewels, but none could give him news of it and all said, 'Never heard we this name.' At Shimaoun he made enquiry for the city of the Jews, and they directed him the road thither. So he set out and journeyed nights and days till he came to the place, where he had given the apes the slip, and continued his journey thence to the river, on the opposite bank of which stood the city of the Jews. He sat down on the shore and waited till Saturday came round and the river dried up, when he crossed over to the opposite bank and entering the city, betook himself to the house of his former host. The Jew and his family rejoiced in his return and set meat and drink before him, saying, 'Where hast thou been during thine absence?' 'In the kingdom of God the Most High,' answered he and lay with them that night.

On the morrow he went out to walk about the city and presently heard a crier crying aloud and saying, 'O folk, who will earn a thousand dinars and a handsome slave-girl and do half a day's work for us?' So Janshah went up to him and said, 'I am your man.' Quoth the crier, 'Follow me,' and carrying him to the house of the Jew merchant, where he had been aforetime, said to the latter, 'This young man will do thy work.' The merchant gave him welcome [not recognizing him] and carried him into the harem, where he set meat and drink before him, and he ate and drank. Then he brought him the dinars and the fair slave, with whom he lay that night.

On the morrow, he took the money and the damsel and committing them to his host, returned to the merchant, who mounted and rode out with him, till they came to the foot of the mountain, where they halted and the merchant, bringing out a knife and cords, bade Janshah throw down the mare on which he rode and bind her legs with the cords. So he threw her down and bound her and slaughtered her and cut off her legs and slit her belly, as the Jew ordered him; whereupon quoth the latter, 'Enter her belly, till I sew it up on thee; and whatsoever thou seest therein, tell me of it, for this is the work the hire whereof thou hast taken.' So Janshah entered the mare's belly and the merchant sewed it up on him, then, withdrawing to a distance, hid himself.

Presently, a great bird swooped down on the carcase and flying up with it to the mountain-top, would have eaten it, which when Janshah felt, he took out his knife and slitting the mare's belly, came forth. The bird was scared at his sight and flew away, and Janshah went up to the edge of the crest and looking down, espied the merchant standing at the foot of the mountain, as he were a sparrow. So he cried out to him, 'What is thy will, O merchant?' 'Throw me down of the stones that lie about thee,' replied the Jew, 'that I may direct thee in the way down.' Quoth Janshah, 'I am he with whom thou didst thus and thus five years agone, and through thee I suffered hunger and thirst and sore toil and much hardship; and now thou hast brought me hither once more and thinkest to destroy me. By Allah, I will not throw thee aught!' So saying, he turned his back on him and set out for the castle of the lord Solomon.

He fared on many days and nights, tearful-eyed and heavy at heart, eating, when he hungered, of the fruits of the earth and drinking, when he thirsted, of its streams, till he came in sight of the castle and saw Sheikh Nesr sitting at the gate. So he hastened up to him and kissed his hands; and the Sheikh bade him welcome and said to him, 'O my son, what ails thee that thou returnest to this place, after I sent thee home with the Princess Shemseh, comforted and glad at heart?' Janshah wept and told him all that had befallen him and how she had flown away from him, saying, 'An thou love me, come to me at the Castle of Jewels;' at which the old man marvelled and said, 'By Allah, O my son, I know not the Castle of Jewels, nor, by the virtue of our lord Solomon, have I ever in my life heard its name!' 'What shall I do?' said Janshah. 'I am dying of love and longing.' Quoth Sheikh Nesr, 'Take patience until the coming of the birds, when I will enquire at them of the Castle of Jewels.'

So Janshah's heart was comforted and he abode with Sheikh Nesr, until the appointed day arrived, when the Sheikh said to him, 'O my son, learn these names and come with me to meet the birds.' Presently, the birds came flying up and saluted Sheikh Nesr, kind after kind, and he asked them of the Castle of Jewels, but they all made answer that they had never heard of such a place. When Janshah heard this, he wept and lamented, till he swooned away, whereupon Sheikh Nesr called a huge bird and said to him, 'Carry this youth to the land of Kabul,' and described to him the land and the way thither. Then he set Janshah on the bird's back, bidding him sit straight and beware of inclining to either side, or he would fall and be torn to pieces in the air, and to stop his ears from the wind, lest he be dazed by the noise of the revolving sphere and the roaring of the seas.

So the bird took flight and flew with him a day and a night, till he set him down by the King of the Beasts, whose name was Shah Bedra, and said to him, 'We have gone astray.' And he would have taken him up again and flown on with him; but Janshah said, 'Go thy ways and leave me here, till I die or find the Castle of Jewels. I will not return to my country.' So the bird left him with Shah Bedra and flew away. The King bade him welcome and said to him, O my son, who art thou and whence comest thou with yonder great bird?' So Janshah told him his story, whereat Shah Bedra marvelled and said, 'By the virtue of the lord Solomon, I know not of this castle; but [when the beasts come to pay their respects to me, we will ask them thereof, and] if any know it, we will reward him bountifully and send thee thither by him.'

So Janshah took patience and abode with Shah Bedra, [who gave him certain tablets, inscribed with magical formulas,] saying 'O my son, commit to memory that which is in these tablets; [so wilt thou be gifted to understand the language of beasts;] and when the beasts come, question them of the Castle of Jewels.' He did as the King bade him, and before long, up came the beasts, kind after kind, and saluted Shah Bedra, who questioned them of the Castle of Jewels; but they all replied, 'We know not this castle, nor ever heard we of it.' At this Janshah wept sore and lamented for that he had not gone with the bird that brought him from Sheikh Nesr's castle; but Shah Bedra said to him, 'Grieve not, O my son, for I have a brother who is older than I; his name is King Shimakh and he rules over all the Jinn in the country. He was once a prisoner to King Solomon, for that he rebelled against him; nor is there among the Jinn an elder than he and Sheikh Nesr. Belike he knows of this castle.' So saying, he set Janshah on the back of a beast and gave him a letter to his brother, commending him to his care.

So the beast set off with the prince and fared on days and nights, till it came to King Shimakh's abiding-place and stood still afar off; whereupon Janshah alighted and walked on, till he found himself in the presence of the King, to whom he presented his brother's letter, after having kissed his hands. The King read the letter and welcomed the prince, saying, 'By Allah, O my son, in all my life I never saw nor heard of this castle! But tell me thy story and who and whence thou art and whither thou art bound.' So Janshah related to him his history from beginning to end, at which the King marvelled and said, 'O my son, I do not believe that our lord Solomon even ever saw or heard of this castle; but I know a hermit in the mountains, who is exceeding old and whom all birds and beasts and Jinn obey; for he ceased not to conjure against the kings of the Jinn, till they submitted themselves to him in their own despite, by reason of the might of his spells and his enchantments. I myself once rebelled against King Solomon and he sent this hermit against me, who overcame me with his craft and his enchantments and imprisoned me, and since then I have been his vassal. His name is Yegmous and he dwells in a retreat in the mountains called the Hermitage of Diamonds. He is a cunning artificer in all manner strange works and a crafty warlock and necromancer, full of guile and versed in every kind of magic and sorcery and enchantment, and all birds and beasts and mountains obey him and come at his beck, for the stress of his conjurations. Moreover, he hath made him a staff in three pieces, and this he plants in the earth and conjures over it; whereupon flesh and blood issue from the first piece, sweet milk from the second and wheat and barley from the third. He hath travelled in all countries and quarters and knoweth all ways and regions and places and castles and cities, nor do I think there is any place hidden from his ken. So needs must I send thee to him; haply he may direct thee to the Castle of Jewels; and if he cannot do this, none can, for all things obey him, by reason of his skill in magic.'

So saying, Shimakh called a great bird, that had feet like those of an elephant and four wings, each thirty cubits long, and set Janshah on its back, bidding it carry him to the hermit. Now this bird flew but twice a year, and there was with King Shimakh an officer, by name Timshoun, who used every day to carry off two Bactrian camels from the land of Irak and cut them up for it, that it might eat them. So it rose into the air and flew on days and nights, till it came to the mountain of the Citadels and the

hermitage of Diamonds where Janshah alithted and going up to the hermitage, found Yegmous at his devotions. So he entered the chapel and kissing the earth before the hermit, stood [in an attitude of respect]. When Yegmous saw him, he said to him, 'Welcome, O my son, O pilgrim from a far country and stranger in the lands! Tell me the cause of thy coming hither.' So Janshah wept and acquainted him with all that had befallen him and that he was in quest of the Castle of Jewels. Yegmous marvelled greatly at his story and said, 'By Allah, O my son, never in my life heard I of this Castle, nor saw I ever one who had heard of or seen it, for all I was alive in the days of Noah, prophet of God (on whom be peace), and have ruled the birds and beasts and Jinn ever since his time; nor do I believe that Solomon himself knew of it. But wait till the birds and beasts and chiefs of the Jinn come to do their homage to me and I will question them of it; peradventure, some one of them may be able to give us news of it and God the Most High shall make it easy to thee [to win thither].'

So Janshah abode with the hermit, until the day of the assembly, when Yegmous questioned all the birds and beasts and Jinn of the Castle of Jewels, but they all replied, 'We never saw or heard of such a place.' At this, Janshah fell a-weeping and lamenting and prostrated himself in supplication to God the Most High, but, as he was thus engaged, there flew down from the heights of the air a great black bird, which had tarried behind the rest, and kissed the hermit's hands. The latter asked it of the Castle of Jewels, and it replied, saying, 'O hermit, when I and my brothers were fledglings, we dwelt behind the mountain Caf on a hill of crystal, in the midst of a great desert, and our father and mother used to go and come with our food every day. They went out one day, [in quest of food,] and were absent from us seven days and hunger was sore upon us; but on the eighth day they returned, weeping, and we asked them the reason of their absence. Quoth they, "A Marid swooped down on us and carried us off to the Castle of Jewels and brought us before King Shehlan, who would have slain us; but we told him that we had left a young brood behind us; so he spared our lives [and let us go]." And were my parents yet in the bonds of life,' added the bird, 'they would give thee news of the castle.'

When Janshah heard this, he wept and besought the hermit to bid the bird carry him to the nest he spoke of on the crystal hill, behind the mountain Caf. So the hermit said to the bird, 'I desire thee to obey this youth in whatsoever he may command thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the bird and taking Janshah on its back, flew with him days and nights, till it set him down on the hill of crystal and said, 'This is where our nest was.' Janshah begged it to carry him farther on to where the old birds used to forage for food. So it took him up again and flew on with him seven nights and eight days, till it set him down on the top of a high hill, named Kermous, and left him there, saying, 'I know of no land behind this hill.' Then it flew away and Janshah sat down on the hill-top and fell asleep. When he awoke, he saw somewhat gleaming afar off [as it were lightning] and filling the air with its radiance, and wondered what this could be. So he descended the mountain and made towards the light.

Now this light came from the Castle of Jewels, which was distant two months' journey from Mount Kermous, and its walls were fashioned of red rubies and the buildings within them of yellow gold. Moreover, it had a thousand turrets builded of precious stones and metals, brought from the Sea of Darknesses, and on this account it

was named the Castle of Jewels. It was a vast great castle and the name of its king was King Shehlan, the father of Shemseh and her sisters. Now, when the princess Shemseh left Janshah, she returned to the Castle of Jewels and told her father and mother all that had passed between the prince and herself. Quoth they, 'Thou hast not dealt righteously with him:' and she, 'Be sure that he will follow me hither, for he loves me passionately.' So King Shehlan repeated the story to his guards and officers of the Marids of the Jinn and bade them bring him every mortal they should see.

Now, as chance would have it, Shemseh had that very day despatched a Marid on an occasion in the direction of Mount Kermous, and on his way thither he caught sight of Janshah; so he hastened up to him and saluted him. The prince was terrified at his sight, but returned his greeting, and the Marid said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Janshah,' answered he, and bursting into tears, related to the genie his adventures and how he was come thither in quest of the princess Shemseh and the Castle of Jewels. The Marid was moved to pity by his story and said to him, 'Weep not, for thou art come to thy desire. Know that [yonder stands the Castle of Jewels, where dwells she whom thou seekest]. She loves thee dear and has told her parents of thy love for her, and all in the castle love thee for her sake; so take comfort and be of good cheer.' Then he took him on his shoulders and made off with him to the Castle of Jewels.

When the news of Janshah's coming reached Shemseh and her father and mother, they all rejoiced with an exceeding joy, and King Shehlan took horse and rode out, with all his guards and Aftits and Marids, to meet the prince. As soon as he came up with him, he dismounted and embraced him, and Janshah kissed his hand. Then Shehlan put on him a robe of honour of vari-coloured silk, laced with gold and set with jewels, and a coronet such as never saw mortal king, and mounting him on a splendid mare of the horses of the kings of the Jinn, brought him in great state to the castle. Janshah was dazzled by the splendour of this castle, with its walls of rubies and other jewels and its pavement of crystal and chrysolite and emerald, and fell a-weeping for very wonderment; but the King wiped away his tears and said, 'Leave weeping and be of good cheer, for thou hast come to thy desire.' Then he carried him into the inner court of the castle, where he was received by a multitude of beautiful damsels and pages and slaves, who seated him in the place of honour and stood to do him service, whilst he was lost in amazement at the goodliness of the place and its walls, that were all builded of precious metals and jewels.

Meanwhile, King Shehlan repaired to his hall of audience, where he sat down on his throne and bidding his attendants bring in the prince, rose to receive him and seated him by his own side on the throne. Then he called for food and they ate and drank and washed their hands; after which in came the Queen, Shemseh's mother, and saluting Janshah, bade him welcome. 'Thou hast come to thy desire after weariness,' quoth she, 'and thine eyes sleep alter watching; so praised be God for thy safety!' So saying, she went away and forthwith returned with the princess Shemseh, who saluted Janshah and kissed his hands, hanging her head in confusion; after which her sisters came up to him and greeted him in like manner.

Then said the Queen to him, 'O my son, our daughter Shemseh hath indeed sinned against thee, but do thou pardon her for our sakes.' When Janshah heard this,

he cried out and fell down in a swoon, and they sprinkled on his face rose-water mingled with musk and civet, till he came to himself and looking at Shemseh, said, 'Praised be God who hath brought me to my desire and quenched the fire of my heart!' 'May He preserve thee from the Fire!' replied she. 'But now tell me what hath befallen thee since our parting and how thou madest thy way to this place; seeing that few even of the Jinn ever heard of the Castle of Jewels and we are beyond the dominion of any king nor knoweth any the road hither.'

So he related to her all the adventures and perils and hardships he had suffered for her sake and how he had left his father at war with the King of Hind. Quoth the Queen, 'Now hast thou thy heart's desire, for the princess Shemseh is thy handmaid, we give her to thee; and next month, if it be the will of God the Most High, we will celebrate the marriage festival and send you both back to thy native land, with an escort of a thousand Marids, the least of whom, if thou shouldst bid him slay King Kefid and his people, would destroy them to the last man in the twinkling of an eye.'

Then King Shehlan sat down on his throne and summoning his grandees and officers of state, bade them make ready for the marriage festivities and decorate the city seven days and nights. 'We hear and obey,' answered they and busied themselves two months in the preparations, after which they celebrated the marriage of the prince and princess and held a mighty festival, never was seen its like. Then they brought Janshah in to his bride and he abode with her in all delight and solace of life two years, at the end of which time, he said to her, 'Thy father promised to send us to my native land, that we might pass one year there and the next here.' 'I hear and obey,' answered she and going in to King Shehlan at nightfall, told him what the prince had said. Quoth he, 'Have patience with me till the first of the month, that I may make ready for your departure.'

Accordingly, they waited till the appointed time, when the King brought out to them a great litter of red gold, set with pearls and jewels and covered with a canopy of green silk, painted in the liveliest colours and embroidered with precious stones, dazzling the eyes with its goodliness. Moreover, he gave his daughter three hundred beautiful damsels to wait upon her and bestowed on Janshah the like number of white slaves of the sons of the Jinn. Then he mounted the litter, with Janshah and Shemseh and their suite, after the prince and princess had taken leave of the latter's mother and family, and chose out four of his officers to carry the litter.

So the four Marids took it up, each by one corner, and rising with it into the air, flew onward till mid-day, when the King bade them set down the litter and they all alighted. Then they took leave of one another and King Shehlan commended Shemsheh to the prince's care, and giving them in charge to the Marids, returned to the Castle of Jewels, whilst the prince and princess remounted the litter, and the Marids, taking it up, flew on for ten whole days, in each of which they accomplished thirty months' journey, till they came in sight of King Teigmous's capital. Now one of them knew the land of Kabul; so, when he saw the city, he bade the others set down the litter there.

Meanwhile, King Teigmous had been routed and fled into the city, where King Kefid laid close siege to him and he was in sore straits. He sought to make peace with

the King of Hind, but the latter would give him no quarter; so, seeing himself without resource or hope of relief, he determined to strangle himself and be at rest from this trouble and misery. Accordingly, he bade his Viziers and officers farewell and entered his house, to take leave of his harem; and the whole place was full of weeping and wailing and lamentation. In the midst of the general desolation, the Marids came down with the litter upon the palace, that was in the citadel, and Janshah bade them set it down in the midst of the Divan. They did his bidding and he descended with his company and seeing all the folk of the city in grief and desolation and sore distress, said to the princess, 'O beloved of my heart and solace of mine eyes, see in what a piteous plight is my father!' Thereupon she bade the Marids fall upon the besieging host and slay them all, even to the last man; and Janshah commanded one of them, by name Keratesh, who was exceeding strong and valiant, to bring King Kefid to him in chains. So they waited till midnight, when they repaired to the enemy's camp, and Keratesh made straight for Kefid's tent, where he found him lying on a couch. So he took him up, shrieking for fear, and flew with him to Janshah, who bade the four Marids bind him on the litter and suspend him in the air over his camp, that he might witness the slaughter of his men. They did as the prince bade them and leaving Kefid, who had swooned for fear, hanging in the air, fell upon the enemy's camp.

As for King Teigmous, when he saw his son, he well-nigh died for excess of joy and giving a loud cry, fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when he and his son embraced and wept sore. Then the princess Shemseh accosted the King and kissing his hand, invited him to go up with her to the roof of the palace and witness the slaughter of his enemies by her father's Marids. So he went up to the roof and sitting down there with his son and daughter-in-law, watched the Marids do havoc among the besiegers and marvelled at their manner of waging war. For one of them smote upon the elephants and their riders with maces of iron and pounded men and beast into one shapeless heap of flesh, whilst another blew in the faces of those who fled, so that they fell down dead, and the third caught up a score of horsemen, beasts and all, and flying up with them into the air, cast them down from on high, so that they were torn in pieces or crushed to atoms in the fall.

When King Kefld came to himself, he found himself hanging between heaven and earth and marvelled at this. Then he saw the slaughter of his troops and wept sore and buffeted his face; nor did the carnage cease among the army of Hind for two whole days, till they were cut off even to the last man, when Janshah commanded a Marid, by name Shimwal, to clap King Kefid in irons and lay him in prison in a place called the Black Tower. Then King Teigmous bade beat the drums and despatched messengers to announce the glad news to Janshah's mother, who mounted forthright and rode to the palace, where she no sooner espied her son than she clasped him in her arms and swooned away for stress of joy. They sprinkled rose-water on her face, till she came to herself, when she embraced him again and wept for excess of gladness. When the lady Shemseh knew of her coming, she came to her and saluted her, and they embraced each other and sat down to converse.

Meanwhile, King Teigmous threw open the gates of the town and despatched couriers to all parts of the kingdom, to announce his happy deliverance, whereupon all his vassals and officers and the notables of the realm flocked to give him joy of his

victory and of the safe return of his son and brought him great plenty of rich gifts and presents. Then he made a second bride-feast for the princess Shemseh, and they decorated the city and held high festival; after which they unveiled the bride before Janshah with the utmost magnificence, and the latter presented her with a hundred beautiful slave-girls to wait upon her.

Some days after this, the princess went in to the King and interceded with him for Kefid, saying, 'Let him return to his own land, and if henceforward he be minded to do thee any hurt, I will bid one of the Marids snatch him up and bring him to thee.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Teigmous and bade Shimwal bring him the prisoner, who came and kissed the earth before him. Then he commanded to strike off his chains and mounting him on a lame mare, said to him, 'The princess Shemseh hath interceded for thee so begone to thy kingdom, but if thou fall again to thine old tricks, she will send one of the Marids to seize thee and bring thee hither.'

So Kefid set off homeward, in the sorriest of plights, whilst Janshah and his wife abode in all delight and solace of life, passing every second year with Shemseh's father and mother at the Castle of Jewels, whither they betook not themselves but in the litter aforesaid, borne by the Marids and flying between heaven and earth; and the length of their journey thither from the land of Kabul was ten days, in each of which they accomplished thirty months' travel.

They abode on this wise a long while, till, one year, they set out for the Castle of Jewels, as of their wont, and on their way thither alighted in this island to rest and take their pleasure therein. They sat down on the river-bank and ate and drank; after which the princess, having a mind to bathe, put off her clothes and plunged into the water. Her women followed her example and they swam about awhile, whilst Janshah walked on along the bank of the stream. Presently, as they were swimming about and playing with one another, a huge shark seized the princess by the leg, and she cried out and died forthright, whilst the damsels fled out of the river to the pavilion, to escape from the shark; but, after awhile, they returned and taking her up, carried her to the litter.

When Janshah saw his wife dead, he fell down in a swoon and they sprinkled water on his face, till he recovered and wept over her. Then he despatched the Marids, to bear the sad news to her parents and family, who presently came thither and washed her and shrouded her; after which they buried her by the river-side and made mourning for her. They would have carried Janshah with them to the Castle of Jewels; but he said to King Shehlan, 'I beseech thee to dig me a grave beside her tomb, that, when I die, I may be buried by her side.' Accordingly, the King commanded one of his Marids to do as Janshah wished, after which they departed and left me here to weep and mourn for her till I die; for I," said the young man, "am Janshah and this is my story and the reason of my sojourn between these two tombs." And he repeated the following verses:

Home is no longer home to me, now ye are gone away,
Nor is the pleasant neighbour now a neighbour, sooth to say.
The comrade, whom withal therein I companied, no more
A comrade is, and eke the lights [of heaven] no lights are they.

When Beloukiya heard Janshah's story, he marvelled and exclaimed, "By Allah, O my brother, methought I had indeed wandered over the world and compassed it about; but thy story maketh me to forget all I have seen. And now," added he, "I beg thee, of thy favour and courtesy, to direct me in the way of safety." So Janshah directed him into the right road, and Beloukiya took leave of him and fared on nights and days, till he came to a great sea; so he anointed his feet with the juice of the magical herb and setting out over the water, sped onward till he came to an island abounding in trees and springs and fruits, as it were Paradise. He landed and walked about, till he saw an immense tree, with leaves as big as the sails of a ship. So he went up to the tree and found under it a table spread with all manner rich meats, whilst on the branches sat a great bird, whose body was of pearls and emeralds, its feet of silver, its beak of red cornelian and its feathers of precious metals, and it was engaged in singing the praises of God the Most High and blessing Mohammed, on whom be benediction and peace!

When Beloukiya saw the bird, he said, "What manner of creature art thou and what dost thou here?" Quoth the bird, "I am one of the birds of Eden [and followed Adam,] when God the Most High cast him out thence. Now Adam took with him four leaves of the trees of the garden, to cover his nakedness withal, and they fell to the ground after awhile. One of them was eaten by a worm, and of it came silk: the gazelles ate the second and thence came musk; the third was eaten by bees and gave rise to honey, whilst the fourth fell in the land of Hind and from it sprang all manner spices. As for me, I wandered over the earth, till God gave me this island for a dwelling-place, and I took up my abode here. This table thou seest is spread by God the Most High for the entertainment of all the saints and holy men of the world, who come hither every Friday and visit the place and eat of this food; and after they have eaten, the table is taken up again to heaven; nor doth the food ever waste or corrupt." So Beloukiya ate his fill of the meats and praised God the Most High.

Presently, there came up El Khizr (on whom be peace), at sight of whom Beloukiya rose and saluting him, was about to withdraw, when the bird said to him, "Sit, O Beloukiya, in the presence of El Khizr, on whom be peace!" So he sat down again, and El Khizr asked him who he was and how he came there. Beloukiya related to him all his adventures and enquired how far it was thence to Cairo. "Five-and-ninety years' journey," replied the prophet; whereupon Beloukiya burst into tears, then, falling at El Khizr's feet, kissed them and said to him, "O my lord, I beseech thee to deliver me from this strangerhood; for that I am nigh upon death and know not what to do, and thy reward be with God." Quoth El Khizr, "Pray to God the Most High to allow me to carry thee to Cairo, ere thou perish."

So Beloukiya wept and offered up supplication to God, who granted his prayer and bade El Khizr carry him to his people. Then said the prophet, "Lift thy head, for God hath heard thy prayer; so take fast hold of me with both thy hands and shut thine eyes." The prince did as he was bidden and El Khizr took a step forward, then said to him, "Open thine eyes." So Beloukiya opened his eyes and found himself at the door of his palace at Cairo. He turned, to take leave of El Khizr, but found no trace of him and entered the palace. When his mother saw him, she gave a loud cry and swooned away for excess of joy, and they sprinkled water upon her face. After a while she came to herself and embraced her son and wept sore, whilst Beloukiya wept and laughed by

turns. Then all his friends and kindred came and gave him joy of his safe return, and the good news was noised abroad in the land and there came to him presents from all parts. Moreover, they beat the drums and blew the flutes and rejoiced mightily. Then Beloukiya related to them his adventures, at which they marvelled exceedingly and wept, till all were weary of weeping.

All this the Queen of the Serpents related to Hasib Kerimeddin, and he said to her, 'But how knowest thou of these things?' 'O Hasib,' answered she, 'it was on this wise. Thou must know that I once had occasion, some five-and-twenty years ago, to send one of my serpents to Egypt and gave her a letter for Beloukiya, saluting him. So she carried the letter to him and he read it and said to the messenger, "I have a mind to go with thee to the Queen of the Serpents, for I have an occasion to her." Quoth she, "Close thine eyes." So he closed them and opening them again, found himself on the mountain where I now am. Then his guide carried him to a great serpent, and he saluted the latter and asked for me. "She hath gone to the Mountain Caf," answered the serpent, "as is her wont in the winter; but next summer she will come hither again. As often as she goeth thither, she appointeth me to reign in her room, during her absence; and if thou have any occasion to her, I will accomplish it for thee." Quoth he, "I beg thee to bring me the herb, which whoso crusheth and drinketh the juice thereof sickeneth not neither groweth grey nor dieth." "Tell me first," said the serpent, "what befell thee since thou leftest the Queen of the Serpents, to go with Uffan in quest of King Solomon's tomb." So he related to her all his travels and adventures, including the history of Janshah, and besought her to grant him his request, that he might go to his own country." "By the virtue of the lord Solomon," replied she, "I know not where the herb of which thou speakest is to be found." Then she bade the serpent, which had brought him thither, carry him back to Egypt: so the latter said to him, "Shut thine eyes." He did so and opening them again, found himself on the mountain Mukettem. When I returned from the mountain Caf,' added the Queen, 'the serpent my deputy informed me of Beloukiya's visit and repeated to me his story: and this, O Hasib, is how I came to know the adventures of Beloukiya and the history of Prince Janshah of Kabul.'

Hasib marvelled at the Queen's story and wept many tears over it; then he again besought her to let him return to his family; but she said, 'I fear me that, when thou gettest back to earth, thou wilt fail of thy promise and prove traitor to thine oath and enter the bath.' But he swore to her another solemn oath that he would never again enter the bath as long as he lived; whereupon she called a serpent and bade her carry him up to the surface of the earth. So the serpent took him and led him from place to place, till she brought him out on the platform of an abandoned cistern [and there left him].

He walked to the city and coming to his house by the last of the day, at the season of the yellowing of the sun, knocked at the door. His mother opened it and seeing her son, screamed out and threw herself upon him and wept for excess of joy. His wife heard her mother-in-law weeping; so she came out to her and seeing her husband, saluted him and kissed his hands; and each rejoiced in other with an exceeding joy. Then they entered the house and sat down to converse; and presently Hasib asked his mother of the woodcutters, who had left him to perish in the cistern. Quoth she, 'They

came and told me that a wolf had eaten thee in the valley. As for them, they are become merchants and own houses and shops, and the world is grown wide for them. But every day they bring me meat and drink, and thus have they done since I lost thee.' 'To-morrow,' said Hasib, 'do thou go to them and say, "My son Hasib hath returned from his travels; so come ye and salute him."'

Accordingly, on the morrow, she repaired to the wood-cutters' houses and delivered to them her son's message, which when they heard, they changed colour and gave her each a suit of silk, embroidered with gold, saying, 'Give this to thy son and tell him that we will be with him to-morrow.' So she returned to Hasib and gave him their presents and message. Meanwhile, the woodcutters called together a number of merchants and acquainting them with all that had passed between themselves and Hasib, took counsel with them what they should do. Quoth the merchants, 'It behoves each one of you to give him half his goods and slaves;' and they agreed to do this.

So, next day, each of them took half his wealth and going in to Hasib, saluted him and kissed his hands. Then they laid before him what they had brought, saying, 'This of thy bounties, and we are in thy hands.' He accepted their peace-offering and said to them, 'What is past is past: that which befell us was decreed of God and destiny avoideth precaution.' Quoth they, 'Come, let us walk about and take our pleasure in the city and visit the bath.' 'Not so,' answered he. 'I have taken an oath never again to enter the bath, so long as I live.' 'At least,' rejoined they, 'come to our houses, that we may entertain thee.' He agreed to this, and each of them entertained him for a night and a day; nor did they cease to do thus for a whole week [for they were seven in number]

Hasib was now master of lands and houses and shops, and all the merchants of the city foregathered with him and he told them all that had befallen him. He became one of the chief of them and abode thus awhile, till, one day, as he was walking in the town, he chanced to pass the door of a bath, whose keeper was one of his friends. When the bathman saw him, he ran up to him and saluted him and embraced him, saying, 'Favour me by entering the bath and washing, that I may show thee hospitality.' Hasib refused, alleging that he had taken a solemn oath never again to enter the bath; but the bathman was instant with him, saying, 'Be my three wives triply divorced, an thou enter not and be washed!' When Hasib heard him thus conjure him by the triple oath of divorcement, he was confounded and replied, 'O my brother, hast thou a mind to ruin me and make my children orphans and lay a load of sin upon my neck?' But the man threw himself at his feet and kissed them, saying, 'I conjure thee to enter, and be the sin on my neck!' Then all the people of the bath set upon Hasib and dragging him in, pulled off his clothes.

So, seeing no help for it, he sat down against the wall and began to pour water on his head; but hardly had he done so, when a score of men accosted him, saying, 'Come with us to the Sultan, for thou art his debtor.' Then they despatched a messenger to the Sultan's Vizier, who straightway took horse and rode, attended by three-score men, to the bath, where he alighted and going in to Hasib, saluted him and said, 'Welcome to thee!' Then he gave the bathman a hundred dinars and mounting Hasib on a charger he had brought with him, returned with him to the Sultan's palace, where he set food before him and clad him in two dresses of honour, each worth five thousand dinars.

When they had eaten and drunken and washed their hands, the Vizier said to Hasib, 'Know that God hath been merciful to us, for the Sultan is nigh upon death for leprosy, and the books tell us that his life is in thy hands.' Then he took him and carried him through the seven vestibules of the palace, till they came to the King's chamber.

Now the name of this King was Kerezdan, King of Persia and of the Seven Countries, and under his sway were a hundred sovereign princes, sitting on chairs of red gold, and ten thousand captains, under each one's hand a hundred deputies and as many sword-bearers and axe-men. They found the King lying on a bed, with his head wrapped in a napkin, and groaning for excess of pain. When Hasib saw this ordinance, his wit was dazed for awe of the King; so he kissed the earth before him and invoked blessings on him. Then the Grand Vizier, whose name was Shemhour, rose (whilst all present rose also to do him honour) and welcoming Hasib, seated him on a high chair at the King's right hand; after which he called for food and the tables were laid.

When they had eaten and drunken and washed their hands, Shemhour turned to Hasib and said to him, 'We are all thy servants and will give thee whatsoever thou seekest, even to the half of the kingdom, so thou wilt but cure the King.' So saying, he led him to the royal couch, and Hasib, uncovering the King's face, saw that he was at the last extremity: so he said to the Vizier, ' It is true that I am the son of the prophet Daniel, but I know nothing of his art: for they put me thirty days in the school of medicine and I learnt nothing of the craft. I would well I knew somewhat thereof and might heal the King.' When the Grand Vizier heard this, he bent over Hasib's hand and kissed it, saying, 'Do not multiply words upon us; for, though we should gather together to us physicians from the East and from the West, none could heal the King but thou.' 'How can I heal him,'rejoined Hasib, 'seeing I know neither his disease nor its remedy?' 'His cure is in thy hands,' replied Shemhour; and Hasib said, 'If I knew the remedy of his sickness, I would heal him.' Quoth the Vizier, 'Thou knowest it right well; the remedy of his sickness is the Queen of the Serpents, and thou knowest her abiding-place and hast been with her.'

When Hasib heard this, he knew that all this came of his entering the bath and repented, whenas repentance availed nothing; then said he, 'What is the Queen of the Serpents? I know her not nor ever in my life heard I of this name.' 'Deny not the knowledge of her,' rejoined the Vizier; 'for I have proof that thou knowest her and hast passed two years with her.' 'I never saw nor heard of her till this moment,' repeated Hasib ; whereupon Shemhour opened a book and after making sundry calculations, raised his head and spoke [or read] as follows; 'The Queen of the Serpents shall foregather with a man and he shall abide with her two years; then shall he return from her and come forth to the surface of the earth, and when he enters the bath, his belly will become black.' Then said he, 'Look at thy belly.' So Hasib looked at his own belly and behold, it was black: but he [still denied and] said, 'My belly was black from the day my mother bore me.' Quoth the Vizier, 'I had posted three men at the door of every bath, bidding them note all who entered and let me know when they found one whose belly was black: so, when thou enteredst, they looked at thy belly and finding it black, sent and told me, after we had all but despaired of coming across thee. All we want of thee is to show us the place whence thou earnest out and after go thy ways; for

we have those with us who will take the Queen of the Serpents and fetch her to us.' Then all the other Viziers and officers and grandees flocked about Hasib and conjured him, till they were weary, to show them the abode of the Queen; but he persisted in his denial, saying, 'I never saw nor heard of such a creature.'

When the Grand Vizier saw that entreaties availed nothing, he called the hangman and bade him strip Hasib and beat him soundly. So he beat him, till he saw death face to face, for excess of pain, and the Vizier said to him, 'Why wilt thou persist in denial, whenas we have proof that thou knowest the abiding-place of the Queen of the Serpents? Show us the place whence thou camest out and go from us; we have with us one who will take her, and no harm shall befall thee.' Then he raised him and giving him a dress of honour of cloth of gold, embroidered with jewels, spoke him fair, till he yielded and consented to show them the place.

At this, the Vizier rejoiced greatly and they all took horse and rode, guided by Hasib, till they came to the cavern where he had found the cistern full of honey. He entered, sighing and weeping, and showed them the well whence he had issued; whereupon the Vizier sat down thereby and sprinkling perfumes upon a chafing-dish, began to mutter charms and conjurations, for he was a crafty magician and diviner and skilled in cabalistic arts. He repeated three several formulas of conjuration and threw fresh incense upon the brasier, crying out and saying, 'Come forth, O Queen of the Serpents!' When, behold, the water of the well sank down and disappeared and a great door opened in the side, from which came a great noise of crying like unto thunder, so terrible that they thought the well would fall in and all present fell down in a swoon; nay, some even died [for fright].

Presently, there issued from the well a serpent as big as an elephant, casting out sparks, like red hot coals, from its mouth and eyes and bearing on its back a charger of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, in the midst whereof lay a serpent with a human face, from whose body issued such a splendour that the place was illumined thereby. She turned right and left, till her eyes fell upon Hasib, to whom said she, 'Where is the covenant thou madest with me and the oath thou sworest to me, that thou wouldst never again enter the bath? But there is no recourse against destiny nor can any flee from that which is written on his forehead. God hath appointed the end of my life to be at thy hand, and it is His will that I be slain and King Kerezdan healed of his malady.' So saying, she wept sore and Hasib wept with her. As for the Vizier Shemhour, he put out his hand to lay hold of her; but she said to him, 'Hold thy hand, O accursed one, or I will blow upon thee and reduce thee to a heap of black ashes.' Then she cried out to Hasib, saying, ' Put out thine hand and take me and lay me in the brass dish that is with you: then set me on thy head, for my death was fore-ordained, from the beginning of the world, to be at thy hand, and thou hast no power to avert it.' So he took her and laid her in the dish, and the well returned to its natural state.

Then they set out on their return to the city, Hasib carrying the dish on his head, and as they went along, the Queen of the Serpents said to him privily, 'Hearken to me, and I will give thee a friendly counsel, for all thou hast broken faith with me and been false to thine oath; but this was fore-ordained from all eternity. It is this: when thou comest to the Vizier's house, he will bid thee kill me and cut me in three; but do thou refuse, saying, "I know not how to slaughter," and leave him to do it himself. When he

has killed me, he will lay the three pieces in a brass pot and set it on the fire. Then there will come a messenger, to bid him to the King, and he will say to thee, "Keep up the fire under the pot, till the scum rises; then skim it off and pour it into a phial to cool. As soon as it is cool, drink it and neither ache nor pain will be left in all thy body. When the second scum rises, skim it off and pour it into a phial against my return, that I may drink it for an ailment I have in my loins." Then will he go to the King, and when he is gone, do thou wait till the first scum rises and set it aside in a phial; but beware of drinking it, or no good will befall thee. When the second scum rises, skim it off and put it in a phial, which keep for thyself. When the Vizier returns and asks for the second phial, give him the first and note what will happen to him. Then drink the contents of the second phial and thy heart will become the abode of wisdom. After this, take up the flesh and laying it in a brazen platter, carry it to the King and give him to eat thereof. When he has eaten it and it has settled in his stomach, cover his face with a handkerchief and wait by him till noonday, when he will have digested the meat. Then give him somewhat of wine to drink and by the decree of God the Most High he will be healed of his disease and be made whole as he was. This, then, is my charge to thee; give ear unto it and keep it in thy memory.'

Presently, they came to the Vizier's house, and he said to Hasib, 'Come in with me.' So he entered and set down the platter, whilst the troops dispersed and went each his own way, and the Vizier bade him kill the Queen of the Serpents; but he said, 'I am no butcher and never in my life killed I aught. An thou wilt have her slaughtered, kill her with thine own hand.' So Shemhour took the Queen from the platter and slew her, whereat Hasib wept sore and the Vizier laughed at him, saying, 'O wittol, how canst thou weep for the killing of a serpent?' Then he cut her in three and laying the pieces in a brass pot, set it on the fire and sat down to await the cooking of the flesh.

Presently, there came a messenger from the King, who said to him, 'The King calls for thee forthright;' and he answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he gave Hasib two phials and bade him drink the first scum and keep the second against his return, even as the Queen of the Serpents had foretold; after which he went away and Hasib tended the fire under the pot, till the first scum rose, when he skimmed it off and set it aside in one of the phials. After a while, the second scum rose; so he skimmed it off and putting it in the other phial, kept it for himself.

When the meat was done, he took the cauldron off the fire and sat waiting, till the Vizier came back and said to him, 'Hast thou done as I told thee?' 'Yes,' answered Hasib. Quoth the Vizier, 'What hast thou done with the first scum?' 'I drank it but now,' replied Hasib, and Shemhour said, 'Feelst thou no change in thy body?' 'Yes,' answered Hasib; 'I feel as I were on fire from head to foot.' The crafty Vizier made no reply, but said, 'Give me the second phial, that I may drink what is therein, so haply I may be made whole of this ailment in my loins.' So Hasib brought him the first phial and he drank it off, thinking it contained the second scum. Hardly had he done this, when the phial fell from his hand and he swelled out and dropped down dead; and thus was exemplified in him the saying, 'He, who diggeth a pit for his brother, falleth into it himself.'

When Hasib saw this, he wondered and feared to drink of the second phial; but he remembered the Queen's injunction and bethought him that the Vizier would not

have reserved the second scum for himself, had there been aught of hurt therein. So he said, 'I put my trust in God,' and drank off the contents of the phial. No sooner had he done so than God the Most High made the fountains of wisdom to well up in his heart and opened to him the sources of knowledge, and joy and gladness overcame him. Then he laid the serpent's flesh on a platter of brass and went forth to carry it to the palace.

On his way thither, he raised his eyes and saw the seven heavens and all that therein is, even to the lote-tree, beyond which there is no passing and the manner of the revolution of the spheres. Moreover, God discovered to him the ordinance of the planets and the scheme of their movements and the fixed stars, and he saw the conformation of the sea and land and understood the causes and consequences of eclipses of the sun and moon, whereby be became informed with the knowledge of the arts of geometry and cosmography, as well as those of astrology and astronomy and mathematics and all that hangs thereby. Then he looked at the earth and saw all minerals and vegetables that are therein and knew their virtues and properties, so that he became in an instant versed in medicine and chemistry and natural magic and the art of making gold and silver.

When he came to the palace, he went in to the King and kissing the earth before him, said, 'Thou hast outlived thy Vizier Shemhour.' The King was sore troubled at the news of the Grand Vizier's death and wept sore for him, whilst his grandees and officers wept also. Then said Kerezdan, 'He was with me but now, in all health, and went away to fetch me the flesh of the Queen of the Serpents, if it should be cooked; what befell him, that he is now dead, and what calamity hath betided him?' So Hasib told him how he had drunk the contents of the phial and had forthwith swelled out and died. The King mourned sore for his loss and said, 'What shall I do without him?' 'Grieve not, O King of the age,' rejoined Hasib; 'for I will cure thee in three days and leave no whit of disease in thy body.' At this the King's breast dilated and he said, 'I will well to be made whole of this affliction, though after years.'

So Hasib set the platter before the King and made him eat a piece of the flesh of the Queen of the Serpents. Then he covered him up and spreading a napkin over his face, bade him sleep. He slept from noon till sundown, when, his stomach having digested the piece of flesh, he awoke. Hasib gave him to drink and bade him sleep again. So he slept till the morning, and on the morrow, Hasib made him eat another piece of the flesh; and thus he did with him three days following, till he had eaten the whole, when his skin began to shrivel up and peel off in scales and he sweated, so that the sweat ran down from his head to his feet. Therewith he became whole and there abode in him no whit of disease, which when Hasib saw, he carried him to the bath and washed his body; and when he came forth, it was like a wand of silver and he was restored to perfect health, nay, sounder than he had ever been.

So he donned his richest robes and seating himself on his throne, made Hasib sit beside him. Then he called for food, and they ate and drank and washed their hands; after which all his Viziers and Amirs and captains and the grandees of his realm and the chiefs of the people came in to him and gave him joy of his recovery; and they beat the drums and decorated the city in token of rejoicing. Then said the King to the assembly, 'O Viziers and Amirs and grandees, this is Hasib Kerimeddin, who hath

healed me of my sickness, and I make him my chief Vizier in the room of the Vizier Shemhour. He who loves him loves me and he who honours him honours me and he who obeys him obeys me.' 'We hear and obey;' answered they and flocked to kiss Hasib's hand and give him joy of the Vizierate.

Then the King bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour of cloth of gold, set with pearls and jewels, the least of which was worth five thousand dinars. Moreover, he gave him three hundred male white slaves and the like number of concubines, as they were moons, and three hundred Abyssinian slave-girls, beside five hundred mules laden with treasure and sheep and oxen and buffaloes and other cattle, beyond count, and commanded all his Viziers and Amirs and grandees and notables and the officers of his household and his subjects in general to bring him gifts.

Then Hasib took horse and rode, followed by the Viziers and Amirs and grandees and all the troops, to the house which the King had set apart for him, where he sat down on a chair and the Viziers and Amirs came up to him and kissed his hand and gave him joy of the Vizierate, vying with each other in paying court to him. When his mother and household knew what had happened, they rejoiced greatly and congratulated him on his good fortune, and the woodcutters also came and gave him joy. Then he mounted again and riding to the house of the late Vizier, laid hands on all that was therein and transported it to his own abode.

Thus did Hasib, from a know-nothing, unskilled to read writing, become, by the decree of God the Most High, proficient in all sciences and versed in all manner of knowledge, so that the fame of his learning was blazed abroad in all the land and he became renowned for profound skill in medicine and astronomy and geometry and astrology and alchemy and natural magic and the Cabala and all other arts and sciences.

One day, he said to his mother, 'My father Daniel was exceeding wise and learned; tell me what he left by way of books or what not.' So his mother brought him the chest and taking out the five leaves aforesaid, gave them to him, saying, 'These five scrolls are all thy father left thee.' So he read them and said to her, 'O my mother, these leaves are part of a book. Where is the rest?' Quoth she, 'Thy father was shipwrecked a while before thy birth and lost all his books, save these five scrolls.'Then she told him how Daniel had committed them to her care, enjoining her, if she bore a male child, to give them to him, when he grew up and asked what his father had left him. And Hasib abode in all delight and solace of life, till there came to him the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

Sindbad the Sailor and Sindbad the Porter.

THERE lived in the city of Baghdad, in the reign of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, a porter named Sindbad, a poor man who carried [burdens] on his head for hire. One day of great heat he was carrying a heavy load and what with the heat and the burden, he became exceeding weary and sweated amain. Presently he came to the gate of a merchant's house, before which the ground was swept and watered, and there the air was temperate. There was a wide bench beside the door; so he set his load thereon, to rest and take breath, and there came out upon him from the porch a pleasant breeze and a delicious fragrance. He sat down on the edge of the bench, to enjoy this, and heard from within the melodious sound of lutes and other stringed instruments and heart-delighting voices singing and reciting all manner verses with clear and goodly speech, together with the song of birds warbling and glorifying God the Most High in various voices and tongues, turtles and mocking-birds and merles and nightingales and cushats and curlews, whereat he marvelled in himself and was moved to great delight.

Then he went up to the gate and saw within a great garden, wherein were slaves and pages and such a train of servants and attendants and so forth as is only found with kings and sultans, and there was wafted to him the fragrance of all manner rich and delicate meats and generous wines. So he raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'Glory to Thee, O Lord, O Creator and Provider, who providest whom Thou wilt without stint! O my God, I cry Thee pardon for all sins and repent to Thee of all offences! O Lord, there is no gainsaying Thee in Thine ordinance and Thy dominion, neither wilt Thou be questioned of that Thou dost, for Thou indeed art Almighty, extolled be Thy perfection! Whom Thou wilt Thou makest rich and whom Thou wilt Thou makest poor! Whom Thou wilt Thou exaltest and whom Thou wilt Thou abasest and there is no god but Thou! How great is Thy majesty and how mighty Thy dominion and how excellent Thy governance! Verily, Thou favourest whom Thou wilt of Thy servants, whereby the owner of this place abideth in all delight of life and taketh his ease of pleasant scents and delicious meats and generous wines of all kinds. For indeed Thou appointest unto Thy servants that which Thou wilt and that which Thou hast foreordained unto them; wherefore are some weary and some easeful and some enjoy fair fortune and delight, whilst other some suffer the extreme of travail and misery, even as do I.' And he recited the following verses:

How many by my toil, unresting and unstayed,
Do joy in pleasant food and cool, delightful shade!
Indeed, I pass my days in weariness galore;
Strange is my case and sore the load upon me laid;
Whilst others, who ne'er knew a burden like to mine,
Delight in fortune fair, untroubled nor dismayed.
They take their ease of life and eat and drink at Will,
With affluence and power by favouring Fate purveyed;
Yet am I like to these and they are like to me,

And of a drop of sperm each living soul is made.
Natheless. 'twixt them and me a difference there is,
As 'twere 'twixt vinegar and wine, when all is said.
Yet, nowise, O my God, I think to rail at Thee;
Thou'rt wise and just Thy sway and none may Thee upbraid.

When he had made an end of his verses, he took up his burden and was about to fare on, when there came forth the gate to him a little fair-faced page, well-shaped and richly clad, who caught him by the hand, saying, 'Come in and speak with my lord, for he calls for thee.' The porter would have excused himself, but the page would take no refusal; so he left his load with the doorkeeper in the vestibule and followed the boy into the house, which he found goodly of ordinance and full of majesty and cheer, till he brought him to a vast and splendid saloon, wherein he saw a company of nobles and great lords, seated, each according to his rank, at tables heaped with all manner flowers and sweet-scented herbs, besides great plenty of rich meats and fruits and confections and wines of the choicest vintages. There also were fair maids, singing and playing upon instruments of music, and in the highest room sat a man of reverend and majestic aspect, whose cheeks hoariness had smitten, and he was well-made and fair of favour, stately of aspect and full of gravity and venerance and dignity.

The porter was confounded at that which he beheld and said in himself, 'By Allah, this must be either one of the pavilions of Paradise or some king's palace!' Then he saluted the company respectfully, wishing them all kinds of prosperity, and kissing the earth before them, stood in a humble attitude, with his head bowed down. The master of the house bade him draw near and be seated and bespoke him kindly, bidding him welcome. Then he set before him various kinds of rich and delicate meats, and the porter called upon the name of God and ate his fill, after which he exclaimed, 'Praised be God, come what may!' and washing his hands, returned thanks to the company for his entertainment. Quoth the host, 'Thou art welcome and thy day is a blessed one. But what is thy name and condition?' 'O my lord,' answered the other, 'my name is Sindbad the porter, and I carry folk's goods on my head for hire.' The host smiled and rejoined, 'Know, O porter, that my name is even as thine, for I am Sindbad the Sailor; and now I would have thee repeat to me the verses thou didst recite at the gate but now.' The porter was abashed and replied, 'God on thee! Excuse me, for toil and misery and lack of good teach a man ill manners and indiscretion.' 'Be not ashamed,' said the host; 'thou art become my brother; but repeat to me the verses, for they pleased me, when I heard thee recite them at the gate.' So the porter repeated the verses and they pleased the merchant, who said to him, 'Know, O porter, that my story is a wonderful one, and thou shalt hear all that befell me and all I underwent before I won to this state of prosperity and became stablished whereas thou seest me; for I came not to this high estate but after sore travail and great weariness and perils galore, and how much toil and trouble have I not suffered aforetime! Indeed, I have made seven voyages, by each of which hangs a marvellous history, such as confounds the reason, and all this came to pass by the decree of fortune and fore-ordained fate; for there is neither flight nor refuge from that which is written. Know, then, O my lords,' continued he, turning to his guests, 'that

The First Voyage Of' Sindbad the Sailor.

MY father was one of the richest and most considerable merchants of my native place and died, whilst I was yet a child, leaving me much wealth in money and lands and houses. When I grew up, I laid hands on the whole and ate and drank freely and wore rich clothes and lived lavishly with my friends and companions of my own age, thinking this way of life would last for ever. Thus did I a great while, till, at last, when I returned to my senses and awoke from my heedlessness, I found my wealth wasted and my case changed, and gone was all I had. At this I was stricken with dismay and confusion and bethought me of a saying of our lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace), which I had heard aforetime from my father, "Three things are better than other three; the day of death is better than the day of birth, a live dog than a dead lion and the grave than poverty." Then I sold the remains of my property and got together three thousand dirhems, with which I resolved to travel to foreign countries, remembering the saying of the poet:

By sheer endeavour, one winneth to fortune's height,
And he who craveth advancement must watch anight.
In midmost ocean the seeker of pearls must plunge
And so attaineth to wealth and lordship and might;
And he sans travail who seeketh eminence
His life in the quest of vanity wasteth quite.

So I bought me merchandise and what not else was needed for a seavoyage and embarked, with a company of merchants, on board a ship bound for Bassora. There we took ship again and putting out to sea, sailed days and nights and passed from island to island and ocean to ocean and place to place, buying and selling and bartering everywhere, till we came to an island as it were one of the pleasaunces of Paradise. Here the captain cast anchor and making fast to the shore, put out the landing-stage. So all on board landed and made furnaces and lighting fires therein, busied themselves in various ways, some cooking and some washing, whilst other some walked about the island for their pleasure and the rest fell to eating and drinking and making merry. I was one of those who explored the place, but, as we were thus variously engaged, behold, the captain cried out to us from the deck at the top of his voice, saying, "Ho, passengers, flee for your lives and leave your gear and hasten back to the ship and save yourselves from destruction, God preserve you! For this is no island, but a great fish stationary in the midst of the sea, on which the sand has settled and trees have sprung up of old time, so that it is become like unto an island; but, when we lighted fires on it, it felt the heat and moved; and presently it will sink with you into the sea and ye will all be drowned. So leave your gear and save yourselves ere ye perish!"

When we heard the captain's warning, we left our gear and fled back to the ship for our lives and some reached it; but, before the rest, of whom I was one, could do so, the island shook and sank into the abysses of the deep, with all that were thereon, and the surging sea closed over it with its clashing billows. I sank with the others, but God the Most High preserved me from drowning and threw in my way a great wooden tub

of those that had served the ship's company for washing. I gripped it for dear life and bestriding it, paddled with my feet, whilst the waves sported with me right and left. Meanwhile the captain made sail and departed with those who had reached the ship, regardless of the drowning men, and I followed the vessel with my eyes, till she disappeared from sight and I looked for nothing but death.

In this plight, the darkness closed in upon me and the winds and waves bore me on all that night and the next day, till the tub brought to with me under the lee of a lofty island, with trees overhanging the water. I caught hold of a branch and made shift to clamber up on to the land, after coming nigh upon death. When I reached the shore, I found my feet cramped and bearing traces of the nibbling of fish upon their soles, the which I felt not for excess of fatigue and misery. I threw myself down on the ground, like a dead man, and swooned away, nor did I return to my senses till next morning, when the sun revived me. I tried to walk, but found my feet swollen, so made shift to crawl on my hands and knees towards the interior of the island where I found abundance of fruits and springs of sweet water. I ate of the fruits and drank of the springs; and thus I abode days and nights, till my strength and spirits began to revive and I was able to move about. So I bethought me and cutting myself a staff to lean upon, fell to exploring the island and diverting myself with gazing upon the things that God the Most High had created there.

One day, as I walked along the sea-shore, I caught sight of some live thing in the distance and thought it a wild beast or one of the creatures of the sea; but, as I drew near it, I saw that it was a magnificent mare, tethered on the beach. So I went up to her, but she cried out against me with a great cry, so that I trembled for fear and turned to go away, when there came forth a man from under the earth and followed me, crying out and saying, "Who and whence art thou and how camest thou hither?" "O my lord," answered I, "I am a shipwrecked man, a stranger, to whom God vouchsafed a wooden tub; so I saved myself thereon and it floated with me, till the waves cast me up on this island." When he heard this, he said, "Come with me," and taking me by the hand, carried me into a great underground chamber and made me sit down at the upper end. Then he brought me food and I ate, being anhungred, till I was satisfied and refreshed; after which he questioned me of myself, and I told him all that had befallen me, adding, "For God's sake, O my lord, excuse me; I have told thee the truth of my case; and now I desire that thou tell me who thou art and why thou abidest here under the earth and why thou hast tethered yonder mare on the brink of the sea. "Know," answered he, "that I am one of several who are stationed in different parts of the island, and we are of the grooms of King Mihrjan and under our hand are all his horses. Every month, at the new moon, we bring hither the best of the King's mares, that have never been covered, and tether them on the sea-shore and hide ourselves in this place under the ground, so that none may see us. Presently, the stallions of the sea scent the mares and come up out of the water and seeing no one, leap the mares and cover them. When they have done their will of them, they try to drag them away with them, but cannot, by reason of the tether; so they cry out at them and set on them with hoofs and teeth, which we hearing, know that the stallions have dismounted; so we run out and shout at them, whereupon they are affrighted and return to the sea. Then the mares conceive by them and bear colts and fillies worth a treasury of money, whose

like is not to be found on the face of the earth. This is the time of the coming forth of the sea-horses; and so it please God the Most High, I will carry thee to King Mihrjan and show thee our country. Well is it for thee that thou hast happened on us, else hadst thou perished miserably and none known of thee, for there cometh none hither save ourselves: but I will be the means of the saving of thy life and of thy return to thine own land."

I called down blessings on him and thanked him for his kindness and courtesy. While we were talking, the stallion came up out of the sea and giving a great cry, sprang upon the mare and covered her. When he had done his will of her, he dismounted and would have carried her away with him, but could not by reason of the tether. She kicked and cried out at him, whereupon the groom took a sword and buckler and ran out, smiting the buckler with the sword and calling to his companions. With this up came a company of men, shouting and brandishing spears, and the stallion took fright at them and plunging into the sea; like a buffalo, disappeared under the waves. After this, we sat a while, till the rest of the grooms came up, each leading a mare, and seeing me with their fellow, questioned me, and I repeated my story to them. Thereupon they drew near me and spreading the table, ate and invited me to eat; so I ate with them, after which they took horse and mounting me on one of the mares, set out with me and fared on without ceasing, till they came to the capital city of King Mihrjan, and going in to him, acquainted him with my case. Then he sent for me and gave me a cordial welcome and bade me repeat my story to him. So I related to him all that had befallen me from first to last, whereat he marvelled exceedingly and said to me, "By Allah, O my son, thou hast indeed been miraculously preserved! Were not the term of thy life a long one, thou hadst not escaped from these straits; but praised be God for safety!" Then he spoke comfortably to me and entreated me with kindness and consideration. Moreover, he made me his agent for the port and registrar of all ships that entered the harbour and clad me in sumptuous apparel. In this capacity, I attended him regularly, to receive his commandments, and he favoured me and did me all manner of kindness. Indeed, I was high in credit with him, as an intercessor for the folk and an intermediary between them and him, whenas they would aught of him.

I abode thus a great while and as often as I went down to the port, I questioned the merchants and travellers and sailors of the city of Baghdad, so haply I might hear of an occasion to return to my native land, but could find none who knew it or knew any who resorted thither. At this I was chagrined, for I was weary of long strangerhood; but, one day, going in to King Mihrjan, I found with him a company of Indians and saluted them. They returned my salutation and asked me of my country; after which I questioned them of theirs and they told me that they were of various castes, some being called Shatriyas, who are the noblest of their castes and neither oppress nor offer violence to any, and others Brahmins, a folk who abstain from wine, but live in delight and solace and merriment and own camels and horses and cattle. Moreover, they told me that the people of India are divided into two-and-seventy castes, and I marvelled at this exceedingly.

Amongst other things that I saw in King Mihrjan's dominions was an island called Kasil, wherein all night is heard the beating of drums and tabrets, but we were told by the neighbouring islanders and by travellers that the inhabitants are people of

diligence and judgment. In this sea I saw also a fish two hundred cubits long and another half that length, with a head like that of an owl, besides many other wonders and rarities, which it would be tedious to recount to you. I occupied myself thus in exploring the islands till, one day, as I stood in the port, with a staff in my hand, according to my wont, I saw a great ship, wherein were many merchants, making for the harbour. When it reached the anchorage, the master furled his sails and making fast to the shore, put out the landing-stage, whereupon the crew fell to unlading the cargo, whilst I stood by, taking note of them. They were long in bringing the goods ashore and I said to the master, "Is there aught left in thy ship?" "Yes, O my lord," answered he; "there are divers bales of merchandise in the hold, whose owner was drowned at one of the islands in our way; so his goods abode in our charge and we purpose to sell them and note their price, that we may carry it to his people in the city of Baghdad, the Abode of Peace." "What was the merchant's name?' asked I, and he answered, "Sindbad;" whereupon I straitly considered him and knowing him, cried out to him with a great cry, saying, "O master, I am that Sindbad of whom thou speakest and these are my goods; for, when the fish sank under us and we were plunged into the sea, God threw in my way a great tub of wood, of those the crew had used to wash withal, and the winds and waves carried me to this island, where, by God's grace, I fell in with King Mihrjan's grooms and they brought me hither to their master. When the latter heard my story, he entreated me with favour and made me his harbour-master, and I have prospered in his service and found acceptance with him."

When the master heard what I said, he exclaimed, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, there is neither conscience nor good faith left among men I" "O captain," said I, "what mean these words, seeing that I have told thee my case?" And he answered, saying, "Because thou heardest me say that I had with me goods whose owner was drowned, thou thinkest to take them without right; but this is forbidden to thee, for we saw him drown before our eyes, together with many others, nor was one of them saved. So how canst thou pretend that thou art the owner of the goods?" "O captain," said I, "listen to my story and give heed to my words, and my soothfastness will be manifest to thee; for falsehood is of the fashion of the hypocrites." Then I recounted to him all that had befallen me since I left Baghdad with him up to the time when we came to the fish, which we took for an island, and reminded him of certain things that had passed between him and me; whereupon both he and the merchants were certified of the truth of my story and recognized me and gave me joy of my deliverance, saying, "By Allah, we thought not that thou hadst escaped drowning! But God hath granted thee new life." Then they delivered my bales to me, and I found my name written thereon, nor was aught thereof lacking. So I opened them and making up a present for King Mihrjan of the richest and most costly of the contents, caused the sailors carry it to the palace,vhere I presented it to the King, acquainting him with what had happened, at which he wondered exceedingly and the truth of all that I had told him was made manifest to him. Wherefore his affection for me redoubled and he showed me exceeding honour and bestowed on me a great present in return for mine. Then I sold my bales and what else I possessed, making a great profit on them, and bought me other goods and gear of the growth and fashion of the island. When the ship was about to start on her homeward voyage, I embarked in her all that I possessed and going in to the King, thanked him for all his favours and

craved his leave to return to my country and friends. He gave me leave and bestowed on me great plenty of the stuffs and produce of the country; and I took my leave of him and embarked. Then we set sail and fared on nights and days, by the permission of God the Most High, and Fortune served us and Fate was favourable to us, so that we arrived in safety at Bassora, where I landed, rejoiced at my safe return to my native land. Thence, after a short stay, I set out again for Baghdad and in due time reached that city, with store of goods and commodities of great price. I went straight to my house and all my friends and kinsfolk came to greet me. Then I bought me slaves and servants, black and white and male and female, in great plenty, and houses and lands and gardens, till I was richer and in better case than before, and gave myself up to feasting and banqueting and making merry with my friends and companions more assiduously than ever, forgetting all I had suffered of fatigue and hardship and strangerhood and all the perils of travel. This, then, is the story of my first voyage, and to-morrow, God willing, I will tell you that of the second of my seven voyages.'

Then Sindbad the Sailor made the porter sup with him and gave him an hundred dinars, saying, 'Thou hast cheered us with thy company this day.' The porter thanked him and went his way, pondering that which he had heard and marvelling at the things that betide mankind. He passed the night in his own house and on the morrow repaired to the abode of Sindbad the Sailor, who received him with honour and seated him by himself. Then, as soon as the rest of the company were assembled, he set meat and drink beIore them and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry and in cheerful case, he took up his discourse and bespoke them, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that

The Second Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

I ABODE a while, as I told you yesterday, in the enjoyment of all the comforts and pleasures of life, until one day the longing seized me to travel again and see foreign countries and traffic and make profit by trade. So I took a great sum of money and buying goods and gear fit for travel, packed them into bales. Then I went down to the river-bank, where I found a handsome new ship about to sail, well manned and provided and equipped with sails of fine cloth. I took passage in her, with a number of other merchants, and we weighed anchor the same day. Fair weather attended us, and we sailed from place to place, buying and selling and bartering, till chance brought us to a lovely island, abounding in trees laden with ripe fruits and fragrant flowers and limpid streams and musical with the song of birds; but there was no dweller there, no, not a blower of the fire. The captain made fast with us to this island, and the merchants and sailors landed and walked about, enjoying the shade of the trees and the song of the birds, that chanted the praises of the One, the Victorious, and marvelling at the works of the Omnipotent King. I landed with the rest and sitting down by a spring of sweet water, that welled up among the trees, took out some victual I had with me and ate of that which God the Most High had allotted me. I sat thus, enjoying the pleasant freshness of the breeze and the fragrance of the flowers, till presently I grew drowsy for very pleasance and lying down, soon fell asleep. When I awoke, I found myself alone, for the ship had sailed with all who were therein, and left me behind, nor had one of the merchants or sailors bethought himself of me. I searched the island right and left, but found neither man nor genie, whereat I was beyond measure troubled and my gall was like to burst for excess of chagrin and anguish and concern, for that I was left quite alone, without aught of meat or drink or worldly gear, weary and heart-broken. So I gave myself up for lost and said, "Not always does the pitcher come off unbroken. I escaped the first time and happened on one who brought me to an inhabited place, but this time there is no hope of falling in with such a deliverer." Then I fell a-weeping and wailing and gave myself up to despair, blaming myself for having again adventured upon the perils and hardships of travel, whenas I was at my ease in my own house in my native city, taking my leisure with pleasant food and rich raiment, and lacking nothing, neither money nor goods, and this the more after all the toils and dangers I had undergone in my first voyage, wherein I had so narrowly escaped destruction. And I repented me of having left Baghdad and exclaimed, "Verily we are God's and to Him we return!" For indeed I was even as one mad, and I rose and walked about the island, unable for trouble to abide in any one place. Then I climbed a tall tree and looked in every direction, but saw nothing but sky and sea and trees and birds and islands and sands. However, after a while, I caught sight of some great white thing, afar off in the interior of the island; so I came down from the tree and making for that which I had seen, found it a huge white dome of vast height and compass. I walked all round it, but found no door thereto, nor could I muster strength or nimbleness to climb it, by reason of its exceeding smoothness and slipperiness. So I marked the spot where I stood and went round about the dome to measure its compass, which I found fifty good paces.

As I stood, casting about how to gain an entrance, the sun was suddenly hidden from me and the air became dark. Methought a cloud had come over the sun, but it was the season of summer and the day drew near to sun-down; so I marvelled at this and lifting my head, looked steadfastly at the sun, when I saw that what I had taken for a cloud was none other than an enormous bird, whose outspread wings, as it flew through the air, obscured the sun and veiled it from the island. At this sight my wonder redoubled and I bethought me of a story that I had heard aforetime of pilgrims and travellers, how in certain islands dwells a huge bird, called the roc, which feeds its young on elephants, and was assured that the dome aforesaid was none other than one of its eggs. As I looked and wondered at the marvellous works of God the Most High, the bird alighted on the egg and brooded over it with its wings covering it and its legs spread out behind it on the ground, and in this posture it fell asleep, glory be to Him who sleepeth not I When I saw this, I arose and unwinding the linen of my turban, twisted it into a rope, with which I girt my middle and bound myself fast to the roc's feet, saying in myself, "Peradventure, this bird may carry me to a land of cities and inhabitants, and that will be better than abiding in this island."

I passed the night on wake, fearing to sleep, lest the bird should fly away with me at unawares; and as soon as the dawn broke and day appeared, the roc gave a great cry and spreading its wings, flew up with me into the air. It ceased not to soar, till I thought it had reached the limit of the skies, after which it descended, little by little, till it lighted on the top of a high hill. As soon as I found myself on the earth, I made haste to unbind myself; quaking for fear of the bird, though it took no heed of me nor was ware of me, and loosing the linen of my turban from its feet, made off. Presently, I saw it catch up something from the ground and rise into the air with it, and observing this narrowly, saw it to be a huge great serpent, with which it flew away out of sight. I marvelled at this and faring on, found myself on a crest overlooking a great valley, exceeding wide and deep and bounded by vast mountains, that soared high into the air: none could see their summits, for the excess of their height, nor could any avail to climb up thereto. When I saw this, I blamed myself for that which I had done and said, "Would God I had remained in the island! It was better than this desert place; for there I had at least fruits to eat and water to drink, and here are neither trees nor fruits nor streams. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, as often as I am quit of one peril, I fall into a worse and a more grievous."

However, I took courage and walking along the valley, found that its soil was of diamond, the stone wherewith they pierce jewels and precious stones and porcelain and onyx, for that it is a hard dense stone, whereon neither iron nor steel hath effect, neither can we cut off aught therefrom nor break it, save by means of the leadstone. Moreover, the valley swarmed with huge snakes and vipers, as big as palm-trees, that would have made but one gulp of an elephant; and they came out by night, hiding during the day, lest the rocs and eagles should pounce on them and tear them in pieces, as was their wont, why I know not. And I repented of what I had done and said, "By Allah, I have made haste to bring destruction upon myself!" As I went along, forgetttng my hunger and thirst in my concern for my life, the day began to wane and I looked about for a place where I might pass the night, being in fear of the serpents. Presently, I caught sight of a cave near at hand, with a narrow doorway; so I entered

and rolled a great stone that I found within to the mouth of the cave and stopped it up, saying in myself; "I am safe here for the night; and as soon as it is day, I will go forth and see what destiny will do." Then I looked within the cave and saw at the further end a great serpent brooding on her eggs, at which my hair stood on end but I raised my eyes to heaven and committing my case to fate and destiny, abode all that night without sleep till daybreak, when I rolled back the stone from the mouth of the cave and went forth, staggering like a drunken man for stress of watching and fear and hunger.

As I walked along the valley, there fell down before me a great piece of meat; but I saw none, at which I marvelled greatly and presently bethought me of a story I had heard aforetime of merchants and pilgrims and travellers, how the mountains where are the diamonds are fenced about with great perils and terrors, nor can any win thither; but the merchants who traffic in diamonds have a device by which they get them, that is to say, they take a sheep and kill and skin it and cut it in quarters and cast them down from the mountain-tops into the valley, where, the meat being sticky with the fresh blood, some of the jewels cling to it. There they leave it till midday, when the eagles and vultures swoop down upon it and carry it up to the mountain-tops, whereupon the merchants come and shout at them and scare them from the meat. Then they come and taking the diamonds, go their ways with them and leave the meat to the birds and beasts; nor can any come at the diamonds, but on this wise. So, when I saw the carcase fall and bethought me of the story aforesaid, I filled my pockets and girdle and turban and the folds of my clothes with great plenty of the best of the diamonds; and as I was thus engaged, down fell another great quarter of meat before me. Then I unrolled the linen of my turban and setting the meat on my breast, bound myself thereto and lay down on my back, so that I was hidden by the meat, which was thus raised above the ground. Hardly had I done this, when an eagle swooped down upon the meat and driving its talons into it, flew up with it and me clinging thereto and alighted on the top of one of the mountains, where it fell to rending the carcase; but there arose a great noise of shouting and clattering of wood, at which the bird took fright and flew away.

Then I loosed myself from the meat, with clothes daubed with blood therefrom, and stood up; whereupon up came the merchant, who had cried out at the eagle, and seeing me standing there, bespoke me not, but was affrighted at me and shook with fear. However, he went up to the carcase and turning it over, found no diamonds sticking to it, whereat he gave a great cry and exclaimed, "Alas, my disappointment! There is no power and no virtue but in God, with whom we seek refuge from Satan the accursed!" And he bemoaned himself and beat hand upon hand, saying, "Alas, the pity of it! How cometh this?" Then I went up to him and he said to me, "Who art thou and how camest thou hither?" "Fear not," answered I. "I am a man and a good one and a merchant. My story is a rare one and the manner of my coming hither is a marvel. So be of good cheer; thou shalt have of me what will gladden thy heart, for I have with me great plenty of diamonds, each better than aught thou couldst get otherwise, and I will give thee thereof what shall suffice thee; so fear nothing." So saying, I gave him abundance of diamonds and he rejoiced therein and thanked and blessed me. Then we talked together till the other merchants, each of whom had thrown down his piece of

meat, hearing me in discourse with their fellow, came up and saluted me. I told them my story and how I came thither, and they gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, a new life hath been decreed to thee, for none ever won to yonder valley and came off thence alive before thee; but praised be God for thy safety!"

I passed the night in their company in a safe and pleasant place, beyond measure rejoiced at my deliverance from the Valley of Serpents and my arrival in an inhabited land; and on the morrow we set out and journeyed along the crest of the mountains, seeing many serpents in the valley, till we came to a wide and fair island, wherein was a grove of great camphor-trees, under each of which a hundred men might shelter. When the folk have a mind to get camphor, they pierce the upper part of the Stem with a long gimlet, whereupon the liquid camphor, which is the sap of the tree, runs out, as it were milk, and they catch it in vessels, where it hardens like gum; but, after this, the tree withers and becomes dry firewood. Moreover, there is in this island a kind of wild beast, called a rhinoceros, that feeds upon grass and leaves of trees, as do oxen and buffaloes with us; but it is a huge beast, bigger of body than the camel, and has a great and thick horn, half a score cubits long, amiddleward its head, wherein, when cleft in twain, is the likeness of a man. Travellers say that this beast will carry off a great elephant on its horn and graze about the island and the sea-coast therewith and take no heed of it, till the elephant dies and its fat melting in the sun, runs down into the rhinoceros's eyes and blinds him, so that he lies down on the shore. Then comes the roc and carries off both elephant and rhinoceros, to feed its young withal. Moreover, I saw in this island many kinds of oxen and buffaloes, whose like are not found in our country.

Here I sold some of my diamonds for gold and silver money and bartered others for the produce of the country, and loading them upon beasts of burden, fared on with the merchants from valley to valley and town to town, buying and selling and viewing foreign countries and the works and creatures of God, till we came to Bassora, where we abode a few days, after which I continued my journey to Baghdad and arrived at home with great store of diamonds and money and goods. I foregathered with my friends and relations and gave alms and largesse and made presents to all my friends and companions. Then I betook myself to eating and drinking and making merry with my fellows, and forgot all my sufferings. And all who heard of my return came and questioned me of my adventures and of foreign countries, and I related to them all that had befallen me, whereat they wondered exceedingly and gave me joy of my safe return. This, then, is the end of the story of my second voyage; and to-morrow, God willing, I will tell you what befell me in my third voyage.'

The company marvelled at his story and ate the evening meal with him; after which he ordered an hundred dinars to be given to the porter, who thanked him and blessed him and went his way, wondering at what he had heard. Next morning, as soon as it was day, he rose and praying the morning-prayer, repaired to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, even as he had bidden him, and gave him good-morrow. The merchant welcomed him and made him sit with him, till the rest of the company arrived; and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry and in good case, their host began as follows, saying, 'Hearken, O my brothers, to the story of my third voyage, which is more wonderful than those you have already heard. Know that

The Third Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

AS I told you yesterday, I returned from my second voyage with great increase of wealth, God having requited me all that I had lost, and I abode awhile at Baghdad in the enjoyment of the utmost ease and prosperity, till I was once more seized with longing for travel and adventure and yearned after traffic and gain, for that the heart is naturally prone to evil. So I laid in great plenty of suitable goods and repairing to Bassora, found there a great ship ready to sail, with a numerous company of merchants and others, men of worth and piety and consideration. I took passage with them and we set sail, commending ourselves to the blessing of God the Most High and trusting in Him to bring our voyage to a safe and prosperous issue. We fared on from sea to sea and from island to island and city to city, in all delight and contentment, buying and selling and taking our pleasure, till, one day, as we sailed, midmost the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, the master, who stood in the ship's side, examining the sea in all directions, cried out with a great cry and bade furl the sail and cast out the anchors. Then he buffeted his face and plucked out his beard and rent his clothes, saying, "Alas!" and " Woe worth the day! O merchants, we are all lost!" So we said to him, "O master, what is to do?" and he replied, "Know, o my brethren, (may God preserve you,) that the wind has gotten the better of us and driven us out of our course into mid-ocean, and fate, for our ill fortune, hath brought us to the Mountain of the Zughb, who are a folk like apes, never fell any among them and came off alive, and my heart misgives me that we are all dead men."

Hardly had he made an end of his speech when the ship was boarded by an innumerable multitude of the islanders, who are the most frightful of wild creatures like apes, foul of favour and little of stature, being but four spans high, yellow-eyed and black-a-viced and covered with black hair like felt; none knoweth their language nor what they are, and they shun the company of men. They swarmed like locusts about the vessel and the shore, and we feared to strike them or drive them away, because of their vast multitude, lest, if we slew one, the rest should fall on us and kill us, for numbers prevail over courage; so we let them do their will, albeit we feared they would plunder our goods and gear. They swarmed up the cables and gnawed them in sunder, and on like wise they did with all the ropes of the ship, so that it fell off from the wind and stranded upon the mountain. Then they laid hands on all the merchants and crew, and landing us on the island, made off with the ship and its cargo we knew not whither.

We abode on the island, eating of its herbs and fruits and drinking of its streams, till, one day, we espied in its midst what seemed an inhabited house. So we made for it and found it a strong castle, compassed about with lofty walls and having a gate of ebony, with two leaves, both of which stood open. We entered and found within a spacious courtyard, with many high doors opening upon it, and at the farther end a great stone bench and brasiers, with cooking gear hanging thereby and great plenty of bones thereabout; but we saw no one and marvelled thereat exceedingly. Then we sat down in the courtyard and presently falling asleep, slept from the forenoon till sundown, when we were awakened by a rumbling noise in the air. The earth shook

under us and behold, there came down upon us from the top of the castle a huge creature, in the likeness of a man, black of colour and tall of stature, as he were a great palm tree, with eyes like coals of fire and tusks like boar's tusks and a vast big mouth like the mouth of a well. Moreover, he had lips like camel's lips, hanging down upon his breast, and ears like two djerms, falling over his shoulders, and the nails of his hands were like lion's claws.

When we saw this frightful monster, we fell down and became as dead men for excess of fear and terror. He sat awhile on the bench, then, coming to us, took me up in his hand and turned me over and felt me, as a butcher feels a sheep, and I but a little morsel in his hands ; but finding me lean and in poor case, for stress of toil and trouble and weariness, let me go and took up another, whom in like manner he turned over and felt and let go; nor did he cease to feel the rest of us, one after another, till he came to the master of the ship. Now he was a stout broad-shouldered fellow, fat and in good case; so he pleased the monster, who seized him, as a butcher seizes a beast, and throwing him down, set his foot on his neck and broke it; after which he fetched a long spit and thrusting it into his fundament, brought it forth of the crown of his head. Then, lighting a great fire, he set over it the spit with the dead man thereon, and turned it over the coals, till the flesh was roasted, when he took the spit off the fire and set it [upright in the ground] before him. Then he tore the body, limb from limb, as one joints a fowl, and rending the flesh with his nails, fell to eating of it and gnawing the bones, till there was nothing left but some bones, which he threw on one side. This done, he lay down on the bench and stretching himself out, fell asleep and snored like the death-rattle of a lamb or a cow, with its throat cut; nor did he wake till morning, when he rose and went out.

As soon as we were certified that he was gone, we began to talk with one another, bemoaning ourselves and saying, "Would God we had been drowned in the sea or that the apes had eaten us! That were better than to be roasted over the coals; by Allah, this is a foul death! But what God wills cometh to pass and there is no power and no virtue save in Him, the Most High, the Supreme! We shall assuredly perish miserably and none will know of us; for there is no escape for us from this place." Then we arose and roamed about the island, so haply we might find a means of flight or a place to hide us in, for indeed death was a light matter to us, so we were not roasted and eaten. However, we could find no hiding-place and the evening overtook us; so, of the excess of our terror, we returned to the Castle and sat down.

Presently, the earth shook under us and the black came up to us and turning us over, felt us, one after another, till be found one to his liking, whom he took and served as he had done the captain, killing and roasting and eating him; after which he laid down on the bench and slept and snored all night, like a beast with its throat cut, till daybreak, when he arose and went out as before. Then we drew together and said to one another, "By Allah, we were better cast ourselves into the sea and be drowned than be roasted and eaten, for this is a vile death!" "Rather let us cast about to kill him," quoth one of us, "and be at peace from him and rid the Muslims of his barbarity and tyranny." Then said I, "O my brothers, if there is nothing for it but to kill him, let us carry some of this wood and planks down to the sea-shore and make a boat, so, if we succeed in killing him, we may either embark in it and let the waters carry us whither

God will, or else abide here till some ship pass, when we will take passage therein. If we win not to kill him, we will embark in the boat and put out to sea; and if we be drowned, we shall at least escape being slaughtered and roasted; whilst if we escape, we escape, and if we be drowned, we die martyrs." "By Allah," said they all, "this is a good counsel;" and we agreed upon this, and set about carrying it out. So we haled the pieces of wood [that lay about] down to the beach and making a boat, moored it to the strand, after which we stowed therein somewhat of victual and returned to the castle.

No sooner was it dark than the earth shook under us and in came the black upon us, as he were a raging dog. He came up to us and feeling us, one by one, took one of us and killed and roasted and ate him, after which he lay down on the bench and snored like thunder. As soon as we were assured that he slept, we arose and taking two iron spits of those set up there, heated them in the fiercest of the fire, till they were red-hot, when we gripped fast hold of them and going up to the giant, as he lay snoring on the bench, thrust them into his eyes and pressed upon them, all of us, with our might, so that his eyes were put out and he became blind. Thereupon he gave a great cry, that our hearts trembled thereat, and springing up from the bench, fell a-groping after us, blind-fold. We fled from him right and left and he saw us not, for he was altogether blind; but we were in deadly fear of him and gave ourselves up for lost, despairing of escape. Then he made for the door, feeling for it with his hands, and went out, roaring aloud, so that the earth shook under us, for the noise of his roaring, and we quaked for fear.

We followed him out of the castle and betook ourselves to the place where we had moored our boat, saying to one another, "If this accursed wretch abide absent till the going down of the sun and come not to the castle, we shall know that he is dead; and if he come back, we will embark in the boat and paddle till we escape, committing our affair to God." But, as we spoke, up came the black, with other two as they were ghouls, fouler and more frightful than he, with eyes like red-hot coals; which when we saw, we embarked in haste in the boat and casting off the moorings, pushed out to sea. As soon as the giants caught sight of us, they cried out at us and running down to the sea-shore, fell a-pelting us with rocks, whereof some reached us, and other some fell into the sea. We paddled with all our might till we were beyond their reach, but the most part of us were slain by the stone-throwing, and the winds and waves sported with us and carried us into the midst of the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. We knew not whither we we went and my fellows died one after another, till there remained but myself and two others on board the boat; for, as often as one died, we threw him into the sea. We were sore exhausted for stress of hunger, but we heartened one another and paddled with our might, till the winds cast us upon an island, as we were dead men for fear and hunger and weariness.

We landed and walked about the island, which abounded in trees and streams and birds, eating of the fruits and rejoicing in our escape from the black and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; and thus we did till nightfall, when we lay down and fell asleep for excess of weariness. After a while we were aroused by a hissing noise, like the wind, and awaking, saw an enormous serpent making for us, which seized one of my companions and swallowed him at one gulp, down to his shoulders; then it gave another gulp and swallowed the rest of him, and we heard his ribs crack in its belly.

Then it went its way, and we abode in sore amazement and grief for our comrade and mortal terror for ourselves, saying, "By Allah, this is a marvellous thing! Each kind of death [that besets us] is more terrible than the last. We were rejoicing in our escape from the black and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; but now we have fallen into that which is worse. There is no power and no virtue but in God! By Allah, we have escaped from the black and from drowning; but how shall we escape from this ill-omened serpent?"

Then we walked about the island, eating of its fruits and drinking of its streams, till dusk, when we climbed up into a high tree and went to sleep there, I being on the topmost branch. As soon as it was dark night, up came the serpent, looking right and left, and making for the tree on which we were, climbed up to my comrade and swallowed him down to his shoulders. Then it coiled about the tree with him, whilst I heard his bones crack in its belly, and it swallowed him whole, after which it slid down from the tree. When the day broke, I came down, as I were a dead man for excess of fear and anguish, and thought to cast myself into the sea and be at peace from the world; but could not bring myself to this, for life is dear. So I took five broad and long pieces of wood and bound one crosswise to the soles of my feet and another over my head and the others in like fashion on my right and left sides and over my breast and made them fast with ropes, which I twisted of the grass of the island. Then I lay down on the ground on my back, so that I was completely fenced in by the pieces of wood which enclosed me like a bier.

As soon as it was dark, up came the serpent, as usual, and made towards me, but could not get at me to swallow me, for the wood that fenced me in. So it crawled round me on every side, whilst I looked on, like one dead for excess of terror; and every now and then it would go away and come back; but as often as it tried to come at me, it was hindered by the pieces of wood with which I had bound myself on every side. It ceased not to beset me thus from sundown till sunrise, when it made off, in the utmost rage and disappointment. Then I unbound myself, well-nigh dead for fear and sleeplessness, and went down to the sea-shore, whence I saw a ship afar off in the midst of the waves. So I tore off a great branch of a tree and made signs with it, shouting out the while; which when the ship's company saw, they said to each other, "We must stand in and see what this is; belike it is a man." So they steered for the island and presently heard my cries, whereupon they put out a boat and taking me on board, questioned me of my case. I told them all my adventures, at which they marvelled exceedingly and covered my nakedness with some of their clothes. Moreover, they set before me food and cold fresh water, and I ate and drank my fill and was mightily refreshed, and God gave me new life after I had looked for nothing but death. So I praised the Most High and thanked Him for His exceeding mercies, and my heart revived in me, till meseemed as if all I had suffered were but a dream.

We sailed on with a favouring wind till we came to an island called Es Selahiteh, when the captain cast anchor mid the merchants and sailors landed with their goods, to sell and buy. Then the captain turned to me and said, "Hark ye, thou art a stranger and poor and tellest us that thou hast undergone great hardships; wherefore I have a mind to advantage thee with somewhat that may further thee in thy native land, so thou wilt still pray for me." "So be it," answered I; "thou shalt have my prayers."

Quoth he, "Know then that there was with us a man, a traveller whom we lost, and we know not if he be alive or dead, for we have had no news of him; so I purpose to commit his goods to thy charge, that thou mayest sell them in the island. A part of the proceeds we will give thee for thy pains, and the rest we will keep till we return to Baghdad, where we will enquire for his family and deliver it to them. Dost thou agree to this?" I thanked him for his kindness and accepted his offer with gratitude, whereupon he bade the sailors and porters carry the bales in question ashore and deliver them to me. Quoth the ship's clerk to him, "O master, what bales are these and what merchant's name shall I write upon them?" "Write on them the name of Sindbad," answered the captain, "him who was with us in the ship and whom we lost at such an island; for we mean this stranger to sell them, and we will give him a part of the price for his pains and keep the rest, till we return to Baghdad, where, if we find him we will pay it to him, and if not, we will make it over to his family." And the clerk said, "It is well and justly thought."

When I heard my name, I bethought me that these must be my goods; so I waited till all the merchants had landed and were gathered together, talking and chaffering; then, taking courage, I went up to the captain and said to him, "O my lord, knowest thou what manner of man was this Sindbad, whose goods thou hast committed to me to sell?" "I know nothing of him," answered the captain, "save that he was a man from the city of Baghdad, Sindbad by name, and that we missed him after touching at such an island and have heard nothing of him since then." At this I gave a great cry and said, "O captain, whom God keep, know that I am that Sindbad and that I was not drowned, but that, landing with the rest of the merchants on the island in question, I sat down in a pleasant place by myself and ate somewhat of food I had with me and enjoyed the freshness of the air, till I became drowsy and fell fast asleep; and when I awoke, I found the ship had sailed without me. These, then, are my goods, and all the merchants that fetch jewels from the Valley of Diamonds know me and will bear me witness of the truth of my story; for I related to them how you forgot me and left me behind and told them all that had befallen me."

When the merchants and crew heard my words, they gathered about me and some of them believed me and others disbelieved; but presently one of the merchants, hearing me mention the Valley of Diamonds, came up and said to them, "Hark ye, good people! When I related to you the most wonderful thing of all that befell me in my travels and told you how, being with other merchants, trying for diamonds in the Valley of Serpents and casting down each our quarter of meat, as of wont, there came up a man hanging to mine, — ye believed me not and gave me the lie. Now this is the very man, by token that he gave me diamonds of great value, whose like are not to be found, requiting me more than would have come up sticking to my quarter of meat; and I carried him with me to Bassora, where he took leave of us and went on to his native city, whilst we returned to our own land. This is he, and God hath sent him hither that the truth of my story may be made manifest to you. Moreover these are his goods, for, when he first foregathered with us, he told us of them, and that his name was Sindbad and how he came to be left on the island; and the truth of his words is manifest." With this the captain came up to me and considered me straitiy awhile, after which he said to me "What was the mark on thy bales?" "Thus and thus," answered I

and reminded him of somewhat that had passed between him and me, when I shipped with him from Bassora. Thereupon he was convinced that I was indeed Sindbad and embraced me and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, my lord, thy case is indeed wonderful and thy story extraordinary, but praised be God who hath brought thee and me together again, and hath restored thee thy goods and thy gear!" Then I disposed of my goods to the best of my skill, and profited largely on them, whereat I rejoiced exceedingly and congratulated myself on my safety and the recovery of my goods.

After this we continued our voyage from island to island, trading everywhere till we came to the land of Hind, where we bought cloves and ginger and all manner of spices; and thence we fared on to the land of Sind, where also we bought and sold. In the course of this voyage in the Indian seas, I saw wonders without number, amongst others a fish like a cow and others like asses; and I saw also a bird that comes out of a sea-shell and lays eggs and hatches them on the surface of the water, never coming up from the sea to the land. Then we set sail again with a fair wind and after a prosperous voyage, arrived in safety, by the blessing of God the Most High, at Bassora, where I abode a few days and after returned to Baghdad, having gained in this voyage what was beyond count and reckoning. I gave alms and largesse and clad the widow and the orphan, by way of thanksgiving for my happy return, and fell to feasting and making merry with my companions and friends and forgot all that had befallen me and all the perils and hardships I had suffered. This, then is the history of my third voyage, and to-morrow, if it be the will of God, you shall hear that of my fourth voyage, which is still more wonderful than those you have already heard.'

Then he bade give the porter an hundred dinars as of wont and called for food. So they spread the tables and the company supped and went their ways, marvelling at what they had heard. The porter passed the night in his own house and as soon as the day broke and the morning appeared with its light and shone, he rose and praying the morning prayer, betook himself to Sindbad the Sailor, who received him with an open and cheerful favour and made him sit with him till the rest of his friends arrived, when he caused set on food and they ate and drank and made merry. Then Sindbad the Sailor bespoke them and related to them the story of his fourth voyage, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that

The Fourth Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

I HAD not long been in the enjoyment of ease and repose, after my return from my third voyage, when a company of merchants entered Baghdad and foregathering with me, talked with me of foreign travel and traffic, till my soul yearned to go with them and divert itself with the sight of strange countries, and I longed for the society of the various races of mankind and for traffic and gain. So I resolved to travel with them and providing myself with great store of costly goods, more than ever before, transported them to Bassora, where I took ship with the merchants in question, who were of the chief of the town.

We set out, trusting in the blessing of God the Most High, and sailed, with a favouring breeze, from island to island and sea to sea, till, one day, there arose against us a contrary wind and the captain cast out his anchors and brought the ship to a standstill, fearing lest she should founder in mid-ocean. Then we all fell to prayer and humbling ourselves before God the Most High; but, as we were thus engaged, there smote us a furious squall, which tore the sails to rags; the cable parted and [the ship, capsizing,] cast us all into the sea. I kept myself afloat half the day, till, when I had given myself up for lost, God threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, on which I and some others of the merchants clambered and paddled with our feet in the sea. We abode thus a day and a night, the wind and waves helping us on, till, on the forenoon of the second day, the breeze freshened and the waves rose and cast us upon an island, well-nigh dead for cold and weariness and fear and hunger and thirst and lack of sleep. We walked about the shore and found abundance of herbs and roots, of which we ate and stayed our failing spirits, then lay down and slept till morning.

As soon as it was light, we arose and walked about the island, till we came in sight of [what seemed] an inhabited house afar off. So we made towards it, but no sooner had we reached the door thereof; than a number of naked men issued from it and without word said, laid hold of us and carried us to their king, who signed to us to sit. So we sat down and they set food before us, whose like we had never seen in all our lives. My companions ate of it, for stress of hunger, but my stomach revolted from it and I would not eat; and my refraining from it was, by God's favour, the cause of my being alive till now: for no sooner had my comrades tasted of it than their reason fled and their condition changed and they began to eat like madmen. Then the savages gave them to drink of cocoa-nut oil and anointed them therewith; and no sooner had they drunken thereof, than their eyes turned in their heads and they fell to eating greedily against their wont. When I saw this, I was confounded and grieved for them, nor was I less concerned for myself, for fear of the savages. So I watched them narrowly, nor was it long before I discovered them to be a tribe of cannibals. All who fell in their way they brought to their king and fed them upon this food and anointed them with cocoa-nut oil, whereupon their bellies expanded that they might eat amain, whilst their reason fled and they lost the power of thought and became idiots. Then they stuffed them with cocoa-nut oil and the aforesaid food, till they grew fat and stout, when they slaughtered them and roasted them for their king's eating: but, as for the savages themselves, they ate human flesh raw.

When I was aware of this, I was sore dismayed for mysel and my comrades, who were now become so brutalized that they knew not what was done with them and the savages committed them to one, who used every day to lead them out and pasture them on the island like cattle. As for me, I wasted away and became sickly for fear and hunger and my flesh shrivelled on my bones; which when the savages saw, they left me alone and took no thought of me, so that one day I gave them the slip and made for the beach, where I espied a man seated on a high place. I looked at him and knew him for the herdsman, who had charge of my fellows, and with him were great plenty of others like unto them. As soon as he saw me, he knew me to be in possession of my reason and signed to me from afar, as who should say, "Turn back and take the right-hand road, for that will lead thee into the king's highway." So I turned back, as he bade me, and followed the right hand road, now running for fear and now slackening pace, to rest me, till I was out of his sight. By this time, the sun had gone down and the darkness set in; so I sat down to rest and would have slept, but sleep came not to me that night, for stress of fear and hunger and weariness. When the night was half spent I rose and walked on, till the day broke and the sun rose over hill and plain. Now I was weary and hungry and thirsty; so I ate my fill of the herbs and roots that grew in the island and stayed my stomach, after which I set out again.

I fared on thus, night and day, seven days and nights, staying my hunger with roots and herbs, till, on the morning of the eighth day, I caught sight of something moving in the distance. So I made for it, though my heart quaked for all I had suffered first and last, and found that it was a company of men gathering pepper. As soon as they saw me, they hastened up to me and surrounding me on all sides, asked me who I was and whence I came. I acquainted them with my case and all the hardships and perils I had suffered and how I had escaped from the savages, whereat they marvelled and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, it is wonderful that thou shouldst have escaped from these blacks, who swarm in the island and devour all who fall in with them, nor is any safe from them."

They made me sit by them, till they had made an end of their work, and brought me good food, of which I ate, for I was hungry, and rested awhile; after which they took ship with me and carrying me to the island where they abode, brought me before their king, who received me kindly and questioned me of my case; whereupon I told him all that had befallen me, from the day of my leaving Baghdad. He wondered greatly at my adventures, he and his courtiers, and made me sit by him; then he called for food and I ate with him and washed my hands and returned thanks to God the most High for all His mercies. Then I left the King and walked about the city, which I found rich and populous, abounding in markets well stocked with food and merchandise and full of buyers and sellers. So I gave myself joy of having reached so pleasant a place and took my ease there after my fatigues; and I made friends with the townsfolk, nor was it long before I became better considered and more in favour with them and their King than any of the chief men of the realm.

Now I saw that all the people, great and small, rode handsome thorough-bred horses barebaeked and without saddles, at which I wondered and said to the King, "O my lord, why dost thou not ride with a saddle? Therein is ease for the rider and increase of power." "What manner of thing is a saddle?" asked he. "I never saw nor

used one in all my life." "With thy permission," rejoined I, "I will make thee a saddle, that thou mayst ride on it and see the comfort thereof." And he said, "Do so." So I asked him for wood, which being brought me, I sought out a skilful carpenter and showed him how to make the saddle-tree, portraying him the fashion thereof in ink on the wood. Then I took wool and carded it and made felt of it and covering the saddle-tree with leather, stuffed it and burnished it and bound on the girth and stirrup-leathers; after which I fetched a blacksmith and described to him the fashion of the stirrups and bridle-bit. So he forged a fine pair of stirrups and a bit, and I filed them smooth and tinned them. Moreover, I made fast to them fringes of silk and fitted bridle-leathers to the bit. Then I fetched one of the best of the royal horses and saddling and bridling him, hung the stirrups to the saddle and led him to the King. The thing took his fancy and he thanked me; then he mounted and rejoiced greatly in the saddle and rewarded me handsomely. When the King's Vizier saw the saddle, he sought of me the like and I made it for him. Moreover, all the grandees and officers of state sought saddles of me; so I fell to making saddles, with the help of the carpenter and blacksmith, whom I had taught the craft, and selling them to all who sought, till I amassed great wealth and became in high honour and favour with the King and his household and officers.

I abode thus till, one day, as I was sitting with the King, in all honour and contentment, he said to me, "Hark ye, such an one! Thou art become one of us and we hold thee in such honour and affection that we cannot part with thee now nor suffer thee to leave our city; wherefore I have somewhat to require of thee, in which I will not have thee gainsay me. "O King," answered I, "what is it thou desirest of me? Far be it from me to gainsay thee in aught, for I am indebted to thee for many favours and bounties and much kindness, and (praised be God!) I am become as one of thy servants." Quoth he, "I have a mind to marry thee to a rich, handsome and agreeable wife, so thou mayst be domiciled with us and I will lodge thee with me in my palace; wherefore gainsay me not neither cross me in this." When I heard this, I was abashed and held my peace nor could make him any answer, by reason of my much bashfulness before him. Quoth he, "Why dost thou not answer me, O my son?" And I answered, saying, "O King of the age, it is thine to command." So he summoned the Cadi and the witnesses and married me straightway to a noble lady of surpassing beauty, high descent and great wealth. Then he gave me a great and goodly house, together with slaves and officers, and assigned me stipends and allowances. So I became in all delight and ease and contentment and forgot all that had befallen me of weariness and trouble and hardship; for I loved my wife dearly and she loved me no less, and we were at one and abode in the utmost comfort and happiness. And I said in myself, "When I return to my native land, I will carry her with me." But whatever is decreed to a man, needs must it be, and none knoweth what shall befall him.

We lived thus a great while, till God the Most High bereft a neighbour of mine of his wife. Now he was a friend of mine; so I went in to condole with him on his loss and found him in very ill plight, full of trouble and weary of heart and mind. I condoled with him and comforted him, saying, "Mourn not for thy wife; God will surely give thee a better in her stead, and thy life shall be long, so it please the Most High." But he wept sore and replied, "O my friend, how can I marry another wife and

how shall God replace her to me with a better than she, seeing that I have but one day left to live?" "O my brother," said I, return to thy senses and forebode not thine own death, for thou art well and in good health and case." "By thy life, O my friend," rejoined he, "to-morrow thou wilt lose me and wilt never see me again till the Day of Resurrection." "How so?" asked I, and he said, "This very day they bury my wife, and me with her in one tomb; for it is the custom with us, if the wife die first, to bury the husband alive with her, and in like manner the wife, if the husband die first; so that neither may enjoy life after the other." "By Allah," cried I, "this is a most vile custom and not to be endured of any!"

Meanwhile, the most part of the townsfolk came in and fell to condoling with my friend for his wife and himself. Presently, they laid the dead woman out and setting her on a bier, carried her and her husband without the city, till they came to a place in the side of a mountain by the sea, where they raised a great stone and discovered the mouth of a stone-lined pit or well, leading down into a vast underground cavern that ran beneath the mountain.Into this pit they threw the coffin, then tying a rope of palm-fibres under the husband's armpits, they let him down into the cavern, and with him a great pitcher of fresh water and seven cakes of bread. When he came to the bottom, he did himself loose from the rope and they drew it up; then stopping the mouth of the pit with the stone, they returned to the city, leaving my friend in the cavern with his dead wife. When I saw this, I said in myself, "By Allah, this kind of death is more horrible than the first." And I went in to the King and said to him, "O my lord, why do ye bury the live with the dead?" Quoth he, "It has been our custom, from time immemorial, if the husband die first, to bury his wife with him, and the like with the wife, if her husband die first, so we may not sever them, alive or dead." "O King of the age," asked I, "if the wife of a foreigner like myself die among you, deal ye with him as with yonder man?" "Assuredly," answered he; "we do with him even as thou hast seen." When I heard this, my gall-bladder was like to burst, for the violence of my dismay and concern for myself; my wit became dazed and I went in fear lest my wife should die before me and they bury me alive with her. However, after a while, I comforted myself, saying, "Haply I shall die before her, for none knoweth which shall go first and which follow."

Then I applied myself to diverting my mind from this thought with various occupations; but it was not long before my wife sickened and died, after a few days' illness, and the King and the rest of the folk came to condole with me and her family for her loss. Then they washed her and arraying her in her richest clothes and ornaments, laid her on the bier and carded her to the mountain aforesaid, where they lifted the cover of the pit and cast her in; after which all my friends and acquaintances came round me, to bid me farewell in my lifetime and condole with me for myself whilst I cried out amongst them, saying, "I am a foreigner and not subject to your custom!" They paid no heed to my words, but laying hold of me, bound me by force and let me down into the cavern, with a pitcher of fair water and seven cakes of bread, as of wont. When I came to the bottom, they called out to me to cast myself loose from the cords, but I refused to do so; so they threw them down on me and closing the mouth of the pit with the stone aforesaid, went their ways.

I found myself in a vast cavern under the mountain, full of dead bodies, that exhaled a fetid and loathsome smell, and fell to blaming myself for what I had done, saying, "By Allah, I deserve all that hath befallen me! What possessed me to take a wife in this city? There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! As often as I say, 'I have escaped from one calamity,' I fall into a worse. By Allah, this is a fearful death to die! Would I had been drowned at sea or perished in the mountains! It were better than to die this miserable death!" Then I threw myself down on the bones of the dead and lay there, imploring Gods help and in the violence of my despair, invoking death, which came not to me, till hunger well-nigh gnawed me in sunder and thirst consumed me, when I sat up and feeling for the bread, ate a morsel and drank a mouthful of water. After this, I arose and exploring the cavern, found that it extended a long way right and left, with hollow places in its sides; and its floor was strewn with dead bodies and rotten bones, that had lain there from of old time. So I made myself a place in the sides of the cavern, afar from the freshly buried dead, and there slept.

I abode thus a long while, knowing not night from day, eating not till I was well-nigh torn in pieces with hunger, neither drinking till driven thereto by excess of thirst, for fear my victual should fail me before my death; and my bread and water diminished, till I had but a little left, albeit I ate but a morsel every day or two and drank but a mouthful. One day, as I sat thus, pondering my case and bethinking me how I should do, when my store was exhausted, the stone that covered the opening was suddenly raised, and the light streamed down upon me. Quoth I, "I wonder what is to do!" Then I espied folk standing about the mouth of the pit, who presently let down a dead man and a live woman, weeping and bemoaning herself; and with her the usual pittance of bread and water. I saw her, but she saw me not; and they closed up the opening and went away. Then I took the thighbone of a dead man and going up to the woman, smote her on the crown of the head, and she fell down in a swoon. I smote her a second and a third time, till she was dead, when I laid hands on her bread and water and found on her great plenty of jewels and ornaments and rich apparel. I carried the victual to my niche in the side of the cavern and ate and drank of it sparingly, no more than sufficed to keep the life in me, lest it come speedily to an end and I perish of hunger and thirst.

I abode thus a great while, killing all the live folk they let down into the cavern and taking their provision of meat and drink, till, one day, as I slept, I was awakened by something routing among the bodies in a corner of the cave, and said, "What can this be?" So I sprang up and seizing the thighbone aforesaid, made for the noise. As soon as the thing was ware of me, it fled from me into the inward of the cavern, and behold, it was a wild beast. However, I followed it to the further end, till I saw afar off a tiny point of light, like a star, now appearing and now disappearing. So I made for it, and as I drew near, it grew larger and brighter, till I was certified that it was a crevice in the rock, leading to the open country; and I said in myself, "There must be some reason for this opening; either it is the mouth of a second pit, such as that by which they let me down, or else it is a [natural] fissure in the rock." So I bethought me awhile and nearing the light, found that it came from a breach in the sea-wall of the mountain, which the wild beasts had made, that they might enter and feed upon the dead bodies.

When I saw this, my spirits revived and hope came back to me and I made sure of life, after having looked for nothing but death. So I went on, as in a dream, and making shift to scramble through the breach, found myself on the slope of a high mountain, overlooking the salt sea and cutting off all access thereto from the island, so that none could come at that part of the beach from the city.

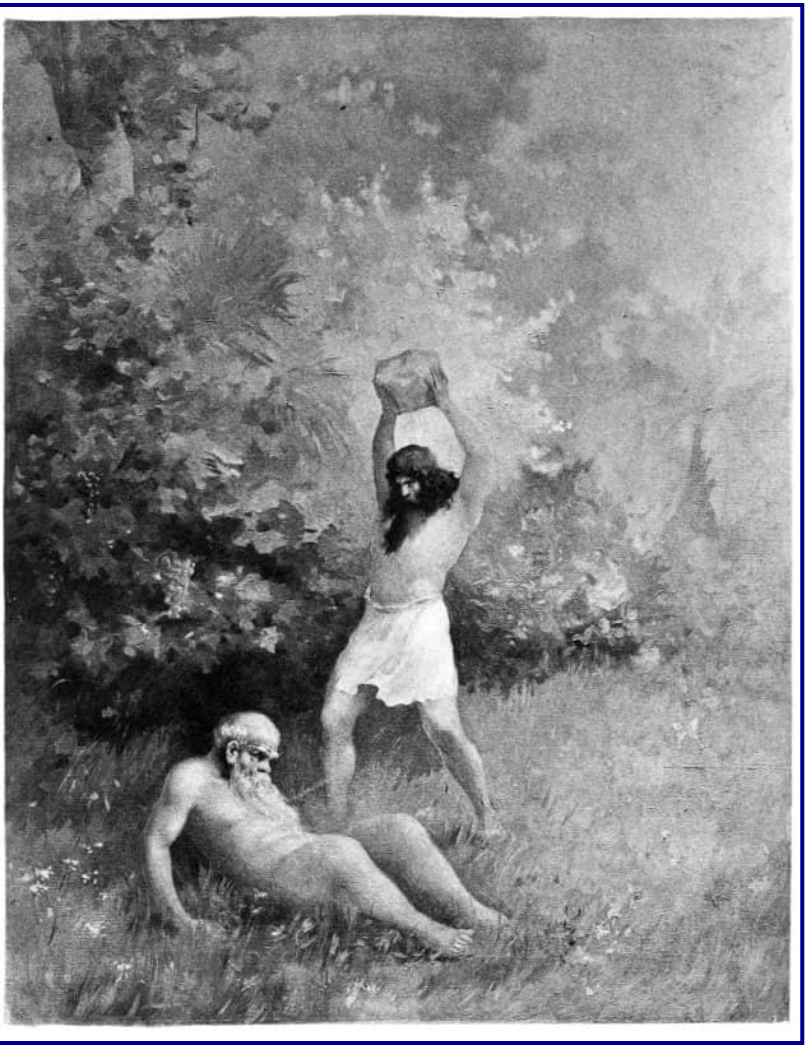
I praised God and thanked Him, rejoicing greatly in the prospect of deliverance; then I returned to the cavern and brought out all the food and water I had saved up and donned some of the dead folk's clothes over my own; after which I gathered together all the collars and necklaces of pearls and jewels and trinkets of gold and silver set with precious stones and other ornaments and valuables I could find upon the corpses, and making them into bales with the grave-clothes and raiment of the dead, carried them out to the sea-shore, where I established myself, purposing to wait there till it should please God the Most High to send me deliverance by means of some passing ship. I visited the cavern daily and as often as I found folk buried alive there, I killed them and took their victual and valuables.

Thus I abode awhile till, one day, as I sat on the beach, pondering my case, I caught sight of a ship passing in the midst of the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. So I took a piece of a shroud I had with me and tying it to a staff, ran along the sea-shore, making signals therewith to the people in the ship, till they espied me and hearing my shouts, sent a boat to fetch me off. When it drew near, the crew called out to me, saying, "Who art thou and how camest thou in this place, where never saw we any in our lives?" I answered that I was a merchant, who had been wrecked and saved myself on one of the planks of the ship, with some of my goods, and that, by the blessing of God and my own strength and skill, I had succeeded after severe toil in landing with my gear in that place, where I waited for some one to pass and take me off. So they took me and the bales I had made of the jewels and valuables from the cavern, tied up in clothes and shrouds, and rowed back with me to the ship, where the captain said to me, "How camest thou to yonder place?" All my life I have sailed these seas and passed to and fro by this mountain; yet never saw I here any living thing save wild beasts and birds." I repeated to him the story I had told the sailors, but acquainted him with nothing of that whicn had befallen me in the city and the cavern, lest there should be any of the islanders in the ship. Then I took out some of the best of the jewels and ornaments and offered them to the captain, saying, "O my lord, thou hast been the means of my delivery; so take this from me in requital of thy good offices." But he refused to accept it, saying, "When we find a shipwrecked man on the sea-shore or on an island, we take him up and feed him, and if he be naked, we clothe him; nor take we aught from him, nay, when we reach a port of safety, we set him ashore with a present of our own money and entreat him kindly and charitably, for the love of God the Most High." So I prayed that his life might be long and rejoiced in my escape, trusting to be delivered from my stress.

Then we pursued our voyage and sailed from island to island and sea to sea, till, by God's grace, we arrived in safety at Bassora, where I tarried a few days, then went on to Baghdad and foregathered with my friends and family, who rejoiced in my happy return and gave me joy of my safety. I laid up in my storehouses all the goods I had brought with me, and gave alms and largesse and clothed the widow and the orphan.

Then I gave myself up to pleasure and enjoyment, returning to my old merry way of life; but, whenever I call to mind my sojourn in the cavern among the dead, I am like to lose my reason. This, then, is the story of my fourth voyage, and to-morrow I will tell you that which befell me in my fifth voyage, which was yet rarer and more wonderful than those which forewent it.'

When Sindbad the Sailor had made an end of his story, he called for supper; so they spread the table and the guests ate the evening meal; after which he gave the porter an hundred dinars as usual, and he and the rest of the company went their ways, glad at heart and marvelling at what they had heard, for that each story was more extraordinary than that which forewent it. The porter passed the night in his own house, in all joy and cheer and wonderment, and next morning, as soon as it was day, he prayed the morning prayer and repaired to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, who welcomed him and made him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when they ate and drank and made merry and the talk went round amongst them. Presently, their host began the story of the fifth voyage and bespoke them, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that



The Fifth Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

WHEN I had been awhile on shore and had forgotten all my perils and sufferings, I was again seized with a longing to travel and see foreign countries. So I bought costly merchandise and making it up into bales, repaired to Bassora, where I found in the port a fine tall ship, newly built and fitted ready for sea. She pleased me, so I bought her and embarking my goods in her, hired a master and crew, over whom I set certain of my slaves and servants as inspectors. A number of merchants took passage with me and paid me freight; and we set sail in all joy and cheer, promising ourselves a prosperous voyage and much profit. We sailed from place to place, selling and buying and viewing the countries by which we passed, till one day we came to a great uninhabited island, waste and desolate, whereon was a vast white dome. The merchants landed to examine this dome, leaving me in the ship; and when they drew near, behold, it was a huge roc's egg. They fell a-beating it with stones, knowing not what it was, and presently broke it open, whereupon much water ran out of it and the young roc appeared within. So they pulled it forth of the shell and killed it and took of it great store of meat.

Now I was in the ship and knew not what they did, but presently one of them came up to me and said, "O my lord, come and look at the egg that we thought to be a dome." So I looked and seeing the merchants beating it with stones, called out to them to desist, for that the roc would come and break up our ship and destroy us. But they paid no heed to me and gave not over smiting upon the egg, till presently the day grew dark and the sun was hidden from us, as if some great cloud had passed between us and it. So we raised our eyes and saw that what we took for a cloud was the roc flying between us and the sun, and it was its wings that darkened the day. When it saw its egg broken, it gave a loud cry, whereupon its mate came flying up and they both began circling about the ship, crying out at us with voices louder than thunder. I called out to the master and the crew to put out to sea and seek safety in flight, before we were all destroyed. So the merchants came on board and we cast off and made haste to gain the open sea. When the rocs saw this, they flew off and we crowded sail on the ship, thinking to get beyond their reach; but presently they reappeared and flew after us, each with a huge rock in its claws, that it had brought from the mountains. As soon as the male bird came up with us, he let fall upon us the rock he held in his talons; but the master steered the ship aside, so that the rock missed her by some small matter and plunged into the sea with such violence, that the ship surged up and sank into the trough of the sea and the bottom of the ocean appeared to us. Then the she-bird let fall her rock, which was smaller than that of her mate, and as fore-ordained fate would have it, it fell on the poop of the ship and crushed it, breaking the rudder into twenty pieces; whereupon the vessel foundered and all on board were cast into the sea.

As for me, I struggled for dear life, till God threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, to which I clung and bestriding it, fell a-paddling with my hands and feet. Now the ship had gone down hard by an island and the winds and waves bore me on, till, by permission of God the Most High, they cast me up on the shore of the island, at the last gasp for toil and distress and hunger and thirst. So I landed more dead than

alive, and throwing myself down on the beach, lay there awhile, till I began to recover myself, when I walked about the island and found it as it were one of the pleasaunces of Paradise, abounding in trees, laden with ripe fruits, and flowers of all kinds and running streams and birds warbling the praises of Him to whom belong power and eternity. So I ate my fill of the fruits and slaked my thirst with the water of the streams and returned thanks to God the Most High and glorified Him; after which I sat till nightfall, hearing no voice and seeing none.

Then I lay down, well-nigh dead for travail and affright, and slept without ceasing till morning, when I arose and walked among the trees, till I came to a spring of running water, by which sat an old man of venerable aspect, girt about with a waistcloth made of the leaves of trees. Quoth I to myself, "Belike this old man is of those who were wrecked in the ship and hath made his way to this island." So I went up to him and saluted him, and he returned my greeting by signs, but spoke not; and I said to him, "O old man, what ails thee to sit here?" He shook his head and moaned and signed to me, as who should say, "Take me on thy back and carry me to the other side of the stream." And I said to myself, "I will deal kindly with him and do what he desires; it may be God will reward me." So I took him on my shoulders and carrying him to the place to which he pointed, said to him, "Dismount at thy leisure." But he would not get off my back and wound his legs about my neck. I looked at them and seeing that they were like a buffalo's hide for blackness and roughness, was affrighted and would have cast him off; but he clung to me and gripped my neck with his legs, till I was well-nigh choked; the world grew black in my sight and I fell to the ground senseless. But he [still kept his seat and] beat me with his feet on the back and shoulders, till he enforced me rise, for excess of pain. Then he signed to me with his head to carry him hither and thither among the trees, to the best of the fruits; and if I refused to do his bidding or loitered, he beat me with his feet more grievously than if I had been beaten with whips. So I carried him about the island, like a captive slave, and he used to do his occasions on my back, dismounting not day nor night; but, when he wished to sleep, he wound his legs about my neck and lay down and slept awhile, then arose and beat me, where-upon I sprang up in haste, unable to gainsay him, because of the pain he inflicted on me. And indeed I repented me of having taken compassion on him and said in myself, "I did him a kindness and it hath turned to my hurt; by Allah, never more will I do any a service so long as I live!"

I abode thus a long while in the utmost wretchedness, hourly beseeching God the Most High that I might die, for stress of weariness and misery, till one day I came to a place wherein was abundance of gourds, many of them dry. So I took a great dry gourd and cutting open the neck, scooped out the inside and cleaned it; after which I gathered grapes from a vine that grew hard by and squeezed them into the gourd till it was full of the juice. Then I stopped up the mouth and set it in the sun, where I left it for some days till it became strong wine; and every day I used to drink of it, to comfort and sustain me under my fatigues with that froward devil, and as often as I drank, I forgot my troubles and took new heart.

One day, he saw me drinking and signed to me as who should say, "What is that?" Quoth I, "It is an excellent cordial, that cheers the heart and revives the spirits." 'Then, being heated with wine, I ran and danced with him among the trees, clapping my

hands and singing and making merry. When he saw this, he signed to me to give him the gourd, that he might drink, and I feared him and gave it him. So he took it and draining it, cast it on the ground, whereupon he grew merry and began to jig to and fro on my shoulders; but presently the fumes of the wine rising to his head, he became helplessly drunk and his every limb relaxed and he swayed to and fro on my back. When I saw that he had lost his senses for drunkenness, I put my hand to his legs and loosing them from my neck, stooped down and threw him to the ground, hardly crediting my deliverance from him and fearing lest he should shake off his drunkenness and do me a mischief.So I took up a great stone from among the trees and smote him therewith on the head with all my might and crushed in his skull and killed him, may God have no mercy on him!

Then I returned, with a heart at ease, to my former station on the sea-shore and abode in the island many days, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and keeping a look out for passing ships; till, one day, as I sat on the beach, recalling all that had befallen me and saying, "I wonder if God will save me alive and restore me to my country and my friends!" I suddenly caught sight of a ship making for the island. Presently, it cast anchor and the passengers landed. So I made for them, and when they saw me, they hastened up to me and questioned me of my case and how I came thither. I told them all that had befallen me, whereat they marvelled exceedingly and said, "He who rode on thy shoulders is called the Old Man of the Sea, and none ever fell into his clutches and came off alive but thou; so praised he God for thy safety!" Then they set set food before me, of which I ate my fill, and gave me somewhat of clothes wherewith I clad myself and covered my nakedness; after which they took me up into the ship, and we sailed days and nights, till fate brought us to a place called the City of Apes, builded with lofty houses, all of which gave upon the sea. Now every night, as soon as it is dusk, the dwellers in this city use to come forth of the seaward doors of their houses and putting out to sea in boats and ships, pass the night thus in their fear lest the apes should come down on them from the mountains.

I landed to visit the city, but meanwhile the ship set sail without me and I repented of having gone ashore, and calling to mind my companions and what had befallen me with the apes, first and last, sat down and fell a-weeping and lamenting. Presently one of the townsfolk accosted me and said to me, "O my lord, meseems thou art a stranger to these parts?" "Yes," answered I, "I am indeed an unfortunate stranger, who came hither in a ship that cast anchor here, and I landed to visit the town; but when I would have gone on board again, I found they had sailed without me." "Come," said he, "and embark with us, for, if thou lie the night in the city, the apes will destroy thee." "I hear and obey," replied I and rising, straight-way embarked with him in one of the boats, whereupon they put out to sea and anchoring a mile from the land, passed the night there. At daybreak, they rowed back to the city and landing, went each about his business. Thus they did every night, for if any tarried in the town by night the apes came down on him and killed him. As soon as it was day, the apes left the place and ate of the fruits of the gardens, then went back to the mountains and slept there till nightfall, when they again came down upon the city.

Now this place was in the farthest part of the country of the blacks, and one of the strangest things that befell me during my sojourn there was on this wise. One of

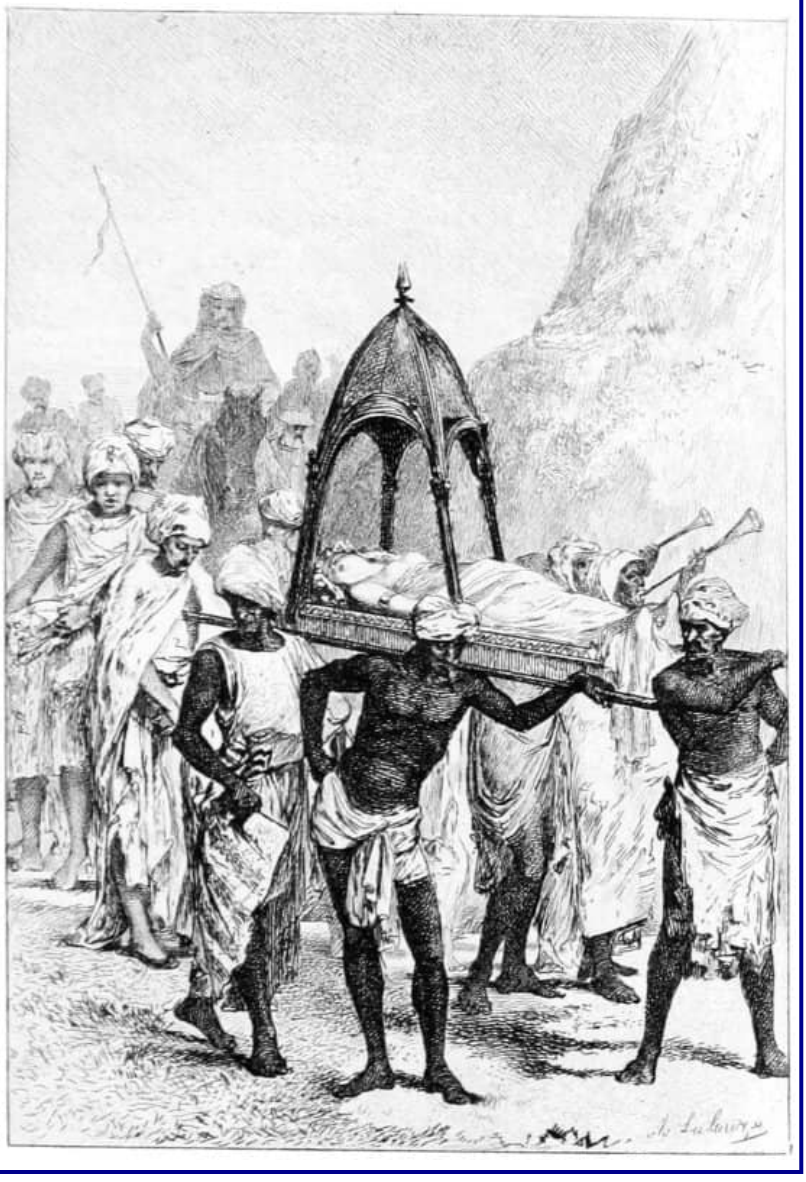
those, in whose company I passed the night in the boat, said to me, "O my lord, thou art a stranger in these parts; hast thou any craft at which thou canst work?" "By Allah, O my brother," replied I, "I have no trade nor know I any handicraft, for I was a merchant and a man of substance and had a ship of my own, laden with great store of goods and merchandise; but it foundered at sea and all were drowned but I, who saved myself on a piece of plank, that God vouchsafed me of His favour." With this, he fetched me a cotton bag and giving it to me, said, "Take this bag and fill it with pebbles from the beach and go forth with a company of the townsfolk, to whom I will commend thee. Do as they do and haply thou shalt gain what may further thy return to thy native land." Then he carried me to the beach, where I filled my bag with small pebbles, and presently we saw a company of folk issue from the town, each bearing a bag like mine, filled with pebbles. To these he committed me, commending me to their care and saying, "Take this man with you, for he is a stranger, and teach him how to gather, that he may get his living, and God will reward you." "We hear and obey," answered they and bidding me welcome, fared on with me till we came to a spacious valley, full of lofty trees, that none might climb.

Now in this valley were many apes, which fled at sight of us and climbed up into the trees; whereupon my companions began to pelt them with the stones they had in their bags, and the apes fell to plucking of the fruit of the trees and casting them at the folk. I looked at the fruits they cast at us and found them to be cocoa-nuts; so I chose out a great tree, full of apes, and going up to it, began to pelt them with stones, and they in return pelted me with nuts, which I collected, as did the rest: so that by the time I had made an end of my bagful of pebbles, I had gotten great plenty of nuts; and as soon as my companions had in like manner gotten as many nuts as they could carry, we returned to the city, where we arrived before the end of the day. Then I went in to the man who had brought me in company with the nut-gatherers and gave him all I had gotten, thanking him for his kindness; but he would not accept them and gave me the key of a closet in his house, saying, "Choose out the worst of the nuts and sell them and provide thyself with the price and lay up the rest here. And go thou forth every day and gather nuts, as thou hast done to-day, and lay up the rest here, so haply thou mayest collect enough to serve thee for thy return home." "God requite thee!" answered I and did as he counselled me, going out daily with the cocoa-nut gatherers, who commended me to each other and showed me the best-stocked trees.

Thus did I for some time, till I had laid up great store of excellent nuts, besides a large sum of money, the price of those I had sold. I became thus at my ease and bought all I saw and had a mind to and passed my time pleasantly, till one day, as I stood on the beach, a great ship cast anchor before the city and landed a company of merchants, who proceeded to sell and buy and trade for cocoa-nuts and other commodities. Then I went to my friend and told him of the coming of the ship and how I had a mind to return to my own country; and he said, "It is thine to decide." So I thanked him for his bounties and took leave of him; then, going to the captain of the ship, I agreed with him for my passage and embarked my cocoa-nuts and what else I possessed. We weighed anchor the same day and sailed from place to place; and wherever we stopped, I sold and traded with my cocoa-nuts, and God requited me more than I had lost. Amongst other places, we came to an island abounding in cloves and cinnamon and

pepper, and the country people told me that by the side of each pepper-pod grows a great leaf that shades it [from the sun] and casts the water off it in the rainy season; but, when the rain ceases, the leaf turns over and falls down by the side of the pod. Here I took in great store of pepper and cloves and cinnamon, in exchange for cocoa-nuts, and we passed thence to the island of El Usrat, whence comes the Comorin aloes, and thence to another island, five days journey in length, where grows the Chinese aloes, which is better than the Comorin; but the people of the latter island are fouler of case and religion than those of the former, for that they love lewdness and wine-bibbing and know not prayer nor the call to prayer. Thence we came to the island of the pearl-fisheries, and I gave the divers some of my Cocoa-nuts and bade them dive on my account and for my luck. They did so and brought up great plenty of large and fine pearls; and they said to me, By Allah, O my master, thy luck is happy!" Then we sailed on, with the blessing of God the Most High, and arrived safely at Bassora. There I abode a little and then went on to Baghdad, where I foregathered with my friends and family, who gave me joy of my safe return, and laid up all my goods in my storehouses. Then I gave alms and largesse and clothed the widow and the orphan and made presents to my friends and relations; after which I returned to my old merry way of life and forgot all I had suffered in the great profit and gain I had made, for God had requited me fourfold that I had lost. This, then, is the history of my fifth voyage, and now to supper; and to- morrow, come and I will tell you what befell me in my sixth voyage; for it was still more wonderful than this.'

Then he called for food; and the servants spread the table, and they ate the evening-meal, after which he gave the porter an hundred dinars and he returned home, marvelling at all he had heard. Next morning, as soon as it was light, he prayed the morning prayer, and betaking himself to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, bade him good-morrow. The merchant bade him sit and talked with him, till the rest of the guests arrived. Then the servants spread the table and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry, Sindbad the Sailor began the story of his sixth voyage as follows, saying, 'Know, O my brethren, that



The Sixth Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

I ABODE some time, after my return from my fifth voyage, in great joy and comfort, and forgot what I had suffered, till, one day, as I sat making merry and enjoying myself with my friends, there came in to me a company of merchants, bearing signs of travel, and talked with me of travel and adventure and greatness of gain and profit. Their sight recalled to my mind the days of my return from travel, and my joy at once more seeing my native land and foregathering with my friends and relations; and my soul yearned for travel and traffic. So I resolved to undertake another voyage, and buying me rich merchandise, made it up into bales, with which I journeyed from Baghdad to Bassora. Here I found a great ship ready for sea and full of merchants and notables, who had with them goods of price; so I joined myself to them and took passage in the vessel with my goods.

We left Bassora with a fair wind and sailed from place to place, in all delight and solace of life, buying and selling and profiting and diverting ourselves with the sight of foreign countries, till one day, as we went along, the captain suddenly gave a great cry and cast his turban on the deck. Then he buffetted his face and plucked out his beard and fell down in the waist of the ship, for stress of grief and chagrin. So all the merchants and sailors came about him and asked him what was to do, and he answered, saying, "Know, O folk, that we have wandered from our course and come into a sea whose ways I know not. Yonder is a great mountain, upon which we are drifting, and unless God vouchsafe us a means of escape, we are all dead men; wherefore pray ye to the Most High, that he deliver us from this strait."

Then he climbed the mast and would have loosed the sails; but the wind redoubled upon the ship and drove her backward; whereupon her rudder broke and she turned round three times and fell off towards the mountain. With this the captain came down from the mast, saying, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme, nor can we avert that which is decreed! By Allah, we are fallen on sure destruction, and there is no way of escape for us!"

Then we all gave ourselves up for lost and fell a-weeping over ourselves and bidding each other farewell. Presently the ship struck upon the mountain and broke up, and all on board her were plunged into the sea. Some were drowned and others made shift to get upon the mountain. I was amongst these latter, and when we got ashore, we found a great island, compassed about with a ring of mountains, whose base was strewn with wrecked ships and goods and gear in countless profusion, cast up by the sea. So we climbed the cliffs into the inward of the island, and my companions, dispersing hither and thither therein, were confounded at what they saw and became as madmen at sight of the countless riches with which its shores were strewn. As for me, I walked on inland, till I came to a stream of sweet water, that welled up at the foot of the mountains and disappeared in the earth under the range of hills on the opposite side. I looked into the bed of this stream and saw therein great plenty of rubies and great royal pearls and all kinds of jewels and precious stones, so that all the channel glittered by reason of their multitude, and they were as gravel in the bed of the rivulets that ran through the fields.

Moreover we found in the island abundance of the finest aloes-wood, both Chinese and Comorin; and there also is a spring of crude ambergris, which exudes over the sides, as it were gum, for the great heat of the sun, and runs down to the sea-shore, where the monsters of the deep come up and swallowing it, return into the sea. But it burns in their bellies; so they cast it up again and it rises to the top of the water, where it congeals and its colour and qualities are changed. By-and-by, the waves cast it ashore and the ambergris-gatherers collect and sell it. The rest of the ambergris congeals on the banks of the stream and when the sun shines on it, it melts and scents the whole valley with a musk-like fragrance: then, when the sun ceases from it, it congeals again. But none can get to this place where is the crude ambergris, because of the mountains aforesaid, which enclose the island on all sides and on which all ships that approach it are wrecked.

We continued thus to explore the island, marvelling at the riches we found there and the wonderful works of God, but sore troubled and dismayed for our own case. Now we had picked up on the beach some small matter of victual from the wreck and husbanded it carefully, eating but once every day or two, in our fear lest it should fail us and we perish miserably of hunger and thirst. Moreover, we were weak for sea-sickness and my companions died one after another, till there were but a few of us left. Each that died we washed and shrouded in some of the clothes and linen cast ashore by the waves; and after a little, the rest of my fellows died, one by one, till I had buried the last of the party and abode alone on the island, with but a little victual left. And I wept over myself, saying, "Would God I had died before my companions and they had washed me and buried me! It had been better than that I should die and none wash me and shroud me and bury me. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!" After awhile I arose and dug me a deep grave on the sea-shore, saying in myself, "When I grow weak and know that death cometh to me, I will lay me down in this grave and die there, so the wind may drift the sand over me and cover me and I be buried therein." Then I fell to reproaching myself for my little wit in leaving my native land and betaking me again to foreign travel, after all I had suffered during my first five voyages, each marked by greater perils and more terrible hardships than its forerunner, especially as I had no need of money, seeing that I had enough and more than enough and could not spend what I had, no, nor half of it, in all my life; and I repented me of my folly, having no hope of escape from my present stress, and bemoaned myself.

However, after a while, I bethought me and said to myself, "By Allah, this stream must have an issue somewhere, and belike its course leads to some inhabited place; so methinks I cannot do better than make me a little boat, big enough to sit in, and carry it down and launching it on the river, embark in it and commit myself to the current. If I escape, I escape, by God's leave; and if I perish, better die in the river than here." So I gathered a number of pieces of aloes-wood and bound them together with ropes from the wreckage; then I chose out from the broken-up ships straight planks of even size and fixed them firmly upon the aloes-wood. On this wise I made me a boat [or raft] a little narrower than the channel of the stream, and tying a piece of wood on its either side, to serve as an oar, launched it on the river. Then I loaded it with the best of the

crude ambergris and pearls and jewels and of the wrecked goods and what was left me of victual, and embarking, did according to the saying of the poet:

Depart from a place, if therein be oppression,
And leave the house tell of its builder's fate
Country for country thou'lt find, if thou seek it,
Life for life never, early or late.
And fret not thy soul for the buffets of fortune:
Each stress hath its term and its fore-ordained date.
He whose death in one land is decreed, in none other
His life shall have end than in that fixed by Fate.

I drifted with the stream, pondering the issue of my affair, till I came to the place where it disappeared beneath the mountains, and the current carried the raft with it into the underground channel. Here I found myself in utter darkness and the stream bore me on through a narrow tunnel, which grew straiter and straiter, till the raft touched either side and my head rubbed against the roof. Then I blamed myself for having undertaken this adventure and said, "If this tunnel grow any straiter, the raft will not pass, and I cannot turn back; so I shall inevitably perish miserably in this place." And I threw myself down on my face on the raft, by reason of the straitness of the channel, whilst the stream ceased not to carry me along the tunnel, which now grew wider and now straiter. I fared on thus, knowing not night from day, for the excess of the darkness that encompassed me and my fear and concern for myself lest I should perish, till, being sore aweary for the intensity of the gloom and worn with hunger and watching, I fell asleep, as I lay on the raft on my face. How long I slept I know not, but, when I awoke, I found myself in the open air and the raft moored to an island in the midst of a number of Indians and blacks.

As soon as the folk saw that I was awake, they came up to me and bespoke me in their language; but I understood not what they said and thought I must be still asleep and that this was a dream that had betided me for stress of trouble and weariness. When they saw I understood them not and made them no answer, one of them came forward and said to me in Arabic, "Peace be on thee, O my brother! Who art thou and what brings thee hither? How camest thou into this river and what manner of land is beyond yonder mountains, for never knew we any make his way thence to us?" Quoth I, "Who are ye and what is this place?" "O my brother," answered he, "we are husbandmen and gardeners, who came out to water our fields and gardens and finding thee asleep on this raft, laid hold of it and made it fast by us, against thou shouldst awake at thy leisure. So tell us how thou camest hither?" "For God's sake, O my lord," rejoined I, "give me to eat, for I am starving; and after ask me what thou wilt." So he hastened to fetch me food and I ate my fill, till I was refreshed and my life returned to me. Then I returned thanks to God the Most High, rejoicing in the happy issue of my toils, and told them all my adventures from first to last.

When I had made an end of my story, they consulted among themselves and said to each other, "We must carry him with us and present him to our King, that he may acquaint him with his adventures." So they took me, together with the raft and its lading, and brought me to their King, telling him what had happened; whereupon he

saluted me and bade me welcome. Then he questioned me of my condition and adventures, and I repeated to him my story, at which he marvelled exceedingly and gave me joy of my deliverance; after which I fetched from the raft great store of jewels and precious stones and ambergris and aloes-wood and presented them to the King, who accepted them and entreated me with the utmost honour, appointing me a lodging in his own palace. So I consorted with the chief of the islanders, and they paid me the utmost respect. Moreover, all the travellers and merchants who came to the place questioned me of the affairs of my native land and of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid and his rule there and I told them of him and of that for which he was renowned, and they praised him for this; whilst I in turn questioned them of the manners and customs of their own countries. One day, the King himself questioned me of the manners and way of government of my country, and I acquainted him with the fashion of the Khalif's sway in the city of Baghdad and the justice of his rule. The King marvelled at my account of his ordinances and said, "By Allah, the Khalif's ordinances are indeed wise and his fashions praiseworthy and thou hast made me love him by what thou tellest me; wherefore I have a mind to send him a present by thee." "I hear and obey, O my lord," answered I; "I will carry thy present to him and inform him that thou art his sincere lover."

Then I abode with the King in great honour and ease and consideration, till, one day, as I sat in his palace, I heard tell of a company of merchants, that were fitting out a ship for Bassora, and said in myself; "I cannot do better than make the voyage with these." So I rose at once and going in to the King, kissed his hand and acquainted him with my wish to set out with the merchants, for that I longed after my people and family and native land. Quoth he, "Thou art thine own master; yet, if it be thy will to abide with us, on our head and eyes be it, for thou gladdenest us with thy company.' "O my lord," answered I, "thou hast indeed overwhelmed me with thy favours; but I weary for a sight of my friends and family and native land." When he heard this, he summoned the merchants in question and commended me to their care, paying my freight and passage-money. Moreover, he bestowed on me great riches from his treasuries and committed to my charge a magnificent present for the Khalif Haroun er Reshid.

Then I took leave of him and of all my intimates and acquaintances in the island and embarked with the merchants aforesaid. We set sail with a fair wind, committing ourselves to the care of God (may He be exalted and glorified!), and by His permission in due time arrived, after a prosperous voyage, at Bassora, where I passed a few days, equipping myself and packing up my goods. Then I went on to Baghdad, where I sought an audience of the Khalif and laid the King's presents before him. He asked me whence they came and I said to him, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I know not the name of the city nor the way thither!" And I related to him all that had befallen me in my last voyage; at which he wondered exceedingly and bade his scribes record my story and lay it up in his treasuries, for the edification of all who saw it. Then he conferred on me exceeding great favours, and I repaired to my house, where I stored up all my goods and possessions. Presently, my friends came to me and I distributed presents among my family and gave alms and largesse; after which I gave myself up to pleasure and merry-making and forgot all that I had suffered. This, then,

O my brothers, is what befell me in my sixth voyage, and to-morrow, if it please God the Most High, I will tell you the story of my seventh and last voyage, which is still more wonderful and extraordinary than that of the first six.

Then he bade lay the table, and the comnany ate the evening meal with him; after which he gave the porter an hundred dinars, as of wont, and they all went their ways, marvelling beyond measure at that which they had heard. Next morning, as soon as he had done his devotions, the porter and the rest of the guests betook themselves to the house of Sindbad the Sailor, and when they were all assembled, the host began the story of his seventh voyage, saying, 'Know, O company, that

The Seventh Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

AFTER my return from my sixth voyage, in which I made abundant profit, I abode some time in all possible ease and delight, feasting and making merry day and night, till I began once more to long to sail the seas and see foreign countries and company with merchants and hear new things. So I packed up a quantity of precious stuffs into bales and repaired with them to Bassora, where I found a ship ready for sea, and in her a company of considerable merchants. I shipped with them and we set forth on our venture, in health and safety, and sailed with a fair wind, till we came to a city called Medinet-es-Sin; but, [awhile after we had left this place,] as we fared on in all cheer and confidence, devising of traffic and travel, there sprang up a violent head wind and a tempest of rain fell on us and drenched us and our goods. So we covered the bales with drugget and canvas, lest they should be spoiled by the rain, and betook ourselves to prayer and supplication to God the Most High, for deliverance from the peril that was upon us. But the captain arose and girding his middle, tucked up his skirts and climbed to the mast-head, whence he looked out right and left and fell a-buffeting his face and plucking out his beard. So we asked him what was to do, and he replied, saying, "Seek ye deliverance of God the Most High from this our strait and bemoan yourselves and take leave of each other; for know that the wind hath gotten the mastery of us and hath driven us into the uttermost of the seas of the world." Then he came down from the mast-head and opening his chest pulled out a bag of cotton, from which he took a powder like ashes. This he wetted with water and after waiting awhile, smelt it; then he took out of the chest a little book, in which he read awhile and said to us, "Know that in this book is a marvellous saying, denoting that whoso cometh hither shall surely perish, without hope of escape; for that this part of the world is called the Clime of Kings, in which is the sepulchre of our lord Solomon, son of David, (on whom be peace!) and therein are serpents of vast bulk and fearsome aspect: and what ship soever cometh to these parts, there riseth to her a great fish out of the sea and swalloweth her up with all on board."

Great was our wonder at the captain's speech, but hardly had he made an end of speaking, when the ship was suddenly lifted out of the water and let fall again and we heard a terrible great cry like the hurtling thunder, whereat we were smitten with terror and became as dead men, giving ourselves up for lost. Then there came up to us a huge fish, as big as a great mountain, at whose sight we became wild for terror and made ready for death, marvelling at its vast size and gruesome aspect; when lo, a second fish made its appearance, bigger than the first. So we bemoaned ourselves and bade each other farewell ; but, at that moment, up came a third fish bigger than the two first, whereupon we lost the power of thought and reason and were stupefied for the excess of our fear. Then the three fish began circling about the ship and the biggest opened its mouth to swallow it, and we looked into its mouth and behold, it was wider than the gate of a city. So we besought God the Most High and called for succour upon His Apostle (on whom be blessing and peace!) when, suddenly, a violent squall of wind arose and smote the ship, which rose out of the water and settled upon a great reef, where it broke up and fell asunder and all on board were plunged into the sea. As for

me, I tore off all my clothes but my shirt and swam, till I fell in with a plank, to which I clung and bestrode it, in the most piteous plight for fear and distress and hunger and thirst, whilst the winds and the waters sported with me, and the waves carried me up and down.

Then I reproached myself for my folly in quitting my hardly earned repose to follow new ventures and said to myself, "O Sindbad, every time [thou undertakest a voyage,] thou sufferest hardships and weariness; yet wilt thou not renounce sea-travel; or, an thou say, 'I renounce,' thou liest in thy renouncement. Endure then [with patience] that which thou sufferest, for indeed thou deservest all that betideth thee. Verily, all this is decreed to me of God the Most High, to turn me from my covetousness, whence arises all that I endure, for I have wealth galore." Then I returned to my senses and said, "Verily, this time I repent to God the Most High, with a sincere repentance, of my lust for gain and venture and will never again name travel with my tongue nor in my thought." And I ceased not to humble myself to God the Most High and weep and bewail myself, recalling my former state of happiness and cheer, and thus I abode two days, at the end of which time I came to a great island, abounding in trees and streams.

I landed and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters, till I was refreshed and restored and my strength returned to me. Then I walked about till I came to a great river of sweet water, running with a strong current; whereupon I called to mind the raft I had made aforetime and said to myself, "Needs must I make me another raft [and commit myself to the current;] haply I may win out of this strait. If I escape I have my desire and I vow to God the Most High to foreswear travel; and if I perish, I shall be at peace from toil and misery."

So I gathered together great store of pieces of wood from the trees, (which were all of the finest sandal-wood, though I knew it not,) and made shift to twist grasses and creepers into a kind of rope, with which I bound the wood together and so contrived a raft. Then I embarked thereon and committed myself to the current, saying, "If I be saved, it is of God's grace;" and it bore me on three days, whilst I lay on the raft, eating not and drinking, when I was athirst, of the water of the stream, till I was giddy and weak as a new-fledged bird, for stress of fear and hunger and fatigue.

At the end of this time, I came to a high mountain, under which ran the river; which when I saw, I was afraid, by reason of the straitness I had suffered in my former underground journey, and I would fain have stayed the raft and landed in that place; but the current over-powered me and drew it into the subterranean passage; whereupon I gave myself up for lost and said, "There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!" However, after a little, the raft shot out of the tunnel into the open air and I saw beneath me a wide valley, into which the river fell with a noise like thunder and a swiftness as of the wind. The torrent bore me along the valley, holding on to the raft, for fear of falling, whilst the waves tossed me right and left, nor could I avail to stop the raft nor turn it to the shore, till I came to a great and goodly city, wherein was much people.

When the townsfolk saw me on the raft, falling down with the current, they threw out a net and ropes upon the raft and grappling to it, drew it ashore with me,

whereupon I fell down amidst them, as I were a dead man for stress of fear and hunger and lack of sleep. After a while, there came up to me an old man of reverend aspect, well stricken in years, who welcomed me and threw over me abundance of handsome clothes, wherewith I covered my nakedness. Then he carried me to the bath and brought me cordial drinks and delicious perfumes. When I came out, he bore me to his house, where his people made much of me, and stablishing me in a pleasant place, set rich food before me, of which I ate my fill and returned thanks to God the Most High for my deliverance. Then his pages brought me hot water, and I washed my hands, and his handmaids brought me silken napkins, with which I dried them and wiped my mouth. Moreover, he assigned me an apartment in his house and charged his pages and women to wait upon me and do my will. So they were assiduous in my service, and I abode with him in the guest-chamber three days, taking my ease of good eating and drinking and sweet scents, till I recovered from my fatigues and life and strength returned to me.

On the fourth day, my host came in to me and said, "Thou cheerest us with thy company, O my son, and praised be God for thy safety! But wilt thou now come down with me to the bazaar and sell thy goods? Belike with their price thou mayst buy thee wherewithal to traffic." When I heard this, I was silent awhile for amazement and said in myself, "What mean these words and what goods have I?" Then said he, "O my son, be not troubled nor careful, but come with me, and if any offer thee what contenteth thee for thy goods, take it; but, if not, I will lay them up for thee in my storehouses, against a fitting occasion." So I bethought me and said to myself, "Let us do his bidding and see what are these goods of which he speaks." And I said to him, "O my old uncle, I hear and obey; I may not gainsay thee in aught, for God's blessing is on that which thou dost."

So he carried me to the market, where I found that he had taken the raft in pieces and delivered the sandal-wood of which it was made to the broker, to cry for sale. Then the merchants came and bid for the wood, till its price reached a thousand dinars, when they left bidding and my host said to me, "O my son, this is the current price of thy goods: wilt thou sell them for this or shall I lay them up for thee in my storehouses, till the price rise?" "O my lord," answered I, "I leave it to thee: do as thou wilt." Then said he, "Wilt thou sell the wood to me for a hundred dinars over and above what the merchants have bidden for it?" And I replied, "I will well." So he bade his servants transport it to his store-houses and carrying me back to his house, counted out to me the purchase money; after which he laid it in bags and setting them in a privy place, locked them up with an iron padlock and gave me the key.

Some days after this, my host said to me, "O my son, I have somewhat to propose to thee, wherein I trust thou wilt do my bidding." Quoth I, "What is it?" And he said, "I am a very old man and have no child but one daughter, who is young and comely and endowed with abounding wealth and beauty. Now I have a mind to marry her to thee, that thou mayst abide with her in this our country, and I will make thee master of all that I possess, for I am an old man and thou shalt stand in my stead." I was silent and made him no answer, whereupon, "O my son," continued he, "do my desire in this, for I wish but thy good; and if thou wilt but do as I say, thou shalt be as my son and all that is under my hand shall be thine. If thou have a mind to traffic and travel

to thy native land, none shall hinder thee; so do as thou wilt." "By Allah, O my uncle," replied I, "thou art become to me even as my father, and I am a stranger and have undergone many hardships; nor, for stress of that which I have suffered, is aught of judgment or knowledge left to me. It is for thee, therefore, to decide." With this, he sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and married me to his daughter in great state. When I went in to her, I found her a perfect beauty, well shapen and graceful, clad in rich raiment and covered with a profusion of trinkets and necklaces and other ornaments of gold and silver and precious stones, worth millions of money. She pleased me and we loved one another; and I abode with her in all delight and solace of life, till her father was taken to the mercy of God the Most High. So we washed him and buried him, and I laid hands on all his property. Moreover, the merchants instated me in his office, for he was their chief and none of them bought aught but with his knowledge and by his leave.

When I became acquainted with the townsfolk, I found that at the beginning of each month they underwent a transformation, in that their faces changed and they became like unto birds and put forth wings, wherewith they flew away out of sight and none abode in the city save the women and children; and I said in myself; "When the first day of the month comes, I will ask one of them to carry me with them, whither they go." So, when the time came, I went in to one of the townsfolk and begged him to carry me with him, that I might divert myself with the rest and return with them. "This may not be," answered he; but I importuned him, till he consented. Then I went out with him, without telling any of my family or servants or friends, and he took me on his back and flew up with me so high into the air, that I heard the angels glorying God in the pavilion of the heavens, whereat I wondered and exclaimed, "Praised be God! Extolled be His perfection!"

Hardly had I made an end of speaking, when there came out a fire from heaven and all but consumed the company; whereupon they all fled from it and descended and casting me down on a high mountain, went away, exceeding wroth with me, and left me there alone. When I found myself in this plight, I repented of what I had done and reproached myself for having undertaken that for which I was unable, saying, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! No sooner am I delivered from one affliction than I fall into a worse." Presently, as I sat, knowing not whither I should go, there came up two young men, as they were moons, each staying his steps with a rod of red gold. So I went up to them and saluted them. They returned my greeting and I conjured them by Allah to tell me who and what they were. Quoth they, "We are devout servants of the Most High God, abiding in this mountain," and giving me a rod of gold after the likeness of those they had with them, went their ways and left me.

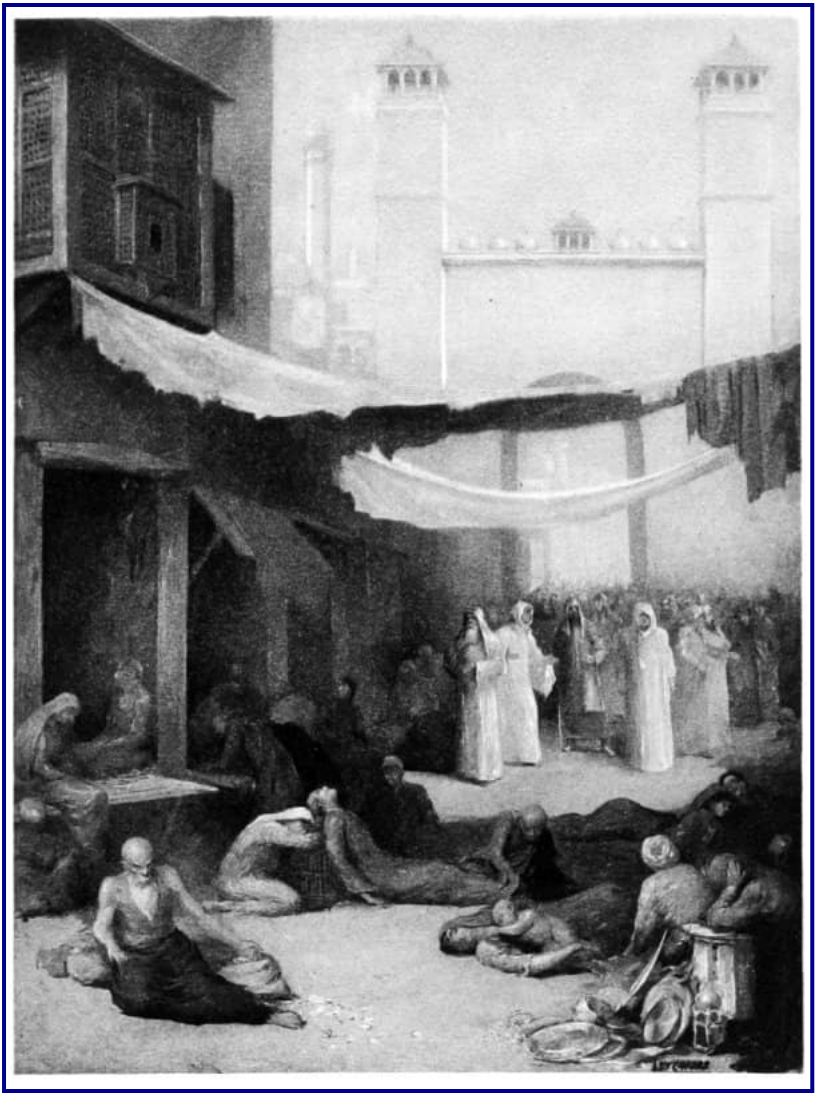
I walked on along the mountain-top, leaning on the staff and pondering the case of the two youths, till I saw a serpent come forth from under the mountain, with a man in her jaws, whom she had swallowed even to the navel, and he was crying out and saying, "Whoso delivereth me from this serpent, God will deliver him from every strait!" So I went up to the serpent and smote her on the head with the staff, whereupon she cast the man forth of her mouth. Then I smote her a second time, and she turned and fled; whereupon he came up to me and said, "Since my deliverance

from yonder serpent hath been at thy hands, I will never leave thee, and thou shalt be my comrade on this mountain." "With all my heart," answered I, and we fared on along the mountain, till we fell in with a company of folk, and I looked and saw amongst them the very man who had cast me down there. So I went up to him and spoke him fair, excusing myself to him and saying, "O my friend, it is not thus that brethren should deal with brethren." Quoth he, "It was thou who [well-nigh] destroyed us by glorifying God on my hack." "Excuse me," answered I; "for I had no knowledge of this; but if thou wilt take me with thee, I swear not to say a word." So he relented and consented to carry me with him, on condition that, so long I abode on his back, I should abstain from pronouncing the name of God or glorifying Him. Then I gave the wand of gold to him whom I had delivered from the serpent and bade him farewell, and my friend took me on his back and flew with me as before, till he brought me to the city and set me down in my own house.

My wife came to meet me and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "Henceforth beware of going forth with yonder folk, neither consort with them, for they are brethren of the devils, and know not the name of God the Most High, neither worship Him." " And how did thy father with them?" asked I. "My father," answered she, "was not of them, neither did he as they; and now he is dead, methinks thou wouldst do well to sell all we have and with the price buy merchandise and return to thine own country and people, and I with thee; for I care not to tarry here, since my father and mother are dead." So I sold all my late father-in-law's property, piecemeal, and looked for one who should be journeying thence [to Bassora,] that I might join myself to him.

Presently, I heard of a company of the townsfolk who had a mind to make the voyage, but could not find a ship; so they bought wood and built them a great ship, in which I took passage with them and paid them the hire. Then we embarked, my wife and I, with all our moveables, leaving our lands and houses and so forth, and set sail, with a favouring wind, for Bassora, where we arrived in due course, after a prosperous voyage. I made no stay there, but freighted another vessel and set out forthright for Baghdad, where I arrived in safety and repairing to my house, foregathered with my kinsfolk and household and laid up my goods in my storehouses. When my friends and family heard of my return, they came to welcome me and give me joy of my safety; and I related to them all that had befallen me, whereat they marvelled exceedingly, having given up hope of me, for that I had been absent from them seven-and-twenty years in this my seventh voyage.

Then I foreswore travel and vowed to God the Most High to venture no more by land or sea, for that this last voyage had surfeited me of travel and adventure; and I thanked God and praised and glorified Him for having restored me to my country and home and friends. Consider, therefore, O Sindbad, O landsman,' continued the host, addressing himself to the porter, 'what sufferings I have undergone and what perils and hardships I have endured [before coming to my present state of prosperity].' 'For God's sake, O my lord,' answered the porter, 'pardon me the wrong I did thee.' And they ceased not from friendship and loving fellowship, [abiding] in all cheer and delight and solace of life, till there came to them that which destroyeth delights and sundereth companies, that which layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs, to wit, the Cup of Death, and glory be to the Living One who dieth not!



The City of Brass

IT is related that the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan was seated one day in his palace at Damascus, conversing with his grandees and officers of state of the histories of people of old time, when the talk turned upon the traditions of our lord Solomon, son of David, (on whom be peace,) and of that which God the Most High had bestowed on him of lordship and dominion over men and Jinn and birds and beasts and reptiles and other created things, and quoth one of those who were present, 'Of a truth we hear from those who forewent us that God (blessed and exalted be He!) vouchsafed unto none the like of that which He vouchsafed unto our lord Solomon and that he attained unto that whereto never attained other than he, in that he was wont to imprison Jinn and Marids and Satans in vessels of copper and stop them with molten lead and seal them with his signet.'

Then said Talib ben Sehl, (who was a seeker after treasures and had books that discovered to him hoards and treasures hidden under the earth,) 'O Commander of the Faithful, (God make thy dominion to endure and exalt thy dignity in the lands!) my father told me of my grandfather, that the latter once took ship with a company, intending for the island of Sicily, and sailed till there arose against them a contrary wind, which drove them from their course and brought them to a great mountain in one of the lands of God the Most High. Quoth my grandfather, "This was in the darkness of the night and as soon as it was day, there came forth to us, from the caves of the mountain, folk black of colour and naked of body, as they were wild beasts, understanding not what was said to them; nor was there any one of them who knew Arabic, except their King, who was of their own kind. When the latter saw the ship, he came down to it with a company of his followers and saluting us, bade us welcome and questioned us of our case. So we told him how we had been driven from our course by a contrary wind, and he said, 'No son of Adam hath ever come to our land before you: but fear not, no harm shall befall you, and rejoice in the assurance of safety and return to your own country.' Then he entertained us three days, feeding on the flesh of birds and wild beasts and fish, than which they had no other meat, and on the fourth day he carried us down to the beach, that we might divert ourselves by looking upon the fishermen. There we saw a fisherman, casting his nets to catch fish, and presently he pulled them up, and behold, in them was a casting-bottle of copper, stopped with lead and sealed with the signet of Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace. He brought the vessel to land and broke it open, when there came forth a blue smoke, which rose to the zenith, and we heard a terrible voice, saying, 'I repent! I repent! Pardon, O prophet of God! I will never return to that which I did aforetime.' Then the smoke became a terrible great giant, frightful to look upon, whose head was level with the mountain tops, and he vanished from our sights, whilst our hearts were like to burst for terror; but the blacks thought nothing of it. Then we returned to the King and questioned him of the matter; whereupon quoth he, 'Know that this was one of the Jinn whom Solomon, son of David, being wroth with them, shut up in these vessels and cast into the sea, after stopping the mouths with melted lead. Our fishermen ofttimes, in casting their nets, bring up the vessels, which being broken open, there

come forth of them genies, who, deeming that Solomon is still alive and pardoneth them, make their submission to him and say, "I repent, O prophet of God!"'

The Khalif marvelled at Talib's story and said, 'Glory be to God! Verily, Solomon was given a mighty dominion.' Now En Nabigheh edh Dhubyani was present, and he said, 'Talib hath spoken sooth, as is proven by the saying of the All-wise, the Primæval One:

And Solomon, when God the Lord of old to him did say,
"Take thou the Khalifate and rule with firm and strenuous sway.
Whoso obeyeth thee reward for his obedience,
And who gainsayeth thy command, imprison him for aye."

Wherefore he used to put them in vessels of copper and cast them into the sea.'

The poet's words seemed good to the Khalif, and he said, 'By Allah, I long to look upon some of these vessels.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Talib, 'it is in thy power to do so, without stirring abroad. Send to thy brother Abdulaziz ben Merwan, so he may write to Mousa ben Nuseir, governor of Morocco, bidding him take horse thence to the mountains whereof I spoke and which adjoin the confines of his government, and fetch thee therefrom as many of the vessels in question as thou hast a mind to.' The Khalif approved his counsel and said, 'Thou hast spoken truly, O Talib, and I desire that thou be my messenger to Mousa ben Nuseir, touching this matter; wherefore thou shalt have the white ensign and all thou hast a mind to of wealth and honour and so forth, and I will care for thy family during thine absence.' 'With all my heart, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Talib. 'Go, with the aid and blessing of God,' said the Khalif and bade write a letter to his brother Abdulaziz, his viceroy in Egypt, and another to Mousa ben Nuseir, his viceroy in Northern Africa, bidding him, ceasing all excuse, take guides and go himself in quest of the vessels of Solomon, leaving his son to govern in his room. Moreover, he charged him to be not remiss in the matter and to spare neither men nor money. Then he sealed the letters and committed them to Talib, bidding him advance the [royal] ensigns before him and make his utmost speed; and he gave him treasure and horsemen and footmen, to further him on his way, and made provision for the wants of his household during his absence.

So Talib set out and arrived in due course at Cairo, where the governor came out to meet him and entertained him and his company whilst they tarried with him. Then he gave them a guide, to bring them to Upper Egypt, where the Amir Mousa had his abiding-place; and when the latter heard of Talib's coming, he went forth to meet him and rejoiced in him. Talib gave him the Khalif's letter, and he read it and laying it on his head, said, 'I hear and obey the Commander of the Faithful.' Then he assembled his chief officers and acquainting them with the Khalif's commandment, sought counsel of them how he should accomplish it. 'O Amir,' answered they, 'if thou seek one who shall guide thee to the place in question, send for the Sheikh Abdussemed son of Abdulcuddous es Semoudi, for he is a man of experience, who has travelled much and knoweth all the seas and wastes and deserts and countries of the world and the inhabitants and wonders thereof; wherefore send thou for him and he will surely guide thee to thy desire.'

So Mousa sent for him, and behold, he was a very old man, broken down with lapse of years and days. The Amir saluted him and said, 'O Sheikh Abdussemed, our lord the Commander of the Faithful, Abdulmelik ben Merwan, hath commanded me thus and thus. Now I have small knowledge of the land wherein is that which the Khalif desires; but it is told me that thou knowest it well and the way thither. Wilt thou, therefore, go thither with me and help me to accomplish the Khalif's need? So it please God the Most High, thy pains and travail shall not be wasted.' 'I hear and obey the bidding of the Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Sheikh; 'but know, O our lord, that the road thither is long and difficult and the ways few.' 'How far is it?' asked Mousa, and the Sheikh answered, 'It is a journey of two years and some months thither and the like back, and the way is full of perils and terrors and toils and wonders. Now thou art a champion of the Faith and our country is hard by that of the enemy, and peradventure the Nazarenes may come out upon us in thine absence; wherefore it behoves thee to leave one to rule thy government in thy stead.' 'It is well,' answered the Amir and appointed his son Haroun governor during his absence, requiring the troops to take the oath of fealty to him and bidding them obey him in all he should command, which they promised to do.

Now this Haroun was a man of great prowess and a renowned warrior, and the Sheikh Abdussemed feigned to him that the place they sought was distant [but] four months' journey along the shore of the sea, with camping- places all the way, adjoining one another, and grass and springs, adding, 'God will assuredly make the matter easy to us for thy sake, O lieutenant of the Commander of the Faithful.' Quoth the Amir Mousa, 'Knowest thou if any of the kings have trodden this land before us?' 'Yes,' answered the Sheikh; 'it belonged aforetime to Darius the Greek, King of Alexandria.' But he said to Mousa [privily], 'O Amir, take with thee a thousand camels laden with victual and store of gugglets.' 'And what shall we do with these [latter]?' asked the Amir. Quoth the Sheikh, 'In our way is the desert of Cyrene, the which is a vast desert, four days' journey long, and lacketh water, nor therein is voice to be heard or soul to be seen. Moreover there bloweth the Simoum and [other hot] winds called El Jewajib, that dry up the waterskins; but, if the water be in gugglets, no harm can come to it.' 'True,' answered Mousa and sending to Alexandria, let bring thence great plenty of gugglets. Then he took with him his Vizier and two thousand horse, clad in complete steel, and set out, whilst Abdussemed forewent them, riding on his hackney, to guide them.

They fared on diligently, now passing through inhabited countries and now ruins and anon traversing frightful deserts and thirsty wastes and anon mountains that rose high into the air; nor did they leave journeying a whole year's space, till, one morning, when the day broke, after they had travelled all night, the Sheikh found himself in a land he knew not and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Quoth the Amir, 'What is to do, O Sheikh?' And he answered, saying, 'By the Lord of the Kaabeh, we have wandered from our road!' 'How cometh that?' asked Mousa, and Abdussemed replied, 'The stars were obscured and I could not guide myself by them.' 'Where are we now?' said the Amir, and the Sheikh, 'I know not; for I never set eyes on this land till now.' Quoth Mousa, 'Guide us back to the place where we went astray;' but the other said, 'I know it no more.' Then said Mousa, 'Let us push on; it may be God will guide us to it or direct us aright of His power.' So

they fared on till the hour of noonday prayer when they came to a fair and wide champaign, level as it were the sea in a calm, and anon there appeared to them in the distance, some great thing, high and black, in whose midst was as it were smoke rising to the confines of the sky. They made for this and stayed not in their course, till they drew near thereto, when, behold, it was a high castle, firm of fashion and great and gruesome as it were a lofty mountain, builded all of black stone, with frowning battlements and a door of gleaming China steel, that dazzled the eyes and dazed the wit. Round about it were a thousand steps and in its midst was a dome of lead, a thousand cubits high, which appeared afar off as it were smoke.

When the Amir saw this, he marvelled thereat exceedingly and how this place was void of inhabitants; and the Sheikh, after he had certified himself thereof said, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God!' Quoth Mousa, 'I hear thee praise God and hallow him and [meseems] thou rejoicest.' 'O Amir,' answered Abdussemed, 'rejoice, for God (blessed and exalted be He!) hath delivered us from the frightful deserts and thirsty wastes.' 'How knowest thou that?' asked Mousa, and the other, 'I know it for that my father told me of my grandfather that he said, 'We were once journeying in this land and straying from the road, came to this palace and thence to the City of Brass;" between which and the place thou seekest is two months' travel; but thou must take to the sea-shore and leave it not, for there be wells and watering and camping places, established by King Iskender Dhoulkernein; for, when he went in quest of Morocco, he found by the way thirsty deserts and wastes and wilds and dug therein wells and built cisterns.' Quoth Mousa, 'May God rejoice thee with good news!' and Abdussemed said, 'Come, let us go look upon yonder palace and its marvels, for it is an admonition to whoso will be admonished.'

So the Amir went up to the palace, with the Sheikh and his chief officers, and coming to the gate, found it open. Now this gate was builded with lofty columns and porticoes whose walls were inlaid with gold and silver and precious stones, and there led up to it flights of steps, among which were two wide stairs of coloured marble, never was seen their like; and over the doorway was a tablet, whereon were graven letters of gold in the ancient Greek character. 'O Amir,' said the Sheikh, 'shall I read?' 'Read and may God bless thee!' replied Mousa. 'For all that betideth us in this journey dependeth upon thy blessing.' So the Sheikh, who was a very learned man and versed in all tongues and characters, went up to the tablet and read the following verses:

Their vestiges, after that they once did do,
Forewarn us that we in their footsteps must ensue.
O thou who haltst by the dwellings for news of folk
Who have doffed their state and bidden their power adieu,
Enter this palace, for there is the last-left news
Of lords in the dust who gathered, a puissant crew.
Death smote them and rent them asunder, and in the dust
They lost what they erst did gather with such ado.
'Tis as they had set their burdens down to rest
In haste, then mounted and fared on their way anew.

When the Amir heard this, he wept till he lost his senses and said, 'There is no god but God, the Living, the Eternal, who ceaseth not!' Then he entered the palace and was confounded at its beauty and the goodliness of its ordinance. He diverted himself awhile by viewing the figures and images therein, till he came to another door, over which also were written verses, and said to the Sheikh, 'Come, read me these.' So he came forward and read as follows:

How many in their halls have halted for a day Of old,
Then taken leave and fared upon their way!
They saw what from the shifts of fortune did befall
Others than they, therein who lighted down to stay.
That which they stored they shared among themselves and left
To others to enjoy its sweets and passed away.
With what delight arrayed were they, what dainties ate
And drank! But eaten now within the dust are they.

At this the Amir wept sore; the world grew pale before his eyes and he said, 'Verily, we were created for a mighty matter!' Then they proceeded to explore the palace and found it desert and void of living thing, its chambers and dwelling-places laid waste and desolate. In the midst stood a lofty pavilion, with a dome rising high into the air, and about it were four hundred tombs, builded of yellow marble. The Amir drew near unto these and behold, amongst them was a great tomb, wide and long, and at its head a tablet of white marble, whereon were graven the following verses:

How often have I stood, how oft set on in fight!
How many a thing, indeed, hath passed before my sight!
How much have I consumed of meat and drink, and songs
How many have I heard of singing wench and wight!
How much did I command and eke how much forbid!
How many a rampired hold, thou'dst deem beyond man's might
To take, I've stormed and sacked and all the cloistered maids,
That hid within its walls, discovered to the light!
But, of my ignorance, I sinned that I might win
Hopes that must pass away, undurable and slight.
Bethink thee, then, O man, before thou drink the cup
Of death, and reckon up thy reckoning forthright.
Yet but a little while and on thy head the dust
Shall sure be strewn and life shall fail unto thy spright.

The Amir and his companions wept; then, drawing near unto the pavilion, they saw that it had eight doors of sandal-wood, studded with nails of gold and stars of silver and inlaid with all manner precious stones. On the first door were written these verses:

That which I left, I left it not of generous purpose; nay,
But fate and fortune fore-ordained still o'er mankind bear sway.
What while content and prosperous I was, my hoarding-place,
Even was a raging lion fierce, I did defend alway.

Ne'er was I still and of my good so niggard, not a grain
Of mustard-seed, though I were cast on fire, I gave away,
Till, of the fore-ordained decree of God, the Lord of Might,
The Maker and the Fashioner, I stricken was one day.
Death, sudden, irrevocable, in haste upon me came:
I could not ward it with my store, nor eke the vast array
Of troops I gathered neath my hand availed me any jot;
Nor friend nor neighbour aided me the feet of fate to stay.
All my life's days, or if it were in solace or in stress,
Still in my journey to the grave I toiled and wearied aye.
I fared the road that all must fare, till, when the money-bags
Are full, though dinar, without cease, to dinar thou shouldst lay,
Before the morrow all hath passed to other than thyself
And unto thee a bier-bearer and grave-digger bring they,
And all alone, with but thy load of sins and crimes to bear
Thee company, thou meetest God upon thy judgment-day.
See with thy neighbours and thy folk how deals the world nor let
Its vanities delude thy wit nor lead thy feet astray.

When Mousa heard these verses, he wept till he swooned away; then, coming to himself, he entered the pavilion and saw therein a long tomb, dreadful to look upon, whereon was a tablet of China steel, bearing the following inscription: 'In the name of the Eternal God, the One, the Everlasting; in His name who begetteth not nor is begotten and to whom there is no like; in the name of God the Lord of Majesty and Might, the Living One who dieth not! O thou who comest to this place, take warning by that which thou seest of the doings of time and the vicissitudes of fortune and be not deluded by the world and its pomps and lies and fallacies and vain allurements, for that it is deceitful and flattering and treacherous, and the things thereof are but a loan, which it will take again from the borrower. It is like unto the dreams of the dreamer and the vain visions of the sleeper or as the mirage of the desert, which the thirsty take for water; and Satan maketh it fair for men even unto death. These are the ways of the world; wherefore put not thou thy trust therein neither incline unto it, for it bewrayeth him who leaneth upon it and committeth himself thereunto in his affairs. Fall not thou into its toils neither take hold upon its skirts, [but be warned by my example]. I possessed four thousand bay horses and a palace, and I had to wife a thousand daughters of kings, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons. Moreover, I was blessed with a thousand sons, as they were fierce lions, and I abode a thousand years, glad of heart and mind, and amassed treasures beyond the competence of all the kings of the regions of the earth, deeming that delight would still endure to me; but there fell on me unawares the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies, he who desolates the abodes of men and lays waste the inhabited places, the slayer of great and small, babes and children and mothers, he who hath no compassion on the poor man, by reason of his poverty, neither feareth he kings, because of their commandment and forbiddance. Yea, we abode in security in this palace, till there descended upon us the judgment of the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of the heavens and the earths; the vengeance of the Manifest Truth overtook us and there died of us every day two, till a

great company of us had perished. When I saw that destruction had entered our dwellings and taken up its abode with us and drowned us in the sea of deaths, I summoned a writer and bade him write these verses and admonitions, the which I let grave, with rule and compass, on these doors and tablets and tombs. Now I had an army of a thousand thousand horsemen, hardy, strong-armed warriors, armed with spears and coats of mail and sharp swords; so I bade them don their long hauberks and gird on their keen swords and mount their high-mettled chargers and couch their dreadful spears; and whenas there fell on us the doom of the Lord of heaven and earth, I said to them, "Ho, all ye soldiers and troopers, can ye avail to ward off that which is fallen on me from the Omnipotent King?" But they availed not unto this and said, "How shall we war with Him to whom no chamberlain bars access, the Lord of the gate that hath no doorkeeper?" Then quoth I to them, "Bring me my treasures." Now I had in my treasuries a thousand cisterns, in each of which were a thousand quintals of red gold and the like of white silver, besides pearls and jewels of all kinds and other things of price, beyond the competence of the kings of the earth. So they did as I bade them and when they had laid all the treasure before me, I said to them, "Can ye ransom me with all this treasure or buy me therewith one day of life?" But they could not; so I resigned myself to fore-ordained fate and submitted to the judgment of God, enduring patiently that which He decreed unto me of affliction, till he took my soul and made me to dwell in my grave. And if thou ask of my name, I am Koush, the son of Sheddad, son of Aad the Greater.'

An thou wouldst know my name, who lived so long ago,
After the shifts of time and fortune's changes, know
I'm Sheddard's son, who held dominion o'er mankind
And over all the earth was monarch, high and low.
The stubborn peoples all abased themselves to me
And all the North was mine from Adnan to Cairo.
In glory still I reigned; the nations of the earth
My mischief feared and I their kings did overthrow.
Yea, armies I beheld and tribes beneath my hand;
The world and all therein did dread me, friend and foe.
When I took horse, I saw the number of my troops
A million cavaliers on neighing steeds arow;
And treasures, too, were mine, past reckoning or count,
The which I garnered up 'gainst fortune's sudden blow.
Fain had I bought my life with all my wealth, although
For but a moment's space to lengthen it; but no,
God would have nought but that He willed should come to pass;
So I abode alone, cut off my brethren fro',
And death came to me, death that sunders all mankind,
And from my state I passed unto the stead of woe.
There found I all I'd wrought of old, for which in pledge
I now abide; and I a sinner was, I trow.
Bethink thee, on a brink that standest, and beware
The chances of events and fortune's overthrow.

The Amir Mousa wept till he swooned away, for what he saw of the slaughtering-places of the folk; then, as they went about the palace, viewing its sitting-chambers and pleasaunces, they came upon a table of yellow onyx, upborne on four feet of juniper-wood, and thereon these words graven: 'A thousand kings blind of the right eye and a thousand blind of the left and yet other thousand sound of both eyes have eaten at this table, all of whom have departed the world and taken up their sojourn in the tombs and the burial-places.'

All this the Amir wrote down and left the palace, taking with him nothing but the table aforesaid. Then he fared on with his retinue three days' space, under the guidance of the Sheikh Abdussemed, till they came to a high hill, whereon stood a horseman of brass. In his hand he held a lance with a broad head of blinding brightness, whereon were graven the following words: 'O thou that comest hither, if thou know not the way to the Brazen City, rub the hand of this horseman and he will turn round and presently stop. Then take the direction in which he faces and fare on boldly, for it will bring thee, without hardship, to the City of Brass.'

The Amir accordingly rubbed the horseman's hand and he revolved, like the dazzling lightning, and stopped, facing in a direction other than that wherein they were journeying. So they took the road to which he pointed and finding it a beaten track, fared on days and nights till they came to a pillar of brass, wherein was one sunken up to his armpits. He had two great wings and four arms, two like men's arms and other two as they were lions' paws, with claws of iron, and he was black and tall, with hair like horses' tails and eyes like blazing coals, slit endlong in his face. Moreover, he had a third eye, as it were that of a lynx, amiddleward his forehead, from which flew sparks of fire, and he cried out, saying, 'Glory to my Lord, who hath adjudged unto me this grievous punishment and sore affliction until the Day of Resurrection!' When the folk saw him, they lost their reason for affright and turned to flee; and the Amir Mousa said to the Sheikh Abdussemed, 'What is this?' 'I know not,' answered he, whereupon quoth Mousa, 'Draw near and question him; haply he will discover to thee his case.' 'God assain the Amir!' replied the Sheikh. 'Indeed, I am afraid of him;' but the Amir rejoined, saying, 'Fear not; he is hindered from thee or any other by that wherein he is.'

So Abdussemed drew near to the pillar and said to him who was therein, 'O creature, what is thy name and what art thou and how camest thou here on this wise?' 'I am an Afrit of the Jinn,' replied he, 'by name Dahish, son of El Aamesh, and am confined here by way of punishment, by the judgment of the Almighty, till it please Him, to whom belong might and majesty, to release me.' Then said Mousa, 'Ask him why he is prisoned in this column.' So the Sheikh asked him of this, and he replied, saying, 'My story is strange and my case extraordinary, and it is on this wise. One of the sons of Iblis had an idol of red cornelian, whereof I was guardian, and there served it a king of the kings of the sea, a prince of great power and prowess, ruling over a thousand thousand warriors of the Jinn, who smote with swords before him and answered to his call in time of need. All these were under my commandment and did my bidding, being all rebels against Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace! And I used to enter the [hollow] belly of the idol and command and forbid them thence. Now this King's daughter loved the idol and was frequent in prostration to it and

assiduous in its service; and she was the fairest woman of her day, accomplished in beauty and grace and elegance. She was described unto Solomon and he sent to her father, saying, "Give me thy daughter to wife and break thine idol of cornelian and testify that there is no god but God and that I am His prophet. If thou do this, that which is ours shall be thine and thy debt shall be our debt; but, if thou refuse, make ready to answer the summons [of God] and don thy grave-clothes, for I will come upon thee with an irresistible host, that shall fill the waste places of the earth and make thee even as yesterday that is passed away and hath no returning."

When this message reached the King, his pride revolted from obeying Solomon's bidding and he said to his Viziers, "Know that Solomon, son of David, hath sent, requiring me to give him my daughter to wife and break my idol of cornelian and enter his faith: what say ye of this?" "O mighty King," answered they, "how shall Solomon do thus with thee? Even could he come at thee in the midst of this vast ocean, he could not prevail against thee, for the Marids of the Jinn will fight on thy side and thou wilt seek succour of thine idol whom thou servest, and he will help thee and give thee the victory over him. So thou wouldst do well to consult thy Lord," meaning the idol aforesaid, "and hear what he says. If he say, 'Fight him,' fight him, and if not, not." So the King went in forthright to his idol and offered up sacrifices and slaughtered victims; after which he fell down before him, prostrate and weeping, and repeated the following verses:

Lord, I know thy puissance and thy power confess:
Solomon would have me break thee. In my stress,
Lord, to thee for succour I myself address.
Order; thy commandment I obey no less.

Then I, of my ignorance and lack of wit and recklessness of the commandment of Solomon and want of knowledge of his power, entered the belly of the idol and made answer as follows:

Solomon I fear not, dread him not to foe,
For that, of my wisdom, everything I know.
An he would be waging war upon me, lo!
I will creep and snatch his life from him, I trow.

When the King heard this, he hardened his heart and resolved to do battle with the prophet; wherefore he beat the messenger grievously and returned a flouting answer to Solomon, threatening him and saying, "Thy soul hath suggested to thee a vain thing: dost thou threaten me with lying words? But gird thyself for battle; for, an thou come not to me, I will assuredly come to thee."

The messenger returned to Solomon and told him all that had passed, which when the prophet heard, he was exceeding wroth and levied an army of men and Jinn and birds and beasts and reptiles. He commanded his Vizier Ed Dimiryat, King of the Jinn, to assemble the Marids of the Jinn from all parts, and he gathered together unto him six hundred millions of devils. Moreover, by his order, his Vizier Asef ben Berkhiya levied him an army of men, to the number of a thousand thousand or more. These all he equipped with arms and armour and mounting, with his host, upon his

magic carpet, flew through the air, whilst the beasts fared under him and the birds flew overhead, till he lighted down on the island of the refractory King and encompassed it about, filling the earth with his hosts. Then he sent to our King, saying, "Behold, I am come: defend thyself against that which is fallen upon thee, or else make thy submission to me and confess my apostleship and give me thy daughter to wife and break thine idol and worship the one God, the alone Worship-Worth, and testify, thou and thine, that there is no god but God and that I am His prophet. This if thou do, thou shalt have peace and pardon; but, if not, it will avail thee nothing to fortify thyself in this island, for God, blessed and exalted be He, hath commanded the wind to obey me; so I will bid it bear me to thee on my carpet and make thee an example to deter others." But the King made answer to his messenger, saying, "It may not in any wise be as he demandeth; so tell him I come forth to him." Then he gathered together all the Jinn that were under his hand, to the number of a thousand thousand, and added to them other than they of Marids and Satans from the islands of the sea and the mountain-tops and opened his armouries and distributed to them arms and armour.

Meanwhile the prophet Solomon drew out his host in battle array, dividing the beasts into two bodies, one on the right wing and the other on the left, and bidding them tear the enemies' horses in sunder. Moreover, he commanded the birds to hover over their heads and whenas the assault should be made, that they should [swoop down upon their battle and] tear out their eyes with their beaks and buffet their faces with their wings; and they answered, saying, "We hear and obey God and thee, O prophet of God!" Then Solomon seated himself [on his carpet] on a throne of alabaster, inlaid with jewels and plated with red gold, and commanding the wind to bear him aloft, arrayed the beasts and vipers and serpents before him, setting his Vizier Asef ben Berkhiya and the kings of mankind on his right and his Vizier Ed Dimiryat and the kings of the Jinn on his left. Then they all set on us together, and we gave them battle two days over a vast plain; but, on the third day, disaster befell us and the judgment of God the Most High was executed upon us.

The first to charge upon them were I and my troops, and I said to my companions, "Abide in your places, whilst I sally forth to them and provoke Ed Dimiryat to single combat." And behold, he came forth as he were a vast mountain, casting out fire and smoke, and shot at me a flame of fire; but I swerved from it and it missed me. Then I cast at him, in my turn, a flame of fire, and it smote him; but his poison overcame my fire and he cried out at me so terrible a cry that meseemed the skies were fallen on me, and the mountains shook at his voice. Then he commanded his hosts to charge; so they rushed on us and we on them, each crying out upon other whilst the air was filled with flames and smoke and hearts were like to cleave in sunder. The birds and the flying Jinn fought in the air and the beasts and men and the Jinn of the earth in the dust, and the battle raged and I fought with Ed Dimiryat, till I was aweary. At last, I grew weak and turned to flee from him, whereupon my companions and tribesmen likewise took to flight and my hosts were put to the rout, and Solomon cried out, saying, "Take yonder proud tyrant, accursed and infamous!" Then man fell upon man and genie upon genie and the armies of the prophet charged down upon us, with the beasts on their right hand and on their left, rending our horses and devouring

our men, whilst the birds hovered above them in the air, pecking out our eyes with their claws and beaks and buffeting our faces with their wings, till the most of us lay prone upon the face of the earth, like palm tree trunks, and defeat befell our king and we became a spoil unto Solomon.

As for me, I fled from before Ed Dimiryat; but he followed me three months' journey, till I fell down for weariness and he overtook me and pouncing upon me, made me prisoner. Quoth I, "By the virtue of Him who hath advanced thee and abased me, spare me and bring me before Solomon, on whom be peace!" So he carried me before Solomon, who received me after the foulest fashion and let bring this pillar and hollow it out. Then he set me therein and chained me and sealed me with his signet, and Ed Dimiryat bore me to this place. Moreover, he charged a great angel to guard me, and this pillar is my prison until the Day of Judgment.'

The folk marvelled at his story and at the frightfulness of his favour, and the Amir Mousa said, 'There is no god but God! Of a truth Solomon was gifted with a mighty dominion.' Then said the Sheikh Abdussemed to the genie, 'Harkye, I would fain ask thee of a thing, whereof do thou inform us.' 'Ask what thou wilt,' answered Dahish and the Sheikh said, 'Are there hereabouts any of the Afrits imprisoned in vessels of brass in the time of Solomon, on whom be peace?' 'Yes,' replied the genie; 'there be such in the sea of El Kerker, on the shores whereof dwell a people of the lineage of Noah, on whom be peace; for their country was not reached by the Deluge and they are cut off there from the [other] sons of Adam.' 'And which,' asked Abdussemed, 'is the way to the City of Brass and the place wherein are the vessels of Solomon, and what distance is there between us and it?' Quoth the Afrit, 'It is near at hand,' and directed them in the way thither.

So they left him and fared on till there appeared to them, afar off, a great blackness and therein two fires facing one another, and the Amir Mousa said to the Sheikh, 'What is yonder vast blackness and its twin fires?' 'Rejoice, O Amir,' answered the guide; 'for this is the City of Brass, as it is described in the Book of Hidden Treasures. Its walls are of black stone and it hath two towers of Andalusian brass, which appear to the beholder in the distance as they were twin fires, and hence is it named the City of Brass.'

Then they fared on without ceasing till they drew near the city and saw it as it were a piece of a mountain or a mass of iron cast in a mould. So they lighted down and sought for a gate, but saw none neither found any trace of opening in the walls, albeit there were five-and-twenty gates to the city, but none of them was visible from without. Then said the Amir, 'O Sheikh, I see no sign of any gate to this city;' and he answered, saying, 'O Amir, thus is it described in my Book of Hidden Treasures; it hath five-and-twenty gates, but none thereof may be opened save from within the city.' 'And how,' asked Mousa, 'shall we do to enter the city and view its wonders!' 'May God assain the Amir!' said Talib. 'Let us rest here two or three days, and God willing, we will make shift to come into the city.'

Then Mousa bade one of his men mount a camel and ride round about the city, so haply he should light upon a gate or breach by which they might enter. So he mounted and rode round the city two days and two nights, without drawing rein to

rest, but found the wall thereof as it were one block, without breach or way of ingress; and on the third day, he came again in sight of his companions, amazed at what he had seen of the extent and loftiness of the place, and said, 'O Amir, the easiest place of access is this where you are encamped.' Then Mousa took Talib and Abdussemed and ascended a high hill that overlooked the town. When they reached the top, they turned and beheld beneath them a city, never saw eyes a greater or goodlier, full of lofty palaces and glittering domes and fair-builded mansions and running streams and orchards laden with fruit and flowered pleasaunces, a gated city and an inexpugnable; but it was silent and deserted, without sound or movement or sign of life, except the hooting of the owl in its market-places and the wheel of the birds over its gardens and the croak of ravens in its streets and thoroughfares, bewailing those that had been therein.

The Amir stood awhile, sorrowing for the desolation of the city and saying, 'Glory to Him whom nor ages nor times change, Him who created all things of His might!' Presently, he chanced to look aside and caught sight of seven tablets of white marble afar off. So he drew near them and finding inscriptions graven thereon, called the Sheikh and bade him read these. Accordingly, he came forward and examining the inscriptions, found that they contained matter of admonition and warning and restraint to those of understanding. On the first tablet was inscribed, in the ancient Greek character, the following: 'O son of Adam, how heedless art thou of that which is before thee! Verily, thy years and months and days have diverted thee therefrom. Knowest thou not that the cup of death is filled for thee and that ere long thou must drain it to the dregs? Look to thyself before thou enter thy grave. Where be they who held the dominion over the lands and abased God's servants and led armies? By Allah, the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies and the Devastator of inhabited houses came down upon them and transported them from their spacious palaces to the narrow room of the grave.'

And at the foot of the tablet were written the following verses:

Where be the kings and where be they the earth who peopled?
Where? That which they built thereon they left and to the grave did fare.
There, after death had razed them out, corruption they became,
Pledged to the tomb to answer that they did and wrought whilere.
Where be the armies that they raised, the wealth they garnered up?
Nothing they served to ward off death or bribe him to forbear.
The Lord of the Ninth Heaven's decree fell down on them in haste:
Strongholds and treasures thereagainst all unavailing were.

When the Amir heard this, he cried out and the tears ran down his cheeks and he exclaimed, 'By Allah, it is surest and most fitting to abstain from the world!' And he called for inkhorn and paper and wrote down what was graven on the tablet.

Then he drew near the second tablet and found these words graven thereon: 'O son of Adam, what hath seduced thee [from the service of] the Ancient of Days and made thee forget that thou must one day pay the debt of death? Knowest thou not, thou that takest thought unto the world and cleavest fast thereto, that it is a perishing dwelling, wherein there is abiding for none? Where be the kings who peopled Irak and

possessed the four quarters of the world? Where be they who peopled Ispahan and the land of Khorassan? The voice of the summoner of death called them and they answered him, and the herald of destruction hailed them and they replied, saying, "Here are we." Verily, that which they builded and fortified profited them not, neither did what they had gathered and provided [against a time of stress] avail for their defence.'

And at the foot of the tablet were graven the following verses:

Where be they these halls who builded and their galleries reared on high,
Galleries whose stately fashion nought resembles neath the sky
Armies levied they and warriors, in their fear of him delights
Who undoth; but they availed not, when th' appointed day drew nigh.
Where be the Chosroës, sovereigns of the strengths that none might storm?
As they'd never been, the countries have they left and fleeted by.

The Amir wept and exclaimed, 'By Allah, we are indeed created for a grave matter!' Then he copied the above inscription and passed on to the third tablet, whereon was written what follows: 'O son of Adam, thou busiest thee with the love of the world and neglectest the commandment of thy Lord. All the days of thy life pass by and thou art content to live thus. Make ready thy provision against the appointed day and prepare to answer the Lord of all creatures.'

And at the foot were written these verses:

Where's he who peopled all the lands, both Hind and Sind, of yore?
He who transgressed and sinned and played the tyrant heretofore?
Ethiops and Abyssinians all unto his beck did bow,
What while himself he magnified and arrogantly bore.
Look not for news of that which is within his tomb, for thou
One who can tidings give of this shalt meet with nevermore.
The stroke of imminent death on him fell and from its assault
Not all the halls he built could save nor all his hoarded store.

At this Mousa wept sore, then, going on to the fourth tablet, he read the following inscription thereon: 'O son of Adam, how long shall thy Lord bear with thee and thou every day sunken in the sea of thy delight? Hath it then been revealed unto thee that thou shalt not die? O son of Adam, let not the deceitful delights of thy days and nights and hours delude thee, but remember that death lieth in wait for thee, ready to spring on thy shoulders, nor doth a day pass but he riseth with thee in the morning and lieth down with thee by night. Beware, then, of his onset and make provision thereagainst. As it was with me, so is it with thee; thou wastest thy whole life and squanderest the delight of thy days. Hearken, therefore, to my rede and put thy trust in the Lord of Lords; for there is no stability in the world; it is but as a spider's web.'

And at the foot of the tablet were written the following verses:

Where's he who traced the house and builded it forthright
And fortified its walls and reared it to the height?
Where be the castles' lords? They who abode therein

Departed have the strengths they governed, every wight.
All lie within the tombs, in pledge against the day
Whereon the secret things shall all be brought to light.
None but the Most High God endureth without cease,
The ever Worship-worth, Lord of all power and might.

When the Amir read this, he swooned away and [presently coming to himself] marvelled exceedingly and wrote it down. Then he drew near the fifth tablet and behold, thereon was graven what follows: 'O son of Adam, what is it distracts thee from the obedience of thy Creator and the Author of thy being, Him who reared thee, whenas thou wast little, and fed thee, whenas thou grewest up? Thou art ungrateful for His bounty, albeit He watcheth over thee with His favours, letting down the curtain of His protection over thee. Needs must there be for thee a time more bitter than aloes and hotter than live coals. Provide thee, therefore, against it; for who shall sweeten its bitterness or quench its flaming fires? Bethink thee who forewent thee of peoples and heroes and take warning by them, ere thou perish.'

And at the foot of the tablet were graven the following verses:

Where be the kings of the kings of the earth? Indeed, they are sped,
And here, with that which they gathered, they lie in the graveyard's bed.
Once, when they mounted, thou'dst see, in the train of their glory, troops
That filled the lands, when they mounted, and over the countries spread.
How many a monarch they humbled, how many an army destroyed!
How much in their day they conquered, and how much blood did they shed!
Upon them, in haste, the commandment o' the Lord of the heavens came
And after a life all untroubled, o'erthrown were they sudden and dead.

The Amir marvelled at this and wrote it down; after which he passed on to the sixth tablet and found thereon the following inscription: 'O son of Adam, think not that immunity will endure [for ever,] seeing that death is irrevocably decreed unto thy head. Where be thy fathers and thy brethren, where thy friends and dear ones? They have all gone to the dust of the tombs and presented themselves before the Glorious, the Forgiving One, as if they had never eaten nor drunken, and they are a pledge for that which they have earned. So look to thyself, ere thy tomb come upon thee.'

And at the foot of the tablet were graven these verses:

Where be the kings of the kings of the Franks and where
Is he who, I trow, abode in Tenjeh whilere?
Their works in a book are written, which to the One,
The Almighty, one day shall witness against them bear.

At this Mousa marvelled and wrote it down, saying, 'There is no god but God! Indeed, how goodly were these folk!' Then he went up to the seventh tablet and behold, thereon was written what follows: 'Glory to Him who fore-ordaineth death to all He createth, the Living One, who dieth not! O son of Adam, let not thy days and their delights delude thee, neither thine hours and the sweet of their tides, and know that death cometh to thee and sitteth upon thy shoulders. Beware, then, of his assault and make ready for his onset. As it was with me, so is it with thee; thou wasteth the sweet

of thy life and the delight of thine hours. Give ear, then, to my rede and put thy trust in the Lord of Lords and know that there is no stability in the world, but it is as it were a spider's web and all that is therein shall cease and die. Where is he who laid the foundations of Amid and builded it and builded Farikin and exalted it? Where be the peoples of the strong places? Whenas they had inhabited them [awhile], they descended, after their might, into the tombs. They have been carried off [by death] and we shall be [in like manner] afflicted. None abideth save God the Most High, God the Forgiving One.'

The Amir Mousa wept and copied all this, and indeed the world was belittled in his eyes. Then he descended the hill and rejoined his troops, with whom he passed the rest of the day, casting about for a means of access to the city. And he said to his Vizier [and] Talib ben Sehl and his chief officers, 'How shall we do to enter this city and view its marvels? It may be we shall find therein wherewithal to propitiate the favour of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'God prolong the Amir's fortune!' replied Talib. 'Let us make a ladder and mount the wall therewith, so haply we may come at the gate from within.' Quoth the Amir, 'This is what came to my thought also, and it is good counsel.' And he called for carpenters and blacksmiths and bade them cut wood and make a ladder clamped and banded with iron. So they made a strong ladder and wrought at it a whole month. Then all the company laid hold of it and set it up against the wall, and it reached the top as truly as if it had been made for it aforetime. The Amir marvelled at the excellence of their work and said, 'The blessing of God be upon you! It seemeth as though ye had taken the measure of the wall.' Then said he to his men, 'Which of you will mount the ladder and walk along the wall and cast about for a way of descending into the city, so to see how the case stands and let us know how we may open the gate?' Quoth one of them, 'I will go up, O Amir, and descend and open to you.' And Mousa answered, saying, 'Go and the blessing of God go with thee!'

So he mounted the ladder; but, when he came to the top of the wall, he stood up and gazed fixedly down into the city, then clapped his hands and crying out, at the top of his voice, 'By Allah, thou art fair!' cast himself down into the place and was dashed to pieces. Quoth Mousa, 'By Allah, the man is destroyed!' But another came up to him and said, 'O Amir, this was a madman and doubtless his madness got the better of him and undid him. I will go up and open the gate to you, if it be the will of God the Most High.' 'Go,' replied Mousa, 'and may God bless thee! But beware lest thou lose thy head, even as did he.' Then the man mounted the ladder, but no sooner had he reached the top of the wall than he laughed aloud and saying, 'Well done! Well done!' cast himself down into the city and died forthright.

When the Amir saw this, he said, 'If this be the fashion of a reasonable man, what is that of the madman? If all our men do thus, we shall have none left and shall fail of our errand and that of the Commander of the Faithful. Let us depart hence, for we have no concern with this city.' But another of the company said, 'Peradventure another may be steadier than they.' So a third mounted the wall and a fourth and a fifth and all cried out and cast themselves down, even as did the first; nor did they leave to do thus, till a dozen had perished.

Then said the Sheikh Abdussemed, 'This adventure is reserved for none other than myself, for the man of experience is not like the inexperienced.' Quoth the Amir,

'Indeed, I will not have thee go up, for thou art our guide and if thou perish, we shall all be cut off to the last man.' But he answered, saying, 'Peradventure, that which we seek may be accomplished at my hands, by the grace of God the Most High.' So they all agreed to let him go up, and he arose and heartening himself, said, 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!' and mounted the ladder, calling on the name of God and reciting the Verses of Safety. When he reached the top of the wall, he clapped his hands and gazed fixedly down into the city; whereupon the folk below cried out to him with one accord, saying, 'O Sheikh Abdussemed, for God's sake cast not thyself down!' And they said, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! If the Sheikh fall, we are all dead men.'

Then he laughed long and loud and sat a great while, reciting the names of God and repeating the Verses of Safety; then he rose and cried out at the top of his voice saying, 'O Amir, have no fear: no hurt shall betide you, for God (to whom belong might and majesty) hath averted from me the wiles and malice of Satan, by the blessing of the words, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!"' 'O Sheikh,' quoth Mousa, 'what didst thou see?' 'When I came to the top of the wall,' answered Abdussemed, 'I saw ten maidens, as they were moons, calling and beckoning to me with their hands, as who should say, "Come hither to us;" and meseemed there was below me a lake of water. Therewith I thought to throw myself down, when behold, I espied my twelve companions lying dead, so I restrained myself and recited somewhat of the book of God the Most High, whereupon He dispelled from me the damsels' wiles and sorceries and they disappeared. And doubtless this was an enchantment devised by the people of the city, to repel those who should seek to enter the place.'

Then he walked on along the wall, till he came to the two towers of brass [from which the city took its name,] and saw therein two gates of gold, without locks or visible means of opening; whereat he marvelled and gazed about him awhile, till he espied, amiddleward one of the gates, a horseman of brass with hand outstretched, as if pointing, and thereon somewhat written. So he went up to it and read these words: 'Turn the pin in my navel twelve times, and the gate will open.' Accordingly, he examined the horseman's body and finding in his navel a pin of gold, firm-set and curiously wrought, turned it twelve times, whereupon the horseman revolved like the blinding lightning and the gate swung open with a noise like thunder. He entered and found himself in a long passage, which brought him down some steps into a guardroom, furnished with goodly benches, whereon sat men dead, with richly wrought targets and keen swords and bended bows and arrows on the string hanging at their heads.

Passing on, he came to the outer gate and finding it secured with curiously wrought locks and bars and bolts and other fastenings of wood and iron, said in himself, 'Belike the keys are with yonder dead folk.' So he turned back to the guardroom and seeing, amongst the dead soldiers, an old man seated upon a high bench, who seemed the chiefest of them, said in himself, 'Who knows but they are with this old man? Doubtless he was the seneschal of the city, and these others were under his hand.' So he went up to him and lifting his gown, saw the keys hanging to his girdle, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and was like to fly for gladness. Then he took them and going up to the gate, undid the locks and drew back the bolts and

bars, whereupon the great gate swung open with a noise like the pealing thunder. At this he cried out, saying, 'God is most great!' And the folk without answered him with the same words, rejoicing and thanking him for his deed.

The Amir Mousa also rejoiced with an exceeding joy in the Sheikh's safety and the opening of the city-gate, and they all pressed forward to enter; but Mousa cried out to them, saying, 'O folk, it is not safe that we all enter at once, lest some ill chance betide us. Let half enter and other half tarry without.' So he entered with half his men, bearing their weapons of war, and saw the doorkeepers and guards and chamberlains and officers lying dead on couches of silk. Then they passed through the inner gate and coming upon their comrades lying dead, buried them; after which they fared on till they came to a great market-place, full of lofty buildings, none of which overpassed other, and saw all the shops open, with the scales hung out and the brazen vessels ranged in order and the magazines full of all manner goods and the merchants sitting in their places, dead, with shrivelled skin and rotted bones, a warning to those who can take warning; and here they saw four separate markets.

Then they went on till they came to the silk-market, where they found silks and brocades, woven with red gold and white silver upon all manner of colours, and the owners lying dead upon mats of scented goats' leather, as if they would speak; after which they traversed the market of pearls and rubies and other jewels and came to that of the money-changers, whom they saw sitting dead upon silken carpets, in shops full of gold and silver. Thence they passed to the drug-market, where they saw the shops filled with drugs of all kinds and bladders of musk and ambergris and aloes and camphor and other perfumes in vessels of ivory and ebony and khelenj-wood and Spanish brass, the which is equal in value to gold, and various kinds of Indian cane; but the shopkeepers were all dead, nor was there with them aught of food.

Hard by this last market they came upon a palace, magnificently built and decorated; so they entered and found therein banners displayed and drawn swords and bended bows and bucklers hanging by chains of gold and silver and helmets gilded with red gold. In the vestibules stood benches of ivory, plated with glittering gold and covered with silken stuffs, whereon lay men, whose skin had dried up on their bones; the unknowing had deemed them sleeping, but, for lack of food, they had perished and tasted the cup of death.

When the Amir Mousa saw this, he stood still, glorifying God the Most High and hallowing Him and contemplating the beauty of the palace and the fair perfection of its ordinance, for it was builded after the goodliest and stablest fashion and the most part of its adornment was of green lapis-lazuli; and on the inner door, which stood open, were written, in characters of gold and ultramarine, the following verses:

Consider what thou seest here, O mortal, and beware
And to thine end take thought before thou hence away must fare.
Needs must each dweller in a house depart therefrom; so look
Provision of good works, which thee shall profit, thou prepare.
See here a folk, who did adorn their dwellings and are now
Become the pledges of the dust for that they wrought whilere.
They builded, but their buildings served them nought; they hoarded wealth,

That might not save them, when their days of life accomplished were.
How much they hoped for, over that which was to them ordained!
Then to the grave they passed and hope availed them nothing there.
Yea, they descended from their height of glory to the strait
Abjection of the tomb, and ill was this their last repair.
Whenas as they buried were, came one that cried to them and said,
"Where be the thrones, the diadems, the raiment ye did wear?
Where be the faces that were veiled and curtained round about,
Whereon, of yore, were bywords made, so bright they were and fair?"
And the tomb answer for them made to him that questioned them,
Saying, "The roses of the cheeks are faded out fore'er.
Long time they ate and drank their fill; now, after pleasant food,
Themselves are eaten in their turn; the worms upon them fare."

When the Amir read this, he wept, till he was like to swoon away, and bade write down the verses, after which he passed on into the inner palace and came to a vast hall, at each of whose four corners stood a lofty and spacious pavilion, enamelled with gold and silver and painted in various colours. Midmost the hall was a great fountain of alabaster, surmounted by a canopy of brocade, and in each of the pavilions was a richly-wrought fountain and cistern paved with marble and streams flowing in channels along the floor and meeting in a great cistern of many-coloured marble.

Quoth the Amir to the Sheikh Abdussemed, 'Come, let us visit yonder pavilions.' So they entered the first and found it full of gold and silver and pearls and rubies and other precious stones and metals, besides chests filled with brocades, red and white and yellow. Then they repaired to the second pavilion and opening a closet there, found it full of arms and armour, such as gilded helmets and Davidean hauberks and Indian swords and Arabian spears and Chorasmian maces and other warlike gear. Thence they passed to the third pavilion, wherein they saw closets locked and covered with curtains wrought with all manner broidery. They opened one of these and found it full of weapons curiously wrought and inlaid with gold and silver and jewels. Then they entered the fourth pavilion and opening one of the closets there, beheld in it great store of eating and drinking vessels of gold and silver, with platters of crystal and cups set with fine pearls and goblets of cornelian and so forth. So they all fell to taking that to which they had a mind, and each of the soldiers carried off what he could.

When they left the pavilions, they saw in the midst of the palace a door of teak-wood, inlaid with ivory and ebony and plated with glittering gold, over which hung a silken curtain, wrought with all manner broideries, and on this door were locks of white silver, that opened by artifice without a key. The Sheikh Abdussemed went boldly up thereto and by the aid of his knowledge and skill, succeeded in opening the locks, whereupon the door swung back and admitted them into a corridor paved with marble and hung with tapestries broidered with figures of all manner beasts and birds, whose bodies were wroughten of red gold and white silver and their eyes of pearls and rubies, amazing all who saw them. Passing along the corridor, they came to a saloon builded all of polished marble, inlaid with jewels, so wonder-clear and smooth that it seemed to the beholder as there were water running over its floor and whoso walked thereon

slipped. The Amir bade the Sheikh strew thereon somewhat, that they might walk over it; which being done, they made shift to pass on till they came to a great pavilion of stone, plated with red gold and crowned with a dome of alabaster, about which were set lattice-windows, painted and jewelled with wands of emerald, beyond the competence of any king; nor had they seen aught goodlier in all the place.

Under this dome was a canopy of brocade, reared upon columns of red gold and wrought with figures of birds with feet of emerald, and beneath each bird was a network of fine pearls. The canopy was spread above a fountain of ivory and cornelian, plated with glittering gold and set with pearls and rubies and other jewels, and thereby stood a couch and a pillar of red gold. On the top of the pillar was perched a bird fashioned of red rubies and holding in its bill a pearl, that shone like a star; and on the couch lay a damsel, as she were the shining sun, never saw eyes a fairer. She was clad in a robe of fine pearls, with a crown of red gold on her head, filleted with gems, and on her brow were two great jewels, whose light was as the light of the sun. On her breast she wore a jewelled amulet, filled with musk and ambergris and worth the empire of the Cæsars, and round her neck hung a collar of rubies and great pearls, [hollow and] full of odoriferous musk. Whoso looked on her would deem her alive and not dead, for it seemed as if she gazed on them with eyes as they were gazelles' eyes, that followed them from side to side.

The Amir Mousa marvelled at her beauty and was confounded at the blackness of her hair and the redness of her cheeks and said to her, 'Peace be on thee, O damsel!' But she returned not his salutation and the Sheikh said to him, 'O Amir, verily this damsel is dead and there is no life in her; so how shall she return thy greeting? Indeed, she is but a corpse embalmed with exceeding art; her eyes were taken out after her death and quicksilver set under them, after which they were restored to their sockets. Wherefore they glisten and when the air moves the lashes, she seems to wink and it appears to the beholder as though she looked at him, for all she is dead.' At this the Amir marvelled beyond measure and said, 'Glory be to God, who subjecteth His creatures unto death!'

Now the couch, on which the damsel lay, had steps, and thereon stood two slaves, one white and the other black. The first held a mace of iron and the second a sword of watered steel, whose radiance dazzled the eye; and between them, on one of the steps of the couch, lay a golden tablet, whereon were written, in characters of white silver, the following words: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Praise be to God, the Creator of mankind, the Lord of Lords, the Causer of Causes! In the name of the Eternal God, the Everlasting, the Ordainer of Fate and Fortune! O son of Adam, how unknowing art thou in thine unending hope and how heedless of the inevitable end! Knowst thou not that death calleth for thee and hasteneth to seize upon thy soul? Be ready, therefore, for the last journey and provide thee [for thy departure] from the world; for, assuredly, ere long thou shalt leave it. Where is Noah and his progeny? Where be the kings of the Chosroës and the Cæsars? Where the kings of India and Chaldæa and the monarchs of the four quarters of the earth? Where be the sons of Amalek and the giants of old time? Indeed, the dwelling-places are void of them and they have departed lands and kindred. Where be the kings of the Arabs and the princes of the barbarians? They are dead, all of them, and are become corruption. Where be

the lords of high degree? They are all dead. Where are Korah and Haman? Where is Sheddad son of Aad? Where be Canaan and the Lord of the Stakes? By Allah, the Reaper of lives hath cut them off and made void the lands of them. Did they provide them against the appointed day or make ready to answer the Lord of all creatures?

O man, if thou know me not, I will acquaint thee with my name: I am Tedmureh, daughter of the kings of the Amalekites, of those who held dominion over the lands and brought low the necks of mankind. I possessed that which never king possessed and was righteous in my rule and did justice among my subjects; yea, I gave gifts and largesse and freed slaves, male and female. Thus lived I many years in all ease and delight of life, till death knocked at my gates and calamities took up their abode with me and with my folk; and it was on this wise. There betided us seven successive years of drought, wherein no drop of rain fell on us from heaven and no green thing sprouted for us on the face of the earth. So we ate what was with us of victual and [when we had made an end thereof] we fell upon the cattle and ate them, till there was nothing left. Then I let bring my treasures and meted them with a measure and sent out trusty men to buy food. They visited all the lands in quest thereof and left not a single city unsought, but found no victual and returned to us with the treasure, after a long absence, disappointed, and gave us to know that they could not avail to barter fine pearls for wheat, bushel for bushel neither weight for weight. So, when we despaired of succour, we displayed all our riches and things of price and shutting the gates of the city, resigned ourselves to the judgment of our Lord and committed our affair to our Master. Then we all died, as thou seest us, and left what we had builded and what we had treasured up. This, then, is our story, and after the substance abideth the trace.'

Then they looked at the foot of the tablet and read these verses:

O son of Adam, let not hope make mock of thee, I pray.
From all thy hands have treasured up thou shalt be snatched away.
I see thou covetest the world and all its fleeting show,
And young and old have done the like before thee many a day.
Wealth, by fair means and foul, they got; but all their hoarded store,
When once their term accomplished was, could buy them no delay.
Armies they led and gathered gold galore, then left their wealth
And what they'd built and to the tombs departed straight and lay
Down in a narrow lodging in the dust, and there asleep,
In pledge for that they wrought of yore, they do abide alway;
As 'twere a caravan, whose folk had halted for the night
And set their burdens in a house, wherein there was no stay.
And quoth its lord to them, 'O folk, there is no sojourn here
For you;' and so they girt their beasts and fared upon their way,
Misliking, after lighting down to rest them, to depart
Forthright again, filled full of care and trouble and dismay.
So look thou furnish thee with store of good shall gladden thee
To-morrow, and the fear of God thy practice govern aye.

And under this was written: 'By Allah, the fear of God is the best of all things, the keystone of certainty and the [only] sure stay. Verily, death is the manifest truth and

the sure promise, and therein, O man, is the goal and place of returning. Take warning, therefore, by those who have foregone thee to the dust and hastened in the way of the predestined end. Seest thou not that hoariness calls thee to the grave and that the whiteness of thy locks maketh moan for thee of thy life? Wherefore be thou on the watch, ready for thy departure and account. O son of Adam, what hath seduced thee from the service of thy Lord? Where be the peoples of old time? [They are become] a warning to whoso will take warning. Where be the kings of China and the lords of power and prowess? Where is Sheddad ben Aad and where the cities he built and stablished? Where is the proud tyrant Nimrod and Pharaoh who rebelled against God and denied Him? Death followed hard upon them and laid them low, sparing neither great nor small, male nor female; yea, and the Reaper of Mankind cut them off, by Him who maketh the night to return upon the day!

Know, O thou who comest to this place, that she whom thou seest here was not deluded by the world and its frail delights, for it is deceitful, perfidious, a house of perdition and vanity, and salutary to the creature is the remembrance of his sins; wherefore she feared her Lord and made fair her dealings and provided herself against the appointed day. Whoso cometh to our city and God vouchsafeth him to enter it, let him take of the treasure what he may, but touch not aught that is on my body, for it is the covering of my nakedness and my furniture for the last journey; wherefore let him fear God and despoil nought thereof; else will he destroy himself. This have I set for a warning from me to him and a trust; wherewith, peace be on you and I pray God to keep you from sickness and calamity.'

When the Amir Mousa read this, he wept till he swooned away and presently coming to himself, wrote down all he had seen and heard and was admonished thereby. Then he bade his men fetch the camels and load them with these treasures and vases and jewels. 'O Amir,' quoth Talib, 'shall we leave yonder damsel with what is upon her? Behold, they are things that have not their equal and whose like is not to be found and more perfect than aught else thou takest; nor couldst thou find a goodlier gift wherewithal to propitiate the favour of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'O man,' replied Mousa, 'heardst thou not what the lady says on the tablet? More by token that she gives it in trust to us, and we are no traitors [that we should betray a trust].' 'And shall we,' rejoined Talib, 'because of these words, leave yonder jewels and riches, seeing that she is dead? What should she do with these that are the adornments of the world and the ornament of the live? We have more right to them than she, seeing that one garment of cotton would suffice for her covering.' So saying, he mounted the steps of the couch, but when he came within reach of the two slaves, the mace-bearer smote him on the back and the other struck him with the sword he held in his hand and cut off his head, and he fell down dead. Quoth the Amir, 'May God have no mercy on thy soul! Indeed, there was enough in these treasures, and covetise assuredly dishonoureth a man.' Then he bade admit the troops; so they entered and loaded the camels with the treasures; after which they went forth the city and the Amir let shut the gate as before.

They fared on along the sea-shore a whole month, till they came in sight of a high mountain, overlooking the sea and full of caves, wherein dwelt a tribe of blacks, speaking an unknown tongue and clad in skins, with hooded cloaks of the same on their heads. When they saw the troops, they took fright and fled into the caverns,

whilst their women and children stood at the doors, looking on the strangers. 'O Sheikh,' said the Amir, 'what are these folk?' 'They are those whom we seek,' answered Abdussemed. So they halted and setting down their loads, pitched their tents; whereupon down came the King of the blacks from the mountain and drew near the camp.

Now he understood the Arabic tongue; so, when he came to the Amir, he saluted him and Mousa returned his greeting and entreated him with honour. Then said he to the Amir, 'Are ye men or Jinn?' 'We are men,' answered Mousa; 'but doubtless ye are Jinn, of the vastness of your stature and your dwelling apart in this mountain, that is cut off from mankind.' 'Nay,' rejoined the black; 'we also are children of Adam, of the lineage of Ham, son of Noah, on whom be peace; and this sea is known as El Kerker.' Quoth Mousa, 'O king, what is your religion and what worship ye?' And he answered, saying, 'We worship the God of the heavens and our religion is that of Mohammed, whom God bless and keep!' 'And how came ye by the knowledge of this,' asked the Amir, 'seeing that no prophet inspired of God hath visited this country?' 'Know, O Amir,' replied the King, 'that there appeared to us [aforetime] from out the sea a man, from whom issued a light that illumined the whole horizon, and he cried out, in a voice that was heard of far and near, saying, 'O children of Ham, bow down to Him who seeth and is not seen and say, "There is no god but God and Mohammed is His apostle!" And he added, "I am Aboulabbas el Khizr." Before this, we used to worship one another, but he called us to the service of the Lord of all creatures. Moreover, he taught us to repeat these words, "There is no god save God alone, who hath no partner, and His are the kingdom and the praise. He giveth life and death and He can do all things." Nor do we draw near unto God (to whom belong might and majesty) but with these words, for we know none other; but every Friday eve we see a light upon the face of the earth and hear a voice saying, "Holy and glorious, Lord of the Spirit and the Angels! What He willeth, is, and what He willeth not, is not. Every blessing is of the grace of God and there is neither power nor virtue save in Him the Most High, the Supreme!"

'But ye,' said the black king, 'who and what are ye and what brings you to this land?' Quoth Mousa, 'We are officers of the sovereign of Islam, the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan, who hath heard tell of the lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace), and of that which God the Most High bestowed upon him of supreme dominion, how he held sway over Jinn and beasts and birds and was wont, whenas he was wroth with one of the Marids, to shut him in a vessel of brass and stopping its mouth on him with lead, whereon he impressed his seal, to cast him into the sea of Kerker. Now we have heard tell that this sea is in your country; so the Commander of the Faithful hath sent us hither, to fetch him some of these vessels, that he may look thereon and divert himself with their sight. This, then, is our case and what we seek of thee, O King, and we desire that thou further us in the accomplishment of our errand for the Commander of the Faithful.' 'With all my heart,' replied the black king and carrying them to the guest-house, entreated them with the utmost honour and furnished them with all they needed, feeding them upon fish.

They abode thus three days, at the end of which time he bade his divers fetch some of the vessels of Solomon from out the sea. So they dived and brought up twelve vessels, whereat the Amir and his company rejoiced in the accomplishment of the Khalif's need. Then Mousa gave the King of the blacks many and great gifts, and he in turn made him a present of wonders of the deep, being fish in human form, saying, 'Your entertainment these three days has been of these fish.' Quoth the Amir, 'Needs must we carry some of these to the Khalif, for they will please him more than the vessels of Solomon.'

Then they took leave of the black king and setting out on their homeward journey, travelled till they came to Damascus, when Mousa went in to the Commander of the Faithful and told him all that they had seen and heard, together with the manner of the death of Talib ben Sehl; and the Khalif said, 'Would I had been with you, that I might have seen what you saw!' Then he took the brazen vessels and opened them, one after another, whereupon the devils came forth of them, saying, 'We repent, O prophet of God! Never again will we return to the like of this thing.' And the Khalif marvelled at this, saying, 'Never gave God unto any man the like of that which He bestowed upon Solomon, son of David!' As for the mermaids, they made them tanks of wood, full of water, and laid them therein; but they died of the great heat.

Then the Khalif divided the spoils of the Brazen City among the faithful, and the Amir Mousa sought leave of him to appoint his son governor of Africa in his stead, that he might betake himself to the holy city of Jerusalem, there to worship God. So the Commander of the Faithful invested Haroun with the government and Mousa repaired to Jerusalem, where he died. This, then, is all that hath come down to us of the story of the City of Brass, and God [alone] is All-knowing!

The Malice of Women.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a rich and powerful king, who ruled over many men of war and vassals, and he had grown old without being blessed with a son. At last, when he began to despair of male issue, he sought the intercession of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) with the Most High and implored Him, by the glory of His saints and prophets and martyrs and others of the Faithful that were dear to Him, to grant him a son, to be the solace of his eyes and inherit the kingdom after him. Then he rose forthright and withdrawing to his sitting-chamber, sent for the daughter of his uncle and lay with her. By God's grace, she conceived by him, and when the months of her pregnancy were accomplished, she bore a male child, whose face was as the round of the moon on its fourteenth night. When the boy reached the age of five, he was committed to the charge of a sage of the sages, a very learned man, by name Es Sindibad, who taught him science and polite letters, till, by the time he was ten years old, there was none of his time could vie with him in knowledge and good breeding and understanding. Then his father delivered him to a company of Arabian cavaliers, who instructed him in horsemanship and martial exercises, till he became proficient therein and came and went in the listed field and excelled all his peers and all the folk of his day.

One day, his governor, being engaged in observing the stars, drew the youth's horoscope and discovered that, if he spoke one word during the seven following days, he would be a dead man. So he went in straightway to the old King and informed him of this, and he said, 'What shall we do, O sage?' 'O King,' answered the other, 'it is my counsel that he be kept in a place of pleasance, where he may divert himself with hearing music, until the seven days be past.' So the King sent for the fairest of his favourites and committed the prince to her, saying, 'Take thy lord into the palace with thee and let him not leave thee till after seven days.' The damsel accordingly took the prince by the hand and carried him to the palace in question, which was compassed about by a running stream, whose banks were planted with all manner fruit-trees and sweet-scented flowers. Moreover, in this palace were forty apartments and in every apartment ten slave-girls, each skilled in some instrument of music, so that, when she played, the palace danced to her melodious strains; and here the prince passed one night.

Now he was handsome and graceful beyond description, and when the King's favourite looked at him, love gat hold upon her heart and she was ravished with him. So she went up to him and offered herself to him, but he made her no answer; whereupon, being confounded by his beauty, she cried out to him and required him of himself and importuned him. Moreover, she threw herself upon him and strained him to her bosom, kissing him and saying, 'O king's son, grant me thy favours and I will set thee in thy father's stead; yea, I will give him to drink of poison, so he may die and thou enjoy his wealth and kingship.' When the prince heard this, he was sore enraged against her and said to her [by signs], 'O accursed one, so it please God the Most High, I will assuredly requite thee this thy deed, whenas I can speak; for I will go out to my father and tell him, and he will kill thee.' So saying, he arose, in a rage, and went out

from her; whereat she feared for herself. So she buffeted her face and rent her clothes and tore her hair and uncovered her head, then went in to the King and threw herself at his feet, weeping and lamenting. When he saw her in this plight, he was sore concerned and said to her, 'What ails thee, O damsel? How is it with thy lord [my son]? Is he not well?' 'O King,' answered she, 'this thy son, whom thy counsellors avouch to be dumb, required me of myself and I repelled him, whereupon he did with me as thou seest and would have slain me; so I fled from him, nor will I ever again return to him nor to the palace.'

When the King heard this, he was beyond measure wroth and calling his Viziers, bade them put the prince to death. However, they said to each other, 'If we do the King's commandment, he will surely repent of having ordered his son's death, for he is passing dear to him and came to him after he had despaired of an heir; and he will turn on us and blame us, saying, "Why did ye not dissuade me from slaying my son?"' So they took counsel together, to turn him from his purpose, and the chief Vizier said, 'I will warrant you from his mischief this day.' Then he went in to the King and prostrating himself before him, craved leave to speak. The King gave him leave, and he said, 'O King, though thou hadst a thousand sons, yet were it no light matter to thee to put one of them to death, on the report of a woman, speak she truth or falsehood; and belike this is a lie and a trick of her against thy son; for indeed, O King, I have heard tell great plenty of stories of the craft and perfidy of women.' Quoth the King, 'Tell me somewhat of that which hath come to thy knowledge thereof.' And the Vizier answered, saying, 'It hath reached me, O King, that

The King and His Vizier's Wife.

THERE was once a king, who was given to the love of women, and one day, being alone in his palace, he espied a beautiful woman on the roof of her house and could not contain himself from falling in love with her. He asked [his servants] to whom the house belonged and they said, "To thy vizier such an one." So he called the vizier in question and despatched him on an errand to a distant part of the kingdom; then, as soon as he was gone, he made an excuse to gain access to his house. When the vizier's wife saw him, she knew him and springing up, kissed his hands and feet and welcomed him. Then she stood afar off busying herself in his service, and said to him "O our lord, what is the cause of thy gracious visit? Such an honour is not for the like of me." Quoth he, "Love of thee and desire to thee hath moved me to this." Whereupon she kissed the earth before him a second time and said, "O our lord, indeed I am not worthy to be the handmaid of one of the king's servants; whence then have I the great good fortune to be in such favour with thee?" Then the king put out his hand to her, but she said. "This thing shall not escape us; but take patience, O king, and abide with me all this day, that I may make ready for thee somewhat of victual." So the king sat down on his vizier's couch and the lady brought him a book wherein he might read, whilst she made ready the food. He took the book and beginning to read, found therein moral instances and exhortations, such as restrained him from adultery and broke his intent to commit sin.

After awhile, she returned and set before him a collation of ninety dishes of different kinds and colours, and he ate a spoonful of each and found that the taste of them was one. At this, he marvelled exceedingly and said to the lady, "O damsel, I see these meats to be many [and various of hue], but the taste of them is one." "God prosper the king!" replied she. "This is a parable I have set for thee, that thou mayst be admonished thereby." "And what is its meaning?" asked he. "May God amend the case of our lord the king!" answered she. "In thy palace are ninety concubines of various colours, but their taste is one." When the king heard this, he was ashamed and rising hastily, went out and returned to his palace, without offering her any affront; but, in his haste and confusion, he forgot his signet-ring and left it under the cushion where he had been sitting.

Presently the vizier returned and presenting himself before the king, kissed the earth and made his report to him of the state of the province in question. Then he repaired to his own house and sat down on his couch, and chancing to put his hand under the cushion, found the king's seal-ring. So he looked at it and knew it and taking the matter to heart, held aloof from his wife nor spoke with her for a whole year, while she knew not the reason of his anger. At last, being weary of estrangement, she sent for her father and told him the case, whereupon quoth he, "I will complain of him to the king, some day when he is in presence."

So, one day, he went in to the king and finding the vizier and the cadi of the army before him, made his complaint in the following words. "May God the Most High amend the king's case! I had a fair garden, which I planted with my own hand and spent my substance thereon, till it bore fruit and its fruit was ripe, when I gave it to

this thy vizier, who ate of it what seemed good to him, then forsook it and watered it not, so that its flowers withered and its beauty departed and it became waste." Then said the vizier, "O king, what this man says is true. I did indeed care for the garden and ate thereof, till, one day, going thither, I saw the track of the lion there, wherefore I feared him and withdrew from the garden." The king understood the parable and knew that, by the track of the lion, he meant his own seal-ring, which he had forgotten in his house; so he said, "Return to thy garden, O vizier, and fear nothing, for the lion came not near it. It hath been told me that he went thither, but by the honour of my fathers and forefathers, he offered it no hurt." "I hear and obey," answered the vizier, and returning home, made his peace with his wife and thenceforth put faith in her chastity.

And I have heard also, O King,' continued the Vizier, 'that

The Merchant's Wife and the Parrot.

THERE was once a merchant who travelled much, and had a fair wife, whom he loved, and was jealous over her, by reason of the greatness of his love. So he bought her for a hundred dinars a green parrot, which talked like a man and used to tell him all that passed in his absence. Whilst he was abroad on one of his voyages, his wife fell in love with a young Turk, who used to visit her, and she entertained him and lay with him whilst her husband was away. When the latter returned, the parrot told him what had happened, whereat he was sore enraged and offered to kill his wife; but she said, "O man, fear God and return to thy wits. How can a bird have sense or understanding? If thou wilt that I make this manifest to thee, so thou mayst know its truth from its leasing, go this night and lie with one of thy friends, and in the morning come back and question the parrot [of what passed during the night,] and thou wilt see if it speak truth or not."

The husband accordingly went forth and passed the night with one of his friends, whilst, as soon as it was dark, the wife covered the parrot's cage with a piece of leather and fell to sprinkling water on it from above. Moreover, she fanned it sharply with a fan and flashed light on it from the lantern, as it were the glancing lightning, grinding the while at the hand-mill. Thus she did, without ceasing, till daybreak; and the parrot thought that the sprinkling of the water on its cage was rain and the fanning a stormy wind and the flashing of the lantern lightning and the noise of the hand-mill thunder. When her husband returned, she bade him question the parrot; so he went up to the cage and began to talk with the bird and question it of the past night. Quoth it, "O my lord, who could see or hear aught last night?" "And why so?" asked he. "Because," replied it, "of the much rain and wind and thunder and lightning." "Thou liest," said the merchant. "There was nothing of all this last night." Quoth the bird, "I tell thee but what I saw and heard." Then was he certified that the parrot had lied in all it had told him of his wife and would have made his peace with the latter; but she said, "By Allah, I will not be friends with thee, till thou kill this parrot that lied to thee of me." So he rose and killed the parrot; but, a few days after, he saw the young Turk come forth of his house and knew that the parrot had spoken the truth and repented of having slain it. Then he went in at once to his wife and cut her throat and casting her into the river, vowed never to take another wife. This,' said the Vizier, 'I tell thee, O King, that thou mayst know how great is the craft of women and that haste begetteth repentance.'

So the King turned from putting his son to death, but, next day, the favourite came in to him and kissing the ground before him, said, 'O King, why dost thou delay to do me justice? Indeed, the kings have heard that thou commandest a thing and thy Vizier countermandeth it. Now the obedience of kings is in the fulfilment of their commandments, and every one knows thy justice and equity: so do thou me justice on thy son. I have heard tell that

The Fuller and His Son.

THERE was once a fuller, who used every day to go forth to the bank of the Tigris, to clean clothes; and his son was wont to go with him and swim about in the river, whilst his father was fulling, nor did the latter forbid him from this. One day, as the boy was swimming, he was taken with cramp in the arms and sank, whereupon the fuller plunged into the water and caught hold of him; but the boy clung about him and pulled him down and so father and son were both drowned. Thus is it with thee, O King. Except thou prevent thy son and do me justice on him, I fear lest both of you sink together, thou and he. Moreover,' continued she, 'for an instance of the malice of men, I have heard tell that

The Lover's Trick Against the Chaste Wife.

A CERTAIN man loved a beautiful and graceful woman, married to a man whom she loved and who loved her. Moreover, she was chaste and virtuous, like unto me, and her lover found no way to her; so, when his patience was at an end, he bethought him of a device to get his will. Now the husband had a young man, whom he had brought up in his house and who was in high trust with him. So the lover addressed himself to the youth and insinuated himself into his favour by presents and fair words, till he became more obedient to him than the hand to the mouth and did whatever he bade him. One day, he said to him, "Harkye, such an one; wilt thou not bring me into thy dwelling some time when thy lady is gone out?" "Yes," answered the steward; so, when his master was at the shop and his mistress gone forth to the bath, he took his friend and bringing him into the house, showed him all that was therein.

Now the lover was minded to play a trick upon the lady; so he took white of egg, that he had brought with him in a vessel, and sprinkled it on the merchant's bed, unseen of the young man, after which he left the house and went his way. Presently, the merchant came home and going to the bed, to rest himself, found thereon something wet. So he took it up in his hand and looked at it and deemed it human sperm; whereat he looked at the young man with angry eyes and said to him, "Where is thy mistress?" "She is gone forth to the bath and will return forthright," replied he. When the man heard this, his suspicion was confirmed and he said, "Go and bring her back at once." The steward accordingly fetched her and when she came before her husband, the latter sprang upon her and beat her grievously, then, binding her hands behind her, offered to kill her; but she cried out to the neighbours, who came to her, and she said to them, "My husband has beaten me without cause and is minded to kill me, though I know not what I have done." So they said to him, "Why hast thou dealt thus by her?" And he answered, saying, "She is divorced." Said they, "Thou hast no right to maltreat her; either divorce her or use her kindly, for we know her chastity. Indeed, she hath been our neighbour this long time and we know no evil of her." Quoth he, "When I came home, I found on my bed human sperm, and I know not the meaning of this." Upon this, one of those present came forward and said, "Show it to me." When he saw it, he smelt it and calling for fire and a frying-pan, fried the white of egg. Then he made the husband and the others taste of it, and they were certified that it was white of egg. So the husband was convinced of his wife's innocence and the neighbours made peace between them; and so the lover's wicked trick came to nought. And know, O King, that this is an instance of the malice of men and their perfidy.'

When the King heard this, he bade put his son to death; but the second vizier came forward and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, hasten not to slay thy son, tor he was not vouchsafed to his mother but after she had despaired, and we trust that he will live to become a treasure to thy realm and a guardian of thy good. Wherefore, have patience, O King; belike he will speak and excuse himself; and if thou make haste to slay him, thou wilt surely repent, even as the merchant repented.' Quoth the King, 'And how was it with the merchant, O vizier?' 'O King,' answered the vizier, 'I have heard that

The Niggard and the Loaves of Bread.

THERE was once a merchant, who was niggardly in his eating and drinking. One day, he went on a journey to a certain town and as lie walked in the market streets, he came upon an old woman with two cakes of bread. He asked her if they were for sale, and she said, "Yes." So he chaffered with her and bought them at a low price and took them home to his lodging, where he ate them that day. On the morrow, he returned to the same place and finding the old woman there with other two cakes, bought these also; and thus he did twenty days' space, at the end of which time the old woman disappeared. He made enquiry for her, but could hear nothing of her, till, one day, as he was walking about the streets, he chanced upon her; so he accosted her and asked why she had ceased to attend the market and bring him the two cakes of bread. At first, she evaded giving him a reply; but he conjured her to tell him; so she said, "Know, O my lord, that I was attending upon a certain man, who had an ulcer on his spine, and his doctor used to knead flour with butter into a plaster and lay it on the place of the pain, where it abode all night. In the morning, I used to take the flour and make it into two cakes, which I sold to thee or another; but presently the man died and I was cut off from making the cakes." When the merchant heard this, he repented, whenas repentance availed nothing, saying, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! There is no power and no virtue but in Him, the Most High, the Supreme!" And he repeated the saying of the Most High, "Whatsoever betideth thee of good, it is from God, and whatsoever betideth thee of ill, it is from thyself," and vomited till he fell sick.

Moreover, O King,' continued the second vizier, 'I have heard tell, of the malice of women, that

The Lady and Her Two Lovers.

THERE was once a man, who was swordbearer to one of the kings, and he loved a certain woman of the common people. One day, he sent his page to her with a message, as of wont between them, and the latter sat down with her and toyed with her. She inclined to him and pressed him to her bosom, whereupon he sought to lie with her and she consented unto him; but, as they were thus, the sword bearer knocked at the door. So she clapped the young man into an underground chamber there and opened the door to his master, who came in, sword in hand, and sat down on her bed. Then she came to him and sported and toyed with him, kissing him and pressing him to her bosom, and he took her and lay with her.

Presently her husband knocked at the door and he said to her, "Who is that?" "My husband," replied she. Quoth he, "How shall I do?" And she, "Draw thy sword and stand in the vestibule and rail at me and revile me; and when my husband comes in to thee, do thou go forth and go thy ways." He did as she bade him, and when the husband entered, he saw the king's swordbearer standing with his drawn sword in his hand, reviling and threatening his wife; but, when the other saw him, he was ashamed and sheathing his sword, went forth the house. Quoth the man to his wife, "What means this?" And she answered, saying, "O man, how blessed is the hour of thy coming! Thou hast saved a true believer from death; and it was on this wise. I was on the housetop, spinning, when there came up to me a youth, panting and distracted for fear of death, fleeing from yonder man, who followed hard upon him with his drawn sword. The young man fell down before me, and kissed my hands and feet, saying, 'O my lady, save me from him who would kill me without just cause!' So I hid him in the underground chamber there and presently in came yonder man to me with his naked sword in his hand, demanding the youth. But I denied him to him, whereupon he fell to reviling and threatening me as thou sawest. And praised be God who sent thee to me, for I was at my wits' end and had none to deliver me!"

"Well hast thou done, O woman!" answered the husband. "Thy reward is with God and may He abundantly requite thee!" Then he went to the trapdoor and called to the page, saying, "Come forth and fear not; no harm shall befall thee." So he came out, trembling for fear, and the husband condoled with him on what had befallen him, saying, "Be of good cheer: none shall hurt thee;" whilst the page called down blessings on his head. Then they both went forth, nor was either aware of that which the woman had contrived. This, then, O King,' said the vizier, 'is one of the tricks of women; so beware lest thou put faith in their speech.'

The King was persuaded and turned from putting his son to death, but, next day, the favourite came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, do me justice on thy son and be not turned from thy purpose by thy Vizier's prate, for there is no good in wicked viziers, and be not as the king, who relied on the word of a certain wicked vizier of his.' 'And how was that? asked the King. Quoth she, 'It hath been told me, O august and well-advised King, that

The King's Son and the Ogress.

A CERTAIN king had a son, whom he loved and favoured over all his other children; and this son said to him one day, "O my father, I have a mind to go a-hunting." So the king bade furnish him and commanded one of his viziers to bear him company and do all he needed during his absence. The vizier accordingly took all that was necessary for the journey and they set out with a retinue of slaves and servants and officers, and fared on till they came to a green and well-watered champaign abounding in pasture and game. Here the prince called a halt and they loosed the hawks and lynxes and dogs and caught great plenty of game, whereat they rejoiced and abode there some days, in all pleasance and delight of life. Then the prince gave the signal for departure, but, as they went along, a beautiful gazelle, as if the sun shone from her forehead, that had strayed from the herd, sprang up before the prince, whereupon his soul longed to make prize of her and he coveted her. So he said to the vizier, "I have a mind to follow yonder gazelle." "Do what seemeth good to thee," said the vizier. So the prince rode after the gazelle, till he lost sight of his companions, and chased her all that day till dusk, when she took refuge in the mountains and the darkness closed in upon him. Then he would have turned back, but knew not the way; whereat he was sore concerned and said, "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!"

He rode on all night, in quest of relief, but found none, and when the day appeared, he fared on at hazard, fearful and exhausted with hunger and thirst and the heat of the sun, until midday, when he came in sight of a great city, with massive walls and lofty turrets; but it was ruined and desolate, nor was there any live thing therein save the owl and the raven. As he stood among the ruins, marvelling at their ordinance, his eyes fell on a young and beautiful damsel sitting weeping, under one of the city walls. So he went up to her and said, "Who art thou and who brought thee hither?" "I am called Bint et Temimeh, daughter of Et Tiyakh, King of the Gray Country," answered she. "I went out one day on an occasion, when an Afrit of the Jinn snatched me up and soared with me between heaven and earth; but as he flew, there fell on him a flame of fire and consumed him, and I dropped here, where I have hungered and thirsted these three days; but, when I saw thee, I coveted life."

The prince was smitten with compassion for her and took her up behind him, saying, "Take heart and be of good cheer; for, if God (blessed and exalted be He!)restore me to my people and family, I will send thee back to thine own people." Then he rode on, praying to God for deliverance, and presently she said to him, "O King's son, put me down, that I may do an occasion under yonder wall." So he drew bridle and she alighted and hid herself behind the wall. He waited for her a long while and she came back, with the foulest of favours; which when he saw, he quaked for fear of her and his hair stood on end and he turned pale. Then she sprang up behind him, wearing the most hideous of aspects, and presently she said to him, "O King's son, what ails thee that I see thee troubled and thy favour changed?" Quoth he, "I have bethought me of somewhat that troubles me." And she, " Seek aid against it of thy father's troops and warriors." "He whom I fear," answered the prince, "cares nothing

for troops, neither can warriors affright him." "Then," rejoined she, "aid thyself against him with thy father's wealth and treasures." Quoth he, "He whom I fear will not be satisfied with wealth and treasures." And she, "Ye pretend that ye have in heaven a God who sees and is not seen and who can do all things." "Yes," answered he; "we have none but Him." "Then," said she, "pray thou to Him; haply He will deliver thee from thine enemy." So he raised his eyes to heaven and began to pray with his whole heart, saying, "O my God, I implore Thee to succour me against that which troubles me." Then he pointed to her with his hand, and she fell to the ground, burnt and black as a coal. Therewith he thanked God and praised Him and fared onward. And God (blessed and exalted be He!) of His grace made the way easy to him and guided him into the right road, so that he reached his father's capital, after he had despaired of life. Now all this befell by the contrivance of the vizier, who travelled with him to the end that he might cause him to perish by the way; but God the Most High succoured him. 'And this,' said the damsel, 'have I told thee, O King, that thou mayst know that wicked viziers deal not honestly by their kings neither counsel them with sincere intent, wherefore be thou ware of them in this matter.'

The King gave ear to her speech and commanded to put his son to death; but the third vizier said [to his brother viziers,] 'I will warrant you from the King's mischief this day;' and going in to him, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O King, I am thy loyal counsellor and affectionately solicitous for thee arid thine estate, and indeed, I give thee a true counsel; it is that thou hasten not to slay thy son, the solace of thine eyes and the fruit of thine entrails. Belike his offence is but a slight matter, which this damsel hath made great to thee; and indeed I have heard tell that the people of two villages once destroyed each other, because of a drop of honey.' 'How was that?' asked the King, and the Vizier answered, saying, 'Know, O King, that

The Drop of Honey.

A CERTAIN man used to hunt the wild beasts in the desert, and one day he came upon a grotto in the mountains, where he found a hollow full of bees' honey. So he took somewhat thereof in a water-skin he had with him and throwing it over his shoulder, carried it to the city, followed by a hunting dog which was dear to him. He stopped at the shop of an oilman and offered him the honey for sale and he bought it. Then he emptied it out of the skin that he might see it, and in the act a drop fell to the ground, whereupon the flies flocked to it and a bird swooped down upon the flies. Now the oilman had a cat, which pounced upon the bird, and the huntsman's dog, seeing the cat, sprang upon it and killed it; whereupon the oilman ran at the dog and killed it and the huntsman in turn leapt upon the oilman and killed him. Now the oilman was of one village and the huntsman of another; and when the people of the two places heard what had passed, they took up arms and rose on one another in anger, and there befell a sore battle; nor did the sword leave to play amongst them, till there died of them much people, none knoweth their number save God the Most High. And amongst other stories of the malice of women,' continued the Vizier, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

The Woman Who Made Her Husband Sift Dust.

A MAN once gave his wife a dirhem to buy rice; so she went to the rice-seller, who gave her the rice and began to jest with her and ogle her, for she was fair and graceful, saying, "Rice is not good but with sugar, which if thou wilt have, come in with me awhile." So she went in with him into his shop and he did his will of her and said to his slave, "Weigh her out a dirhem's worth of sugar." But he made the slave a privy sign, and the latter, taking the napkin, in which was the rice, emptied it out and put in its place earth, and for the sugar stones, after which he knotted the napkin up again and left it by her. Now the man's object, in doing this, was that she should come to him a second time; so, when she went forth of the shop, he gave her the napkin and she took it, thinking to have in it rice and sugar, and went her way; but when she returned home and set it before her husband, he found in it earth and stones. So, when she came back with the cooking-pot, he said to her, "Did I tell thee that I had aught to build, that thou bringest me earth and stones? When she saw this, she knew that the rice-seller's slave had tricked her; so she said to her husband, "O man, in my trouble of mind for what hath befallen me, I went to fetch the sieve and brought the cooking-pot." "What hath troubled thee?" asked he; and she said, "I dropped the dirhem thou gayest me in the market and was ashamed to search for it before the folk; yet I grudged to lose the money, so I gathered up the earth from the place where it fell and brought it away, thinking to sift it [when I came home]. Wherefore I went to fetch the sieve, but brought the cooking-pot instead." Then she fetched the sieve and gave it to her husband, saying, "Do thou sift it; for thine eyes are better than mine." So he sat, sifting the earth, till his face and beard were covered with dust; and he discovered not her trick, neither knew what had befallen her. This then, O King, 'said the Vizier, 'is an instance of the malice of women, and consider the saying of God the Most High, "Verily, the malice of you [women] is great!" And again, "Indeed, the malice of Satan is weak [in comparison with that of women]."'

The King gave ear to his Vizier's speech and was persuaded thereby and by what he cited to him of the sayings of God and the lights of good counsel arose and shone in the firmament of his understanding and he turned from his purpose of putting his son to death. But, on the fourth day, the favourite came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O august King and lord of good counsel, I have made plainly manifest to thee my grievance and thou bast dealt unjustly by me and hast forborne to avenge me on him who hath wronged me, for that he is thy son and the darling of thy heart; but God (blessed and exalted be He!) will succour me against him, even as he succoured the king's son against his father's vizier.' 'And how was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell., O King,' replied she, 'that

The Enchanted Springs.

THERE was once a king who had an only son; and when the latter grew up to man's estate, he contracted him in marriage to another king's daughter. Now she was beautiful and graceful and her cousin had sought her in marriage of her father, but she would none of him. So, when he knew that she was to be married to another, despite and jealousy gat hold on him and he bethought himself and sent a rich present to the vizier of the bride-groom's father, desiring him to use craft to make an end of the prince or go about with him, to bring him to leave his intent of marrying the princess and adding that he was the lady's cousin and that it was jealousy of her that moved him to this. The vizier accepted the present and sent an answer, saying, "Be of good cheer, for I will do all that thou wishest."

Presently, the bride's father wrote to the prince, bidding him to his capital, that he might go in to his daughter, whereupon the king his father despatched him thither, sending with him the vizier aforesaid and a thousand horse, besides presents and litters and tents and pavilions. The vizier set out with the prince, plotting the while in his heart to do him a mischief; and when they came into the desert, he called to mind a certain spring of running water in the mountains there, called Ez Zehra, whereof what man soever drank became a woman. So he called a halt near the place and presently mounting again, said to the prince, "Hast thou a mind to go with me and look upon a spring of water nigh at hand?" The prince assented, knowing not what should befall him in the future, and they rode on, unattended, till they came to the spring. The prince alighted and washed his hands and drank, whereupon he straightway became a woman. When he knew what had befallen him, he cried out and wept till he swooned away, and the vizier came up to him and said, "What ails thee?" So he told him what had happened, and the vizier feigned to condole with him and weep for his affliction, saying, "God the Most High succour thee in thine affliction! How came this grievous calamity upon thee, and we carrying thee, rejoicing, that thou mightest go in to the king's daughter? Verily, now I know not whether we shall go to her or not; but it is thine to decide. What dost thou hid me do?" Quoth the prince, "Go back to my father and tell him what hath befallen me, for I will not stir hence till this affliction be removed from me or I die in my grief." So he wrote a letter to his father, telling him what had happened, and the vizier took it and set out to return, leaving the troops with the prince and glad at heart for the success of his plot. As soon as he reached the king's capital, he went in to him and telling him what had passed, delivered to him the prince's letter. The king mourned sore for his son and sent for the wise men and masters of hidden arts, that they might discover to him this thing that had happened to the prince, but none could give him an answer. As for the vizier, he sent to the lady's cousin, giving him the glad news of the prince's misfortune, which when he heard, he rejoiced greatly and thought to marry the princess and wrote to the vizier, thanking him exceedingly and sending him rich presents and great store of treasure.

Meanwhile, the prince abode by the stream three days and nights, eating not nor drinking and committing himself, in his strait, unto God (blessed and exalted be He!) who disappointeth not whoso putteth his trust in Him. On the fourth night, there

came to him a cavalier with a crown on his head, as he were of the Sons of the kings, and said to him, "O youth, who brought thee hither?" The prince told him his story, in a voice broken with tears, and the horseman pitied his case and said to him, "It was thy father's vizier who brought this thing upon thee, for he is the only man alive that knows of this spring: but mount thou behind me and come with me to my dwelling, for thou art my guest this night." "Tell me first who thou art," said the prince; and the other answered, saying, "I am a king's son of the Jinn, as thou a king's son of mankind; so take heart and be of good courage, for I will surely do away thy grief and trouble; and this is an easy thing unto me."

So the prince mounted behind the stranger, and they rode on, leaving the troops, from the first of the day till midnight, when the King's son of the Jinn said to the prince, "Knowest thou how many days' travel we have accomplished in this time?" "Not I," answered the prince, and the other, "We have a come a full year's journey for a swift horseman." The prince marvelled at this and said, "How shall I do to return to my people?" "That is not thine affair, but mine," replied the genie. "As soon as thou art quit of thy trouble, thou shalt be with thy people in less than the twinkling of an eye; for that is an easy matter to me." When the prince heard this, he well-nigh lost his wits for excess of joy; it seemed to him as he were in the mazes of a dream, and he exclaimed, "Glory be to Him who can restore the wretched to happiness!" They fared on all that night, and on the morrow they found themselves in a green and smiling country, full of towering trees and warbling birds and excellent fair gardens and splendid palaces and running waters and odoriferous flowers. Here the King's son of the Jinn alighted and bidding the prince do the like, took him by the hand and carried him into one of the palaces, where he found a great and puissant king and abode with him all that day, eating and drinking.

As soon as it was night, the King's son of the Jinn mounted his courser and taking the prince up behind him, fared on swiftly till morning, when they found themselves in a black and desert country, full of black rocks and stones, as it were a piece of hell; and the prince said to the genie, "What is the name of this land?" "It is called the Black Country," answered the other, "and belongs to one of the Kings of the Jinn, by name Dhoul Jenahain, against whom none of the other kings may prevail, neither may any enter his dominions without his leave; so abide thou here, whilst I go ask it. So saying, he went away and returning after awhile, they fared on again, till they came to a spring of water welling forth of a black rock, and the King's son of the Jinn bade the prince alight and drink. So he lighted down and drank of the spring, and no sooner had he done so than, by God's grace, he became a man as before. At this he was beyond measure rejoiced and said to the genie, "O my brother, how is this spring called?"Quoth the other, "It is called the Women's Spring, for that no woman drinks thereof but she becomes a man: wherefore do thou praise God the Most High and thank Him for thy restoration and mount." So the prince prostrated himself in gratitude to God the Most High, after which he mounted again and they fared on diligently all that day, till they came to the genie's palace, where the prince passed the night in all delight and solace of life.

They spent the next day in eating and drinking till nightfall, when the genie said to the prince, "Hast thou a mind to return to thy people?" "Yes," replied he; "for

indeed I long for them." Then the king's son of the Jinn called one of his father's slaves, Rajiz by name, and said to him, "Take this young man on thy shoulders and let not the day dawn ere he be with his wife and father-in-law." "I hear and obey," answered the slave, and withdrawing awhile, reappeared in the form of an Afrit. When the prince saw this, he lost his senses for affright, but the genie said to him, "Fear not; no harm shall befall thee. Mount thy horse and leap him on to the Afrit's shoulders." " Nay," answered he ; " I will leave my horse with thee and bestride his shoulders myself." So he bestrode the Afrit's shoulders and shut his eyes, as the genie bade him; whereupon the Afrit rose with him into the air and ceased not to fly between earth and heaven, whilst the prince was unconscious, nor was the last third of the night come before he lighted down with him on the roof of his father-in-law's palace. Then said the Afrit, "Alight and open thine eyes; for this is the palace of thy father-in-law and his daughter." So he alighted and the Afrit flew away and left him on the roof of the palace.

When the day broke and the prince recovered from his trouble, he went down into the palace and his father-in-law, espying him, came to meet him and marvelled to see him descend from the roof of the palace, saying, "We see folk enter by the doors; but thou comest from the skies." Quoth the prince, "What God (may He be hallowed and glorified!) wills, cometh to pass." And he told him all that had befallen him, from first to last, whereat the king marvelled and rejoiced in his safety and bade his vizier make ready splendid bride-feasts. So did he and they held the marriage festival, after which the prince went in to his bride and abode with her two months, then departed with her for his father's capital: but, as for the lady's cousin, he died of jealousy and despite. When the prince and his bride drew near his father's city, the king came out to meet them with his troops and viziers, and so God (blessed and exalted be He!) aided the prince against his bride's cousin and his father's vizier. And I pray God the Most High,' added the damsel, 'to aid thee against thy viziers, O King, and I beseech thee to do me justice on thy son!'

When the King heard this (it being the fourth day), he bade put his son to death; but the fourth vizier entered and kissing the ground before him, said, 'May God stablish and protect the King! O King, be deliberate in doing this thou art resolved upon, for the wise man doth nothing till he have considered the issue thereof, and the proverb says, "He who looks not to the issue of his actions, fortune is no friend to him ;" and whoso acteth without consideration, there befalleth him what befell the bath-keeper with his wife.' 'And what was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the vizier, 'that

The Vizier's Son and the Bathkeeper's Wife.

THERE was once a bathkeeper, to whom resorted the notables and chiefs of the folk, and one day there came in to him a handsome young man of the sons of the viziers, who was fat and stout of body. So he stood to serve him and when the young man put off his clothes, he saw not his yard, for that it was hidden between his thighs, by reason of the excess of his fat, and there appeared thereof but what was like unto a filbert. At this, the bathkeeper fell a-lamenting and smiting hand upon hand, which when the youth saw, he said to him, "O bathkeeper, what ails thee to lament thus?" And he answered, saying, "O my lord, my lamentation is for thee, because thou art in sore straits, for all thy fair fortune and goodliness and exceeding grace, seeing thou hast nought wherewithal to do delight, like unto other men." Quoth the young man, "Thou sayst sooth, but thou mindest me of somewhat I had forgotten." "What is that?" asked the bathkeeper, and the youth said, "Take this dinar and fetch me a handsome woman, that I may prove myself on her." So he took the money and betaking himself to his wife, said to her, "O woman, there is come in to me in the bath a young man of the sons of the viziers, as he were the moon on the night of her full; but he hath no yard like other men, for that which he hath is but some small matter like unto a filbert. I lamented over his youth and he gave me this dinar and begged me to fetch him a woman, on whom he might approve himself. Now thou art worthier of the money than another, and no harm shall betide us from this, for I will protect thee. So do thou sit with him awhile and laugh at him and take this dinar from him." So she took the dinar and rising, adorned herself and donned the richest of her clothes. (Now she was the fairest woman of her time.) Then she went out with her husband, and he carried her in to the young man in a privy place. When she came in to him, she looked at him and finding him a handsome youth, fair of favour, as he were the moon at its full, was confounded at his beauty and grace; and on like wise his heart and wit were amazed at sight of her. So he rose forthright and locking the door, took the damsel in his arms and pressed her to his bosom and they embraced, whereupon the young man's yard rose on end, as it were that of an ass, and he mounted her breast and swived her, whilst she sobbed and sighed and writhed and wriggled under him. Now the bathkeeper was standing behind the door, awaiting what should betide between them, and he began to call her, saying, "O Umm Abdal-lah, enough! Come out, for the day is long upon thy sucking child." Quoth the youth, "Go forth to thy child and come back;" but she said, "If I go forth from thee, my soul will depart my body; so I must either leave the child to die of weeping or let him be reared an orphan, without a mother." So she ceased not to abide with him, till he had done his desire of her half a score times, what while her husband stood at the door, calling her and crying out and weeping and imploring succour. But none came to him and he ceased not to do thus, saying, "I will kill myself!" till at last, finding no way of access to his wife and being distraught with rage and jealousy he went up to the top of the bath and casting himself down therefrom, died.

Moreover, O King,' continued the Vizier, 'there hath reached me another story of the malice of women.' 'What is that?' asked the King, and the Vizier said, 'Know, O

King, that

The Wife's Device to Cheat Her Husband.

THERE was once a woman, who had no equal in her day for beauty and grace and perfection; and a certain lewd fellow, setting eyes on her, fell passionately in love with her, but she was chaste and inclined not to adultery. It chanced one day that her husband went on a journey to a certain town, whereupon the young man fell to sending to her many times a day; but she made him no reply. At last, he resorted to an old woman, who dwelt hard by, and complained to her of his suffering for love of the woman and his longing to enjoy her. Quoth she, "I will warrant thee this; no harm shall befall thee, for I will surely bring thee to thy desire, if it please God the Most High." So he gave her a dinar and went his way. Next day she went in to the woman and clapping up an acquaintance with her, fell to visiting her daily, eating the morning with her and the evening meal and carrying away food for her children. Moreover, she used to sport and jest with her, till the wife became corrupted and could not endure an hour without her company.

Now she was wont, when she left the lady's house, to feed a bitch, that was in that quarter, with the fragments that remained over, and thus she did day by day, till the bitch became fond of her and followed her wherever she went. One day she took a cake of dough and putting therein much pepper and butter, gave it to the bitch to eat, whereupon the animal's eyes began to water, for the heat of the pepper, and she followed the old woman, weeping. When the lady saw this, she was amazed and said to the old woman, "O my mother, what ails this bitch to weep?" "O my daughter," answered she, "hers is a strange story. Know that she was once a most lovely and accomplished young lady and a close friend of mine. A young man of the quarter fell in love with her and his passion increased on him, till he took to his pillow, and he sent to her many times, begging her to have compassion on him, but she refused, albeit I gave her good counsel, saying, 'O my daughter, have pity on him and consent to that which he wishes.' She gave no heed to my advice, until, at last, the young man's patience failing him, he complained to one of his friends, who cast an enchantment on her and changed her into a bitch. When she saw what had befallen her and that there was none to pity her save myself, she came to my house and began to fawn on me and lick my hands and feet and whine and shed tears, till I recognized her and said to her, 'How often did I not warn thee? But my advice profited thee nothing.' However, I had compassion on her case and kept her by me; and as often as she bethinks herself of her former estate, she weeps thus."

When the lady heard this, she was taken with great fear and said, "By Allah, O my mother, thou affrightest me with this thy story." "Why so?" asked the old woman. "Because," answered the lady, "a certain handsome young man fell in love with me and hath sent many times to me, but hitherto I have repelled him; and now I fear lest there befall me the like of what befell this bitch." "O my daughter," rejoined the old woman, "look thou to what I counsel thee and beware of crossing me, for I am in great fear for thee. If thou know not his abiding-place, describe him to me, that I may fetch him to thee, and let not any one's heart be angered against thee." So the lady described him to her, and she feigned not to know him and said, "When I go out, I will ask after him."

But when she left the lady, she went straight to the young man and said to him, "Be of good cheer, for I have played with the girl's wits, [so that she hath consented;] so come thou to-morrow at noonday and wait at the end of the street, till I come and carry thee to her house, where thou shalt take thine ease with her the rest of the day and all night long." At this the young man rejoiced greatly and gave her half a score dinars, saying, "When I have gotten my desire [of her,] I will give thee other ten dinars."

Then she returned to the lady and said to her, "I have seen him and spoken with him on the matter. I found him exceeding wroth with thee and minded to do thee hurt, but I plied him with fair words till he agreed to come to-morrow at the time of the call to midday prayer. When the lady heard this, she rejoiced exceedingly and said, "O my mother, if he keep his promise, I will give thee ten dinars." Quoth the old woman, "Look to none but me to bring him to thee." When the next day came, she said to the lady, "Make ready the morning meal and adorn thyself and don thy richest clothes and ornaments, whilst I go and fetch him to thee." Accordingly, she clad herself in her richest apparel and made ready food, whilst the old woman went out to look for the young man. The latter came not and she went round looking for him, but could come by no news of him; so she said to herself, "What is to be done? Shall the food she has made ready be wasted and I lose the reward she promised me? Indeed, I will not lose my pains thus, but will look her out another man and carry him to her." So she walked about the streets till her eye fell on a handsome and elegant young man, who bore on his face the traces of travel.

Now this was the lady's husband; but she knew it not; so she went up to him and saluted him, saying, "Hast thou a mind to meat and drink and a girl adorned and ready?" "Where is this to be had?" asked he. "At home, in my house," answered she and carrying him to his own house, knocked at the door. The lady opened to them and hastened in again, to make an end of her dressing and perfuming; whilst the old woman brought the husband into the saloon and made him sit down. Presently, in came the lady, who no sooner set eyes on her husband than she knew him and guessed how the case stood; nevertheless, she was not taken aback and forthwith bethought her of a device to hoodwink him. "Is this how thou keepest our contract?" cried she. "Hou canst thou betray me and deal thus with me? Know that, when I heard of thy coming, I sent this old woman to try thee and she hath made thee fall into that against which I warned thee: so now I am certified of thine affair and that thou hast broken faith with me. I thought thee chaste till now, till I saw thee, with my own eyes, in this old woman's company and knew that thou didst frequent loose women."

So saying, she pulled off her slipper and fell to beating him about the head, whilst he excused himself and swore to her by God the Most High that he had never in his life been untrue to her nor had done aught of that whereof she suspected him. But she stinted not to weep and scream and beat him, crying out and saying, "Come to my help, O Muslims!" till he laid hold of her mouth with his hand and she bit it. Moreover, he humbled himself to her and kissed her hands and feet, whilst she continued to cuff him and would not be appeased. At last, she made a privy sign to the old woman to come and hold her hand from him. So she came up to her and kissed her hands and feet, till she made peace between them and they sat down together; whereupon the husband began to kiss her hands, saying, "God requite thee with all

good, for that thou hast delivered me from her!" And the old woman marvelled at the wife's cunning and ready wit. This, then, O King,' said the vizier, 'is one of many instances of the craft and malice and perfidy of women.'

When the King heard this story, he was persuaded by it and turned from his purpose to kill his son; but, on the fifth day, the damsel came in to him with a cup of poison in her hand, calling aloud for help and buffeting her cheeks and face, and said to him, 'O King, either thou shalt do me justice and avenge me on thy son, or I will drink this cup of poison and die, and my blood will be on thy head at the Day of Resurrection. Thy viziers accuse me of malice and perfidy, but there be none in the world more perfidious than men. Hast thou not heard the story of the goldsmith and the Cashmere singing-girl?' 'What befell them, O damsel?' asked the King; and she answered, saying, 'It hath come to my knowledge, O august King, that

The Goldsmith and the Cashmere Singing-girl

THERE lived once, in a city of Persia, a goldsmith who delighted in women and in drinking wine. One day, being in the house of one of his friends, he saw painted on the wall the figure of a beautiful damsel, never beheld eyes a fairer or a more pleasant. He looked at the picture again and again, marvelling at its beauty, and fell so desperately in love with it, that lie sickened for passion and came near to die. It chanced that one of his friends came to visit him and sitting down by him, enquired how he did and what ailed him. "O my brother," replied the goldsmith, "that which ails me is love, and it befell on this wise. I saw the figure of a woman painted on the wall of my brother such an one's house and became enamoured of it." Quoth the other, "This was of thy lack of wit; how couldst thou fall in love with a painted figure on a wall, a thing that can neither harm nor profit, that seeth not neither heareth, that neither taketh nor withholdeth." "Surely," said the sick man, "he who painted yonder picture must have limned it after the likeness of some beautiful woman." "Belike," rejoined his friend, "he painted it from imagination." "In any case," replied the goldsmith, "I am dying for love of the picture, and if there live the original thereof in the world, I pray God to keep me in life, till I see her."

When those who were present went out, they enquired for the painter of the picture and finding that he had departed to another town, wrote him a letter, complaining of their friend's case and asking whether he had drawn the figure of his own invention or copied it from a living model; to which he replied that he had painted it after a certain singing girl belonging to one of the viziers in the city of Cashmere in the land of Hind. When the goldsmith heard this, he set out for Cashmere, where he arrived, after much travail, and tarried awhile. There he clapped up an acquaintance with a certain druggist, a fellow of a keen and sprightly wit, and being one day in company with him, questioned him of their king and his polity; to which the other answered, saying, "Our king is just and righteous in his governance, equitable and beneficent to his subjects, and misliketh nothing in the world save sorcerers; but, whenever a sorcerer or sorceress falls into his hands, he casts them into a pit without the city and there leaves them to die of hunger." Then he questioned him of the king's viziers, and the druggist told him of each vizier, his fashion and condition, till the talk came round to the singing-girl and he told him that she belonged to such a vizier.

The goldsmith took note of the latter's abiding-place and waited some days, till he had devised a scheme to his mind; and one night of rain and thunder and stormy winds, he provided himself with thieves' tackle and repaired to the house of the vizier in question, where he grappled a rope ladder with grappling irons to the battlements and climbed up to the roof of the palace. Thence he descended to the inner court and making his way into the harem, found all the slave-girls lying asleep, each on her own couch and amongst them a damsel, as she were the moon on its fourteenth night, lying on a couch of alabaster and covered with a coverlet of cloth of gold. At her head stood a candle of ambergris, and at her feet another, each in a candlestick of glittering gold, and under her pillow lay a casket of silver, in which were her jewels. He raised the coverlet and drawing near her, considered her straitly, and behold, it was she whom he

desired and of whom he was come in quest. So he took out a knife and wounded her in the hinder parts, a manifest [but superficial] wound, whereupon she awoke in terror; but, when she saw him, she was afraid to cry out, thinking he came to steal her jewels; so she said to him, "Take the box and what is therein, but slay me not, for it will profit thee nothing." So he took the box and went away.

On the morrow, he donned clothes after the fashion of men of learning and doctors of the law and taking the casket, went in therewith to the king of the city, before whom he kissed the earth and said to him, "O king, I am a loyal well-wisher to thee and come hither, a pilgrim to thy court from the land of Khorassan, attracted by the report of thy just governance and righteous dealing with thy subjects and minded to be under thy standard. I reached this city yestereve and finding the gate shut, lay down to sleep without: but, as I lay betwixt sleep and wake, I saw four women come up, one riding on a broom, another on a wine-jar, a third on an oven-peel and a fourth on a black bitch, and knew that they were witches making for the city. One of them came up to me and kicked me with her foot and beat me grievously with a fox's tail she had in her hand, whereat I was wroth and smote her with a knife I had with me, wounding her in the hinder parts, as she turned to flee from me. When she felt the wound, she fled before me and in her flight let drop this casket, which I picked up and opening, found therein these costly jewels. Wherefore do thou take it, for I have no need of it, being a wanderer in the mountains, who have put away the world from my heart and renounced it and all that is in it, seeking [only] the favour of God the Most High." Then he set the casket before the king and went away. The king opened the box and emptying out all the trinkets it contained, fell to turning them over, till he chanced upon a necklace of which he had made gift to the vizier to whom the girl belonged. So he called the vizier in question and said to him, "This is the necklace I gave thee?" He knew it and answered, "It is; and I gave it to a singing-girl of mine." Quoth the king, "Fetch her to me forthwith." So he fetched her to him, and he said, "Uncover her hinder parts and see if there be a wound therein or no." The vizier accordingly bared her backside and finding a knife wound there, said, "Yes, O my lord, there is a wound." Then said the king, "Doubtless, this is the witch of whom the devotee told me," and bade cast her into the witches' well. So they carried her thither forthwith.

As soon as it was night and the goldsmith knew that his plot had succeeded, he repaired to the pit, taking with him a purse of a thousand dinars, and entering into converse with the warder, sat talking with him till a third part of the night was past, when he broached the matter to him, saying, "Know, O my brother, that this girl is innocent of that they lay to her charge and that it was I brought this calamity upon her." Then he told him the whole story, adding, "Take this purse of a thousand dinars and give me the damsel, that I may carry her to my own land, for the money will profit thee more than keeping her in prison; moreover God will requite thee for us, and we will both offer up prayers for thy safety and prosperity." When the warder heard this story, he marvelled exceedingly at this device and taking the money, delivered the girl to the goldsmith, on condition that he should not abide one hour with her in the city. So the goldsmith took the girl and fared on with her, without ceasing, till he reached his own country, and so he attained his desire. See then, O King,' said the damsel, 'the malice of men and their wiles. Now thy viziers hinder thee from doing me justice [on

thy son], but to-morrow both thou and I will stand before the Just Judge, and He shall do me justice on thee, O King.'

When the King heard this, he commanded to put his son to death, but the fifth vizier came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O mighty King, delay and hasten not to slay thy son, for oftentimes haste engendereth repentance; and I fear for thee lest thou repent, even as did the man who never laughed again.' 'And how was that, O Vizier?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the Vizier, 'that

The Man Who Never Laughed Again.

THERE was once a man who was rich in lands and houses and goods and slaves, and he died and went to the mercy of God the Most High, leaving a young son, who, when he grew up, gave himself to feasting and hearing music and singing and wasted his substance in gifts and prodigality, till he had squandered all the money his father left him. Then he betook himself to selling his slaves and lands and houses and spent the proceeds on like wise, till he was reduced to beggary and must needs labour for his living. He abode thus a year's space, at the end of which time he was sitting one day under a wall, awaiting who should hire him, when there came up to him a man of comely aspect and apparel and saluted him. "O uncle," said the young man, "hast thou known me aforetime?" "Not so, O my son," replied the other, "I know thee not at all; but I see the trace of gentle breeding on thee, despite thy present case." "O uncle," rejoined the poor man, "needs must Fate and fore-ordained fortune be accomplished; but, O uncle, bright of face, hast thou any occasion wherein thou wouldst employ me?" "Yes," said the other, "I wish to employ thee in an easy matter." "What is it?" asked the young man, and the stranger, "I have with me ten old men in one house, but we have none to serve us; so, if thou wilt take service with us, thou shalt have food and clothing to thy heart's content, besides what cometh to thee of money and other goods, and haply God will restore thee thy fortune by our means." "With all my heart," replied the youth. " But," said the other, "I have a condition to impose on thee." Quoth he, "What is that?" And the old man said, "O my son, it is that thou keep our secret in what thou seest us do, and if thou see us weep, that thou question us not of the cause of our weeping." "It is well, O uncle," replied the young man; whereupon the other bade him, "Come with me, O my son, with the blessing of God the Most High!"

So he followed him to the bath, where he caused cleanse his body of the crusted dirt, after which he sent for a handsome garment of linen and clad him therein. Then he carried him to a lofty and spacious house, wherein were sitting-chambers facing one another and saloons, in each a fountain of water, with the birds warbling over it, and windows on every side, giving upon a fair garden within the house. The old man brought him into one of the sitting-chambers, which was paved and lined with vari coloured marble and spread with silken carpets, and the roof thereof decorated with ultramarine and glittering gold; and here he found ten old men in mourning apparel, seated opposite one another, weeping and wailing. He marvelled at their case and was about to ask the reason, when he remembered the condition and held his peace. Then he who had brought him delivered to him a chest containing thirty thousand dinars and said to him, "O my son, spend from this chest what is fitting for our entertainment and thine own; and be thou faithful and remember that wherewith I charged thee as to secrecy." "I hear and obey," answered he and served them days and nights, till one of them died, whereupon his fellows washed him and shrouded him and buried him in a garden behind the house; nor did death cease to take them, one after another, till there remained but he who had hired the youth.

Then the two dwelt together alone for years and years, nor was there with them a third save God the Most High, till the old man fell sick; and when the other despaired of his life, he went up to him and condoling with him, said, "O uncle, I have served you twelve years and have not failed of your service a single hour, but have been loyal and faithful to you and served you with my might." "Yes, O my son," answered the old man, "thou hast served us [well; but now] my comrades are gone to the mercy of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and needs must I die also." "O my lord," said the other, "thou art in danger of death and I would fain have thee acquaint me with the cause of your weeping and wailing and of your unceasing mourning and lamentation." "O my son," answered the old man, "it concerns thee not to know this, so importune me not of what I may not do: for I have vowed to God the Most High that I would acquaint none of His creatures with this, lest he be afflicted with what befell me and my comrades. If, then, thou desire to be delivered from that into which we fell, look thou open not yonder door," and pointed to a certain part of the house; "but, if thou have a mind to suffer what we have suffered, then open it and thou shalt learn the cause of that which thou hast seen us do; and whenas thou knowest it, thou wilt repent, what time repentance will avail thee not." Then his sickness increased on him and he accomplished his term [of life] and departed to the presence of his Lord; and the young man washed him with his own hands and shrouded him and buried him with his comrades; after which he abode alone in the house and took possession of all that was therein.

Yet he was uneasy and troubled concerning the case of the old man, till, one day, as he sat pondering the words of his dead master and his injunction not to open the door, he suddenly bethought himself to go and look for it. So he repaired to the part whither the dead man had pointed and sought till, in a dark and unfrequented corner, he found a little door, over which the spider had spun its webs and which was fastened with four locks of steel. Then he recalled the old man's warning and restrained himself and went away; and he held aloof from it seven days, whilst all the time his heart would have him open it. On the eighth day his curiosity got the better of him and he said, "Come what will, I must open the door and see what will happen to me. Nothing can avert what is decreed and fore-ordained of God the Most High nor doth aught befall but by His will." So saying, he rose and broke the locks and opening the door, found himself in a narrow passage, which he followed for three hours, at the end of which time he came out on the shore of a vast ocean and fared on along the beach, marvelling at this sea, [of which he had no knowledge] and turning right and left, till, presently, a great eagle swooped down upon him and seizing him in its talons, flew away with him betwixt heaven and earth, till it came to an island in the midst of the sea, where it cast him down and flew away, leaving him dazed and knowing not whither he should go.

After awhile, as he sat pondering his case, he caught sight of the sails of a ship in the midst of the sea, as it were a star in the mid-heaven; and his heart clave to it, so haply his deliverance might be therein. He continued gazing at the ship, till it drew near, when he saw that it was a galley builded all of ivory and ebony, inlaid with glittering gold, with oars of sandal and aloes-wood. In it were ten damsels, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons, who, when they saw him, came ashore to him

and kissed his hands, saying, "Thou art the king, the bride-groom!" Then there came to him a young lady, as she were the sun shining in the cloudless sky, bearing a silken napkin, wherein were a royal robe and a crown of gold set with all manner rubies and pearls. She threw the robe over him and set the crown on his head, after which the damsels bore him in their arms to the galley, where he found all kinds of silken carpets and hangings of various colours. Then they spread the sails and stretched out into mid-ocean.

[Quoth the young man] Indeed, when they put to sea with me, meseemed it was a dream and I knew not whither they went with me. Presently, we drew near to land, and I saw the shore full of troops magnificently arrayed and clad in complete steel, none knoweth their number save God (blessed and exalted be He!) As soon as the galley had made fast to the land, they brought me five horses of noble breeds, housed and saddled with gold, inlaid with all manner pearls and precious stones. I chose out one of them and mounted it, whilst they led the four others before me. Then they raised the banners and the standards over my head, whilst the troops ranged themselves right and left, and we set out, with drums beating and cymbals clashing, and rode on, — whilst I debated in myself whether I were on sleep or on wake, believing not in that my estate, but taking all this for the pageant of a dream, — till we drew near to a green champaign, full of palaces and gardens and trees and streams and flowers and birds chanting the praises of God, the One, the Victorious. At our approach, an army poured out from amid the palaces and gardens, as it were the torrent, when it pours down [from the mountains,] and overflowed the plain. The troops halted at a little distance from me and there rode forth from amongst them a king, preceded by some of his chief officers on foot.

He came up to the young man and dismounted, whereupon the latter dismounted also, and they saluted each other after the goodliest fashion. Then said the King, "Come with us, for thou art my guest." So they took horse again and rode on in great state, conversing as they went, till they came to the royal palace, where they alighted and the king taking the young man by the hand, led him into the palace, followed by his suite, and making him sit down on a throne of gold, seated himself beside him. Then he unbound the chinband from his face; and behold, the king was a young lady, like the sun shining in the cloudless sky, accomplished in beauty and elegance and amorous grace and all perfection. Quoth she to the young man, who was lost in wonder at her beauty and grace and at the splendour and affluence he saw about him, "Know, O King, that I am the queen of this country and that all the troops thou hast seen, whether horse or foot, are women, there is no man amongst them; for in this our state the men delve and sow and reap and occupy themselves with the tillage of the earth and other mechanical crafts and arts, whilst the women govern and fill the great offices of state and bear arms."

At this he marvelled past measure and as they were in discourse, in came a tall gray-haired old woman of venerable and majestic aspect, and it was told him that this was the vizieress. Quoth the queen to her, "Bring me the Cadi and the witnesses." So she went out to do this, and the queen, turning to him, conversed with him in friendly fashion and enforced herself to reassure him and do away his shamefastness with speech blander than the zephyr, saying, "Art thou content to take me to wife?

Thereupon he arose and would have kissed the earth before her; but she forbade him and he replied, saying, " O my lady, I am the least of thy servants." "Seest thou all these servants and soldiers and riches and treasures?" asked she; and he answered, "Yes." Quoth she, "All these are at thy commandment; dispose of them and give and bestow as seemeth good to thee." Then she pointed to a closed door and said, "All these things are at thy disposal, save yonder door; that shalt thou not open, else wilt thou repent, when repentance will avail thee not." Hardly had she made an end of speaking when the vizieress entered, followed by the Cadi and the witnesses, all old women of reverend and majestic aspect, with their hair streaming over their shoulders; and the queen bade them draw up the contract of marriage between herself and the young man. So they performed the marriage-ceremony and the queen made a great bride-feast, to which she bade all the troops; and after they had eaten and drunken, he went in to his bride and found her a clean maid.

So he did away her maidenhead and abode with her seven years in all delight and solace of life, till, one day, he bethought himself of the forbidden door and said in himself; "Except there were therein treasures greater and finer than any I have seen, she had not forbidden me therefrom." So he rose and opened the door, when, lo, behind it was the very bird that had brought him to the island, and it said to him, "An ill welcome to a face that shall never prosper!,' When he saw it and heard what it said, he fled from it; but it followed him and seizing him in its talons, flew with him an hour's journey betwixt heaven and earth, till it set him down in the place whence it had first carried him off and flew away. When he came to his senses, he called to mind his late great and glorious estate and all the honour and fair fortune he had lost and fell to weeping and wailing.

He abode two months on the sea-shore, where the bird had set him down, hoping yet to return to his wife, till, as he sat one night wakeful, mourning and musing, he heard one speaking and saying, "How great were the delights! Far, far from thee is the return of that which is past!" When he heard this, he redoubled in his regrets and despaired of recovering his wife and his late fair estate; so he returned, weary and broken-hearted, to the house where he had dwelt with the old men and knew that they had fared even as he and that this was the cause of their weeping and mourning; wherefore he held them excused. Then, being overcome with chagrin and regret, he took to his chamber and gave himself up to mourning and lamentation; and he ceased not to weep and lament and left eating and drinking and pleasant scents and laughter, till he died and they buried him beside the old men. See, then, O King,' continued the Vizier, 'what cometh of haste; verily, it is unpraiseworthy and begetteth repentance; and in this I give thee true and loyal counsel.'

When the King heard the Vizier's story, he turned from slaying his son; but, on the sixth day, the favourite came in to him with a naked knife in her hand and said to him,'Know, O my lord, that, except thou hearken to my complaint and protect thy right and thine honour against these thy viziers, who are banded together against me, to do me wrong, I will kill myself with this knife, [and my blood will testify against thee on the Day of Judgment]. Indeed, they pretend that women are full of tricks and malice and perfidy and design by this to defeat me of my right and hinder the King from doing me justice; but, behold, I will prove to thee that men are more perfidious

than women by the story of a king of the kings and how he gained access to the wife of a certain merchant.' 'And what passed between them?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O august King,' replied she, 'that

The King's Son and the Merchant's Wife.

A CERTAIN jealous merchant had a beautiful wife; and of the excess of his fearfulness and jealousy of her, he would not abide with her in any town, but built her a pavilion without the city, apart from all other buildings, and fortified it with high walls and strong doors, secured with curious locks; and when he had occasion to go into the city, he locked the doors and hung the keys about his neck. One day, when the merchant was abroad, the king's son of the city came forth, to take his pleasure in the open country without the walls, and coming to the solitary pavilion, stood still to examine it. Presently, he caught sight of a lovely lady looking out of one of the windows and being smitten with amazement at her grace and beauty, cast about for a means of getting to her, but could find none. So he called to one of his attendants, who brought him pen and paper anti inkhorn, and wrote her a letter, setting forth his case for love of her. Then he set it on the point of an arrow and shot it at the pavilion, and it fell in the garden, where the lady was then walking with her maidens. She bade one of the latter hasten and bring her the letter, for she could read writing; and when she had read it and saw what he said in it of his love and passion and longing, she wrote him a reply, to the effect that she was smitten with a yet fiercer passion for him and threw the letter down to him from one of the windows of the pavilion. When he saw her, he picked up the reply and after reading it, came under the window and said to her, "Let me down a string, that I may send thee this key, which do thou take and keep by thee." So she let down a string and he tied the key to it.

Then he went away and repairing to one of his father's viziers, complained to him of his passion for the lady and that he could not live without her; and the vizier said, "And how dost thou bid me contrive?" Quoth the prince, "I would have thee lay me in a chest and commit it to the merchant, feigning to him that it is thine and desiring him to keep it for thee in his country-house some days, that I may have my will of her; then do thou demand it back from him." The vizier answered, "With all my heart." So the prince returned to his palace and fixing the padlock, the key whereof he had given the lady, on a chest he had by him, entered the latter, whereupon the vizier locked it upon him and setting it on a mule, carried it to the pavilion of the merchant. The latter, seeing the vizier, came forth to him and kissed his hands, saying, "Belike our lord the vizier hath some need or business which we may have the pleasure of accomplishing for him?" "Yes," answered the vizier; "I would have thee set this chest in the priviest place in thy house and keep it till I seek it of thee." So the merchant made the porter carry it in and set it down in one of his store-houses, after which he went out upon some occasion of his. As soon as he was gone, his wife went up to the chest and unlocked it with the key the prince had given her, whereupon there came forth a youth like the moon. When she saw him, she donned her richest apparel and carried him to her sitting-chamber, where they abode seven days, eating and drinking and making merry; and as often as her husband came home, she put the prince back into the chest and locked it upon him.

One day, the king asked for his son and the vizier hurried off to the merchant's [town] house and sought of him the chest. The merchant accordingly repaired in haste

to his pavilion, at a time other than of his wont, and knocked at the door. When his wife was ware of him, she hurried the prince back into the chest, but, in her confusion, forgot to lock it. The merchant bade the porters take it up and carry it to his house in the town. So they took up the box by the lid, whereupon it flew open and discovered the prince lying within. When the merchant saw him and knew him for the king's son, he went out to the vizier and said to him, "Go in, thou, and take the King's son; for none of us may lay hands on him." So the vizier went in and taking the prince, went away with him. As soon as they were gone, the merchant put away his wife and swore that he would never marry again. And I have heard tell also, O King,' continued the damsel, 'that

The Page Who Feigned to Know the Speech of Birds.

A CERTAIN man of condition once entered the slave-market and saw a page put up for sale; so he bought him and carrying him home, gave him in charge to his wife, with whom he abode awhile. One day the man said to his wife, "Go forth to-morrow to the garden and take thy pleasure therein." And she replied, "With all my heart." When the page heard this, he made ready in secret meat and drink and fruits and dessert and sallied forth with them privily that night to the garden, where he laid the meat under one tree, the drink under another and the fruits and conserves under a third, in the way his mistress should pass. Next morning, the husband bade him accompany the lady to the garden; so she took horse and riding thither with him, dismounted and entered.

Presently, as they were walking about, a crow croaked, and the page said, "Thou sayst truly," whereupon his mistress said to him, "Dost thou know what the crow said?" "Yes, O my lady," answered he; "he said, 'Under yonder tree is meat; go and eat it.'" So she went up to the tree and finding a dish of meat ready dressed, was assured that the youth understood the speech of birds and marvelled exceedingly. They ate of the meat and walked about awhile, taking their pleasure in the garden, till the crow croaked a second time, and the page again replied, "Thou sayst well." "What said he?" asked the lady, and the page, "O my lady, he says that under such a tree is a pitcher of old wine and a gugglet of water flavoured with musk." So she went up to the tree and finding the wine and water there, redoubled in wonderment and the page was magnified in her eyes. They sat down and drank, then arose and walked in another part of the garden. Presently, the crow croaked again and the page said, " Right." Quoth the lady, "What says he now?" and the page, "He says that under yonder tree are fruits and confections." So they went thither and found all as he said and sat down and ate. Then they walked about again till the crow croaked a fourth time, whereupon the page took up a stone and cast it at him. Quoth she, "What said he, that thou shouldst stone him?" ' O my lady," answered he, "he said what I cannot tell thee." "Say on," rejoined she, "and be not abashed, for there is nought between me and thee." But he ceased not to say, "No," and she to press him to speak, till at last she conjured him to tell her, and he answered, "The crow said to me, 'Do with thy mistress even as doth her husband.'"

When she heard this, she laughed till she fell backward and said, "This is a light matter, and I may not cross thee therein." So saying, she went up to a tree and spreading the carpet under it, [lay down and] called to him to come and do her need, when, behold, her husband, who had followed them unawares and saw this, called out to the page, saying, "Harkye, boy! What ails thy mistress to lie there, weeping?" "O my lord," answered the page, "she fell off the tree and was [all but] killed; and none but God (may He be exalted and glorified!) restored her to thee. Wherefore she lay down awhile to recover herself" When the lady saw her husband standing by her, she rose and made a show of weakness and pain, saying, "O my back! O my sides! Come to my help, O my friends! I shall never survive this." So her husband was deceived and sending the page for the horse, set her thereon and carried her home, the boy holding one stirrup and the man the other and saying, "God vouchsafe thee ease and recovery!"

These then, O King,' said the damsel, 'are some instances of the craft and perfidy of men; wherefore let not thy viziers turn thee from succouring me and doing me justice. Then she wept, and when the King saw her weeping, (for she was the dearest to him of all his slave-girls,) he once more commanded to put his son to death; but the sixth vizier entered and kissing the earth before him, said, 'May God the Most High advance the King! Verily I am a loyal counsellor to thee, in that I counsel thee to deal deliberately in the matter of thy son; for falsehood is as smoke and truth is a strongly stablished [fortress]; yea, and the light thereof dispels the darkness of falsehood. Know that the perfidy of women is great, even as saith God the Most High in His Holy Book, "Verily, the malice of you [women] is great." And indeed I have heard tell of a certain woman who befooled the chiefs of the state on such wise as never did any before her.' 'And how was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the vizier, 'that

The Lady and Her Five Suitors.

A CERTAIN woman of the daughters of the merchants was married to a man who was a great traveller. It chanced once that he set out for a far country and was absent so long that his wife, for pure weariness, fell in love with a handsome young man of the sons of the merchants, who returned her passion, and they loved each other with an exceeding love. One day, the youth fell out with another man, who lodged a complaint against him with the chief of the police, and he cast him into prison. When the news came to his mistress, she well-nigh lost her wits and rising, donned her richest clothes and repaired to the house of the chief of the police, whom she saluted and presented with a petition to the effect that the prisoner was her brother, who had been unjustly accused and condemned on false witness, and that she had none other to come in to her nor to provide for her support and beseeching him of his grace to release him. When the magistrate had read the petition, he cast his eyes on her and fell in love with her; so he said to her, "Go into the house, till I bring him before me; then will I send for thee and thou shalt take him." "O my lord," answered she, "I have none save God the Most High. Indeed, I am a stranger and may not enter any one's house." Quoth the chief of the police, "I will not let him go, except thou enter my house and I take my will of thee." "If it must be so," rejoined she, "thou must come to my house and sit and sleep and rest the whole day there." "And where is thy house?" asked he. "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for such a time.

Then she went out from him, leaving his heart taken with love of her, and repaired to the Cadi of the city, to whom said she, "O my lord the Cadi, look into my case, and thy reward be with God the Most High!" Quoth he, "Who hath wronged thee?" and she answered, saying, "O my lord, I have a brother and I have none but him, and it is on his account that I come to thee; for that the chief of the police hath imprisoned him for a wrong-doer, on the evidence of false witnesses. [Indeed, he is wronged] and I beseech thee to intercede for him with the chief of the police." When the Cadi looked on her, he fell in love with her and said to her, "Enter the house and rest awhile with my women, whilst I send to the chief of the police to release thy brother. If I knew the forfeit that is upon him, I would pay it out of my own monies, so I may have my desire of thee, for thou pleasest me with thy sweet speech." Quoth she, "If thou, O my lord, do thus, we must not blame others." But the Cadi answered, saying, "An thou wilt not come in, go thy ways." Then said she, "If thou wilt have it so, O my lord, it will be safer and better in my house than in thine, for here are slave-girls and servants and goers-in and corners-out, and indeed I am a woman who knows nought of this fashion; but necessity compels." "And where is thy house?" asked the Cadi. "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for the same time as the chief of the police.

Then she went to the Vizier, to whom she preferred her petition for the release of her [pretended] brother from prison: but he also required her of herself, saying, " Suffer me to have my desire of thee and I will set thy brother free." Quoth she, "If thou wilt have it so, be it in my House, for there it will be safer both for me and for thee. It is not far distant and thou knowest that which behoveth us [women] of cleanliness and

elegance." "Where is thy house?" asked he. "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for the same time as the two others.

Then she went out from him to the King of the city and told him her story and sought of him her brother's release. "Who imprisoned him?" asked he; and she replied, "The chief of the police." When the King heard her speech, it transfixed his heart with the arrows of love and he bade her enter the palace with him, that he might send to the Cadi and release her brother. "O King," answered she, "this thing is easy to thee, whether I will or not; and if the King will indeed have this of me, it is of my good fortune; but, if he will come to my house, he will do me the more honour, even as saith the poet:

Friends, have ye seen or heard o' the visit of a wight Whose virtues are indeed illustrious in my sight?"

Quoth the King, "We will not cross thee in this." So she told him where her house was and appointed him for the same time as the three others.

Then she left him and betaking herself to a carpenter, said to him, "I would have thee make me a cabinet with four compartments, one above another, each with its door to lock up. Let me know thy hire and I will give it thee." "My hire will be four dinars," replied the man; "but, O noble lady, if thou wilt vouchsafe me thy favours, I will ask nothing else of thee." "If thou wilt have it so," rejoined she, "then make the cabinet with five compartments, each to lock up." "It is well," said he; "sit down, O my lady, and I will make it for thee forthright, and after I will come to thee at my leisure." So she sat down, whilst he fell to work on the cabinet, and when he had made an end of it, she carried it home and set it up in the sitting-chamber. Then she took four gowns and carried them to the dyer, who dyed them each of a different colour; after which she busied herself in making ready meat and drink and fruits and flowers and perfumes.

When it was the appointed time, she donned her costliest apparel and scented and adorned herself, then spread the room with various kinds of rich carpets and sat down to await who should come. The Cadi was the first to appear, and when she saw him, she rose and kissed the earth before him, then made him sit down by her on the couch and fell to jesting and toying with him. By and by, he would have her do his desire, but she said, "O my lord, put off thy clothes and turban and don this yellow cassock and this kerchief, whilst I bring thee meat and drink; and after thou shalt do thy desire." So saying, she took his clothes and turban and clad him in the yellow cassock and the kerchief; but hardly had she done this, when there came a knocking at the door. Quoth he, "Who is that at the door?" And she answered, "My husband." "What to be done?" said the Cadi; "and where shall I go?" "Fear nothing," replied she; "I will hide thee in this cabinet." Quoth he,"Do as seemeth good to thee." So she took him by the hand and pushing him into the lowest compartment, locked the door on him.

Then she went to the door, where she found the chief of the police; so she kissed the earth before him and brought him into the saloon, where she made him sit down and said to him, "O my lord, this is thy house and I am thy handmaid, and thou shalt pass all this day with me; wherefore do thou doff thy clothes and don this red gown, for it is a sleeping gown." So she took away his clothes and made him don the red gown and set on his head an old patched rag she had by her; after which she sat down

by him on the couch and they sported awhile, till he put out his hand to her; but she said to him, "O my lord, this day is thine, all of it, and none shall share it with thee; but first, of thy favour and grace, write me an order for my brother's release, that my heart may be at ease." "I hear and obey," answered he; "on my head and eyes be it;" and wrote a letter to his treasurer, to the following effect: "As soon as this letter reaches thee, do thou, without delay and without fail, set such an one free, neither answer the bearer a word." Then he sealed it and she took it from him, after which she began again to toy with him on the couch, when, behold, some one knocked at the door. Quoth he, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she. "What shall I do?" asked he, and she said, "Enter this cabinet. till I send him away and return to thee." So she clapped him into the second compartment and locked the door on him; and all this time the Cadi heard what they said and did.

Then she went to the door and opened it, whereupon the Vizier entered. She kissed the earth before him and received him with all worship, saying, "O my lord, thou honourest us by thy coming to our house; may God never deprive us of the light of thy countenance!" Then she seated him on the couch and said to him, "O my lord, these thy clothes and turban are the apparel of the vizierate; so leave them to their own time and don this light gown, which is better fitted for carousing and making merry and sleep." So he put off his clothes and turban and she dressed him in a blue cassock and a tall red cap, after which she began to toy with him and he with her, and he would have done his desire of her; but she put him off saying, "O my lord, this shall not escape us." Presently there came a knocking at the door, and the Vizier said to her, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she. Quoth he, "What is to be done?" "Fear nothing," said she; "but enter this cabinet, till I get rid of him and come back to thee." So she put him in the third compartment and locked the door on him, after which she went out and opened the door and in came the King.

When she saw him, she kissed the earth before him, and taking him by the hand, led him into the saloon and seated him on the couch at the upper end. Then said she to him, "Verily, O King, thou dost us honour, and if we brought thee the whole world and all that therein is as a gift, it would not equal a single one of thy steps towards us: but give me leave to speak one word." "Say what thou wilt," answered he, and she said, "O my lord, take thine ease and put off thy clothes and turban." So he put off his clothes, which were worth a thousand dinars, and she clad him in a patched gown, not worth ten dirhems, and fell to talking and jesting with him, whilst the folk in the cabinet heard all that passed, but dared not say a word. Presently, the King put his hand to her neck and sought to do his desire of her; but she said, "This thing shall not escape us; but, first, I had promised myself to entertain thee in this sitting-chamber, and I have that which shall content thee." At that moment, some one knocked at the door and he said to her, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she, and he, "Make him go away of his own accord, or I will go forth to him and send him away perforce." "Nay, O my lord," replied she; "have patience till I send him away by my skilful contrivance "And how shall I do?" asked the King; whereupon she took him by the hand and making him enter the fourth compartment of the cabinet, locked it upon him.

Then she went out and opened the door, when the carpenter entered and saluted her. Quoth she, "What manner of thing is this cabinet thou hast made me?" "What ails it, O my lady?" asked he, and she said, "The [top] compartment is too strait." "Not so," answered he; and she, "Go in thyself and see; it is not wide enough for thee." Quoth he, "It is wide enough for four," and entered the fifth compartment, whereupon she locked the door on him. Then she took the letter of the chief of the police and carried it to the treasurer, who kissed it and delivered her lover to her. She told him all that had passed and he said, "And how shall we do now?" Quoth she, "We will remove hence to another city, for there is no tarrying for us here after this." So they packed up their goods and loading them on camels, set out forthright for another city.

Meanwhile, the five abode in the cabinet three whole days, without eating or drinking, until at last the carpenter could retain his water no longer; so he made water on the King's head, and the King made water on the Vizier's head, and the Vizier on the Chief of the Police, who did the like with the Cadi; whereupon the latter cried out and said, "What filth is this? Doth not this strait that we are in suffice us, but you must make water upon us?" The Chief of the Police recognized the Cadi's voice and answered, saying, "God increase thy reward, O Cadi!" And when the Cadi heard him, he knew him for the Chief of the Police. Then the latter lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" and the Vizier answered, saying, "God increase thy reward, O Chief of the Police!" whereupon he knew him to be the Vizier. Then the Vizier lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" But when the King heard his Vizier's voice, he held his peace and concealed his affair. Then said the Vizier, "May God curse the woman for her dealing with us! She hath brought hither all the chiefs of the state, except the King." Quoth the King, "Hold thy peace, for I was the first to fall into the toils of this lewd baggage." "And I," cried the carpenter, "what have I done? I made her a cabinet for four dinars, and when I came to seek my hire, she tricked me into entering this compartment and locked the door on me." And they fell to talking with one another, to divert the King and do away his chagrin.

Presently the neighbours came up to the house and seeing it deserted, said to one another, "But yesterday our neighbour the wife of such an one was in it; but now there is no sound to be heard therein nor soul to be seen. Let us break open the doors and see how the case stands, lest it come to the ears of the King or the Chief of the Police and we be cast into prison and regret that we did not this thing before." So they broke open the doors and entered the saloon, where they saw the cabinet and heard the men within groaning for hunger and thirst. Then said one of them, "Is there a genie in the cabinet?" "Let us heap faggots about it," quoth another, "and burn it with fire." When the Cadi heard this, he cried out at them, saying, "Do it not!" And they said to one another, "Verily, the Jinn make believe to be mortals and speak with men's voices." Thereupon the Cadi repeated some verses of the sublime Koran and said to the neighbours, "Draw near to the cabinet." So they drew near, and he said, "I am so and so the Cadi, and ye are such an one and such an one, and we are here a company." Quoth the neighbours, "And how came ye here?" And he told them the whole case from beginning to end.

Then they fetched a carpenter, who opened the five doors and let out the Cadi and the Vizier and the Chief of the Police and the King and the Carpenter; and when

they saw how they were accoutred, each fell a-laughing at the others. Now she had taken away all their clothes; so each of them sent to his people for fresh clothes and put them on and went out, covering himself therewith from the sight of the folk. See, therefore, O our lord the King,' said the vizier, 'what a trick this woman played off upon the folk! And I have heard tell also that

The Man Who Saw the Night of Power.

A CERTAIN man had longed all his life to look upon the Night of Power, and it befell that, one night, he looked up at the sky and saw the angels and Heaven's gates opened and beheld all things in the act of prostration before their Lord, each in its several room. So he said to his wife, "Harkye, such an one, God hath shown me the Night of Power, and it hath been proclaimed to me, from the invisible world, that three prayers will be granted unto me; so do thou counsel me what I shall ask." Quoth she, "O man, the perfection of man and his delight is in his yard; so do thou pray God to greaten thy yard and magnify it." So he lifted up his hands to heaven and said, "O my God, greaten my yard and magnify it." Hardly had he spoken when his yard became as big as a calabash and he could neither sit nor stand nor move; and when he would have lain with his wife, she fled before him from place to place. So he said to her, "O accursed woman, what is to be done? This is thy wish, by reason of thy lust." "Nay, by Allah," answered she; "I did not ask for this huge bulk, for which the gate of a street were too strait. Pray God to make it less." So he raised his eyes to heaven and said, "O my God, rid me of this thing and deliver me therefrom." And immediately his yard disappeared altogether and he became smooth [like a woman]. When his wife saw this, she said, 'I have no occasion for thee, now thou art become yardless;" and he answered her, saying, "All this comes of thine own ill-omened counsel and the infirmity of thy judgment. I had three prayers accepted of God, wherewith I might have gotten me my good, both in this world and the next, and now two are gone in pure waste, by thy lewd wish, and there remaineth but one." Quoth she, "Pray God the Most High to restore thee thy yard as it was." So he prayed to his Lord and his yard was restored to its first case. Thus the man lost his three wishes by the ill counsel and lack of sense of the woman; and this, O King,' said the vizier, 'have I told thee, that thou mightest be certified of the thoughtlessness of women and their little wit and silliness and see what comes of hearkening to their counsel. Wherefore be not persuaded by them to slay thy son, the darling of thy heart, and thus blot out thy remembrance after thee.'

The King gave ear to his vizier's words and forbore to put his son to death; but, on the seventh day, the damsel came in, shrieking, and lighting a great fire in the King's presence, made as she would cast herself therein; whereupon they laid hands on her and brought her before him. Quoth he, 'Why hast thou done this?' And she answered, saying, 'Except thou do me justice on thy son, I will cast myself into the fire and accuse thee of this on the Day of Resurrection, for I am weary of life and before coming hither, I wrote my last dispositions and gave alms of my goods and resolved upon death. And thou wilt repent with all repentance, even as did the King of having punished the pious woman.' 'How was that?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' replied she, 'that

The Stolen Necklace.

THERE was once a devout woman, who had renounced the world and devoted herself to the service of God. Now she used to resort to a certain king's palace, the dwellers wherein looked for a blessing by reason of her presence, and she was held of them in high honour. One day, she entered the palace, according to her wont, and sat down beside the queen. Presently the latter gave her a necklace, worth a thousand dinars, saying, "Keep this for me, whilst I go to the bath." So she entered the bath, which was in the palace, and the pious woman laid the necklace on the prayer-carpet and stood up to pray. As she was thus engaged, there came a magpie, which snatched up the necklace, [unseen of her,] and carrying it off, hid it in a crevice in one of the palace-walls. When the queen came out of the bath, she sought the necklace of the recluse, and the latter searched for it, but found it not nor could light on any trace of it; so she said to the queen, "By Allah, O my daughter, none has been with me. When thou gavest me the necklace, I laid it on the prayer-carpet, and I know not if one of the servants saw it and took it without my heed, whilst I was engaged in prayer. God only knows what is come of it!" When the King heard what had happened, he bade his consort put the woman to the question by fire and beating; so they tortured her with all manner tortures, but could not bring her to confess or to accuse any. Then he commanded to lay her in irons and cast her into prison, and they did as he bade.

One day, after this, as the King sat in the inner court of his palace, with the queen by his side aud water flowing around him, he saw the magpie fly into a crevice of the wall and pull out the lost necklace, whereupon he cried out to a damsel who was with him, and she caught the bird and took the necklace from it. By this the King knew that the pious woman had been wronged and repented of that he had done with her. So he sent for her and fell to kissing her head and sought pardon of her-weeping. Moreover, he commanded great treasure to be given to her, but she would none of it. However, she forgave him and went away, vowing never again to enter any one's house. So she betook herself to wandering in the mountains and valleys and worshipped God the Most High till she died. And for an instance of the malice of the male sex,' continued the damsel, 'I have heard tell that

The Two Pigeons

A PAIR of pigeons once stored up wheat and barley in their nests in the winter, and when the summer came, the grain shrivelled and became less; so the male pigeon said to his mate, "Thou hast eaten of this grain." "No, by Allah," replied she; "I have not touched it!" But he believed her not and beat her with his wings and pecked her with his bill, till he killed her. When the cold season returned, the corn swelled out and became as before, whereupon he knew that he had slain his mate unjustly and wickedly and repented, when repentance availed him not. Then he lay down by her side, mourning over her and weeping for grief, and left eating and drinking, till he fell sick and died.

But,' added the damsel, 'I know a story of the malice of men more extraordinary than either of these.' 'Let us hear it,' said the King; and she said, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

Story of Prince Behram of Persia and the Princess Ed Detma.

THERE was once a king's daughter, by name Ed Detma, who had no equal in her time for beauty and elegance and symmetry and amorous grace and the art of ravishing men's wits, nor was there one more accomplished than she in horsemanship and martial exercises and all that behoveth a cavalier, and all the king's sons sought her in marriage; but she would none of them, saying, "None shall marry me except he overcome me at push of pike and stroke of sword in the open field. If any can do this, I will willingly wed him; but, if I overcome him, I will take his horse and clothes and arms and write with fire upon his forehead, 'This is the freedman of Ed Detma.'" So the eons of the kings flocked to her from far and near, and she overcame them and put them to shame, stripping them of their arms and branding them with fire.

At last, the son of a king of the kings of the Persians, by name Behram, heard of her and journeyed from afar to her father's court, bringing with him men and horses and great store of wealth and royal treasures. When he drew near the city, he sent her father a rich present and the king came out to meet him and received him with the utmost honour. Then the prince sent a message to him by his vizier, demanding his daughter's hand in marriage; but the king answered, saying, "O my son, I have no power over my daughter Ed Detma, for she hath sworn by her soul to marry none except he overcome her in the listed field." Quoth the prince, "It was to this intent that I journeyed hither from my father's court." And the king said, "Thou shalt meet her to-morrow." Accordingly, on the morrow, he sent to bid his daughter, who donned her harness of war, and the folk, hearing of the coming encounter, flocked from all sides to the field. Presently the princess rode into the lists, armed cap-a-pie and vizor down, and the prince pricked out to meet her, equipped at all points after the goodliest fashion. Then they drove at each other and fought a great while, wheeling and feinting and advancing and retreating, till the princess, finding in him such valour and horsemanship as she had seen in none else, began to fear lest he should put her to shame before the bystanders and knew that he would assuredly overcome her, unless she could contrive to trick him. So she raised her vizor and discovered her face, more brilliant than the full moon, which when he saw, he was confounded by her beauty and his strength failed and his heart faltered. When she knew this, she fell upon him at unawares and tore him from his saddle, and he became in her hands as he were a sparrow in the clutches of an eagle, knowing not what was done with him for amazement and confusion. So she took his horse and cIothes and armour and branding him with fire, let him go.

When he recovered from his stupor, he abode several days without eating or drinking, for despite and love of the princess that had taken hold upon his heart. Then he sent a letter by certain of his slaves to his father, advising him that he could not return home, till he had gotten his will of the princess or died for lack of her. When his father read the letter, he was sore concerned for his son and would have succoured him with troops and soldiers; but his viziers dissuaded him from this and exhorted him to patience; so he committed his affair to God the Most High.

Meanwhile, the prince cast about for a means of coming to his desire and disguising himself as a decrepit old man, repaired to a garden, in which the princess used to walk most of her days. Here he sought out the gardener and said to him, "I am a stranger from a far country and from my youth upward I have been a gardener, and none is more skilled than I in the care of trees and the culture of fruits and flowers and so forth." When the gardener heard this, he rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and carried him into the garden, where he commended him to his underlings, and the prince betook himself to the service of the garden and the tending of the trees and the bettering of their fruits.

One day, as he was thus employed, he saw some slaves enter the garden, leading mules laden with carpets and vessels, and asked them the meaning of this, to which they replied that the princess was minded to take her pleasure. When he heard this, he hastened to his lodging and fetching some of the jewels and raiment he had brought with him from Persia, sat down in the garden and spread them out before him, shaking and trembling, as if for decrepitude, and making a show of extreme old age. Presently a company of damsels and eunuchs entered, with the princess in their midst, as she were the moon among stars, and dispersed about the garden, plucking the fruits and diverting themselves. By and by they espied the prince sitting under one of the trees and making towards him, found him, [as it seemed,] a very old man, whose hands and feet trembled for decrepitude, and before him store of precious jewels and splendid ornaments. So they marvelled at his case and asked him what he did there with the jewels. Quoth he, "I would fain buy me one of you to wife therewith." They laughed at him and said, "If one of us marry thee, what wilt thou do with her?" "I will give her one kiss," answered he, "and let her go." Then said the princess, "I give thee this damsel to wife." So he rose and coming up to her, trembling and staggering and leaning on a staff; kissed her and gave her the jewels and ornaments; whereat she rejoiced and they went away, laughing at him. Next day, they came again to the garden and finding him seated in the same place, with more jewels and ornaments than before, said to him, "O old man, what wilt thou do with these jewels?" And he answered, saying, "I wish to take one of you to wife with them, even as yesterday." So the princess said, "I marry thee to this damsel ;" and he came up to her and kissed her and gave her the jewels, and they went away.

But the princess said in herself; "I have more right to all these fine things than my waiting-women, and no harm can betide me." So, on the morrow, she went down privily into the garden, in the habit of one of her damsels, and presenting herself before the prince, said to him, "O old man, the king's daughter hath sent me to thee, that thou mayst marry me." He looked at her and knew her; so he answered, "With all my heart," and gave her jewels and ornaments of the costliest. Then he rose to kiss her, and she off her guard and fearing nothing; but, when he came up to her, he suddenly laid hold of her with a strong hand and throwing her down, did away her maidenhead. Then he pulled the beard from his face and said to her, "Dost thou not know me?" "Who art thou?" asked she, and he answered, "I am Behram, the king's son of Persia, who have changed my favour and am become a stranger to my people and estate for thy sake and have lavished my treasures for thy love."

So she rose from under him in silence and spoke not a word of reply to him, being dazed for what had befallen her and seeing nothing for it but to be silent, for fear of disgrace; and she bethought herself and said "If I kill him, it will profit me nothing, and nought will serve me but that I flee with him to his own country." Then she gathered together her wealth and treasures and sent to him, acquainting him with her resolve, to the intent that he also might equip himself; and they agreed upon a night on which to depart. So, at the appointed time, they mounted swift horses and set out under cover of the night, nor did day break till they had traversed a great distance; and they fared on till they drew near his father's capital in the land of the Persians. When the king heard of his son s coming, he came out to meet him with his troops and rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy. Then, after a few days, he sent the princess's father a splendid present, with a letter to the effect that his daughter was with him and demanding her wedding equipage. Ed Detma's father received the messengers with exceeding joy, (for that he had deemed his daughter lost and had grieved sore for her loss,) and invested them with robes of honour; after which he made bride-feasts and summoning the Cadi and the witnesses, let draw up the marriage contract between his daughter and the prince of Persia. Then he made ready her equipage and despatched it to her, and Prince Behram abode with her till death sundered them.

See, therefore, O King,' continued the favourite, 'the malice of men in their dealing with women. As for me, I will not go back from my due till I die.' So the King once more commanded to put his son to death; but the seventh vizier came in to him and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, have patience with me whilst I speak words of good counsel to thee; for he who is patient and acteth deliberately attaineth unto his hope aud enjoyeth his desire, but whoso acteth hastily, repentance overtaketh him. Now I have seen how this damsel hath profligately striven to abuse the King and incite him to unnatural cruelties; but I his slave, whom he hath overwhelmed with his favours and bounties, do proffer him true and loyal counsel; for that I, O King, know of the malice of women that which none knoweth but myself; and [in particular] there hath come to my knowledge, on this subject, the story of the old woman and the son of the merchant.' 'And what fell out between them, O vizier?' asked the King. 'I have heard tell, O King,' answered the seventh vizier, 'that

The House with the Belvedere.

THERE was once a wealthy merchant, who had a son who was very dear to him, and the latter said to him one day, "O my father, I have a boon to ask of thee." Quoth the merchant, "O my son, what is it, that I may give it thee and bring thee to thy desire, though it were the light of mine eyes." "Give me money," rejoined the youth, "that I may journey with the merchants to the city of Baghdad and see its sights and look upon the palace of the Khalifs; for the sons of the merchants have described these things to me and I long to see them for myself." "O my child, O my little son," answered his father, "how can I endure to part from thee?" But the youth said, "I have said my say and needs must I journey to Baghdad with or without thy consent; for such a longing for its sight hath fallen upon me as can only be assuaged by the going thither."

When the merchant saw that there was no help for it, he provided his son with goods to the value of thirty thousand dinars and gave him in charge to certain merchants in whom he trusted. Then he took leave of the youth, who journeyed with his friends the merchants till they reached Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, where he entered the market and wishing to hire a house, was shown one so handsome and spacious and elegant that he well-nigh lost his wits for admiration; for therein were gardens and fountains and running waters and pavilions facing one another, with floors of coloured marbles and ceilings inlaid with gold and lapis lazuli, and its gardens were full of warbling birds. So he asked the porter what was its rent, and he replied, "Ten dinars a month." Quoth the young man, "Speakest thou truly or dost thou jest with me?" "By Allah," answered the porter, "I speak nought but the truth, for none who taketh up his abode in this house lodgeth in it more than a week or two." "And how is that?" asked the other. "O my son," replied the porter, "whoso taketh this house cometh not forth of it, except sick or dead, wherefore it is known among the folk of Baghdad, so that none offereth to take it, and thus cometh it that its rent is fallen so low." At this the young merchant marvelled exceedingly, saying, "Needs must there be some reason for this." However, after considering awhile and seeking refuge with God from Satan the Stoned, he rented the house and took up his abode there. Then he put away apprehension from his thought and busied himself with selling and buying; and some time passed over him without any ill case befalling him.

One day, as he sat at the door, there came up a grizzled old woman, as she were a speckled snake, calling aloud on the name of God and magnifying Him at a great rate and at the same time putting away the stones and other obstacles from the path. Seeing the youth sitting there, she looked at him and marvelled at his case; whereupon quoth he to her, "O old woman, dost thou know me or am I like any thou knowest?" When she heard him speak, she hastened up to him and saluting him, said, "How long hast thou dwelt in this house?" "Two months, O my mother," answered he. And she said, "O my son, it was at this that I marvelled; for I know thee not, neither dost thou know me, nor yet are thou like unto any one I know; but I marvelled for that none other than thou hath taken up his abode in this house but hath gone forth from it, dead or sick, saving thee alone. Doubtless thou hast not gone up to the upper story neither

looked out from the belvedere there." So saying, she went her way and he fell a-pondering her words and said, "I have not gone up to the top of the house; nor did I know that there was a belvedere there."

Then he arose forthright and going in, searched the house, till he espied, in a corner among the trees, a narrow door, over which the spider had spun its webs, and said in himself "Belike the spider hath not spread its web over the door, but because death is within." However, he heartened himself with the saying of God the Most High, "Say, nought shall befall us save what God hath prescribed unto us;" and opening the door, ascended a narrow flight of stairs, till he came to the top, where he found a belvedere, in which he sat down to rest and enjoy the view. Presently, he caught sight of an elegant house hard by, surmounted by a lofty belvedere, overlooking the whole of Baghdad, in which sat a damsel fair as a houri. No sooner had he set eyes on her, than her beauty took possession of his whole heart and made away with his reason, afflicting him with the pains of Job and the grief of Jacob. Fire was lighted in his entrails and he said, "They say that whoever takes up his abode in this house dies or falls sick. If this be so, this damsel is assuredly the cause. Would I knew how I shall win free of this affair, for my senses are gone!"

Then he descended from the turret, pondering his case, and sat down in the house, but could not rest. So, after awhile, he went out and sat at the door, absorbed in melancholy thought, and presently up came the old woman, praising and magnifying God [aloud], as she went. When he saw her, he rose and accosting her courteously, said to her, "O my mother, I was in health and well-being, till thou madest mention to me of the belvedere; so I found the door and ascending to the top of the house, saw thence what took away my senses; and now methinks I am a lost man, and I know no physician for me but thyself." When she heard this, she laughed and said, "No harm shall befall thee, so God please." Whereupon he went into the house and coming back with a hundred dinars in his sleeve, said to her, "Take this, O my mother, and deal with me as lords with slaves and succour me quickly; for, if I die, my blood will be laid to thy charge at the Day of Resurrection." "With all my heart," answered she; "but, O my son, thou must lend me thine aid in some small matter, whereby hangs the accomplishment of thy desire." Quoth he, "What would thou have me do, O my mother?" "Go to the silk-market," said she, "and enquire for the shop of Aboul Feth ben Caidam. Sit down by him and salute him and say to him, 'Give me the face-veil thou hast by thee, figured with gold:' for he hath none handsomer in his shop. Then buy it of him at his own price and keep it till I come to thee to-morrow, God willing." So saying, she went away and he passed the night [as] upon coals of tamarisk wood.

Next morning, he took a thousand dinars in his pocket and repairing to the silk-market, sought cut the shop of Aboul Feth, whom he found a man of dignified aspect, surrounded by servants and attendants; for he was a merchant of great wealth and consideration, and of the goods that God the Most High had bestowed upon him was the damsel who had ravished the young man's heart. She was his wife and had not her match for beauty, nor was her like to be found with any of the sons of the kings. So he saluted him and Aboul Feth returned his salute and bade him be seated. Accordingly, he sat down by him and said to him, "O merchant, I wish to look at such a face-veil." So he bade his servants bring him a parcel of silk from the inner shop and opening it,

brought out a number of veils, whose beauty amazed the youth. Among them was the veil he sought; so he bought it for fifty dinars and bore it home, well pleased.

Hardly had he reached his house when up came the old woman, to whom he gave the veil. She bade him bring a live coal, with which she burnt one of the corners of the veil, then folded it up as before and repairing to Aboul Feth's house, knocked at the door. Quoth the damsel, "Who is there?" And she answered, "I, such an one." Now the damsel knew her for a friend of her mother, so, when she heard her voice, she came out and opening the door to her, said, "What dost thou want, O my mother? My mother has left me and gone to her own house." "O my daughter," answered the old woman, "I know thy mother is not with thee, for I have been with her in her house, and I come not to thee, but because I fear to miss the hour of prayer; wherefore I desire to make my ablutions with thee, for I know thou art clean and thy house pure." The damsel admitted her and she saluted her and called down blessings upon her. Then she took the ewer and went into the lavatory, where she made her ablutions and prayed in a place there. Presently, she came out again and said to the damsel, "O my daughter, I doubt thy servants have been in yonder place and defiled it; so do thou show me another place where I may pray, for the prayer I have prayed I account void." Thereupon the damsel took her by the hand and said to he; " O my mother, come and pray on my carpet, where my husband sits." So she stood there and prayed and worshipped and bowed and prostrated herself; and presently, she took the damsel unawares and made shift to slip the veil under the cushion, unseen of her. Then she prayed for her and went away.

At nightfall, Aboul Feth came home and sat down upon the carpet, whilst his wife brought him food and he ate what sufficed him and washed his hands; after which he leant back upon the cushion. Presently, he caught sight of a corner of the veil protruding from under the cushion; so he pulled it out and knowing it for that he had sold to the young man, at once suspected his wife of unchastity. So he called her and said, "Whence hadst thou this veil?" And she swore an oath to him [that she knew not whence it came,] saying, "None hath come to me but thou." Then he was silent for fear of scandal, and said in himself; "If I open up this chapter, I shall be put to shame before all Baghdad;" for he was one of the intimates of the Khalif and had nothing for it but to hold his peace. So he asked no questions, but said to his wife, whose name was Muhziyeh, "I hear that thy mother lies ill of heart-ache and all the women are with her, weeping over her; so do thou go to her." Accordingly, she repaired to her mother's house and found her well, ailing nothing; and the latter said to her, "What brings thee here at this hour?" So she told her what her husband had said and sat with her awhile; but, presently, up came porters, who brought all her clothes and paraphernalia and what not else belonged to her of goods and vessels from her husband's house and deposited them in that of her mother. When the latter saw this, she said to her daughter, "Tell me what hath passed between thee and thy husband, to bring about this." But she swore to her that she knew not the cause thereof and that there had befallen nothing between them, to call for this conduct. Quoth her mother, "Needs must there be a cause for this." And she answered, saying, "I know of none, and after this, with God the Most High be it to make provision!", Whereupon her mother fell a-

weeping and lamented her daughter's separation from the like of this man, by reason of his sufficiency and fortune and the greatness of his rank and estate.

On this wise, things abode some days, after which the old woman paid a visit to Muhziyeh in her mother's house and saluted her affectionately, saying, "What ails thee, O my daughter, O my beloved one? Indeed, thou hast troubled my mind." Then she went in to her mother and said to her, "O my sister, what is this about thy daughter and her husband? I hear he has put her away. What hath she done to call for this?" Quoth the mother, "Peradventure her husband will return to her by the virtue of thy prayers; so do thou pray for her, for thou art a constant faster and a stander up by night to pray." Then the three women fell to talking and the old woman said to the damsel, "O my daughter, have no care, for, God willing, I will make peace between thee and thy husband before many days." Then she left them and going to the young merchant, said to him, "Make ready a handsome entertainment for us, for I will bring her to thee this very night." So he rose and provided all that was fitting of meat and drink and so forth and sat down to await them; whilst the old woman returned to the girl's mother and said to her, "O my sister, we make a splendid bride-feast to-night; so let thy daughter go with me, that she may divert herself and make merry with us and forget her troubles; and I will bring her back to thee even as I took her away." So the mother dressed her daughter in her finest clothes and jewels and accompanied her to the door, where she commended her to the old woman's care, saying, "Look thou let none of the creatures of God the Most High see her, for thou knowest her husband's rank with the Khalif; and do not tarry, but bring her back to me as soon as possible."

The old woman carried the girl to the young man's house, and she entered, thinking it the place where the wedding was to be held: but, when she came into the saloon, the youth sprang up to her and embraced her and kissed her hands and feet. She was confounded at his beauty, as well as at the elegance of the place and the profusion of meat and drink and flowers and perfumes that she saw therein, and deemed all this but a dream. When the old woman saw her amazement, she said to her, "The name of God be upon thee, O my daughter! Fear not; I am here with thee and will not leave thee for a moment. Thou art worthy of him and he of thee." So the damsel sat down, in great confusion; but the young man jested and toyed with her and entertained her with stories and verses, till her breast dilated and she became at her ease. Then she ate and drank and growing warm with wine, took the lute and sang and inclined to the youth's beauty. When he saw this, he was drunken without wine and his life was a light matter to him [compared with her love].

Presently the old woman went out and left them alone together till the next morning, when she went in to them and gave them good morrow and said to the damsel, "How hast thou passed the night, O my lady?" "Well," answered the girl, "thanks to thine adroitness and the excellence of thine intermediation." Then said the old woman, "Come, let us go back to thy mother." But the young man pulled out a hundred dinars and gave them to her, saying, "Take this and leave her with me to-night." So she left them and repaired to the girl's mother, to whom quoth she, "Thy daughter salutes thee, and the bride's mother is instant with her to abide with her this night." "O my sister," replied the mother, "bear her my greeting, and if it please the girl, there is no harm in her staying the night; so let her do this and divert herself and

come back to me at her leisure, for all I fear for her is chagrin on account of her husband."

The old woman ceased not to make excuse after excuse and to put off cheat upon cheat upon the girl's mother, till Muhziyeh had tarried seven days with the young man, of whom she took a hundred dinars each day for herself; but at the end of this time, the girl's mother said to her, "Bring my daughter back to me forthright; for I am uneasy about her, because she has been so long absent, and I misdoubt me of this." So the old woman went out, angered at her words, and going to the young man's house, took the girl by the hand and carried her away, leaving him lying asleep on his bed, for he was heavy with wine. Her mother received her with joy and gladness and rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy, saying, "O my daughter, my heart was troubled about thee, and in my uneasiness I offended against this my sister with an injurious speech, that wounded her." "Rise and kiss her hands and feet," replied Muhziyeh; "else art thou no mother of mine; for she hath been to me as a servant in doing all I needed." So the mother went up to the old woman and made her peace with her.

Meanwhile, the young man recovered from his drunkenness and missed the damsel, but was content to have enjoyed his desire. Presently, the old woman came in to him and saluted him, saying, "What thinkest thou of my fashion?" Quoth he, "It was excellently well contrived of thee." Then said she, "Come, let us mend what we have marred and restore the girl to her husband, for we have been the cause of their separation." "How shall I do?" asked he, and she answered, "Go to Aboul Feth's shop and salute him and sit down by him, till thou seest me pass by, when do thou rise in haste and catch hold of my dress and revile me and rail at me, demanding of me the veil. And do thou say to the merchant, 'O my lord, thou knowest the face-veil I bought of thee for fifty dinars? I gave it to a slave-girl of mine, who burnt a corner of it by accident; so she gave it to this old woman, who took it, promising to get it darned and return it, and went away, nor have I seen her from that day to this.'" "With all my heart," replied the young man and rising forthrtght, repaired to the shop of the silk merchant, with whom he sat till he saw the old woman pass, telling her beads on a rosary she held in her hand; whereupon he sprang up and laying hold of her clothes, began to revile and rail at her, whilst she answered him with fair words, saying, "Indeed, my son, thou art excusable."

The people of the bazaar flocked round them, saying, "What is to do?" and he replied, "Know, O folk, that I bought a veil of this merchant for fifty dinars and gave it to my slave-girl, who wore it awhile, then sat down to fumigate it. Presently, a spark flew out of the chafing dish and lighting on the edge of the veil, burnt a hole in it. So we committed it to this pestilent old woman, that she might give it to who should darn it and return it to us, and we have never set eyes on her again till this day." "This young man speaks the truth," answered the old woman. "I did indeed have the veil of him, but I took it with me into one of the houses where I used to visit and forgot it there, nor do I know where I left it; and being a poor woman, I feared its owner and dared not face him."

Now the girl's husband was listening to all they said and when he heard the tale that the crafty old woman had contrived with the young man, he rose to his feet and said, "God is Most Great! I crave pardon of the Almighty for my offences and what my

heart suspected!" And he praised God who had discovered to him the truth. Then he accosted the old woman and said to her, "Dost thou use to visit us?" "O my son," replied she, "I visit you and other than you, for the sake of alms; but from that day to this, none hath given me any news of the veil." Quoth the merchant, "Hast thou asked at my house?" "O my lord," answered she, "I did indeed go to thy house and ask; but they told me that the lady of the house had been divorced by her husband; so I asked no farther." With this, the merchant turned to the young man and said, "Let the old woman go her way; for the veil is with me." So saying, he brought it out from the shop and gave it to the darner before all the folk. Then he betook himself to the damsel and giving her some money, took her again to wife, after making abundance of excuses to her and asking pardon of God, because he knew not what the old woman had done. This then, O King,' said the Vizier, 'is an instance of the malice of women, and for another to the same purport, I have heard tell that

The King's Son and the Afrits Mistress.

A CERTAIN king's son was once walking alone for his pleasure, when he came to a green meadow, abounding in trees laden with fruit and birds singing on the branches, and a river running through it. The place pleased him; so he sat down there and taking out some conserves he had brought with him, began to eat. Presently, he espied a great smoke rising up to heaven and taking fright, climbed up into a tree and hid himself among the branches. Thence he saw an Afrit rise out of the midst of the stream, with a chest of marble, secured by a padlock, on his head. He set down the chest on the sward and opened it, and there came forth a damsel like the sun shining in the cloudless sky. He gazed on her awhile, then laid his head in her lap and fell asleep, whereupon she lifted up his head and laying it on the chest, rose and walked about.

Presently, she chanced to raise her eyes to the tree in which was the prince, and seeing him, signed to him to come down. He refused, but she swore to him that, except he came down and did as she bade him, she would wake the Afrit and point him out to him, when he would straightway kill him. The prince, fearing she would do as she said, came down, whereupon she kissed his hands and feet and conjured him to do her occasion, to which he consented; and when he had satisfied her desires, she said to him, "Give me the seal-ring on thy finger." So he gave it to her and she laid it in a silken handkerchief she had with her, wherein were more than fourscore others. When the prince saw this, he asked her what she did with all these rings and she answered, saying, "Know that this Afrit carried me off from my father's palace and shut me in this box, which he carries about on his head wherever he goes; and he hardly leaves me a moment, of the excess of his jealousy over me, and hinders me from what I desire. When I saw this, I swore that I would deny my favours to no one, and these rings thou seest are after the tale of the men who have had to do with me; for I took from each a ring and laid it in this handkerchief. And now go thy ways, that I may look for another than thee, for the Afrit will not awake yet awhile."

So the prince returned to his father's palace, hardly crediting what he had heard, and when the King heard that his son had lost his ring, he bade put him to death, knowing not how the damsel had beguiled him. (Now she feared this not, neither took any account thereof.) Then he rose and entered his palace; but his Viziers came in to him and prevailed with him to abandon his purpose. The same night, the King sent for them and thanked them for having dissuaded him from slaying his son; and the latter also thanked them, saying, "It was well done of you to counsel my father to let me live, and God willing, I will abundantly requite you." Then he related to them how he had lost the ring, and they offered up prayers for his long life and advancement and withdrew. See then, O King,' said the Vizier, 'the malice of women and what they do unto men.'

The King hearkened to the Vizier's counsel and again countermanded his order to slay his son. Next morning, it being the eighth day, as the King sat in his audience-chamber in the midst of his grandees and amirs and officers and men of learning, the prince entered, with his hand in that of his governor, Es Sindibad, and praised his

father and his Viziers and grandees in the most eloquent words and thanked them; so that all who were present wondered at his eloquence and fluency and the excellence of his speech. His father rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and calling him to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he called Es Sindibad and asked him why his son had kept silence these seven days, to which he replied, 'O my lord, it was I who enjoined him to this, in my fear for him of death; for, when I took his nativity, I found it written in the stars that, if he should speak during this period, he would surely die; but now the danger is over, by the King's fortune.'

At this the King rejoiced and said to his Viziers, 'If I had killed my son would the fault have fallen on me or the damsel or Es Sindibad?' But they refrained from answering and Es Sindibad said to the prince, 'Answer thou, O my son.' Quoth he, 'I have heard tell that certain guests once alighted at a merchant's house, and he sent his slave-girl to the market, to buy a jar of milk. So she bought it and set out on her return; but, on her way home, there passed over her a kite, holding a serpent in its claws, and a drop of the serpent's venom fell into the jar of milk, unknown of the girl. So, when she came back, the merchant took the milk from her and drank of it, he and his guests; but hardly had it settled in their stomachs when they all died. Now tell me, O King, whose was the fault in this case?' Some said, 'It was the fault of the company, who drank the milk, without examining it.' And other some, 'That of the girl, who left the jar uncovered.' But Es Sindibad said to the prince, 'What sayest thou, O my son?' 'I say,' answered the prince, 'that the folk err; it was neither the fault of the damsel nor of the company, for their appointed hour was come, with the exhaustion of their divinely-decreed provision, and God had fore-ordained them to die thus.'

When the courtiers heard this, they marvelled greatly and lifted up their voices, calling down blessings on the prince and saying, 'O our lord, thou hast made a peerless answer, and thou art the wisest man of thy time.' 'Indeed, I am no sage,' answered the prince; 'the blind sheikh and the three-year-old child and the five-year-old were wiser than I.' 'O youth,' said the bystanders, 'tell us the stories of these three who were wiser than thou.' 'With all my heart,' answered he, 'I have heard tell that

The Sandal-wood Merchant and the Sharpers.

THERE was once a rich merchant, who was a great traveller. One day, being minded to journey to a certain city, he asked those who came thence what kind of goods brought most profit there, "Sandal-wood," answered they; "for it sells at a high price." So he laid out all his money in sandal-wood and set out for the city in question. When he arrived there, it was the close of the day, and he met an old woman driving her sheep. Quoth she to him, "Who art thou, O man?" and he answered, saying, "I am a stranger, a merchant." "Beware of the townsfolk," said she, "for they are cheats and robbers, who impose on strangers that they may get the better of them and devour their substance. Indeed, I give thee good counsel."

Then she left him and on the morrow there met him a man, who saluted him and said to him, "O my lord, whence comest thou?" "From such a place," answered the merchant. "And what merchandise hast thou brought with thee?" asked the other. "Sandal-wood," replied he; "for I hear it is high of price with you." Quoth the townsman, "He erred who told thee that; for we burn nothing but sandal-wood under our cooking-pots, and its value with us is but that of firewood." When the merchant heard this, he sighed and repented and knew not whether to believe him or not. Then he alighted at one of the khans of the city and when it was night, he saw a merchant make a fire of sandal-wood under his cooking-pot. Now this was the man who had spoken with him and this was a trick of his. When the townsman saw the merchant [looking at him,] he said to him, "Wilt thou sell me thy sandal-wood for a measure of whatever thy soul shall desire?" "I sell it to thee," answered the merchant, purposing to take gold, and the buyer transported all the wood to his own house and stored it up there.

Next morning, the merchant, who was a blue-eyed man, went out to walk in the city; but, as he went along, one of the townsfolk, who was also blue-eyed and had but one eye, caught hold of him, saying, "Thou art he who stole my eye and I will never let thee go [till thou restore it to me]." The merchant denied this, saying, "I never stole [thine eye]: the thing is impossible." Whereupon the folk collected round them and besought the one-eyed man to grant him till the morrow, that he might give him the price of his eye. So the merchant procured one to be surety for him, and they let him go. Now his shoe had been rent in the struggle with the one-eyed man; so he stopped at a cobbler's stall and bade him mend it, and he should have of him what would content him. Then be went on, till he came to some people sitting playing at forfeits and sat down with them, to divert his grief and anxiety. They invited him to play with them and he did so; but they practised on him and overcoming him, offered him his choice, either to drink up the sea or disburse all be had. "Have patience with me till to-morrow," said he, and they granted him the delay he sought; whereupon he went away, sore concerned for what had betided him and knowing not how he should do, and sat down in a place [apart], heavy at heart and full of melancholy thought.

Presently, the old woman passed by and seeing him thus, said to him, "Meseems the townsfolk have gotten the better of thee, for I see thee troubled and heavy of heart. Tell me what ails thee." So he told her all that had passed and she said. "As for him

who cheated thee in the matter of the sandal-wood, thou must know that with us it is worth ten dinars a pound. But I will give thee a counsel, whereby I trust thou shalt deliver thyself; and it is this. By such and such a gate lives a blind sheikh, a cripple, who is knowing, wise and experienced, and all resort to him and ask him what they will, and he counsels them what will be for their advantage; for he is versed in craft and magic and trickery. Now he is a sharper and the sharpers resort to him by night [and recount to him the tricks they have played during the day], and he [passes judgment upon them and] tells them which got the better and which was bettered. So go thou to his lodging and hide thyself from thine adversaries, so thou mayst hear what they say, unseen of them; and haply thou shalt learn from the sheikh some subterfuge that may avail to deliver thee from them."

So he went to the place in question and hid himself near the blind man. Before long, up came the latter's company who were wont to take him as their judge, and amongst them the merchant's four adversaries. They saluted the sheikh and each other and sat down round him, whereupon he set food before them and they ate. Then each began to tell what had befallen him that day, and amongst the rest came forward he of the sandal-wood and told how he had bought of one sandal-wood, below its price, and had agreed to pay for it a measure of whatever the seller should desire. Quoth the old man, "Thine opponent hath the better of thee." " How can that be," asked the other, "seeing that, if he say, 'I will take the measure full of gold or silver,' I will give it him and still be the gainer?" And the sheikh answered, "And if he say, 'I will take the measure full of fleas, half male and half female,' what wilt thou do?" So the sharper knew that he was beaten.

Then came forward the one-eyed man and said, "O Sheikh, I met a blue-eyed man to-day, a stranger to the town; so I picked a quarrel with him and caught hold of him, saying, 'It was thou robbedst me of my eye;' nor did I let him go, till some became surety for him that he should return to me to-morrow and satisfy me for my eye." Quoth the sheikh, "If he will, he may have the better of thee." "How so?" asked the sharper; and the sheikh said, "He may say to thee, 'Pluck out thine eye, and I will pluck out one of mine; then will we weigh them both, and if thine eye be of the same weight as mine, thou speakest truth in what thou avouchest.' So wilt thou owe him the price of his eye and be stone blind, whilst he will still see with his other eye." So the sharper knew that the merchant might baffle him with this subterfuge.

Then came the cobbler and said, "O Sheikh, a man brought me his shoe to-day, saying, 'Mend this shoe and thou shalt have of me what will content thee.' Now nothing will content me but all he hath." Quoth the sheikh, "If he will, he may take his shoe from thee and give thee nothing." "How so?" asked the cobbler, and the sheikh, "He has but to say to thee, 'The sultan's enemies are put to the rout; his foes are become weak and his children and helpers are multiplied. Art thou content or no?'" "If thou say, 'I am content,' he will take his shoe and go away; and if thou say, 'I am not content,' he will take his shoe and beat thee therewith over the face and neck." So the cobbler owned himself beaten.

Then came forward the gamester and said, "O Sheikh, I played at forfeits with a man to-day and beat him and adjudged him to drink up the sea or give up to me all his wealth." "If he will," replied the sheikh, "he may baffle thee." "How so?" asked the

sharper, and the sheikh, "He has but to say, 'Take the mouth of the sea in thine hand and give it me and I will drink it.' But thou wilt not be able to do this; so he will baffle thee with this subterfuge." When the merchant heard this, he knew how it behoved him to deal with his adversaries. Then the sharpers went their way and the merchant returned to his lodging.

On the morrow, the gamester came to him and summoned him to redeem his forfeit; so he said to him, "Give me the mouth of the sea and I will drink it up." Whereupon he confessed himself beaten and redeemed his forfeit by paying a hundred dinars. Then came the cobbler and sought of him what should content him. Quoth the merchant, "Our lord the Sultan hath overcome his foes and put his enemies to nought and his children are multiplied. Art thou content or no?" "I am content," replied the cobbler aud giving up the shoe without payment, went away. Next came the one-eyed man and demanded the price of his eye. "Pluck out thine eye," said the merchant, "and I will pluck out one of mine. Then will we weigh them, and if they are equal in weight, I will acknowledge the truth of thine avouchment and pay thee the price ot thine eye; but, if they differ, thou liest and I will sue thee for the price of my eye." Quoth the one-eyed man, "Grant me time;" but the merchant answered, saying, "I am a stranger and grant time to none, nor will I part from thee, [till thou satisfy me]." So the sharper ransomed his eye by paying him a hundred dinars and went away. Last of all came the buyer of the sandal-wood and said, "Take the price of thy ware." "What wilt thou give me?" asked the merchant, and the other, "We agreed for a measure of whatever thou shouldst desire; so, if thou wilt, take it full of gold and silver." "Not I," answered the merchant. "Nothing will serve me but I must have it full of fleas, half male and half female." "This is a thing none may avail unto," said the sharper, and confessing himself beaten, returned him his sandal-wood and redeemed himself from him with a hundred dinars, to be off his bargain. Then the merchant sold the sandal-wood at his own price and returned to his own country.

As for the three-year-old child,' continued the prince, 'I have heard tell that

The Debauchee and the Three-year-old Child.

A CERTAIN profligate man, who was addicted to women, once heard of a beautiful and graceful woman who dwelt in a town other than his own. So he journeyed thither, taking with him a gift, and wrote her a letter, seeking access to her and setting out all that he suffered for longing and desire for her and how the love of her had driven him to forsake his native land and come to her. She gave him leave to visit her and received him with all honour and worship, kissing his hands and entertaining him with the best of meat and drink. Now she had a little three-year-old son, whom she left and busied herself in cooking rice. Presently the man said to her, "Come, let us go to bed;" and she, "My son is sitting looking at us." Quoth the man, "He is a little child, understanding not neither knowing how to speak." "Thou wouldst not say thus," answered the woman, "if thou knewest his intelligence." When the boy saw that the rice was done, he fell to weeping bitterly, and his mother said to him, "What ails thee to weep, O my son?" "Give me some rice," answered he, "and put butter in it." So she ladled him out somewhat of rice and put butter therein; and he ate a little, then began to weep again. Quoth she, "What ails thee now?" and he answered, saying, "O my mother, I want same sugar with my rice." At this the man was angered and said to him, "Thou art none other than a curst child." "It is thou who art curst," answered the boy, "seeing thou weariest thyself and journeyest from city to city, in quest of lewdness. As for me, I wept because I had somewhat in my eye, and my weeping brought it out; and now I have eaten rice with butter and sugar and am content; so which is the curst of us twain?" The man was confounded at this rebuke from a little child and grace entered him and he repented. Wherefore he laid not a finger on the woman, but went out from her forthright and returned to his own country, where he lived a contrite life till he died.

As for the story of the five-year-old child,' continued the prince, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

The Stolen Purse.

FOUR merchants once owned a thousand dinars is common; so they laid them in one purse and set out to buy goods therewith. On their way, they happened on a beautiful garden; so they left the purse with a woman who kept the garden and entered. After they had walked about awhile and eaten and drunken and made merry, one of them said to the others, "I have with me scented fuller's earth; come, let us wash our heads therewith in this running water." Quoth another, "We lack a comb;" and a third, "Let us ask the keeper; belike she hath a comb." Thereupon one of them arose and accosting the keeper, whereas his comrades could see him, but not hear what he said, maid to her, "Give me the purse." Quoth she, "I will not give it up, except ye be all present or thy fellows bid me give it thee." Then he called to his companions, saying, "She will not give it me." And they said to her, "Give it him," thinking he meant the comb. So she gave him the purse and he took it and made off.

When the three others were weary of waiting, they went to the keeper and said to her, "Why wilt thou not give him the comb?" "He asked me for nought but the purse," answered she, "and I gave it not but with your consent, and he went his way with it." When they heard this, they buffeted their faces and said to her, "We authorized thee only to give him the comb." And she, "He named not a comb to me." Then they laid hands on her and haled her before the Cadi, to whom they made their complaint, and he condemned her to make good the purse and bound a number of her debtors surety for her. So she went forth, confounded and knowing not what she should do.

Presently, she met a five-year-old boy, who, seeing her troubled, said to her, "What ails thee, O my mother?" But she gave him no answer, making no account of him, because of his tender age, and he repeated his question a second and a third time, till, at last, she told him all that had passed. "Give me a dirhem, to buy sweetmeats withal," said the boy; "and I will tell thee how thou mayst acquit thyself." So she gave him a dirhem and said to him, "What hast thou to say?" "Return to the Cadi," quoth he, "and say to him, 'It was agreed between myself and them that I should not give them, back the purse, except all four of them were present. Let them all four come and I will give them the purse, as was agreed.'" So she went back to the Cadi and said to him as the boy had counselled; and he said to the merchants, "Was it thus agreed between you?" "Yes," answered they. "Then bring me your fellow," said the Cadi, "and take the purse." So they went in quest of their fellow, whilst the keeper came off scot free and went her way without hindrance.'

When the King's viziers and those who were present in the assembly heard the prince's words, they said to his father, 'O our Lord the King, of a truth thy son is the most accomplished man of his time,' and they called down blessings upon the King and the prince. Then the King strained his son to his bosom and kissed him between the eyes and questioned him of what had passed between the favourite and himself; and the prince swore to him, by God the Supreme and by His Holy Prophet, that it was she who had required him of love and he refused. 'Moreover,' said he, 'she promised me that she would give thee poison to drink and kill thee, so should the kingship be mine; whereupon I waxed wroth and said to her, [by signs] "O accursed

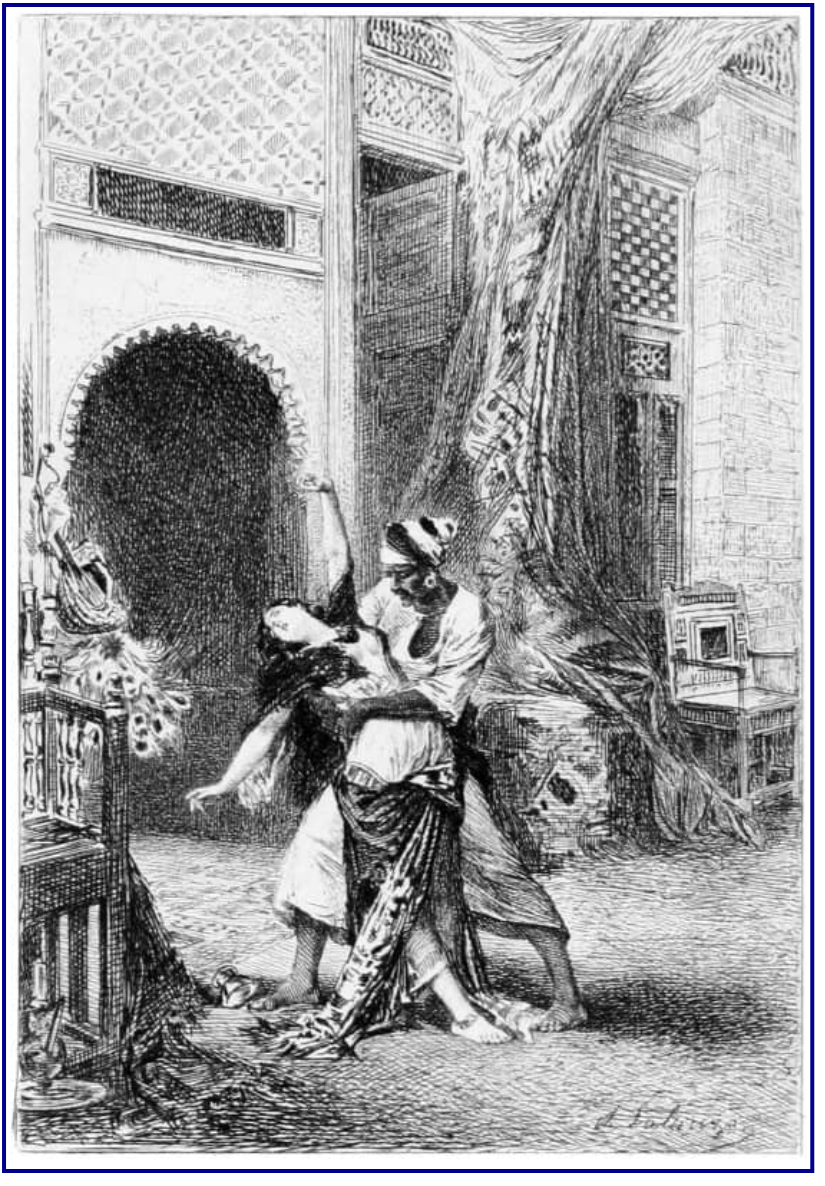
one, when I can speak, I will requite thee." So, in her fear of me, she did as thou hast seen.' The King believed his words and sending for the damsel, said to those present, 'How shall we put this damsel to death?' Some counselled to cut out her tongue and other some to burn it with fire; but, when she came before the King, she said to him, 'My case with thee is like unto the story of the fox and the folk.' 'How so?' asked he; and she said, 'I have heard tell, O King, that

Story of the Fox and the Folk.

A FOX once made his way into a city by the wall and entering a currier's storehouse, played havoc with what was therein and spoiled the skins for the owner. One day, the currier set a trap for him and taking him, beat him with the hides, till he fell down senseless, whereupon the man, deeming him to be dead, cast him out into the road by the city-gate. Presently, an old woman came up and seeing the fox, said, "A fox's eye, hung about a child's neck, is salutary against weeping." So she pulled out his right eye and went away. Then came a boy, who said, "What does this tail on this fox?" and cut off his brush. After awhile, up came a man and saying, "A fox's gall clears away dimness from the eyes, if they be anointed therewith," [took out his knife and made to slit the fox's paunch]; but the latter said in himself; "We bore with the pulling out of the eye and the cutting off of the tail; but, as for the slitting of the paunch, there is no putting up with that." So saying, he sprang up and made off through the gate of the city.'

Quoth the King, 'I excuse her, and in my son's hands be her doom. If he will, let him torture her, and if he will, let him put her to death.' Quoth the prince, 'Forgiveness is better than vengeance and it is of the fashion of the noble;' and the King repeated, 'It is for thee to decide, O my son.' So the prince set her free, saying, 'Depart from our neighbourhood and may God pardon what is past!'

Therewith the King rose from his couch of estate and seating his son thereon, crowned him with his crown and bade the grandees of his realm swear fealty and do homage to him. And he said, 'O folk, indeed, I am stricken in years and desire to withdraw apart and give myself up to the service of my Lord, and I call you to witness that divest myself of the royal dignity, even as I have divested myself of my crown, and set it on my son's head.' So the troops and officers swore fealty to the prince, and his father gave himself up to the worship of his Lord nor stinted from this, whilst his son abode in his kingship, doing justice and righteousness; and his power was magnified and his dominion strengthened and he abode in all delight and solace of life, till there came to him the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.



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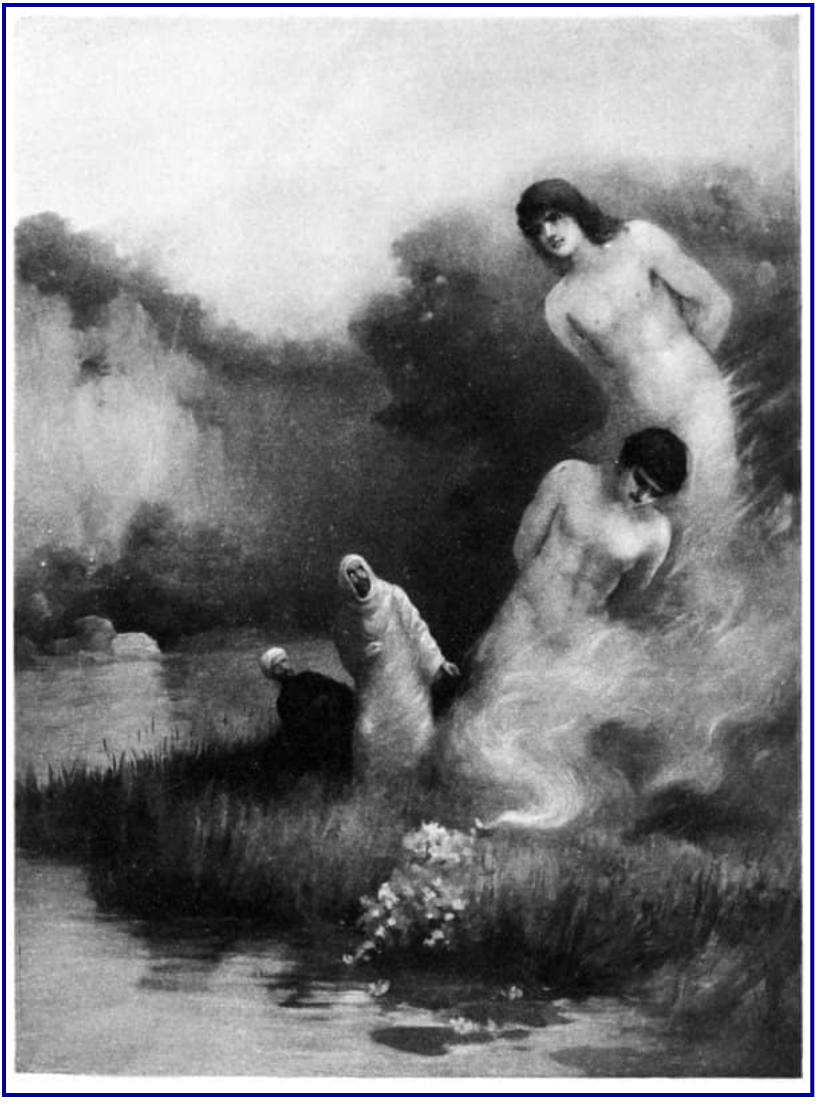


Jouder and His Brothers.

THERE was once a merchant named Omar and he had three sons, the eldest of whom was called Salim, the second Selim and the third Jouder. He reared them all till they came to man's estate, but the youngest he loved more than his brothers, who, seeing this, waxed jealous of Jouder and hated him. Now their father was a man stricken in years, and when he saw that his two eldest sons hated their brother, he feared lest trouble should befall him from them after his death. So he assembled a company of his kinsfolk, together with divers men of learning and assessors of the Cadi's court, and letting bring all his money and stuff, said to them, 'O folk, divide ye this money and stuff into four parts, according to the law.' They did so, and he gave one part to each of his sons and kept the fourth himself, saying, "This was my good and I have divided it among them; and now they have no farther claim upon me nor upon each other; so, when I die, no difference shall arise between them, seeing that I have parted the inheritance among them in my lifetime; and this that I have kept shall be for my wife, their mother, wherewithal to provide for her subsistence [after my death]."

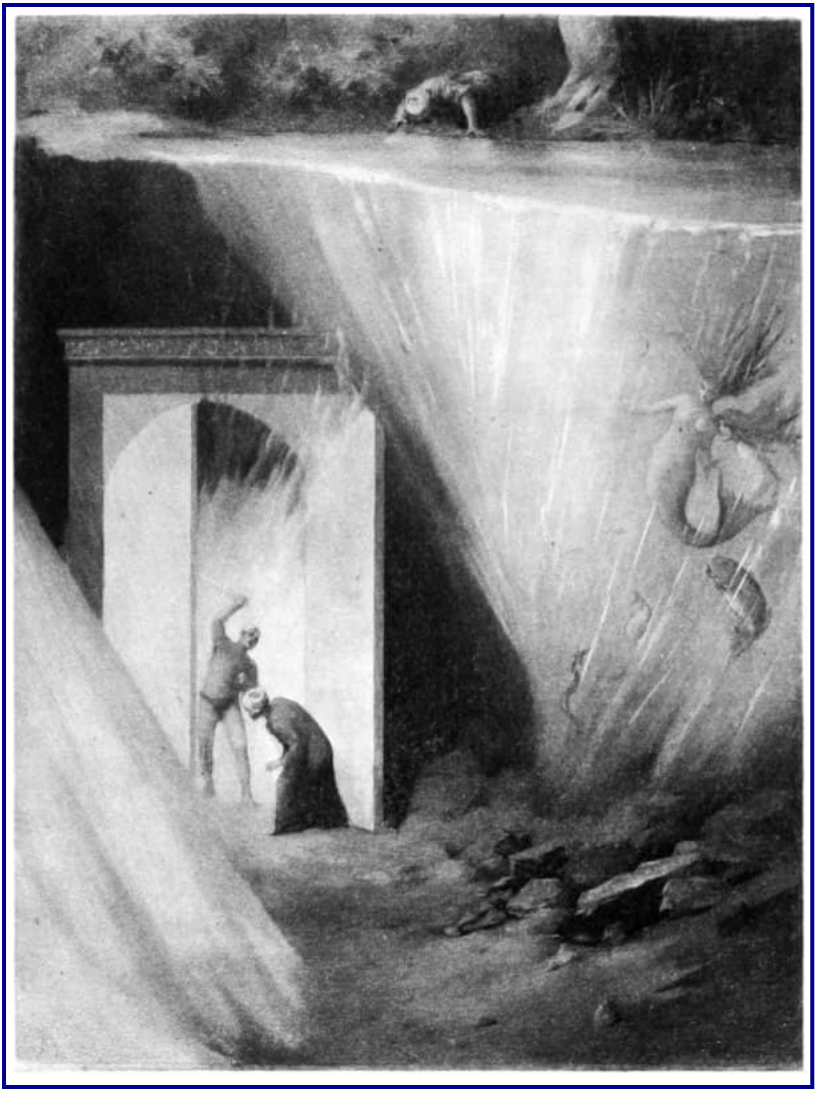
A little while after this he died, and neither of the two elder brothers was content with his share, but sought more of Jouder, saying, 'Our father's good is in thy hands.' So he appealed to the judges and those who had been present at the partition came and bore witness of that which they knew, wherefore the judge forbade them from each other; but Jouder and his brothers spent much money in bribes to him. After this, they left him awhile, but presently they began again to torment him and he again appealed to the magistrate, [who again gave judgment in his favour;] but all three once more lost much money in bribes. Nevertheless Salim and Selim forbore not to seek his hurt [and to carry the case] from court to court, losing, he and they, till they had given all their good for food to the oppressors and they became poor, all three. Then the two elder brothers went to their mother and took her money and beat her and laughed at her and drove her away. So she betook herself to her son Jouder and told him how his brothers had dealt with her and fell to cursing them. 'O my mother,' said he, 'do not curse them, for God will requite each of them his deed. See, I am become poor, and so are my brethren, for contention begetteth loss of good, and we have contended amain, I and they, before the judges, and it hath profited us nothing: nay, we have wasted all our father left us and are disgraced among the folk by reason of our testimony, [one against the other]. Shall I then contend with them anew on thine account and shall we appeal to the judges? This may not be; rather do thou take up thine abode with me, and the cake of bread I eat I will share with thee. Do thou pray for me and God will give me the means of thy support. Leave them to receive of Him the recompense of their deed, and console thyself with the saying of the poet:

If a lewd fellow should transgress against thee, let him be,
And wait till God shall punish him who doth iniquity;
Neither oppress, for if a mount another should oppress,
The evil-doer would be crushed therefore, assuredly.

And he comforted her till she consented and took up her dwelling with him. Then he got him a net and went a-fishing every day in the river or the lakes or some other place in which there was water; and one day he would earn ten paras, another twenty and another thirty, which he spent upon his mother and himself, and they ate and drank well. But, as for his brothers, they plied no craft and sold not neither bought; misery and ruin and overwhelming calamity overtook them and they wasted that which they had taken from their mother and became wretched naked beggars. Bytimes they would come to their mother, humbling themselves to her exceedingly and complaining of hunger; and she, a mother's heart being pitiful, would give them some mouldy bread; or, if there were any cooked meat of the day before, she would say to them, 'Eat it quickly and go, before your brother comes; for it would be grievous to him and he would harden his heart against me, and ye would disgrace me with him.' So they would eat in haste and go.

One day they came in to their mother, and she set cooked meat and bread before them. As they were eating, in came their brother Jouder, at whose sight their mother hung her head in shame and confusion, fearing lest he should be wroth with her. But he smiled in their faces, saying, 'Welcome, O my brothers! This is indeed a blessed day. How comes it that ye visit me this blessed day?' Then he embraced them and entreated them lovingly, saying to them, 'I thought not that ye would have deserted me nor that ye would have forborne to visit me and your mother.' 'By Allah, O my brother,' said they, 'we longed sore for thee and nought withheld us but shamefastness because of what befell between us and thee; but indeed we have repented amain. It was Satan's doing, the curse of God the Most High be upon him! And now we have no blessing but thee and our mother.' 'And I,' rejoined Jouder, 'I have no blessing but you twain.' And his mother exclaimed, 'God whiten thy face, O my son, and increase thy prosperity, for thou art the best of us all!' Then he said to his brothers, 'Welcome to you both! Abide with me; for God is bountiful and good aboundeth with me.' So he made peace with them and they ate the evening meal and passed the night with him.

Next morning, after they had broken their fast, Jouder shouldered his net and went out, trusting in [God] the Opener [of the gates of sustenance,] whilst the two others also went forth and were absent till noon, when they returned and their mother set the midday meal before them. At nightfall, Jouder came home, bearing meat and vegetables, and they abode thus a month's space, Jouder catching fish and spending their price on his mother and his brothers, and the latter eating and amusing themselves, till, one day, he went down to the river-bank and casting his net, brought it up empty. He cast it a second time, but again it came up empty and he said to himself, 'There are no fish in this place.' So he removed to another place and cast the net there, but with no better success. And he ceased not to remove from place to place till nightfall, but caught not a single gudgeon and said to himself, 'Strange! Is the river drained of fish or what?' Then he shouldered the net and made for home, chagrined and concerned for his mother and brothers and knowing not how he should feed them that night.



Presently he came to a baker's oven and saw the folk crowding for bread, with money in their hands, whilst the baker took no note of them. So he stood there, sighing, and the baker said to him, 'Welcome, O Jouder! Dost thou want bread?' But he was silent and the baker continued, 'If thou hast no money, take thy sufficiency and thou shalt have credit.' So Jouder said, 'Give me ten paras' worth of bread and take this net in pledge.' 'Nay, good fellow,' rejoined the baker, 'the net is thy means of earning thy livelihood, and if I take it of thee, I shall close up against thee the door of thy subsistence. Take ten paras' worth of bread and take these other ten paras, and to-morrow bring me fish for the twenty.' 'On my head and eyes be it,' answered Jouder and took the bread and money, saying, 'To-morrow God will provide me the means of acquittance.' Then he bought meat and vegetables and carried them home to his mother, who cooked them, and they supped and went to bed.

Next morning he arose at daybreak and took the net, and his mother said to him, 'Sit down and break thy fast.' But he said, 'Do thou and my brothers breakfast,' and went down to the river, where he ceased not to cast and shift about all day, without aught falling to him, till the hour of afternoon-prayer, when he shouldered his net and went away, sore dejected. His way led him perforce by the shop of the baker, who, when he saw him, counted out to him the loaves and the money, saying, 'Come, take it and go; if it be not for to-day, it will be for to-morrow.' Jouder would have excused himself, but the baker said to him, 'There needs no excuse; if thou hadst caught aught, it would be with thee; so, when I saw thee empty-handed, I knew thou hadst gotten nought; and if to-morrow thou have no better luck, come and take bread and be not ashamed, for I will give thee credit.' So Jouder took the bread and money and went home. Next day he sallied forth and fished from lake to lake until the time of afternoon-prayer, but caught nothing; so he went to the baker and took the bread and silver as usual.

Thus he did seven days running, till he became disheartened and said in himself, 'To-day I will go to Lake Caroun.' So he went thither and was about to cast his net, when there came up to him unawares a Moor clad in a splendid habit and riding a mule with trappings embroidered with gold and on her back a pair of saddle-bags of the same stuff. The Moor alighted and said to him, 'Peace be upon thee, O Jouder, son of Omar!' 'And on thee, O my lord the pilgrim!' replied the fisherman. Quoth the Moor, 'O Jouder, I have need of thee and if thou obey me, thou shalt get great good and shalt be my companion and do my occasions for me.' 'O my lord,' replied Jouder, 'Tell me what is in thy mind and I will obey thee, without demur.' Quoth the Moor, 'Repeat the First Chapter of the Koran.' So he recited it with him and the Moor, bringing out a silken cord, said to Jouder, 'Bind my hands fast behind me with this cord and cast me into the lake; then wait awhile and if thou see my hands appear above the water, cast thy net over me and draw me out in haste; but if I come up, feet foremost, then know that I am dead; in which case do thou leave me and take the mule and saddle-bags and carry them to the merchants' bazaar, where thou wilt find a Jew, by name Shemaiah. Deliver him the mule and he will give thee a hundred dinars, which do thou take and go thy ways and keep the matter secret.' So Jouder bound his hands behind his back and he kept saying, 'Tighter.' Then said he, 'Push me into the lake.' So he pushed him in and he sank.

Jouder stood waiting some time, till, at last, the Moor's feet appeared above the water, whereupon he knew that he was dead. So he left him and drove the mule to the bazaar, where he found the Jew seated on a stool at the door of his storehouse. When the latter saw the mule, he said, 'The man hath perished and nought undid him but covetise.' Then he took the mule from Jouder and gave him a hundred dinars, charging him keep the matter secret. So Jouder went to the baker and giving him a dinar, took what bread he needed. The baker reckoned up what was due to him and said, 'I still owe thee two days' bread.' 'Good,' answered Jouder and went on to the butcher, to whom he gave a dinar and took meat, saying, 'Keep the rest of the dinar on account.' Then he bought vegetables and going home, found his brothers importuning their mother for food, whilst she said, 'Have patience till your brother comes home, for I have nothing.' So he went in to them and said, 'Take and eat;' and they fell on the victual like ghouls. Then he gave his mother the rest of the dinars, bidding her, if his brothers came to her, give them wherewithal to buy food and eat in his absence.

Next morning he took his net and going down to Lake Caroun, was about to cast his net, when there came up to him a second Moor, riding on a mule, more handsomely accoutred than he of the day before and having with him a pair of saddle-bags, in each pocket of which was a casket. 'Peace be on thee, O Jouder!' said the Moor. 'And on thee be peace, O my lord the pilgrim!' replied Jouder. Quoth the Moor, 'Did there come to thee yesterday a Moor riding on a mule like this of mine?' At this Jouder was alarmed and replied, 'I saw none,' fearing lest the other should say, 'Whither went he?' and if he answered, 'He was drowned in the lake,' that he should charge him with having drowned him; wherefore he could not but deny. 'Harkye, good fellow,' rejoined the Moor, 'this was my brother, who is gone before me.' Quoth Jouder, 'I know nothing of him.' Then said the Moor, 'Didst thou not bind his hands behind him and throw him into the lake, and did he not say to thee, "If my hands appear above the water first, cast thy net over me and pull me out in haste; but, if my feet appear first, know that I am dead and carry the mule to the Jew Shemaiah, who will give thee a hundred dinars?" And did not his feet appear first and didst thou not carry the mule to the Jew and take of him the hundred dinars?' 'Since thou knowest all this,' replied Jouder, 'why dost thou question me?' Quoth the Moor, 'I would have thee do with me as thou didst with my brother.' Then he gave him a silken cord, saying, 'Bind my hands behind me and throw me in, and if I fare as did my brother, take the mule to the Jew and he will give thee other hundred dinars.' Quoth Jouder, 'Come.' So he came and he bound him and pushed him into the lake, where he sank.

After awhile, his feet appeared above the water and Jouder said, 'He is dead and damned! So God will, may Moors come to me every day, and I will bind them and push them in and they shall die; and I will be content with a hundred dinars for each dead man.' Then he took the mule to the Jew, who exclaimed, on seeing him, 'The other is dead?' 'May thy head live!' answered Jouder, and the Jew said, 'This is the reward of the covetous.' Then he took the mule and gave Jouder a hundred dinars, with which he returned to his mother. 'O my son,' said she, 'whence hast thou this money?' So he told her and she said, 'Go not again to Lake Caroun, for I fear for thee from the Moors.' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'I do but cast them in by their own wish, and what am I to do? This craft brings me in a hundred dinars a day and I return speedily;

wherefore, by Allah, I will not leave going to Lake Caroun, till the trace of the Moors is cut off and not one of them is left.'

So, on the morrow, he went down to the lake and stood there, till there came up a third Moor, riding on a mule and still more richly accoutred than the first two, who said to him, 'Peace be on thee, O Jouder, O son of Omar!' And the fisherman returned his salute, saying in himself, 'How comes it that they all know me?' Quoth the Moor, 'Have any Moors passed by here?' 'Two,' answered Jouder. 'Whither went they?' asked the Moor, and Jouder said, 'I bound their hands behind them and cast them into the lake, where they were drowned, and the same fate is in store for thee.' The Moor laughed and rejoined, saying, 'O good fellow, every living soul hath its appointed term.' Then he alighted and gave the fisherman the silken cord, saying, 'Do with me as thou didst with them.' 'Put thy hands behind thy back,' said Jouder, 'that I may pinion thee, for I am in haste, and time flies.' So he put his hands behind him and Jouder bound him and cast him in. Then he waited awhile, till presently the Moor thrust his hands forth of the water and called out to him, saying, 'Ho, good fellow! Cast out thy net!' So Jouder cast the net over him and drew him ashore, and behold, in each hand he held a fish as red as coral. Quoth the Moor, 'Bring me the two caskets [that are in the saddle-bags].' So Jouder brought them and opened them to him, and he laid in each casket a fish and shut them up.

Then he pressed Jouder to his bosom and kissed him on the right cheek and the left, saying, 'God save thee from all stress! By Allah, hadst thou not cast the net over me and pulled me out, I should have kept my grip of the two fish till I sank and was drowned, for I could not get ashore [of myself].' 'O my lord the pilgrim,' quoth Jouder, 'I conjure thee by Allah, tell me the true history of the two drowned men and the fishes and the Jew.' 'Know, O Jouder,' replied the Moor, 'that these that were drowned were my two brothers, by name Abdusselam and Abdulahed. My own name is Abdussemed, and the Jew also is our brother: his name is Abdurrehim and he is no Jew, but a true believer of the Maliki school. Our father, whose name was Abdulwedoud, taught us magic and the art of solving mysteries and bringing to light hidden treasures, and we applied ourselves thereto, till we compelled the Afrits and Marids of the Jinn to do us service. By-and-by, our father died and left us much wealth, and we divided amongst us his treasures and talismans, till we came to the books, when we fell out over a book called "The Fables of the Ancients," whose like is not in the world, nor can its price be paid of any nor its value made good with gold and jewels; for in it are particulars of all the hidden treasures of the earth and the solution of all mysteries. Our father was wont to make use of this book, of which we had some small matter by heart, and each of us desired to possess it, that he might come at what was therein.

Now there was in our company an old man, by name the Diviner El Abten, who had reared our father and taught him divination and magic, and he said to us, "Bring me the book." So we gave it him and he said, "Ye are my son's sons, and it may not be that I should wrong any of you. So whoso is minded to have the book, let him address himself to achieve the treasure of Es Shemerdel and bring me the celestial planisphere and the kohl-pot and the seal-ring and the sword. For the ring hath a Marid that serves it called Er Raad el Casif. And whoso hath possession thereof, neither King nor Sultan

may prevail against him; and if he will, he may therewith make himself master of the earth, in all its length and breadth. As for the sword, if its bearer draw it and brandish it against an army, the army will be put to the rout, and if he say the while, 'Slay yonder host,' there will come forth of the sword lightning and fire, that will slay the whole host. As for the planisphere, its possessor has only to turn its face toward any country with whose sight he hath a mind to divert himself, and therein he will see that country and its people, as they were before him, and he sitting in his place; and if he be wroth with a city and have a mind to burn it, he has but to turn the face of the planisphere towards the sun's disc, saying, 'Let such a city be burnt,' and that city will be consumed with fire. As for the kohl-pot, whoso anointeth his eyes therefrom, he shall see all the treasures of the earth. And I make this condition with you that none but he who achieves the treasure and brings me the four precious things that be therein shall have any claim to this book."

We all agreed to this, and he continued, saying, "O my sons, know that the treasure of Es Shemerdel is under the governance of the sons of the Red King, and your father told me that he had himself essayed to open the treasure, but could not achieve it; for the sons of the Red King fled from him into the land of Egypt and took refuge in a lake there, called Lake Caroun, whither he pursued them, but could not prevail over them, by reason of their stealing into that lake, which was guarded by a spell. So he returned, empty-handed, and complained to me of his ill-success, whereupon I made him an astrological calculation and found that the treasure could only be achieved by means of a young fisherman of Cairo, by name Jouder ben Omar, the place of foregathering with whom was at Lake Caroun, for that he should be the means of the taking the sons of the Red King and that the charm should not be dissolved, save if he should bind the hands of the seeker of the treasure behind him and cast him into the lake, there to do battle with the sons of the Red King. An he were he to whom the adventure was reserved, he should lay hands upon them; but, if it were not destined to him, he should perish and his feet appear above the water. As for him who was successful, his hands would appear first above the water, whereupon it behoved that Jouder should cast the net over him and draw him ashore."

Quoth my brothers Abdusselam and Abdulahed, "We will essay the adventure, though we perish;" and I said, "And I also will go;" but my brother Abdurrehim (he whom thou hast seen in the habit of a Jew) said, "I have no mind [to this]." So we agreed with him that he should repair to Cairo in the disguise of a Jewish merchant, so that, if one of us perished in the lake, he might take his mule and saddle-bags and give the bearer a hundred dinars. The first that came to thee the sons of the Red King slew, and so did they with the second; but against me they could not prevail and I laid hands on them.' Quoth Jouder, 'And where are they?' 'Didst thou not see me shut them in the caskets?' asked the Moor. 'Those were fish,' said Jouder. 'Nay,' answered the Moor, 'they are Afrits in the guise of fish. But, O Jouder,' continued he, 'thou must know that the treasure can only be achieved by thy means: so wilt thou do my bidding and go with me to the towns of Fez and Mequinez and open the treasure? And after I will give thee what thou wilt and thou shalt ever be my brother in the bond of God and return to thy family with a joyful heart.' 'O my lord the pilgrim,' said Jouder, 'I have on my hands a mother and two brothers, whose provider I am; and if I go with thee, who

shall give them bread to eat?' 'This is an idle excuse,' replied the Moor; 'if it be but a matter of spending-money, I will give thee a thousand dinars for thy mother, wherewith she may provide herself till thou come back; and indeed thou shalt return before four months.'

When Jouder heard mention of the thousand dinars, he consented and the Moor, pulling out the money, gave it to him, whereupon he carried it to his mother and told her what had passed, saying, 'Take these thousand dinars and provide thyself and my brothers withal, whilst I journey to Morocco with the Moor, for I shall be absent four months, and great good will betide me; so pray for me, O my mother!' 'O my son,' answered she, 'thou desolatest me and I fear for thee.' 'O my mother,' rejoined he, 'no harm can befall him who is in God's keeping, and the Moor is a man of worth.' And he went on to praise his fashion to her. 'May God incline his heart to thee!' said she. 'Go with him, O my son: peradventure, he will give thee somewhat.' So he took leave of her and rejoined the Moor Abdussemed, who said to him, 'Hast thou consulted thy mother?' 'Yes,' answered Jouder; 'and she blessed me.' 'Then mount behind me,' said the Moor.

So Jouder mounted behind him on the mule, and they rode on from noon till the time of afternoon-prayer, when the fisherman was anhungred, but seeing no victual with the Moor, said to him, 'O my lord the pilgrim, belike thou hast forgotten to bring aught to eat by the way?' 'Art thou hungry?' asked the Moor. 'Yes,' answered Jouder. So Abdussemed alighted and made Jouder alight and take down the saddle-bags; then he said to him, 'O my brother, what wilt thou have?' 'Anything,' replied Jouder. 'God on thee,' rejoined the Moor, 'tell me what thou hast a mind to.' 'Bread and cheese,' said Jouder; and the other, 'O good fellow, bread and cheese befit thee not; wish for something good.' 'Just now,' replied Jouder, 'everything is good to me.' Quoth the Moor, 'Dost thou like fricasseed fowl?' 'Yes,' answered Jouder. 'Dost thou like rice and honey?' asked he, and Jouder said, 'Yes.' And the Moor went on to ask him if he liked this dish and that, till he had named four-and-twenty kinds of meats; and Jouder thought to himself, 'He must be mad. Where are all these dishes to come from, seeing he hath neither cook nor kitchen?' And he said to him, 'Enough: thou makest me long for all these meats, and I see nothing.' Quoth the Moor, 'Thou art welcome, O Jouder!' and putting his hand into the saddle-bags, pulled out a dish of gold, containing two hot fricasseed fowls. Then he put in his hand a second time and pulled out a golden dish, full of kabobs; nor did he give over taking out dishes from the saddle-bags, till he had brought forth the whole of the four-and-twenty he had named, whilst Jouder looked on in amazement.

Then said the Moor, 'Eat, good fellow.' And Jouder said to him, 'O my lord, meseems thou carriest in yonder saddle-bags a kitchen and cooking-folk!' The Moor laughed and replied, 'These are enchanted saddle-bags and have a servant, who would bring us a thousand dishes an hour, if we called for them.' Quoth Jouder, 'By Allah, this is indeed a fine pair of saddle-bags!' Then they ate their fill and threw away what was left; after which the Moor replaced the empty dishes in the saddle-bags and putting in his hand, drew out an ewer. They drank and making the ablutions, prayed the afternoon-prayer; after which Abdussemed replaced the ewer and the two caskets in the saddle-bags and throwing them over the mule's back, mounted and took Jouder up

behind him. Then said he, 'O Jouder, knowest thou how far we have come, since we left Cairo?' 'Not I, by Allah,' replied he, and Abdussemed, 'We have come a whole month's journey.' 'And how is that?' asked Jouder. 'Know, O Jouder,' replied the Moor, 'that this mule under us is a Marid of the Jinn, that every day performs a year's journey; but, for thy sake, she hath gone at her leisure.'

Then they set out again and fared on westward till nightfall, when they halted and the Moor brought out the evening meal from the saddle-bags, and in like manner, in the morning, he took forth wherewithal to break their fast. So they rode on four days, alighting at midnight and sleeping till the morning, when they fared on again; and all that Jouder had a mind to, he sought of the Moor, who brought it out of the saddle-bags. On the fifth day, they arrived at Fez and Mequinez and entered the city, where all who met the Moor saluted him and kissed his hands; and he rode through the streets, till he came to a certain door, at which he knocked, whereupon it opened and out came a girl like the moon, to whom said he, 'O Rehmeh, O my daughter, open us the upper chamber.' 'On my head and eyes, O my father!' replied she and went in, swaying to and fro with a graceful and voluptuous gait, that ravished Jouder's reason, and he said, 'This is none other than a King's daughter.' So she opened the upper chamber and the Moor, taking the saddle-bags from the mule's back, said, 'Go, and God bless thee!' When behold, the earth opened and swallowing the mule, closed up again as before. And Jouder said, 'O Protector! praised be God who hath kept us in safety on her back!' 'Marvel not, O Jouder,' quoth the Moor; 'I told thee that the mule was an Afrit; but come with us into the upper chamber.'

So they went up into the upper chamber, and Jouder was amazed at the profusion of rich furniture and pendants of gold and silver and jewels and other rare and precious things that he saw there. As soon as they were seated, the Moor bade Rehmeh bring him a certain bale and opening it, took out a dress worth a thousand dinars, which he gave to Jouder, saying, 'Don this dress, O Jouder! and welcome to thee!' So Jouder put it on and became as he were one of the Kings of the West. Then the Moor laid the saddle-bags before him, and putting in his hand, pulled out dish after dish, till they had before them a tray of forty kinds of meat, when he said to Jouder, 'Come, O my lord, eat and excuse us, for that we know not what meats thou wouldest have; but tell us what thou hast a mind to, and we will set it before thee without delay.' 'By Allah, O my lord the pilgrim,' replied Jouder, 'I love all kinds of meat and mislike none; so ask me not of aught, but bring all that cometh to thy thought, for I have nought to do but to eat.'

He abode twenty days with the Moor, who clad him in a new dress every day, and all this time they ate from the saddle-bags; for the Moor bought neither meat nor bread nor aught else nor cooked, but brought everything out of the bags, even to various kinds of fruit. On the twenty- first day, he said to Jouder, 'Come, this is the day appointed for opening the treasure of Shemerdel.' So he rose and they went afoot without the city, where they found two slaves, each holding a mule. The Moor mounted one mule and Jouder the other, and they rode on till noon, when they came to a stream of running water, on whose banks they alighted and Abdussemed signed with his hand to the slaves and said, 'To it!' So they took the mules and going each his own way, were absent awhile, after which they returned, bearing, one a tent, which he

pitched, and the other carpets, which he spread in the tent and laid cushions thereabout. Then they brought the saddle-bags and the caskets containing the two fish; whereupon the Moor arose and said, 'Come, O Jouder!' So Jouder followed him into the tent and sat down beside him; and he brought out dishes of meat from the saddle-bags and they ate the morning meal.

Then the Moor took the two caskets and conjured over them, whereupon there came from within voices that said, 'Here are we, at thy service, O diviner of the world! Have mercy on us!' But he ceased not to repeat conjurations and they to call for help, till the two caskets flew in sunder and there came forth two men, with their hands bound behind them, saying, 'Pardon, O diviner of the world! What wilt thou with us?' Quoth he, 'I will burn you with fire, except ye make a covenant with me, to open to me the treasure of Es Shemerdel.'* 'We promise this to thee,' answered they, 'and we will open the treasure to thee, so thou produce to us Jouder ben Omar, the fisherman, for it may not be opened but by his means, nor can any enter therein but he.' 'He of whom ye speak,' answered the Moor, 'I have brought, and he is here, listening to you and looking at you.' Thereupon they covenanted with him to open the treasure to him, and he released them.

Then he brought out a hollow wand and tablets of red cornelian and laid the latter on the former; after which he took a chafing-dish and laying charcoal thereon, blew one breath into it and it kindled forthwith. Then said he to Jouder, 'O Jouder, I am now about to begin the necessary conjurations and fumigations, and when I have once begun, I may not speak, or the conjuration will be naught; so I will tell thee first what thou must do.' 'Say on,' replied Jouder. 'Know then,' said the Moor, 'that, when I have recited the charm and thrown on the perfumes, the water will dry up from the river's bed and discover to thee a door of gold, the bigness of the city- gate, with two rings of metal thereon; whereupon do thou go down to the door and knock lightly and wait awhile; then knock a second time more loudly than the first and wait another while; after which give three knocks, one after another, and thou wilt hear a voice say, "Who knocks at the door of the treasure, unknowing how to solve the mysteries?" Do thou answer, "I am Jouder ben Omar, the fisherman;" and the door will open and there will come forth one with a sword in his hand and say to thee, "If thou be that man, stretch forth thy neck, that I may strike off thy head." Then do thou stretch forth thy neck and fear not; for, when he lifts his hand and smites thee, he will fall down before thee, and in a little thou wilt see him a body without a soul; and the blow shall not irk thee nor shall any harm befall thee; but, if thou gainsay him, he will slay thee. When thou hast undone his enchantment by obedience, enter and go on till thou seest another door, at which do thou knock, and there will come forth to thee a horseman with a lance on his shoulder and say to thee, "What brings thee hither, where neither man nor genie may enter?" And he will shake his spear at thee. Bare thy breast to him and he will smite thee and fall down forthright and thou shalt see him a body without a soul; but if thou cross him, he will slay thee.

Then go on to the third door, whence there will come forth to thee a man with a bow and arrows in his hand and take aim at thee. Bare thy breast to him and he will shoot at thee and fall down before thee, a body without a soul; but if thou cross him,

he will kill thee. Then go on to the fourth door and knock, and there will come forth to thee a huge lion, which will rush upon thee, opening his mouth as if he had a mind to devour thee. Have no fear of him, neither flee from him; but, when he cometh to thee, give him thy hand and he will bite at it and fall down straightway, nor shall aught [of hurt] betide thee. Then enter the fifth door, where thou shalt find a black slave, who will say to thee, "Who art thou?" Say, "I am Jouder," and he will answer, "If thou be that man, open the sixth door." Then do thou go up to the door and say, "O Jesus, tell Moses to open the door;" whereupon the door will fly open and thou wilt see two dragons, one on the left hand and another on the right, which will open their mouths and fly at thee, both at once. Do thou put forth to them thy hands and they will bite each a hand [and fall down dead;] but if thou resist them, they will kill thee. Then go on to the seventh door and knock, whereupon there will come forth to thee thy mother and say, "Welcome, O my son! Come, that I may greet thee!" But do thou say to her, "Hold off from me and put off thy clothes." And she will make answer, "O my son, I am thy mother that suckled thee and brought thee up: how then wouldst thou strip me naked?" Then do thou say, "Except thou put off thy clothes, I will kill thee!" and look to thy right, where thou wilt see a sword hanging up. Take it and draw it upon her, saying, "Strip!" whereupon she will wheedle thee and humble herself to thee; but have thou no pity on her nor be beguiled, and as often as she puts off aught, say to her, "Off with the rest!" nor do thou cease to threaten her with death, till she put off all that is upon her and fall down, when the enchantment will be dissolved and the charms undone, and thou wilt be safe.

Then enter the hall of the treasure, where thou wilt see the gold lying in heaps; but pay no heed to aught thereof and go on to the upper end of the hall, where thou wilt find a niche, with a curtain drawn before it. Draw back the curtain and thou wilt see the enchanter Es Shemerdel lying upon a couch of gold, with something at his head, round and shining like the moon, which is the celestial planisphere. He is girt with the sword; on his finger is the ring and about his neck is a chain, to which hangs the kohl-pot. Bring me the four talismans, and look thou forget not aught of that which I have told thee, or thou wilt repent and be put to fear.' And he repeated his directions to Jouder a second and a third and a fourth time, till he said, 'I have them by heart: but who may face all these enchantments that thou namest and endure against these mighty terrors?' 'O Jouder,' replied the Moor, 'fear not, for they are semblances without life;' and he went on to hearten him, till he said, 'I put my trust in God.'

Then Abdussemed threw perfumes on the chafing-dish, and addressed himself to reciting conjurations. Presently the water disappeared and discovered the bed of the river and the door of the treasure, whereupon Jouder went down to the door and knocked. Therewith he heard a voice saying, 'Who knocks at the door of the treasure, unknowing how to solve the mysteries?' Quoth he, 'I am Jouder, son of Omar;' whereupon the door opened and there came forth one with a drawn sword, who said to him, 'Stretch forth thy neck.' So he stretched forth his neck and the figure smote him and fell down, lifeless. Then he went on to the second door and did the like, nor did he cease to do thus, till he had undone the enchantments of the first six doors and came to the seventh door, from which there issued forth to him his mother, saying,

'Greeting, O my son!' 'What art thou?' said he; and she answered saying, 'O my son, I am thy mother who bore thee nine months [in my womb] and gave thee suck and reared thee.' Quoth he, 'Put off thy clothes.' 'Thou art my son,' said she, 'how wouldst thou strip me naked?' But he said, 'Strip, or I will strike off thy head with this sword;' and he put out his hand to it and drew it upon her, saying, 'Except thou strip, I will slay thee.' Then the strife became long between them and as often as he redoubled on her his menaces, she put off somewhat of her clothes and he said to her, 'Put off the rest,' whilst she kept saying, 'O my son, thou hast disappointed my fosterage of thee,' till she had nothing left but her trousers. Then said she, 'O my son, is thy heart stone? Wilt thou dishonour me by discovering my nakedness. Indeed, this is unlawful, O my son!' And he answered, 'Thou sayst sooth; it behoves not that thou put off thy trousers.'

No sooner had he uttered these words, than she cried out and said, 'He hath made default: beat him!' Whereupon there fell upon him blows like rain and the servants of the treasure flocked to him and dealt him a beating that he forgot not in all his life; after which they thrust him forth and cast him down without the treasure and the doors shut of themselves as before, whilst the waters of the river returned to their bed. When the Moor saw this, he took Jouder up in haste and repeated conjurations over him, till he came to his senses, when he said to him, 'What hast thou done, O dolt?' 'O my brother,' answered Jouder, 'I undid all the enchantments, till I came to my mother and there befell between her and myself a long contention. But I made her put off her clothes, till but her trousers remained upon her and she said to me, "Do not dishonour me; for to discover one's nakedness is forbidden." So I left her her trousers out of pity, and behold, she cried out and said, "He hath made default: beat him!" Whereupon there came out upon me folk, whence I know not, and beating me till I was nigh upon death, thrust me out; nor do I know what befell me after this.' Quoth the Moor, 'Did I not warn thee not to swerve from my directions? Verily, thou hast done ill by me and by thyself: for if thou hadst made her take off her trousers, we had attained our desire; but now thou must abide with me till this day next year.'

Then he cried out to the two slaves, who struck the tent forthright and loaded it [on muleback;] then they were absent awhile and presently returned with the two mules; and they mounted and rode back to the city of Fez, where Jouder abode with the Moor, eating and drinking well and donning a rich dress every day, till the appointed day arrived, when the Moor said to him, 'Come with me, for this is the appointed day.' And Jouder said, 'It is well.' So the Moor carried him without the city, where they found the two slaves with the mules, and mounting, rode on till they came to the river. Here the slaves pitched the tent and furnished it and the Moor brought forth the tray of food and they ate the morning meal; after which Abdussemed brought out the wand and the tablets as before and kindling the fire in the chafing-dish, made ready the perfumes. Then said he to Jouder, 'O Jouder, I wish to renew my injunctions to thee.' 'O my lord the pilgrim,' answered he, 'if I have forgotten the beating, I have forgotten the injunctions.' 'Dost thou indeed remember them,' asked the Moor, and he said, 'Yes.' Quoth the Moor, 'Keep thy wits, and think not that the woman is thy very mother; nay, she is but an enchantment in her semblance, whose purpose is to catch

thee tripping. Thou camest off alive the first time, but, if thou make default this time, they will kill thee.' 'If I slip this time,' replied Jouder, 'I deserve to be burnt of them.'

Then Abdussemed cast in the perfumes and recited the conjurations, till the river dried up; whereupon Jouder descended and knocked at the door. It opened and he entered and undid the several enchantments, till he came to the seventh door and the semblance of his mother appeared before him, saying, 'Welcome, O my son!' But he said to her, 'How am I thy son, O accursed one? Strip!' And she began to wheedle him and put off garment after garment, till but her trousers remained; and he said to her, 'Strip, O accursed one!' So she put off her trousers and became a body without a soul. Then he entered the hall of the treasure, where he saw gold lying in heaps, but paid no heed to it and passed on to the niche at the upper end, where he saw the enchanter Es Shemerdel lying on a couch of gold, girt with the sword, with the ring on his finger, the kohl-pot on his breast and the celestial planisphere over his head. So he unbuckled the sword and taking the ring, the kohl-pot and the planisphere, went forth, when, behold, music sounded for him and the servants of the treasure cried out, saying, 'Mayst thou enjoy that which thou hast gained, O Jouder!' Nor did the music leave sounding, till he came forth of the treasure to the Moor, who gave over his conjurations and rising, embraced him and saluted him. Then Jouder gave him the four talismans, and he took them and cried out to the slaves, who carried away the tent and brought the mules.

So they mounted and returned to the city of Fez, where the Moor fetched the saddle-bags and brought forth dish after dish of meat, till the tray was full, and said to Jouder, 'Eat, O Jouder, O my brother!' So he ate till he was satisfied, when the Moor emptied what remained of the meats into other dishes and returned the empty platters to the saddle-bags. Then he said to Jouder, 'O Jouder, thou hast left thy native land on our account and hast accomplished our need; wherefore thou hast a right to a reward of us. Seek, therefore, what thou wilt; it is God the Most High that giveth unto thee by our means. Ask thy will and be not ashamed, for thou art deserving.' 'O my lord,' answered Jouder, 'I ask first of God the Most High and then of thee, that thou give me yonder saddle-bags.' So the Moor called for them and gave them to him, saying, 'Take them, for they are thy due, and if thou hadst asked of me aught else, I had given it thee. Eat from them, thou and thy family, and know that the manner of their usance is on this wise; put thy hand therein and say, "O servant of these saddle-bags, I conjure thee by the virtue of the mighty names that have power over thee, bring me such a dish!" And he will bring thee whatsoever thou askest, though thou shouldst call for a thousand different dishes a day. But, O good fellow, these will not profit thee, save by way of victual, and thou hast wearied thyself with us and we promised thee to send thee home, rejoicing; so we will join to these other saddle-bags, full of gold and jewels, and bring thee back to thy native land, where thou shalt become a merchant and clothe thyself and thy family; nor shalt thou want for spending-money.'

So saying, he filled him a pair of saddle-bags, half with gold and half with jewels and precious stones, and sending for a slave and a mule, said to him, 'Mount this mule, and the slave shall go before thee and guide thee in the way, till thou come to the door of thy house, where do thou take the two pairs of saddle-bags and give him the mule, that he may bring it back. But let none into thy secret; and so we commend thee to

God.' 'May God increase thy good!' replied Jouder and laying the two pairs of saddle-bags on the mule's back, mounted and set forth. The slave went on before him and the mule followed him all that day and night, and on the morrow he entered Cairo by the Gate of Victory, where he saw his mother seated, saying, 'Charity, for the love of God!' At this sight he well-nigh lost his wits and alighting, threw himself upon her: and when she saw him, she wept. Then he mounted her on the mule and walked by her stirrup, till they came to the house, where he set her down and taking the saddle-bags, left the mule to the slave, who took her and resumed with her to his master, for that both slave and mule were Afrits.

As for Jouder, it was grievous to him that his mother should beg; so, when they were in the house, he said to her, 'O my mother, are my brothers well?' And she replied, 'They are both well.' Quoth he, 'Why dost thou beg by the wayside?' 'Because I am hungry, O my son,' answered she; and he, 'Before I went away I gave thee a hundred dinars one day, the like the next and a thousand on the day of my departure.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'they cheated me and took the money from me, saying, "We will buy goods with it." Then they drove me away, and I fell to begging by the wayside, for stress of hunger.' 'O my mother,' said Jouder, 'no harm shall befall thee, now I am come; so have no concern, for these saddle-bags are full of gold and jewels and good aboundeth [with me].' Quoth she, 'Verily, thou art blessed, O my son! May God accept of thee and increase thee of His bounties! Go, O my son, fetch us some victual, for I slept not last night for stress of hunger, having gone to bed supperless.'

He laughed and said, 'Welcome to thee, O my mother! Call for what thou wilt to eat, and I will set it before thee forthright; for I have no occasion to buy from the market, nor need I any to cook.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'I see nought with thee.' And he said, 'I have with me in these saddle-bags all manner of meats.' 'O my son,' rejoined she, 'whatever is ready will serve to stay hunger.' 'True,' answered he, 'when there is no choice, men are content with the least thing; but where there is plenty, they like to eat what is good: and I have plenty; so call for what thou hast a mind to.' 'O my son,' said she, 'give me some hot bread and a piece of cheese:' but he answered, saying, 'O my mother, this befits not thy condition.' 'Then give me to eat of that which befits my condition,' quoth she; 'for thou knowest it.' 'O my mother,' rejoined he, 'what befits thy condition is rissoled meat and fricasseed fowls and savoury rice and sausages and stuffed cucumbers and stuffed lamb and stuffed ribs [of mutton] and vermicelli with pounded almonds and nuts and honey and sugar and fritters and almond patties.' But she thought he was laughing at her and making mock of her; so she said to him, 'Alas! Alas! what is come to thee? Dost thou dream or art thou mad?' 'Why deemest thou that I am mad?' asked he, and she replied, 'Because thou namest to me all manner rich meats; who can avail unto their price, and who knows how to dress them?' Quoth he, 'As I live, thou shalt eat of all that I have named to thee, and that forthright.' And she said, 'I see nothing.' Then said he, 'Bring me the saddle-bags.'

So she fetched them and feeling them, found them empty. However, she laid them before him and he thrust in his hand and pulled out dish after dish, till he had set before her all he had named. Whereupon, 'O my son,' said she, 'the saddle-bags are small and moreover they were empty; yet hast thou taken thereout all these dishes. Where then were they all?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'know that these are enchanted

saddle-bags, which the Moor gave me, and they have a servant, whom, if one desire aught, he has but to adjure by the names [which have power over him,] saying, "O servant of the saddle-bags, bring me such a dish!" and he will bring it.' Quoth his mother, 'And may I put out my hand and ask of him?' 'Do so,' replied he. So she put out her hand and said, 'O servant of the saddle-bags, [I conjure thee,] by the virtue of the names that have power over thee, bring me stuffed ribs [of mutton].' Then she thrust in her hand and found a dish containing delicate stuffed ribs of lamb. So she took it out, and called for bread and what else she had a mind to; after which Jouder said to her, 'O my mother, when thou hast made an end of eating, empty what is left of the food into platters other than these and restore the empty dishes to the saddle-bags, for the charm is upon this condition, and keep the saddle-bags carefully.' So she arose and laid them up in a safe place. 'And look that thou keep this secret,' added he; 'and whenever thou hast a mind to aught, take it forth of the saddle-bags and give alms and feed my brothers, whether I be absent or present.'

Then he fell to eating with her, and while they were thus engaged, in came his two brothers, whom a man of the quarter had apprised of his return, saying, 'Your brother is come back, riding on a mule, with a slave before him, and wearing a dress that hath not its like.' So they said to each other, 'Would we had not ill-treated our mother! She will surely tell him how we did by her, and then how sore will be our disgrace with him!' But one of them said, 'Our mother is tender-hearted, and if she tell him, our brother is yet tenderer over us than she; and if we excuse ourselves to him, he will accept our excuse.' So they went in to him and he rose to them and saluting them after the friendliest manner, bade them sit and eat. So they ate till they were satisfied, for they were weak with hunger; after which Jouder said to them, 'O my brothers, take what is left and distribute it to the poor.' 'O brother,' replied they, 'let us keep it to sup withal.' But he said, 'When supper-time comes, ye shall have more than this.' So they took the rest of the victual and going out, gave of it to every poor man who passed by them, saying, 'Take and eat,' till there was nothing left. Then they brought back the dishes and Jouder said to his mother, 'Put them in the saddle-bags.'

When it was night, he entered the saloon and took forth of the saddle-bags a table of forty dishes; after which he went up [to the upper chamber] and sitting down between his brothers, said to his mother, 'Bring the supper.' So she went down to the saloon and finding there the dishes ready, laid the tray and brought up the forty dishes, one after another. Then they ate the evening meal, and when they had done, Jouder said to his brothers, 'Take and feed the poor and needy.' So they took what was left and gave alms thereof, and presently he brought forth to them sweetmeats, whereof they ate, and what was left he bade them give to the neighbours. On the morrow, they broke their fast after the same fashion, and thus they fared ten days, at the end of which time quoth Salim to Selim, 'How comes it that our brother sets before us a banquet in the morning and another at noon and a third at sundown, besides sweetmeats at night, and all that is left he gives to the poor? Verily, this is the fashion of Sultans. Yet we never see him buy aught, and he hath neither cook nor kitchen, nor doth he light a fire. Whence hath he this great plenty? Hast thou not a mind to enquire the cause of all this?' 'By Allah, I know not,' replied Selim. 'But knowest thou any who will tell us the truth of the case?' And Salim said, 'None will tell us but our mother.'

So they laid a plot and going in to their mother one day, in Jouder's absence, said to her, 'O our mother, we are hungry.' 'Rejoice,' answered she; '[for ye shall presently be satisfied;]' and going into the saloon, sought of the servant of the saddle-bags hot meats, which she took out and set before her sons. 'O our mother,' said they, 'this meat is hot; yet hast thou not cooked, neither kindled a fire.' Quoth she, 'It comes from the saddle-bags;' and they, 'What manner of thing are these saddle-bags?' 'They are enchanted,' replied she and told them their virtue, enjoining them to secrecy. Quoth they, 'O our mother, the secret shall be kept; but teach us the manner of this.' So she taught them the fashion thereof and they fell to putting their hands into the saddle-bags and taking forth whatever they had a mind to.

Then quoth Salim [privily] to Selim, 'O my brother, how long shall we abide with Jouder servant-wise and eat of his charity? Shall we not cast about to get the saddle-bags from him and make off with them?' 'And how shall we make shift to do this?' asked Selim. 'We will sell him to the galleys,' replied Salim; and Selim said, 'How shall we do that?' Quoth Salim, 'We will go to the Captain [of the galleys] of the Sea of Suez and bid him to an entertainment, with two of his company. What I say to Jouder do thou confirm, and at the end of the night I will show thee what I will do.'

So they agreed upon this and going to the captain's lodging, said to him, 'O captain, we have come to thee on an errand that will content thee.' 'Good,' answered he; and they, 'We two are brethren, and we have a third brother, a lewd, good-for-nothing fellow. When our father died, he left us some money, which we shared amongst us, and he took his part and wasted it in lewdness and debauchery, till he was reduced to beggary, when he came upon us and cited us before the magistrates, avouching that we had taken his good and that of his father, and we disputed the matter before the judges and lost the money. Then he waited awhile and attacked us a second time, till he brought us to poverty; nor will he desist from us, and we have no peace for him; wherefore we would have thee buy him of us.' Quoth the captain, 'Can ye go about with him and make shift to bring him to me here? If so, I will pack him off to sea forthright.' 'We cannot avail to bring him here,' answered they; 'but be thou our guest [this night] and bring with thee two of thy men, no more; and when he is asleep, we will fall upon him, we five, and gag him. Then shalt thou carry him forth the house, under cover of the night, and do with him as thou wilt.' 'So be it,' rejoined the captain. 'Will ye sell him for forty dinars?' 'Yes,' said they. 'Come to such a street, by such a mosque, after nightfall, and thou shalt find one of us awaiting thee.'

Then they repaired to Jouder and waited awhile, after which Salim went up to him and kissed his hand. Quoth Jouder, 'What ails thee, O my brother?' And he made answer, saying, 'Know that I have a friend, who hath many a time bidden me to his house in thine absence and hath ever hospitably entreated me, and I owe him a thousand kindnesses, as my brother here knoweth. I met him to-day and he invited me to his house, but I said to him, "I cannot leave my brother [Jouder]." Quoth he, "Bring him with thee;" and I answered, saying, "He will not consent to that; but if ye will be my guests, thou and thy brothers ... ... ;" for his brothers were sitting with him, and I invited them, thinking that they would refuse. But he accepted my invitation, saying, "Look for me at the gate of the Mosque, and I will come to thee, I and my brothers." And now I fear they will come and am ashamed before thee. So wilt thou set my heart

at rest and entertain them this night, for thy good is abundant, O my brother? Or if thou consent not, give me leave to take them into the neighbours' house.' 'Why shouldst thou carry them into the neighbours' house?' replied Jouder. 'Is our house then so strait or have we not wherewithal to give them to sup? Shame on thee to consult me! Thou hast but to call for what thou needest and have rich meats and sweetmeats and to spare. Whenever thou bringest home folk in my absence, ask thy mother, and she will set before thee victual more than enough. Go and fetch them; blessings have descended upon us.'

So Salim kissed his hand and going forth, sat at the gate of the mosque till after sundown, when the Captain and his men came up to him, and he carried them to the house. When Jouder saw them, he bade them welcome and made them sit and entreated them friendly, knowing not what he was to suffer at their hands. Then he called to his mother for supper, and she fell to taking dishes out of the saddle-bags, whilst he said, 'Bring such and such meats,' till she had set forty different dishes before them. So they ate till they were satisfied and the tray was taken away, the sailors thinking the while that this liberal entertainment came from Salim. When a third part of the night was past, Jouder set sweetmeats before them and Salim served them; whilst his two brothers sat with the guests, till they sought to sleep. So Jouder laid down and the others with him, who waited till he was asleep, when they fell upon him and gagging and binding him, before he was awake, carried him forth of the house, under cover of the night. Then they packed him off to Suez, where they shackled him and set him to work as a [galley] slave; and he ceased not to serve thus in silence a whole year.

As for his brothers, they went in next morning to his mother and said to her, 'O mother, our brother Jouder is not awake.' Quoth she, 'Do ye wake him.' 'Where lieth he?' asked they, and she replied, 'With the guests.' 'Peradventure,' rejoined they, 'he went away with them whilst we slept. It would seem that he had tasted of foreign travel and yearned to find hidden treasures; for we heard him talk with the Moors, and they said to him, "We will take thee with us and open the treasure to thee."' 'Hath he then been in company with Moors?' asked she, and they answered, saying, 'Were they not our guests yesternight?' 'Most like he hath gone with them,' said she; 'but God will direct him aright; for there is a blessing upon him and he will surely come back with great good.' And she wept, for it was grievous to her to be parted from her son.

Then said they to her, 'O accursed woman, dost thou love Jouder with all this love, whilst as for us, whether we be absent or present, thou neither joyest in us nor sorrowest for us? Are we not thy sons, even as Jouder is thy son?' 'Ye are indeed my sons,' answered she; 'but ye are reprobates who deserve no favour of me, for I have never had any satisfaction of you since your father's death; whilst, as for Jouder, I have had abundant good of him and he has comforted my heart and entreated me with honour; wherefore it behoves me to weep for him, because of his goodness to me and to you.'

When they heard this, they reviled her and beat her; after which they sought for the saddle-bags, till they found the two pairs and took the enchanted one and all the gold and jewels from the other, saying, 'This was our father's good.' 'Not so, by Allah!' said their mother. 'It belongs to your brother Jouder, who brought it from the land of

the Moors.' 'Thou liest,' answered they; 'it was our father's property; and we will dispose of it.'

Then they divided the gold and jewels between them; but a dispute arose between them concerning the enchanted saddle-bags, each saying, 'I will have them;' and they came to high words over this. Then said she, 'O my sons, ye have divided the gold and the jewels, but this may not be divided, nor can its value be made up in money; and if it be cut in twain, its virtue will be annulled; so leave it with me and I will give you to eat from it at all times and be content to take a morsel with you. If ye give me aught to clothe me, it will be of your favour, and each of you shall traffic with the folk for himself. Ye are my sons and I am your mother; wherefore let us abide as we are, lest your brother come back and we be disgraced.' But they hearkened not to her words and passed the night, wrangling with one another.

Now it chanced that a sergeant of the King's guards was a guest in the adjoining house and heard them through the open window. So he looked out and listening, heard all that passed between them. Next morning, he presented himself before the King of Egypt, whose name was Shems ed Dauleh, and told him all he had heard, whereupon he sent for Jouder's brothers and put them to the torture, till they confessed; and he took the two pairs of saddle-bags from them and clapped them in prison, appointing a sufficient daily allowance to their mother.

Meanwhile, Jouder abode a whole year in service at Suez, till, one day, being in a ship bound on a voyage over the sea, a wind arose against them and cast the vessel upon a rock, where she broke up and all on board were drowned, save Jouder. He got ashore in safety and fared on inland, till he reached an encampment of Bedouins, who questioned him of his case, and he told them what had befallen him. Now there was amongst them a merchant, a native of Jiddah, who took pity on him and said to him, 'O Egyptian, wilt thou take service with me and I will clothe thee and carry thee with me to Jiddah?' So Jouder took service with him and followed him to Jiddah, where he showed him much favour. After awhile, the merchant set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, taking Jouder with him, and when they reached the city, the latter repaired to the temple, to make the round of the Kaabeh. As he was making the prescribed circuits, he saw his friend Abdussemed the Moor doing the like; and when the latter caught sight of him, he saluted him and asked him how he did; whereupon Jouder wept and told him all that had befallen him.

The Moor carried him to his lodging and entreated him with honour, clothing him in a dress of unmatched richness and saying to him, 'Thou hast seen the end of thine ills, O Jouder.' Then he levelled a tablet of sand and drew a geomantic figure, by which he discovered what had befallen Salim and Selim and said to Jouder, 'Such and such things have befallen thy brothers and they are now in the King of Egypt's prison; but do thou abide with me and accomplish thy religious duties at thine ease, and all shall be well.' 'O my lord,' replied Jouder, 'let me go and take leave of the merchant with whom I am and after I will come back to thee.' 'Dost thou owe money?' asked the Moor, and he answered, 'No.' 'Go,' said Abdussemed, 'and take leave of him and come back forthright, for men of honour owe a duty to those whose bread they have eaten.'

So Jouder returned to the merchant and took leave of him, saying, 'I have fallen in with my brother.' 'Bring him here,' said the merchant, 'and we will make him an entertainment.' But Jouder answered, saying, 'He has no need of that; for he is a man of wealth and hath many servants.' Then the merchant gave Jouder twenty dinars, saying, 'Acquit me of responsibility;' and he bade him farewell and went forth from him. As he went along, he saw a poor man, so he gave him the twenty dinars and returned to the Moor, with whom he abode till they had accomplished the rites of the pilgrimage, when Abdussemed gave him the ring, that he had taken from the treasure of Es Shemerdel, saying, 'This ring will bring thee to thy desire, for it is enchanted and hath a servant, by name Er Raad el Casif; so whatever thou hast a mind to of the things of this world, rub this ring and its servant will appear and do all thou biddest him.'

Then he rubbed the ring before him, whereupon the genie appeared, saying, 'Here I am, O my lord! Ask what thou wilt and it shall be given thee. Hast thou a mind to people a ruined city or lay waste a flourishing one or slay a king or put an army to the rout?' 'O Raad,' said Abdussemed, 'this is become thy lord; do thou serve him faithfully.' Then he dismissed him and said to Jouder, 'Rub the ring and the genie will appear; and do thou command him to do whatever thou desirest, for he will not gainsay thee. Now go to thine own country and take care of the ring, for it will enable thee to baffle thine enemies.' 'O my lord,' answered Jouder, 'with thy leave, I will set out homeward.' Quoth the Moor, 'Summon the genie and mount upon his back; and if thou say to him, "Bring me to my native city this very day," he will not gainsay thy commandment.'

So he took leave of the Moor and rubbed the ring, whereupon Er Raad presented himself, saying, 'Here am I; ask and it shall be given to thee.' 'Carry me to Cairo this day,' said Jouder. 'Thy commandment shall be done,' answered the genie and taking him on his back, flew with him from noon till midnight, when he set him down in the courtyard of his mother's house and disappeared. Jouder went in to his mother, who rose at sight of him and greeted him, weeping. Then she told him how the king had beaten his brothers and cast them into prison and taken the two pairs of saddle-bags; which when he heard, it was grievous to him and he said to her, 'Grieve not for this; I will show thee what I can do and bring my brothers hither forthright.' So he rubbed the ring, whereupon the genie appeared, saying, 'At thy service! Ask and thou shalt have.' Quoth Jouder, 'Bring me my two brothers from the prison.'

So the genie sank into the earth and came not up but in the midst of the gaol where Salim and Selim lay in piteous plight and sore affliction, for the misery of prison, so that they wished for death and one of them said to the other, 'By Allah, O my brother, affliction is long upon us! How long shall we abide in this prison? Death would be relief.' As he spoke, the earth clove in sunder and out came Er Raad, who took them up and plunged with them into the earth. They swooned away for excess of fear, and when they recovered, they found themselves in their mother's house and saw her seated, with Jouder by her side. Quoth he, 'I salute you, O my brothers! I rejoice to see you.' And they bowed their heads and fell a-weeping. Then said he, 'Weep not, for it was the devil and covetise that led you to do thus. How could you sell me? But I comfort myself with the thought of Joseph, whose brothers did with him worse than ye

with me, when they cast him into the pit. Repent unto God and crave pardon of Him, and He will forgive you, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Merciful. As for me, I pardon you and bid you welcome: no harm shall befall you.' Then he comforted them and set their hearts at ease and related to them all he had suffered, till he fell in with Abdussemed, and told them also of the ring that the latter had given him. 'O our brother,' said they, 'forgive us this time; and if we return to our old ways, do with us as thou wilt.' Quoth he, 'No harm shall befall you; but tell me what the king did with you.' 'He beat us and threatened us,' answered they, 'and took the two pairs of saddle-bags from us.' 'He shall answer for this,' said Jouder and rubbed the ring, whereupon Er Raad appeared.

When his brothers saw the genie, they were affrighted and thought Jouder would bid him slay them; so they fled to their mother, saying, 'O our mother, we throw ourselves on thy mercy: do thou intercede for us!' And she said to them, 'Fear nothing, O my sons!' Then said Jouder to the genie, 'I command thee to bring me all that is in the king's treasury, together with the two pairs of saddle-bags he took from my brothers, and look thou leave nothing.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Er Raad and disappearing, straightway returned with the two pairs of saddle-bags and all else that was in the treasury and laid them before Jouder, saying, 'O my lord, I have left nothing in the treasury.' Jouder gave the treasure to his mother to keep and laying the enchanted saddle-bags before him, said to the genie, 'I command thee to build me this night a lofty palace and overlay it with liquid gold and furnish it magnificently: and let not the day dawn, ere thou be quit of the whole work.' 'Thy commands shall be obeyed,' replied the genie and sank into the earth. Then Jouder brought forth food and they ate and took their ease and lay down to sleep.

Meanwhile, Er Raad summoned his attendant Jinn and commanded them to build the palace. So some of them fell to hewing stones and some to building, whilst others plastered and painted and furnished; nor did the day dawn before the ordinance of the palace was complete; whereupon Er Raad came to Jouder and said to him, 'O my lord, the palace is ready, if it please thee to come and look on it.' So Jouder went forth with his mother and brothers and saw a palace, whose like there was not in the whole world. It stood upon the merge of the highway and confounded all minds with the goodliness of its ordinance; and withal it had cost him nothing. Then he said to his mother, 'Wilt thou take up thine abode in this palace?' 'I will well, O my son,' answered she and called down blessings upon him.

Then he rubbed the ring and bade the genie fetch him forty handsome white slave-girls and forty male white slaves, besides the like number of black slaves, male and female. 'Thy will shall be done,' answered Er Raad and betaking himself, with forty of his attendant Jinn, to Hind and Sind and Persia, carried off every handsome girl and boy they saw, till they had made up the required number. Moreover, he sent other fourscore, who fetched handsome black slaves, male and female, forty of either sex, and carried them all to Jouder's house, which they filled. Then he showed them to Jouder, who was pleased with them and bade him bring a suit of the richest raiment for each of them and dresses to boot for himself and his mother and brothers. So the genie brought all that was needed and clad the female slaves, saying to them, 'This is your mistress: kiss her hands and cross her not, but serve her, white and black.' The male

slaves also clad themselves and kissed Jouder's hands; and he and his brothers arrayed themselves in the robes the genie had brought them and became, Jouder as he were a king and his brothers as viziers. Now his house was spacious; so he lodged Salim and his slave-girls in one part thereof and Selim and his slave-girls in another, whilst he and his mother took up their abode in the new palace; and each in his own place was like the Sultan.

Meanwhile, the king's treasurer, thinking to take something from the treasury, went in and found it altogether empty, even as saith the poet:

Once was it as a beehive stocked and full of bees galore; But when they left it, it became devoid of all its store.

And he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he left the door open and going in to the king, said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have to tell thee that the treasury hath become empty during the night.' Quoth the king, 'What hast thou done with my treasures that were therein?' 'By Allah,' replied the treasurer, 'I have not done aught with them nor know I what is come of them! I visited the place yesterday and saw it full; but, when I went in to day, I found it altogether empty, albeit the doors were locked and [the walls] unpierced and the locks unbroken, nor hath a thief entered it.' 'Are the two pairs of saddle-bags gone?' asked the king. 'Yes,' replied the treasurer; whereupon the king's reason fled from his head and he rose to his feet, saying, 'Go thou before me.' So the treasurer forewent him to the treasury and he found nothing there, whereat he was sore enraged and said, 'Who hath dared to violate my treasury, fearing not my wrath?'

Then he went forth and held a Divan, to which he summoned all his chief officers, who came, thinking each that the king was wroth with him; and he said to them, 'Know that my treasury hath been plundered during the night, and I know not who has done this thing and dared thus to outrage me, without fear of my wrath.' 'How so?' asked they. Quoth he, 'Ask the treasurer.' So they asked him, and he replied, saying, 'I visited the treasury yesterday and it was full, but when I entered it this morning, I found it empty, though the doors were unpierced and the locks unbroken.' They all marvelled at this and could make the king no answer, when in came the sergeant, who had denounced Salim and Selim, and said to Shems ed Dauleh, 'O King of the age, all this night I have not slept for that which I saw.' And the king said, 'And what didst thou see?' 'Know, O King of the age,' answered the sergeant, 'that all night long I have been amusing myself with watching builders at work, and when it was day, I saw a palace ready built, whose like is not in the world. So I asked about it and was told that Jouder had come back with great wealth and slaves and servants and that he had freed his brothers from prison and built this palace, wherein he is as a Sultan. Quoth the king, 'Go, look in the prison.' So they went thither and finding Salim and Selim gone, returned and told the king, who said, 'It is plain now who is the robber; he who took Salim and Selim out of prison it is who hath stolen my treasures.' 'O my lord,' said the Vizier, 'and who is he?' 'Their brother Jouder,' replied the king, 'and he hath taken the two pairs of saddle-bags; but, O Vizier, do thou send him an Amir with fifty men to seal up his goods and lay hands on him and his brothers and bring them to me, that I may hang them.' And he was sore enraged and said, 'Quick, fetch them to me, that I may put them to death.'

But the Vizier said to him, 'Be thou clement, for God is clement and hasteth not to punish His servants, when they transgress against Him. Moreover, he who can build a palace in one night, as these say, none in the world can vie with him; and I fear lest the Amir catch a mischief of Jouder. Have patience, therefore, whilst I devise for thee some means of getting at the truth of the case, and so shalt thou come to thy desire, O King of the age.' Quoth the king, 'Counsel me how I shall do, O Vizier.' And the Vizier said, 'Send him an Amir, to bid him to an entertainment, and I will make much of him for thee and make a show of affection for him and ask him of his estate; after which we will see. If we find him stout of heart, we will use craft with him, and if weak, then do thou seize him and do with him thy will.' The King agreed to this and despatched one of his Amirs, by name Othman, to invite Jouder and say to him, 'The King bids thee to an entertainment;' and the King said to him, 'Return not but with him.'

Now this Othman was a proud conceited fool; so he went forth upon his errand, and when he came to Jouder's palace, he saw at the door an eunuch seated upon a chair of gold, who rose not at his approach, but sat as if none were near, though there were with the Amir fifty men. Now this eunuch was none other than Er Raad el Casif, the servant of the ring, whom Jouder had commanded to put on the guise of an eunuch and sit at the gate of the palace. So the Amir rode up to him and said to him, 'O slave, where is thy lord?' 'In the palace,' answered he, without stirring from his leaning posture; whereupon Othman waxed wroth and said to him, 'O pestilent slave, art thou not ashamed, when I speak to thee, to answer me, sprawling at thy length like a good-for-nought?' 'Begone,' answered the eunuch, 'and do not multiply words.' When Othman heard this, he was filled with rage and drawing his mace, would have smitten the eunuch, knowing not that he was a devil; but the latter leapt upon him and taking the mace from him, dealt him four blows with it. When the fifty men saw their lord beaten, it was grievous to them; so they drew their swords and ran at the slave, thinking to kill him; but he said, 'Do ye draw swords on us, O dogs?' And fell upon them with the mace, and every one whom he smote, he broke his bones and drowned him in his blood. So they gave back before him and fled in confusion, whilst he followed them, beating them, till he had driven them far from the palace; after which he returned and sat down on his chair at the gate, caring for no one.

Meanwhile the Amir and his company returned, beaten and discomfited, to Shems ed Dauleh, and Othman said, 'O King of the age, when I came to the palace gate, I saw an eunuch seated there in a chair of gold and he was passing arrogant; for, when he saw me coming, he lay back in his chair and entreated me contemptuously, neither offered to rise to me. So I began to speak to him and he answered me without stirring, at which passion got the better of me and I drew the mace upon him, thinking to smite him. But he snatched it from me and beat me and my men therewith and overthrew us. So we fled from him and could not prevail against him.' At this, the King was wroth and said, 'Let a hundred men go down to him.' So the hundred men went down to him, but he fell upon them with the mace and smote upon them till he put them to the rout; whereupon they returned to the King and told him what had passed, saying, 'O King of the age, he beat us and we fled for fear of him.' Then the King sent two hundred men against him, but these also he put to the rout, and Shems

ed Dauleh said to his Vizier, 'O Vizier, I charge thee take five hundred men and bring this eunuch in haste, and with him his master Jouder and his brothers.' 'O King of the age,' replied the Vizier, 'I need no soldiers, but will go down to him alone and unarmed.' 'Go,' said the King, 'and do as thou seest fit.'

So the Vizier laid down his arms and donning a white habit, took a rosary in his hand and set out alone and afoot. When he came to the palace gate, he saw the eunuch sitting there; so he went up to him and seating himself courteously by his side, said to him, 'Peace be on thee!' 'And on thee be peace, O mortal!' answered the slave. 'What wilt thou?' When the Vizier heard him say 'O mortal,' he knew him to be of the Jinn and quaked for fear; then he said to him, 'O my lord, is thy master Jouder here?' 'Yes,' answered the eunuch, 'he is in the palace.' 'O my lord,' said the Vizier, 'go thou to him and say to him, "King Shems ed Dauleh salutes thee and bids thee honour his dwelling [with thy presence] and eat of a banquet he hath made for thee."' And the eunuch said, 'Abide here, whilst I consult him.'

So the Vizier stood in a respectful attitude, whilst the Marid went up into the palace and said to Jouder, 'Know, O my lord, that the King sent to thee an Amir and fifty men, and I beat them and drove them away. Then he sent a hundred men and I beat them also; then two hundred, and these also I put to the rout. And now he hath sent thee the Vizier, unarmed, bidding thee to visit him and eat of his banquet. What sayst thou?' 'Go,' answered Jouder; 'bring the Vizier hither.' So the Marid went down and said to him, 'O Vizier, come speak with my lord.' 'On my head be it,' replied he and going in to Jouder, found him seated, in greater state than the King, upon a carpet, the like of which the King could not spread, and was amazed at the goodliness of the palace and the magnificence of its furniture and decoration, which made him seem as he were but a beggar in comparison.

So he kissed the earth before Jouder and called down blessings on him; and Jouder said to him, 'What is thy business, O Vizier?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'thy friend King Shems ed Dauleh salutes thee and longs to look upon thy face; wherefore he hath made thee an entertainment. So wilt thou heal his heart [and eat of his banquet]?' Quoth Jouder, 'If he be indeed my friend, salute him and bid him come to me.' 'On my head be it,' replied the Vizier. Then Jouder rubbed the ring and bade the genie bring him a dress of the best, which he gave to the Vizier, saying, 'Don this dress and go tell the King what I say,' So the Vizier donned the dress, the like of which he had never worn, and returning to the King, told him what had passed and praised the palace and that which was therein, saying, 'Jouder bids thee to him.' So the King called for his charger and mounting with all his guards, set out for Jouder's palace.

Meanwhile Jouder summoned the Marid and said to him, 'It is my will that thou bring me some of the Afrits at thy command in the guise of guards and station them before the palace, that the King may see them and be awed by them; so shall his heart tremble and he shall know that my power is greater than his.' So Er Raad brought him two hundred Afrits of great stature and strength, in the guise of guards, magnificently armed and equipped, and when the King came and saw these tall and stout troops, his heart feared them. Then he entered the palace, and found Jouder sitting in such state as neither King nor Sultan could match. So he saluted him and made his obeisance to him; yet Jouder rose not to him nor did him honour neither bade him be seated, but

left him standing, so that fear entered into him and he could neither sit nor go away and said in himself, 'If he feared me, he would not leave me thus unheeded; belike he will do me a mischief, because of that which I did with his brothers.' Then said Jouder, 'O King of the age, it beseems not the like of thee to wrong the folk and take away their goods.' 'O my lord,' replied the King, 'be not wroth with me, for covetise impelled me to this and the fulfilment of fore-ordained fate; and were there no offence, there would be no forgiving.' And he went on to excuse himself and sue to him for pardon and indulgence, reciting amongst other things the following verses:

O thou of noble sires and nature frank and free,
Reproach me not for what I've done to anger thee.
An thou have wrought upright, God pardon thee, quoth I;
And if I've sinned, do thou on like wise pardon me!

And he ceased not to humble himself before him, till he said, 'God pardon thee!' and bade him sit. So he sat down and Jouder invested him with the garments of pardon and bade his brothers spread the table. When they had eaten, he clad the King's company in robes of honour and gave them largesse; after which he bade the King depart. So he went forth and thereafter came every day to visit Jouder and held not his Divan save in his house: wherefore friendship and usance waxed great between them, and they abode thus awhile, till one day the King, being alone with his Vizier, said to him, 'O Vizier, I fear lest Jouder kill me and take the kingdom from me.' 'O King of the age,' replied the Vizier, 'as for his taking the kingdom from thee, have no fear of that, for his present estate is greater than that of the King, and to take the kingdom would be a lowering of his rank; but, if thou fear that he kill thee, thou hast a daughter: give her to him to wife and thou and he will be of one condition.'

'O Vizier,' said the King, 'be thou intermediary between us and him.' And the Vizier said, 'Do thou bid him to an entertainment and pass the night with him in one of thy saloons. Then command thy daughter to don her richest clothes and ornaments and pass by the door of the saloon. When he sees her, he will fall in love with her, and when we know this, I will turn to him and tell him that she is thy daughter and engage him in converse and lead him on, so that thou shalt [seem to] know nothing of the matter, till he asks her of thee in marriage. When thou hast married him to the girl, thou and he will be as one thing and thou wilt be safe from him; and if he die, thou wilt inherit all he hath, both great and small.' 'Thou sayst sooth, O my Vizier,' replied the King and made a banquet and invited Jouder thereto. So he came to the King's palace and they sat in the saloon in great good cheer till the end of the day. Now the King had commanded his wife to array the girl in her richest clothes and ornaments and carry her by the door of the saloon. She did as he bade her, and when Jouder saw the princess, who had not her match for beauty and grace, he looked fixedly at her and said, 'Alas!' And his joints were loosened for love and passion and desire were sore upon him; transport and love-liking gat hold upon him and he turned pale. Quoth the Vizier, 'May no hurt betide thee, O my lord! Why do I see thee pale and undone?' 'O Vizier,' asked Jouder, 'whose daughter is yonder damsel? Verily, she hath captived me and ravished my reason.' 'She is the daughter of thy friend the King,' replied the Vizier; 'and since she pleases thee, I will speak to him that he marry thee to her.' 'Do so, O Vizier,' quoth Jouder, 'and as I live, I will bestow on thee what thou wilt and will give

the King whatsoever he shall ask to her dowry; and we will become friends and kinsfolk.' And the Vizier said, 'It shall go hard but thy desire be accomplished.' Then he turned to the King and said to him, 'O King of the age, thy friend Jouder seeks alliance with thee and will have me ask of thee for him the hand of thy daughter, the princess Asiyeh; so disappoint me not, but accept my intercession, and what dowry soever thou askest he will give thee.' Quoth the King, 'The dowry I have already received, and as for the girl, she is his handmaid; I give her to him to wife and he doth me favour in accepting her.'

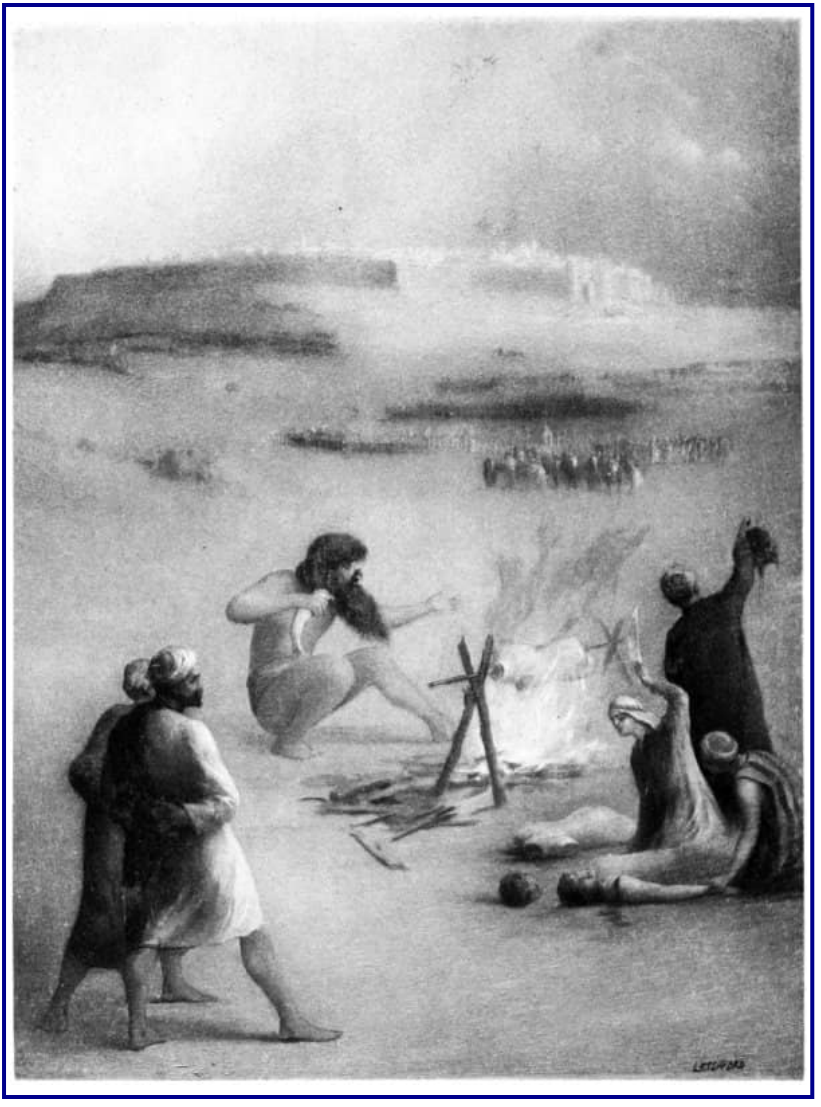
They spent the rest of the night together and on the morrow the King held a court, to which he summoned great and small, together with the Sheikh el Islam. Then Jouder demanded the princess in marriage and the King said, 'The dowry I have received.' So they drew up the contract of marriage and Jouder sent for the saddle-bags containing the jewels and gave them to the King as his daughter's dowry. Then the drums beat and the pipes sounded and they held high festival, whilst Jouder went in to the girl. Thenceforward he and the King were as one and they abode thus awhile, till Shems ed Dauleh died; whereupon the troops proclaimed Jouder Sultan, and he refused; but they importuned him, till he consented and became King in his father-in-law's stead. Then he bade build a congregational mosque over the latter's tomb in the Bundecaniyeh quarter and endowed it. Now the quarter in which he dwelt was called the Yemaniyeh quarter; but when he became Sultan, he built therein a congregational mosque and other buildings, wherefore the quarter was named after him and was called the Jouderiyeh quarter.

Moreover, he made his brother Salim his Vizier of the right and his brother Selim his Vizier of the left hand; and thus they abode a year and no more; for, at the end of that time, Salim said to Selim, 'O my brother, how long is this to last? Shall we pass our whole lives in service to our brother Jouder? We shall never enjoy lordship or fortune whilst he lives: so how shall we do to kill him and take the ring and the saddle-bags?' 'Thou art craftier than I,' answered Selim; 'do thou contrive us a device, whereby we may kill him.' 'If I do this,' said Salim, 'wilt thou agree that I be Sultan and have the ring and that thou be my right-hand Vizier and have the saddle-bags?' 'I consent to this,' replied Selim, and they agreed to kill their brother for love of the world and of dominion.

So they laid a snare for Jouder and said to him, 'O our brother, we have a mind to glory in thee and would fain have thee enter our houses and eat of our victual and solace our hearts.' 'So be it,' replied Jouder. 'In whose house shall the banquet be?' 'In mine,' said Salim, 'and after thou hast eaten of my victual, thou shalt be the guest of my brother.' 'It is well,' answered Jouder and went with him to his house, where he set before him poisoned food, of which when he had eaten, his flesh rotted from his bones [and he fell down dead]. Then Salim came up to him and would have drawn the ring from his finger, but it resisted him; so he cut off the finger with a knife. Then he rubbed the ring and the Marid presented himself, saying, 'At thy service. Ask what thou wilt.' Quoth Salim, 'Put my brother Selim to death and take the two bodies, the poisoned man and the slaughtered, and cast them down before the troops.' So the Marid took Selim and slew him; then, carrying the two bodies forth, he cast them down before the chief officers of the army, who were sitting at meat in the verandah of

the house. When they saw Jouder and Selim slain, they held their hands from the food and fear gat hold of them and they said to the Marid, 'Who hath dealt thus with the Sultan and the Vizier?' 'Their brother Salim,' answered the Marid. And behold Salim came in to them and said, 'O soldiers, eat and make merry, for Jouder is dead and I have taken to me the seal-ring, of which the Marid before you is the servant; and I bade him kill my brother Selim, lest he dispute the kingdom with me, for he was a traitor and I feared lest he should deal traitorously with me. So now I am become Sultan over you; will ye accept of me? If not, I will rub the ring and bid the Marid slay you all, great and small.' Quoth they, 'We accept thee to King and Sultan.'

Then he summoned the Divan and bade bury his brothers; and some of the folk followed the funeral, whilst others went before him in state procession to the palace, where he sat down upon the throne and they proclaimed him king; after which he said, 'It is my will to marry my brother Jouder's wife.' Quoth they, 'Wait till the days of widowhood are accomplished.' But he answered, saying, 'I know not days of widowhood nor aught else. As my head liveth, I will go in to her this very night.' So they drew up the marriage contract and sent to tell the princess Asiyeh, who replied, 'Bid him enter.' Accordingly, he went in to her and she received him with a show of joy and welcome; but by and by she gave him poison in water and made an end of him. Then she took the ring and broke it, that none might possess it thenceforward, and rent the saddle-bags; after which she sent to the Sheikh el Islam and other the great officers of state, telling them what had passed and saying to them, 'Choose you out a king to rule over you.' And this is all that hath come down to us of the story of Jouder and his brothers.



The History of Gherib and His Brother Agib.

THERE was once of old time a mighty king called Kundemir, who had been a brave and doughty man of war in his day, but was grown very old and decrepit. It pleased God to vouchsafe him, in his extreme old age, a son, whom he named Agib, because of his beauty and grace, and committed to the midwives and nurses and handmaids and serving-women, and they reared him till he was seven years old, when his father gave him in charge to a priest of his own people and faith. The priest taught the boy the laws and tenets of their infidel faith and instructed him in philosophy and all manner of other knowledge, and it needed but three full-told years before he was proficient therein and his resolve waxed strong and his judgment sound; yea, and he became learned, eloquent and accomplished, consorting with the wise and disputing with the doctors of the law. When his father saw this of him, it pleased him and he taught him to ride and thrust with spears and smite with swords, till by the end of his twentieth year he was an accomplished cavalier, versed in all martial exercises and surpassing in all things all the folk of his day. But he grew up a stubborn tyrant and an arrogant devil, using to ride forth to the chase with a thousand horse and make raids upon the neighbouring lands, waylaying caravans and carrying off the daughters of kings and nobles; wherefore many were the complaints against him to his father, who cried out to five of his servants, saying, 'Seize me yonder dog and beat him!' So they seized the prince and binding his hands behind him, beat him till he lost his senses; after which the king imprisoned him in a chamber, where one might not know heaven from earth or length from breadth; and there he abode two days and a night. Then the Amirs went in to the King and kissing the earth before him, interceded with him for the prince, and he released him.

Agib dissembled with his father for ten days, at the end of which time he went in to him by night and smote off his head, as he slept. When the day rose, he mounted the throne and bade his men arm themselves in complete steel and stand before him and on his either hand with drawn swords. By and by, the Amirs and captains entered and finding their king slain and his son Agib seated on the throne, were confounded and knew not what to do. But Agib said to them, 'O folk, ye see what hath befallen your king. Whoso obeyeth me, I will entreat him with munificence, and whoso gainsayeth me, I will do with him even as I did with my father.' When they heard this, they feared lest he should do them a mischief; so they replied, 'Thou art our king and the son of our king;' and kissed the earth before him; whereupon he thanked them and rejoiced in them. Then he let bring money and apparel and clad them in sumptuous dresses of honour and showered largesse upon them, wherefore they loved him and obeyed him. In like manner he dealt with the governors of the provinces and the Sheikhs of the Bedouins, both tributary and independent, so that all the kingdom submitted to him and the folk obeyed him and he reigned and commanded and forbade.

He abode thus five months, till, one night, he had a vision in sleep and awoke trembling, nor did sleep visit him again till the morning. As soon as it was day, he mounted his throne and his officers stood before him, right and left. Then he called

the astrologers and expounders of dreams and said to them, 'As I slept last night, my father appeared to me, with his yard uncovered, and there came forth of it a thing the bigness of a bee, which grew till it became as a mighty lion, with claws like daggers. As I lay, wondering and alarmed at this, behold, it ran upon me and smiting me with its claws, rent my bells' in sunder; whereupon I awoke, affrighted and trembling. Expound to me the meaning of this dream.' The interpreters looked at one another and answered, after consideration, 'O mighty King, this dream points to a child born of thy father, between whom and thee shall be strife, and he shall get the better of thee: so be thou ware of him, by reason of this thy dream.' When Agib heard their words, he said, 'I have no brother whom I should fear; so this your speech is a lying one.' 'We tell thee but what we know,' answered they; but he was wroth with them and beat them.

Then he rose and going in to his father's palace, examined his concubines and found one of them seven months gone with child; whereupon he bade two of his slaves carry her to the sea-shore and drown her. So they took her forth to the sea-shore and were about to drown her, when they looked at her and seeing her to be of surpassing beauty and grace, said to each other, 'Why should we drown this damsel? Let us rather carry her to the forest and live with her there in rare dalliance.' So they took her and fared on with her nights and days, till they brought her to a distant forest, abounding in fruit trees and streams, where they thought to take their will of her; but each said, 'I will lie with her first' And they fell out one with the other concerning this. As they were thus engaged, a company of blacks fell upon them, and they drew their swords and defended themselves; but the blacks slew them both in less than the twinkling of an eye. So the damsel abode alone and wandered about the forest, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters, till in due time she gave birth to a boy, brown but clean-limbed and comely, whom she named Gherib, by reason of her strangerhood. Then she cut his navel and wrapping him in some of her own clothes, gave him suck, mournful at heart and sorrowing for the fair estate she had lost and full of fear for her loneliness.

One day, there came horsemen and footmen into the forest, with hounds and hawks and horses laden with storks and cranes and herons and young ostriches and divers and other waterfowl and hares and gazelles and wild oxen and lynxes and wolves and lions. Presently, they came upon the damsel, sitting suckling her child, and said to her, 'Art thou a mortal or a genie?' 'I am a mortal, O chief of the Arabs,' answered she. So they told their chief, whose name was Merdas, prince of the Benou Kehtan, and who had come forth to hunt that day with five hundred of his kinsmen and the nobles of his tribe. and he bade them bring her before him. They did so and she related to him her story, at which he marvelled. Then they took her and returned, hunting by the way, to their encampment, where the Amir appointed her a separate dwelling-place and five damsels to serve her; and he loved her with an exceeding love and went in to her and lay with her. She straightway conceived by him, and when her months were accomplished, she bore a male child and named him Sehim el Leil. He grew up with his brother Gherib among the nurses and throve and waxed upon the lap of the Amir Merdas; and the latter in due time committed the two boys to a doctor of the law, who instructed them in the things of their faith; after which he gave them in charge to a valiant cavalier of the Arabs, who taught them to smite with swords and thrust with spears and shoot with bows, till, by the time they reached the age of fifteen, they knew

all that they needed and surpassed all the warriors of their tribe; for each of them would undertake a thousand horse.

Now Merdas had many enemies, and the men of big tribe were the bravest of all the Arabs, being all doughty cavaliers, none might warm himself at their fire. Amongst his neighbours was an Amir, by name Hissan ben Thabit, who was his friend; and he took to wife a noble lady of his tribe and bade all his friends to the wedding, amongst them Merdas, prince of the Benou Kehtan, who accepted his invitation and came with three hundred horsemen of his tribe, leaving other four hundred to guard the women. Hissan received him with honour and seated him in the highest room. Then came all the cavaliers to the bridal and he made them bride feasts and held high festival by reason of the marriage, after which the guests departed to their dwelling-places. When Merdas came in sight of his camp, he saw dead men lying and birds hovering over them right and left and his heart sank within him at the sight. Then he entered the camp and was met by Gherib, clad in complete mail, who gave him joy of his safe return. Quoth Merdas, 'What meanest this, O Gherib?' And Gherib answered, 'El Hemel ben Majid attacked us with five hundred horse.'

Now the reason of this was that the Amir Merdas had a daughter called Mehdiyeh, never saw eyes a fairer than she, and El Hemel, prince of the Benou Nebhan, heard of her charms; whereupon he took horse with five hundred of his men and rode to Merdas to demand her hand; but he refused and sent him away disappointed. So he abode his time, till Merdas was absent on his visit to Hissan, when he fell upon the camp of the Benou Kehtan with his braves and slew a number of their warriors, and the rest fled to the mountains. Now Gherib and his brother had ridden forth a-hunting with a hundred horse and returned not till midday, when they found that El Hemel had sacked the camp and carried off the women and children captives, and Mehdiyeh among them. When Gherib saw this, he lost his wits for rage and cried out to Sehim, saying, 'They have plundered our camp and carried off our women and children! Up and at the enemy, that we may deliver the captives!' So Gherib and Sehim and their hundred horse rushed upon the foe, and Gherib's wrath redoubled, and he reaped a harvest of heads, giving the warriors to drink of the cup of death, till he won to El Hemel and saw Mehdiyeh among the captives. Then he drove at the prince of the Benou Nebhan and transfixing him with his lance, hurled him from the saddle; nor was the time of the afternoon-prayer come before he had slain the most part of the foe and put the rest to the rout and rescued the captives; whereupon he returned to the camp in triumph, bearing El Hemel's head on the point of his lance and reciting the following verses:

I'm he whose might is known upon the battle-day:
Earth's Jinn do quake to see my shadow in the way.
I have a sword, which when my right hand shakes on high,
Death hastens from my left to plunge into the fray;
And eke a spear I have, whereon if any look,
Like to the crescent moon they see its steel point ray.
Gherib I'm called, that am the champion of my tribe:
What if my men be few! My heart knows not dismay.

Hardly had he made an end of this when up came Merdas, to whom he related all that had passed in his absence. So Merdas alighted and entered his pavilion, and the men stood about him. Then all the people of the tribe fell to praising Gherib and saying, 'But for Gherib, O our lord, not one of the tribe had been saved!' So Merdas thanked him and said, 'Thou hast well requited our pains in rearing thee, O Gherib!'

Now, when Gherib delivered Mehdiyeh from El Hemel, she smote him with the arrows of her glances and he fell into the toils of her love, wherefore his heart could not forget her and he became drowned in passion and love-longing. Sleep forsook him and he had no delight of meat or drink, but would spur his horse up to the mountain-tops, where he would spend the day in reciting verses and return at nightfall; and indeed the signs of love-liking and distraction were manifest upon him. He discovered his secret to one of his companions and it became noised abroad in the camp, till it reached the ears of Merdas, who thundered and lightened and rose and sat down and puffed and snorted and reviled the sun and the moon, saying, 'This is the reward of him who rears bastards! Except I kill Gherib, I shall be put to shame.'

Then he opened out his mind to one of the elders of his tribe and took counsel with him of killing Gherib. 'O Amir,' replied he, 'it was but yesterday that he freed thy daughter from captivity. If thou must needs kill him, let it be by the hand of another than thyself, so the folk may not misdoubt of thee.' Quoth Merdas, 'Advise me how I may compass his death, for I look to none but thee for this.' 'O Amir,' answered the other. 'wait till he goes forth to hunt, when do thou take a hundred horse and lie in wait for him in the caves, till he passes; then take him off his guard and fall upon him and cut him in pieces, so shalt thou be quit of his reproach.' 'This should serve,' said Merdas and chose out a hundred and fifty of his stoutest horsemen, whom he lessoned to his will. Then he watched Gherib till, one day. he went forth to hunt and rode far away amongst the hills and valleys; whereupon Merdas followed him with his men and lay in wait for him by the way against he should return from the chase; but, as they lay in ambush among the trees, there fell upon them five hundred Amalekites, who slew of them three-score and made fourscore and ten prisoners and pinioned Merdas.

Now the reason of this was that when Gherib put El Hemel and his men to the sword, the rest fled to their lord's brother and told him what had happened, whereat his gorge rose and he gathered together his Amalekites and choosing out five hundred cavaliers, each fifty cubits high, set out with them in quest of revenge for his brother. By the way he fell in with Merdas and his company and there happened between them what happened; after which he bade his men alight and rest, saying, 'O folk, the idols have given us an easy revenge; so guard ye Merdas and his men, till I carry them away and put them to death on the foulest wise.' When Merdas found himself a prisoner, he repented of what he had done and said, 'This is the reward of tyranny.' Then they lay down to sleep, and the enemy passed the night, rejoicing in their victory, whilst Merdas and his men despaired of life and made sure of death.

Meanwhile, Sehim el Leil, who had been wounded in the fight with El Hemel, went in to his sister Mehdiyeh and she rose to him and kissed his hands, saying, 'May thy hand never wither nor thine enemies have occasion to rejoice! But for thee and Gherib, we had not escaped captivity. But know, O my brother,' continued she, 'that thy father hath ridden forth with a hundred and fifty horse, purposing to kill Gherib;

and thou knowest it would be foul wrong to kill him, for that it was he who saved your honour and rescued your goods.' When Sehim heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and he donned his battle-harness and mounting, rode in quest of Gherib. He presently came up with him and found that he had taken great plenty of game; so he saluted him and said to him, 'O my brother, why didst thou go forth, without telling me?' 'By Allah,' replied Gberib, 'it was but that I saw thee wounded and thought to give thee rest.' Then said Sehim, 'O my brother, beware of my father!' and told him how Merdas was abroad with a hundred and fifty men, seeking to kill him. Quoth Gherib, 'Allah will make his treason to return on his own head.'

Then they set out, to return to the camp, but the night overtook them by the way and they rode on in the darkness, till they drew near the valley where the enemy lay and heard the neighing of horses; whereupon said Sehim, 'O my brother, my father and his men are ambushed in yonder valley; let us flee from it.' But Gherib dismounted and throwing his bridle to his brother, said to him, 'Stay here till I come back to thee.' Then he went on till he came in sight of the folk, when he saw that they were not of his tribe and heard them name Merdas and say, 'We will not kill him save in his own land.' Wherefore he knew that Merdas was their prisoner and said, 'As Mehdiyeh liveth, I will not depart hence till I have delivered her father, that she may not be troubled!' Then he sought till he came upon Merdas and found him bound with cords; so he sat down by his side and said to him, 'God deliver thee, O uncle, from these bonds and humiliation!' When Merdas saw Gherib, his reason fled and he said to him, 'O my son, I am at thy mercy: deliver me in right of my fosterage of thee!' Quoth Gherib, 'If I deliver thee, wilt thou give me Mehdiyeh?' 'O my son,' answered the Amir, 'by all that is sacred to me, she is thine to all time!' So he loosed him, saying, 'Make for the horses, for thy son Sehim is there:' and Merdas crept along till he came to his son, who rejoiced in him and gave him joy of his escape.

Meanwhile, Gherib unbound one after another of the prisoners, till he had freed the whole ninety and they were all far from the enemy. Then he sent them their arms and horses, saying to them, 'Scatter yourselves round about the enemy and cry out, "O sons of Kehtan!" And when they awake, do ye remove from them and encircle them.' So he waited till the last watch of the night, when he cried out, 'O sons of Kehtan!' and his men answered, saying, 'O sons of Kehtan!' as with one voice; and the mountains echoed their crying, so that it seemed to the enemy as though the whole tribe [of the Benou Kehtan] were upon them; wherefore they all snatched up their arms and fell upon one another with slaughter. Gherib and his men held aloof, and they fought with one another till daybreak, when Merdas and Gherib and their ninety warriors fell in upon them and killed some of them and put the rest to flight. Then they took the arms and horses of the dead and the fugitives and returned to the camp, whilst Merdas could hardly credit his deliverance.

When they reached the encampment, the folk all came to meet them and rejoiced in their safe return. Then they alighted and betook them to their tents; and all the youths of the tribe flocked to Gherib's tent and great and small saluted him and did him honour. When Merdas saw this, he was more jealous of Gherib than before and said to his kinsfolk, 'Verily, hatred of Gherib grows on my heart, and why but because I see these flocking about him! And to-morrow he will demand Mehdiyeh of me.' Quoth

his confidant, 'O Amir, ask of him somewhat he cannot avail unto.' This pleased Merdas, and on the morrow, as he sat on his divan, with the Arabs about him, Gherib entered, followed by his men and surrounded by the youth of the tribe, and kissed the earth before Merdas, who rose to do him honour, making a show of joy in him and seating him beside himself.

Then said Gherib, 'O uncle, thou madest me a promise; do thou fulfil it.' 'O my son,' answered the Amir, 'she is thine to all time; but thou lackest good.' 'O uncle,' said Gherib, 'ask of me what thou wilt, and I will fall upon the Amirs of the Arabs in their dwellings and on the kings in their cities and bring thee wealth enough to cover the land from East to West.' 'O my son,' rejoined Merdas, 'I have sworn by all the idols that I would give Mehdiyeh to none but him who should take my wreak [of mine enemy] and do away my reproach.' 'O uncle,' said Gherib, 'tell me with which of the kings thou hast a feud, that I may go to him and break his throne over his head.' 'O my son,' replied Merdas, 'know that I once had a son, a champion of the champions, and he went forth one day to hunt with a hundred horse. They fared on from valley to valley, till they had wandered far away into the mountains and came to the Valley of Flowers and the Castle of Ham ben Shith ben Sheddad ben Kheled.

Now in this place dwells a black giant, seventy cubits high, who uses to pluck up trees by the roots and fight with them; and he came out upon my son and his men and slew them all, save three, who escaped and bore me the news. So I assembled my braves and went forth to fight the giant, but could not avail against him; wherefore I was baulked of my revenge and swore that I would not give my daughter in marriage but to him who should avenge me of my son.' 'O uncle,' said Gherib, 'I will go to the giant and avenge thy son on him with the help of God the Most High.' And Merdas answered, saying, 'O Gherib, if thou get the victory over him, thou wilt gain of him such booty of wealth and treasures as fires may not devour.' Quoth Gherib, 'Swear to me [before witnesses] that thou wilt give me Mehdiyeh to wife, that I may go to seek my fortune with a heart at ease.' So Merdas swore this to him and took the elders of the tribe to witness; whereupon Gherib went away, rejoicing in the [anticipated] fulfilment of his hopes, and went in to his mother, to whom he related what had passed. 'O my son,' said she, 'know that Merdas hates thee and doth but send thee to this mountain, to bereave me of thee; so take me with thee and let us depart the tents of this tyrant.' But he answered, saying, 'O my mother, I will not depart hence till I have compassed my desire and overcome my enemy.'

Then he slept, till the morning arose with its light and shone, and hardly had he mounted his charger when his friends, the young men, came up to him, two hundred stout cavaliers, and cried out to him, saying, 'Take us with thee; we will help thee and keep thee company by the way.' And he rejoiced in them and said, 'God requite you for us with good! Come, my friends, let us go.' So they set out and fared on for two days, till the evening of the second day, when they halted at the foot of a high scarped bill and unbridled their horses. As for Gherib, he left the rest and fared on into the mountain, till he came to a cave, whence issued a light. So he entered and found, at the upper end of the cave, an old man, three hundred and forty years old, whose eyebrows hung down over his eyes and whose moustaches hid his mouth. His aspect filled Gherib with awe and veneration, and the hermit said to him, 'O my son, methinks

thou art of the idolaters that worship stones in the stead of the All-powerful King, the Creator of Night and Day and the revolving sphere.' When Gherib heard his words, his nerves quivered and he said, 'O elder, where is this lord of whom thou speakest, that I may worship him and take my fill of his sight?' 'O my son,' replied the old man, 'this is the Supreme Lord, none in the world may look upon Him; He seeth and is not seen. He is the Most High of aspect and is present everywhere in His works. He it is who maketh all things to be and ordereth the march of time; He is the Creator of men and Jinn and sendeth the prophets to guide His creatures into the right way. Whoso obeyeth Him, He bringeth into Paradise, and whoso disobeyeth Him, He casteth into the fire.'

'And how, O uncle,' asked Gherib, 'doth he say who worships this mighty Lord who hath power over all?' 'O my son,' answered the old man, 'I am of the tribe of Aad, which were transgressors in the land and believed not in God. So He sent unto them a prophet named Houd, but they believed not in him and he destroyed them by means of a deadly wind; but I believed, I and some of my tribe, and we were saved from destruction. Moreover, I was present with the tribe of Themoud and saw what befell them with their prophet Salih. After Salih, God the Most High sent a prophet called Abraham the Friend to Nimrod son of Canaan, and there befell what befell between them. Then my companions died and I continued in this cave to serve God the Most High, Who provideth me without my taking thought.' 'O uncle,' quoth Gherib, 'what shall I say, that I may become of the servants of this mighty Lord? 'Say,' replied the old man, '"There is no god but God and Abraham is the Friend of God."'

So Gherib embraced the faith of submission' with heart and tongue and the old man said to him, 'May the sweetness of submission and belief be stablished in thy heart!' Then he taught him somewhat of the ordinances and scriptures of Islam and said to him, 'What is thy name?' And he answered, 'My name is Gherib.' 'O Gherib,' said the old man, 'whither art thou bound?' So he told him all his history, till he came to the mention of the Ghoul of the Mountain, whereupon quoth the other, 'O Gherib, art thou mad that thou goest forth against the Ghoul of the Mountain alone?' 'O my lord,' replied Gherib, 'I have with me two hundred horse.' 'O Gherib,' rejoined the hermit, 'hadst thou ten thousand, yet shouldest thou not prevail against him, for his name is *The-Ghoul-who-eats-men-we-pray-God-for-safety*, and he is of the children of Ham. His father's name was Hindi, who peopled Hind and named it, and he left this son after him, whom he called Saadan the Ghoul. Now, even in his father's lifetime he was a cruel tyrant and an arrogant devil and had no other food than men's flesh. His father forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden and redoubled in his frowardness, till Hindi banished him and drove him forth of Hind, after battle and sore travail. Then he came to this country and fortified himself therein, making his dwelling in this place, whence he uses to sally forth and waylay all that come and go. Moreover, he bath begotten five stout and warlike sons, each one of whom will do battle with a thousand braves, and be hath filled the valley with his booty of horses and camels and oxen and sheep, besides other treasure and goods. Wherefore I fear for thee from him; so do thou implore God the Most High to succour thee against him by the word of Unity, and when thou drivest at the infidels, say, "God is Most Great!" for this saying confoundeth those who misbelieve.'

Then he gave him a mace of steel, a hundred pounds in weight, with ten rings, which clashed like thunder, when the wielder brandished it, and a sword forged of a thunder-bolt, three cubits long and three spans broad, wherewith if one smote a rock, it would cleave it in sunder. Moreover, he gave him a hauberk and target and a book [of the law] and said to him, 'Return to thy people and expound Islam to them.' So Gherib left him, rejoicing in his newly-gained faith, and returned to his companions, who saluted him, saying, 'What made thee tarry thus?' Whereupon be told them all that had befallen him and expounded to them Islam, and they all embraced the faith of submission.

Next morning, Gherib mounted and rode to the hermit to bid him farewell, after which he set out to return to his camp. On his way, there met him a horseman armed cap-a-pie, so that only his eyes appeared, who made at him, saying, 'Put off what is on thee, O dog of the Arabs; or I will slay thee!' Therewith Gherib drove at him and there befell between them a battle such as would make a new-born child turn gray and melt the flinty rock with its terror; but presently the stranger did off his face-veil, and behold, it was Gherib's half-brother Sehim el Leil.

Now the manner of his coming thither was on this wise. When Gherib set out in quest of the Ghoul of the Mountain, Sehim was absent and on his return, not seeing his brother, he went in to his mother, whom he found weeping. So he asked the reason and she told him what had happened, whereupon, without allowing himself aught of rest, he donned his harness of war and mounting, pricked after Gherib, till he overtook him and there befell between them what befell. When, therefore, he discovered his face, Gherib knew him and saluted him, saying, 'What moved thee to do this?' Quoth Sehim, 'I had a mind to measure myself with thee in the field and make trial of my force in cutting and thrusting.' Then they rode on, till they drew near the valley, and on the way Gherib expounded Islam to Sehim, who embraced the faith.

Meanwhile, the Ghoul espied the dust of their horses' feet and said to his sons, 'O my sons, mount and fetch me yonder booty.' So the five took horse and made for the party. When Gherib saw the five giants approaching, he spurred towards them and cried out, saying, 'Who and what are ye and what do ye want?' Whereupon Felhoun, the eldest of the five, came out and said, 'Dismount and bind one another and we will drive you to our father, that he may roast some of you and boil other, for it is long since he hath tasted human flesh.' When Gherib heard this, he drove at Felhoun, shaking his mace, so that the rings resounded like the pealing thunder and the giant was confounded. Then he smote him a light blow with the mace between the shoulders, and he fell to the ground like a great palm-tree; whereupon Sehirn and some of his men fell upon him and bound him; then, putting a rope about his neck, they haled him along like a cow.

When his brothers saw him a prisoner, they rushed upon Gherib, who took three of them captive and the fifth fled back to his father, who said to him, 'What is behind thee and where are thy brothers?' Quoth he, 'A beardless youth, forty cubits high, hath taken them prisoner.' 'May the sun pour no blessing on you!' replied Saadan and going down from his hold, tore up a huge tree, with which he went in quest of Gherib and his folk on foot, for that no horse might carry him, because of the bigness of his body. His son followed him and they went on till they came up with Gherib and his

company, when the Ghoul fell upon them, without word said, and killed five men with his club. Then he made at Sehim and struck at him with his club, but Sehim avoided the blow and it fell harmless; whereat Saadan was wroth and throwing down the weapon, sprang upon Sehim and caught him up as the merlin catches up the sparrow.

When Gherib saw his brother in the Ghoul's clutches, he cried out, saying, 'God is most Great! By the favour of Abraham the Friend, whom God bless and preserve!' And spurred his charger at Saadan, shaking his mace, till the rings resounded. Then he cried out again, 'God is most Great!' and smote the Ghoul full on the ribs with his mace, whereupon he fell to the ground, insensible, and loosed his hold of Sehim; nor did he come to himself before he was bound and shackled. When his son saw this, lie turned and fled; but Gherib drove after him and smiting him with his mace between the shoulders, unhorsed him. So they bound him with his father and brothers and haltering them with ropes, haled them all six along like camels, till they reached the Ghoul's castle, which they found full of goods and treasures and things of price; and there they found also twelve hundred Persians, bound and shackled.

Gherib sat down on Saadan's chair, which had aforetime belonged to Sasa ben Shith ben Sheddad ben Aad, with Sehim on his right and his companions standing on his either hand, and sending for the Ghoul of the Mountain, said to him, 'How findest thou thyself, O accursed one?' 'O my lord,' answered Saadan, 'in the sorriest of plights for abasement and mortification; my sons and I, we are bound with ropes like camels.' Quoth Gherib, 'It is my will that you enter my faith, that is, the faith of Islam, and acknowledge the Unity of the All-knowing King, Creator of light and darkness and of all things, - there is no God but He, the Requiting King, - and confess the prophethood of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace I' So the Ghoul and his sons made profession of Islam after the goodliest fashion, and Gherib bade loose their bonds, whereupon Saadan wept and would have kissed his feet, he and his sons: but Gherib forbade them and they stood with the rest.

Then said Gherib, 'Harkye, Saadan!' 'At thy service, o my lord!' answered he. Quoth Gherib, 'What are these captives?' 'O my lord,' replied the Ghoul, 'these are my booty from the land of the Persians and are not the only ones.' 'And who is with them?' asked Gherib. 'O my lord,' answered Saadan, 'there is with them the princess Fekhr Taj, daughter of King Sabour of Persia, and a hundred damsels like moons.' When Gherib heard this, he marvelled and said, 'How came ye by these?' 'O Amir,' replied Saadan, 'I went forth one day with my Sons and five of my slaves in quest of booty, but finding no spoil in our way, we dispersed over deserts and plains and fared on, so haply we might happen on somewhat of prey and not return empty-handed, till we found ourselves in the land of the Persians. Presently, we espied a cloud of dust in the distance and sent one of our slaves to reconnoitre, who returned after awhile and said, "O my lord, this is the princess Fekhr Taj, daughter of Sabour, King of the Persians and Medes and Turcomans, who is on a journey, attended by two thousand horse." Quoth I, "Mayst thou be gladdened with good news! We could have no finer purchase than this." Then I and my sons fell upon the Persians and slew of them three hundred men and took the princess and twelve hundred cavaliers prisoners, together with all that was with her of treasure and riches, and brought them hither.'

Quoth Gherib, 'Hast thou offered any violence to the princess Fekhr Taj?' 'Not I,' replied Saadan, 'as thy head liveth, and by the virtue of the faith I have [but now] embraced!, 'It was well done of thee, O Saadan,' said Gherib; 'for her father is king of the world and he will surely despatch troops in quest of her and lay waste the dwellings of those who took her. And whoso looks not to the issue of events, Fate is no friend to him. But where is the damsel?' And Saadan, 'I have set apart a pavilion for her and her damsels.' Quoth Gherib, 'Show me her lodging,' and Saadan answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he carried him to the pavilion, where he found the princess mournful and cast down, weeping for her former estate of honour and delight. When Gherib saw her, he thought the moon was near him and magnified God the All-hearing and seeing. The princess also looked at him and saw him a princely cavalier, with valour shining from between his eyes and testifying for him and not against him; so she rose and kissed his hands, then threw herself at his feet, saying, 'O hero of the age, I cast myself on thy mercy; protect me from this Ghoul, for I fear lest he do away my maidenhead and after devour me. So take me to serve thine handmaids.' Quoth Gherib, 'Thou shalt be restored in safety to thy father and the seat of thy worship.' Whereupon she prayed that he might live long and have advancement in rank.

Then he caused unbind the Persians and turning to the princess, said to her, 'What brought thee forth of thy palace to the deserts and wastes, so that the highway-robbers made prize of thee?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'my father and all the people of his realm are Magians, who worship the fire, and not the All-powerful King. Now in our country is a monastery called the Monastery of the Fire, whither every year the daughters of the Magians and worshippers of the Fire resort at the time of their festival, after which they return to their houses. So I and my damsels set out, as of wont, attended by two thousand horse, whom my father sent with me to guard me; but by the way this Ghoul fell upon us and killed some of us and taking the rest captive, imprisoned us in this hold. This, then, is what befell me, O valiant champion, whom God guard against the shifts of fortune!' And Gherib said, 'Fear not; for I will bring thee to thy palace and the seat of thy worship.' Wherefore she blessed him and kissed his hands and feet.

Then he went out from her, after having commanded to treat her with honour, and slept till morning, when he made the ablution and prayed a two-bow prayer, after the rite of our father Abraham the Friend (on whom be peace), whilst the Ghoul and his sons and Gherib's company did the like after him. Then he turned to the Ghoul and said to him, 'O Saadan, wilt thou not show me the Valley of Flowers?'I will well, O my lord,' answered he. So Gherib and his company and Fekhr Taj all rose and went forth, whilst Saadan commanded his slaves and slave-girls, (of whom he had a hundred and fifty female and a thousand male slaves, to pasture his sheep and oxen and camels) to slaughter and cook and make ready the morning-meal and bring it to them among the trees.

When they came to the valley, they found it beautiful passing measure, full of trees growing singly and in clusters and birds warbling on the branches. There sang the mocking-bird, trilling out her melodious notes, and the cushat filling with her warble the mansions of God's creation, and the nightingale, with her voice like that of a man, and the merle, that the tongue fails to describe, and the turtle, whose plaining maddens

men for love, and the ringdove and the popinjay answering her with fluent tongue. There also were trees laden with all manner of fruits, of each two kinds, the pomegranate, sweet and sour, the almond-apricot, the camphor-apricot and the almond of Khorassan and the plum, with whose branches entwine the boughs of the myrobalan, and the orange, as it were a flaming cresset, and the shaddock, weighing down its branches, and the lemon, that cures lack of appetite, and the citron, sovereign against the jaundice, and the date, red and yellow, the [especial] handiwork of God the Most High. Of the like of this place saith the poet El Welhan:

When its birds sing in the dawn o'er its limpid lake,
El Welhan yearns for its sight ere morning break.
For as it were Paradise 'tis with its fragrant gales
And its fruits and its streams that run through its shady brake.

Gherib marvelled at the beauty of the place and bade them set up there the pavilion of Fekhr Taj, daughter of the Chosroës; so they pitched it among the trees and spread it with rich carpets. Then he sat down and the slaves brought food and they ate till they were satisfied; after which quoth Gherib, 'Harkye, Saadan!' 'At thy service, O my lord,' answered the Ghoul. 'Hast thou any wine?' asked Gherib, and Saadan replied, 'Yes, I have a cistern full of old wine.' 'Then,' said Gherib, 'bring us some of it.' So Saadan sent ten slaves, who returned with great plenty of wine, and they ate and drank and made merry. And Gherib bethought him of Mehdiyeh and recited the following verses:

I mind me of the happy days of union and delight,
And all my heart's on fire with love and longing for thy sight.
By God, I did not leave thy side of my unfettered will,
But by the strange and evil chance of Fate in my despite!
Peace be upon thee, O my love, a thousand times be peace!
Whilst I, afar from thee, remain a sad and weary wight.

They abode there three days, eating and drinking and taking their pleasure in the valley, at the end of which time they returned to the castle. Then Gherib called Sehim and said to him, 'Take a hundred horse and go to thy father and mother and thy people, the Benou Kehtan, and bring them all to this place, here to pass the rest of their days, whilst I carry the Princess of Persia back to her father. As for thee, O Saadan,' continued Gherib, addressing the Ghoul, 'abide thou here with thy sons, till I return to thee.' 'And why,' asked Saadan, 'wilt thou not carry me with thee to the land of the Persians?' 'Because,' answered Gherib, 'thou stolest away King Sabour's daughter and if his eye fall on thee he will eat thy flesh and drink tny blood.' When the Ghoul heard this, he laughed a great laugh, as it were the pealing thunder, and said, 'O my lord, if the Persians and the Medes united against me, I would make them quaff the cup of death.' 'Doubtless it is as thou sayest,' rejoined Gherib; 'but abide thou here till I return to thee.' And the Ghoul answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then Sehim departed with his comrades of the Benou Kehtan for the dwelling-pIaces of their tribe, and Gherib set out with Fekhr Taj and her company, intending for the cities of Sabour, King of the Persians.

Meanwhile, King Sabour abode awaiting his daughter's return from the Monastery of the Fire, and when the appointed time passed by and she came not, fires raged in his heart. Now he had forty viziers, whereof the wisest and chiefest was called Daidan: so he said to him, 'O vizier, the day of my daughter's return is past and I have no news of her; so do thou send a courier to the Monastery of the Fire to learn what is come of her.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Daidan, and summoning the chief of the couriers, despatched him forthright to the Monastery. When he reached it, he asked the monks of the princess, and they said, 'We have not seen her this year.' So the Courier returned to the city of Ishanir and told the vizier, who went in to the king and told him. When Sabour heard this, he was sore concerned and casting his crown on the ground, tore his beard and tell down in a swoon. They sprinkled water upon him, and presently he came to himself, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted and repeated the words of the poet:

When in thine absence to mine aid patience and tears I call,
Tears come obedient to my word, but patience not at all.
What if the days have parted us? Indeed, 'tis of their wont;
For unto Fortune perfidy, alas! is natural.

Then he called ten of his captains and bade them take each a thousand horse and ride in different directions, in quest of his daughter. So they mounted forthright and departed; whilst the princess's mother clad herself and her women in black and strewed ashes and sat weeping and lamenting.

Meanwhile Gherib and the princess journeyed on ten days, and on the eleventh day, a cloud of dust appeared in the distance and rose to the confines of the sky; whereupon Gherib called the Amir of the Persians and bade him go and learn the cause thereof. 'I hear and obey,' replied he and pricked his charger, till he came within the cloud of dust, where he saw folk and enquired of them. Quoth they, 'We are of the Benou Hettal and are questing for plunder; our Amir is Semsam ben Jirah and we are five thousand horse.' The Persian returned in haste and told Gherib, who cried out to his men and to the Persians, saying, 'Don your arms!' They did as he bade them and presently up came the Arabs, shouting, 'Booty! Booty!' Quoth Gherib, 'God confound you, O dogs of Arabs!' Then he set spurs to his horse and drove at them in valiant wise, shouting, 'God is most great! Ho for the faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!' And there befell between them a sore battle and great was the clash of arms and the din of the mellay; nor did they leave fighting, till the day fled and the darkness came, when they drew off from one another.

Then Gherib numbered his men and found that five of the Benou Kehtan had fallen and three-and-seventy of the Persians; but of the Benou Hettal they had slain more than five hundred horse. As for Semsam, he alighted and sought neither food nor sleep, but said, 'In all my life I never met such a fighter as this youth! Anon he fights with the sword and anon with the mace: but to-morrow I will go forth and defy him to single combat and cut off these Arabs.' Now, when Gherib returned to his camp, the princess met him, weeping and affrighted for the terror of that which had befallen, and kissed his foot in the stirrup, saying, 'May thy hands never wither nor thine enemies rejoice, O champion of the age! Praised be God Who hath saved thee alive this day!

Verily, I am in fear for thee from yonder Arabs.' When Gherib heard this, he smiled in her face and comforted her, saying, 'Fear not, O princess! Were this desert full of the enemy, yet would I scatter them, by the might of God the Most High.' She thanked him and prayed that he might be given the victory over his enemies; after which she returned to her women and Gherib went to his tent, where he cleansed himself of the blood of the infidels, and they lay on their arms that night.

Next morning, the two hosts mounted and sought the field. The first to prick into the plain was Gherib, who spurred his charger till he was near the infidels and cried out, 'Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out to me!' Whereupon there came out a buirdly giant of the lineage of the tribe of Aad, armed with an iron mace, twenty pounds in weight, and drove at Gherib, saying, 'O scum of the Arabs, take what cometh to thee and know that thy last hour is at hand!' So saying, he aimed a blow at Gherib, but he avoided it and the mace sank a cubit into the ground. Now the Bedouin was bent in twain with the blow; so Gherib smote him with his mace and clove his forehead in sunder; and he fell down dead and God hurried his soul to the fire. Then Gherib made his horse wheel and curvet before the foe and offered battle. So there came out to him a second and a third and a fourth and so on, till ten had come forth to him and he slew them all.

When the infidels saw his swashing blows and the slaughter he made, they hung back and forbore to go forth to him, whereupon Semsam looked at them and said, 'May God not bless you! I will go forth to him.' So he donned his battle-harness and spurring his charger into the midst of the field, cried out to Gherib, saying, 'Out on thee, O dog of the Arabs! what art thou that thou shouldst defy me in the open field and slay my men?' And Ghetib answered, 'Up and take thy wreak for the slaughter of thy braves!' So Semsam ran at Gherib, who awaited him with a dilated breast and a heart well pleased, and they hewed at one another with maces, till the two hosts marvelled and every eye was fixed on them. Then they wheeled about [and fetching a compass] in the field, [met] and struck at each other; but Gherib avoided Semsam's stroke and dealt him a buffet that beat in his breast and cast him to the ground, dead; whereupon all his host set upon Gherib as one man, and he ran at them, crying out, 'God is most Great! He giveth help and victory [to His servants] and forsaketh those who reject the faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!'

When the infidels heard the name of the All-powerful King, the One, the Victorious, whom the sights comprehend not, but He comprehendeth all sights, they looked at one another and said, 'What is this saying that makes us tremble in every nerve and weakens our resolution and causes the life to fail in us? Never in our lives heard we aught goodlier than this saying! Let us leave fighting, that we may ask its meaning.' So they held their hands from the battle and dismounted; and their chiefs assembled and held counsel together, seeking to go to Gherib and saying, 'Let ten of us go to him!' So they chose out ten of their best, who set out for Gherib's camp. Now he and his people had alighted and returned to their tents, marvelling at the withdrawal of the infidels from the fight. Presently, the ten elders came up and seeking speech of Gherib, kissed the earth before him and wished him glory and long life. Quoth he to them, 'What made you leave fighting?' 'O my lord,' answered they, 'thou didst affright us with the words thou shoutedst out at us.' Then said Gherib, 'What calamity do ye

worship?' 'We worship Wedd and Souwaa and Yeghouth,' answered they, 'lords of the tribe of Noah;' and Gherib, 'We serve none but God the Most High, Maker of all things and Provider of every living creature. He it is who created the heavens and the earth and stablished the mountains, who maketh water to well from the rocks and the trees to grow and feedeth the wild beasts in the deserts; for He is God, the One, the All-powerful.'

When they heard this, their bosoms expanded to the words of the faith of Unity and they said, ' Verily, this God is a great lord, compassionate and merciful. What shall we say, to become of those that submit themselves to Him ?' Quoth Gherib, 'Say," There is no god but God and Abraham is the Friend of God."' So the ten made sincere profession of the true faith and Gherib said to them, ' If the sweetness of Islam be indeed stablished in your hearts, go to your people and expound the faith to them; and if they profess, they shall be saved, but if they refuse, we will burn them with fire.' So they returned and expounded Islam to their people and set forth to them the way of truth and righteousness, and they embraced the faith of submission with heart and tongue.

Then they repaired on foot to Gherib's tent and kissing the earth before him, wished him power and advancement, saying, 'O our lord, we are become thy slaves; command us what thou wilt, for we hearken to thee and obey thee and will never leave thee, for God hath guided us into the right way at thy hands.' 'May God abundantly requite you!' answered he. 'Return to your dwellings and take your goods and your children and forego me to the Valley of Flowers and the castle of Sasa ben Shith, whilst I carry the princess Fekhr Taj, daughter of Sabour, King of the Persians, back to her father and return to you.' 'We hear and obey,' said they and straightway returned to their encampment, rejoicing in Islam, and expounding the faith to their wives and children, who became true believers. Then they dismantled their dwellings and set forth, with their goods and cattle, for the Valley of Flowers. Now Gherib had charged them, saying, 'If the Ghoul of the Mountain come out to you and offer to attack you, do ye call upon the name of God, the Creator of all things, and he will leave his hostile intent and receive you hospitably.' So, when they came in sight of the castle of Shith, Saadan and his Sons sallied forth to them and would have fallen upon them; but they called aloud upon the name of God the Most High, and straightway he received them kindly and asked them of their case. They told him all that had passed between Gherib and themselves, whereupon he rejoiced in them and lodged them with him and loaded them with kindnesses.

Meanwhile, Gherib and his company fared on five days' journey towards the city of Isbanir, and on the sixth day, they saw in the distance a cloud of dust. So Gherib sent one of the Persians to learn the meaning of this and he went and returned, swiftlier than a bird in its flight, saying, 'O my lord, these be a thousand horse of our comrades, whom the King hath sent in quest of his daughter.' When Gherib heard this, he commanded his men to halt and pitch the tents. So they halted and waited till the new comers reached them, when they went to meet them and told Touman, their captain, that the princess was with them; whereupon he went in to Gherib and kissing the earth before him, enquired for her. Gherib sent him to her tent, and he entered and kissed her hands and feet and acquainted her with what had befallen her father and

mother. She told him in return all that had befallen her and how Gherib had delivered her from the Ghoul of the Mountain, who would else have eaten her, adding, 'And indeed, it behoves my father to give him the half of his kingdom.' Then Touman returned to Gherib and kissed his hands and feet and thanked him for his good dealing, saying, 'With thy leave, O my lord, I will return to Isbanir and acquaint the King with the good news of his daughter's approach.' 'Go,' answered Gherib, 'and take of him the gift for glad tidings.'

So Touman returned with all diligence to Isbanir and entering the palace, kissed the earth before the King, who said to him, 'What is the news, O bringer of glad tidings?' Quoth Touman, 'I will not speak, till thou give me the reward for good news.' 'Tell me thy good news,' answered the King, 'and I will content thee.' So Touman said, 'O King, I bring thee the glad tidings of the return of the princess Fekhr Taj.' When Sabour heard his daughter's name, he fell down in a swoon and they sprinkled rose-water on him, till he recovered and said to Touman, 'Draw near to me and tell me all.' So he came forward and acquainted him with all that had befallen the princess; and Sabour beat hand upon hand, saying, 'Alas, unhappy Fekhr Taj!' And he bade give Touman ten thousand dinars and conferred on him the government of the city of Ispahan. Then he cried out to his Amirs, saying, 'Mount, all of you, and go forth to meet the princess Fekhr Taj!' Whilst the chief eunuch went in to the queen-mother and told her and all the harem the good news, whereat she rejoiced and gave him a dress of honour and a thousand dinars. Moreover, the people of the city heard of this and decorated the streets and houses.

Then the King and Touman took horse and rode till they fell in with Gherib, when Sabour dismounted and made some steps towards Gherib, who also dismounted and advanced to meet him; and they embraced and saluted each other, and Sabour bent over Gherib's hand and kissed it and thanked him for his favours. They pitched their tents in face of one another and Sabour went in to his daughter, who rose and embracing him, told him all that had befallen her and how Gherib had rescued her from the clutches of the Ghoul of the Mountain. 'By thy life, O princess of fair ones,' said the King, 'I will overwhelm him with gifts!' 'O my father,' rejoined she, 'make him thy son-in-law, that he may be to thee a help against thine enemies, for he is passing valiant.' This she said because her heart was enamoured of Gherib. 'O my daughter,' answered her father, 'knowst thou not that King Khired Shah seeks thee in marriage and that he hath cast the brocade and given a hundred thousand dinars [to dowry], and he is King of Shiraz and its dependencies and is lord of empire and horsemen and footmen?' 'O my father,' said the princess, 'I desire not that whereof thou speakest, and if thou constrain me to that I have no mind to, I will kill myself.' So Sabour left her and went in to Gherib, with whom he sat awhile and could not take his fill of looking upon him; and he said in himself, 'By Allah, my daughter is excusable if she love this Bedouin!' Then he called for food and they ate and passed the night together.

On the morrow, they took horse and rode till they arrived at the city of Isbanir and entered, stirrup to stirrup, and it was a great day for them. Fekhr Taj repaired to her palace and the abiding-place of her rank, where her mother and her women received her with cries of joy. As for King Sabour, he sat down on his throne and seated Gherib on his right hand, whilst the princes and viceroys and chamberlains and viziers

and officers stood on either hand and gave him joy of the recovery of his daughter. Quoth Sabour, 'Whoso loveth me let him bestow a robe of honour on Gherib,' and there fell dresses of honour on him like rain. Then Gherib abode the King's guest ten days, at the end of which time he would have departed, but Sabour clad him in a dress of honour and swore by his faith that he should not depart for a month. Quoth Gherib, 'O King, I am plighted to one of the girls of the Arabs and I desire to go in to her.' 'Whether is the fairer,' asked the King, 'thy betrothed or Fekhr Taj?' 'O King of the age,' replied Gherib, 'what is the slave beside the lord?' And Sabour said, 'Fekhr Taj is become thy handmaid, for that thou didst rescue her from the clutches of the Ghoul, and she shall have none other husband than thee.'

Thereupon Gherib rose and kissed the earth, saying, "O, King of the age, thou art a king and I am but a poor man, and belike thou wilt ask a heavy dowry.' 'O my son,' replied the King, 'know that Khired Shah, lord of Shiraz, seeks her in marriage and hath appointed a hundred thousand dinars to her dower; but I have chosen thee before all men, that I may make thee the shield of my kingship and the sword of my vengeance.' Then he turned to his chief officers and said to them, 'Bear witness against me that I give my daughter Fekhr Taj in marriage to my son Gherib.' With that he joined hands with him and she became his wife. Then said Gherib, 'Appoint me a dower and I will bring it to thee, for I have in the Castle of Sasa wealth and treasures beyond count.' 'O my son,' answered Sabour, 'I want of thee neither gold nor treasure and I will take nothing for her dower save the head of Jemrcan, King of Desht and the city of Ahwaz.' 'O King of the age,' rejoined Gherib, 'I will fetch my people and go to thine enemy and lay waste his realm.' Quoth Sabour, 'May God requite thee with good!' and dismissed the assembly, thinking that, if Gherib went forth against Jemrcan, be would never return.

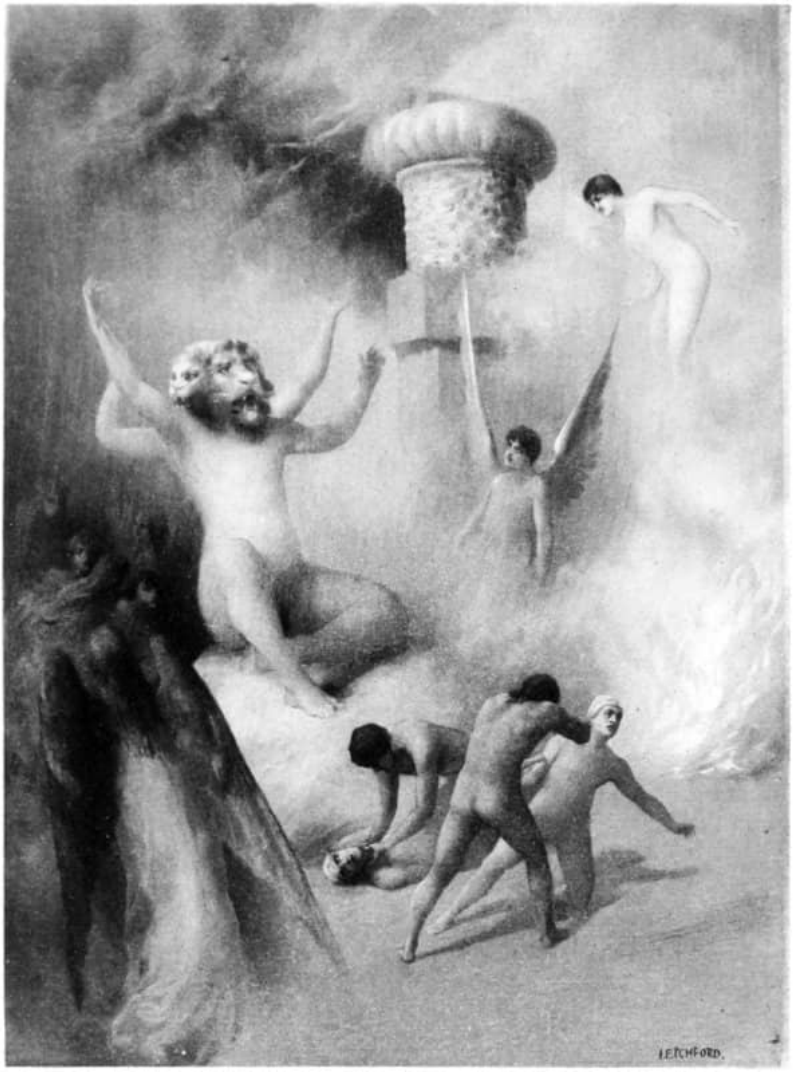
Next morning, the King mounted with Gherib and all his troops and rode forth to the tilting-ground, where he said to his men, 'Do ye tilt with spears and gladden my heart.' So the Persian cavaliers tilted, one against the other, and Gherib said, 'O King of the age, I have a mind to tilt with the horsemen of the Persians, but on one condition.' 'What is that?' asked the King. 'It is,' answered Gherib, 'that I shall don a light tunic and take a headless spear, with a pennon dipped in saffron, whilst the Persians tilt against me with sharp spears. If any conquer me, I will give myself to him; but, if I conquer him, I will mark him on the breast and he shall leave the lists.' Then the King cried to the commander of the troops to bring forward the champions of the Persians; so he chose out twelve hundred of his stoutest champions, and the King said to them, in the Persian tongue, 'Whoso slayeth this Bedouin may ask of me what he will.' So they strove with each other for the precedence and advanced upon Gherib and truth was distinguished from falsehood and jest from earnest. Quoth Gherib, 'I put my trust in God, the God of Abraham the Friend, Who hath power over all and from whom nothing is hidden, the One, the Almighty, whom the sight comprehendeth not!'

Then a giant of the Persian champions pricked out to him, but Gherib let him not stand long before him ere he marked him and filled his breast with saffron, and as he turned away, he smote him on the nape with [the butt of] his spear, and he fell to the ground and his pages carried him forth of the lists. Then a second champion came forth against him and he overcame him and marked him on the breast; and thus did

he with champion after champion, till he had overcome them all and marked them on the breast; for God the Most High gave him the victory over them and they went forth of the lists. Then the servants set food before them and they ate and drank till Gherib's wits were dazed. By and by, he went out upon an occasion and would have returned, but lost his way and entered the palace of Fekhr Taj. When she saw him, her reason fled and she cried out to her women, saying, 'Go to your own places!' So they withdrew and she rose and kissed Gherib's hand, saying, 'Welcome to my lord, who delivered me from the Ghoul! Indeed I am thine handmaid for ever.' Then she drew him to her bed and embraced him, whereupon desire was hot upon him and he broke her seal and lay with her till the morning. Now the King thought that he had departed; but on the morrow he went in to him and Sabour rose to him and made him sit by his side.

Then entered the [tributary] kings and kissing the earth, stood on either hand and fell to talking of Gherib's valour and saying, 'Extolled be He who gave him such prowess, and he so young in years!' As they were thus engaged, the King espied from the palace-windows the dust of horse approaching and cried out to his scouts, saying, 'Out on you! Go and bring me news of yonder dust!' So one of them took horse and riding off, returned after awhile and said, 'O King, this is the dust of a hundred horse, and the name of their chief is Sehim el Leil.' Quoth Gherib, 'O my lord, this is my brother, whom I had sent on an errand, and I will go forth to meet him.' So saying, he mounted, with his hundred men of the Benou Kehtan and a thousand Persians, and rode forth to meet his brother in great state, [that is to say if greatness may be attributed to the creature] for [real] greatness belongeth to God alone. When they came up with each other, they dismounted and embraced, and Gherib said to Sehim, 'O my brother, hast thou brought our tribe to the Castle of the Ghoul of the Mountain and the Valley of Flowers?' 'O my brother,' answered Sehim, 'when the perfidious dog Merdas heard that thou hadst mastered the Ghoul of the Mountain and his stronghold, he was sore chagrined and said, "Except I depart hence, Gherib will come and take my daughter Mehdiyeh without dower." So he took his daughter and his goods and set out with his tribe for Irak, where he entered the city of Cufa and put himself under the protection of King Agib, seeking to give him his daughter to wife.' When Gherib heard his brother's story, he well-nigh gave up the ghost for rage and said, 'By the virtue of the faith of submission, the faith of Abraham the Friend, and by the Supreme Lord, I will assuredly go to the land of Irak and make fierce war upon it.'

Then they returned to the city and going in to the King, kissed the earth before him. He rose to Gherib and saluted Sehim; after which the former told him what had happened and he put ten captains at his command, under each one's hand ten thousand horse of the stoutest of the Persians and the Arabs, who equipped themselves and were ready to depart at the end of three days. Then Gherib set out and journeyed till he reached the Castle of Sasa, where the Ghoul and his sons came forth to meet him and dismounting, kissed his feet in the stirrups. He told them all that had passed and the Ghoul said, 'O my lord, do thou abide in this castle, whilst I repair to Irak with my sons and servants and lay waste town and hamlet and bring thee all its defenders bound hand and foot.' But Gherib thanked him and said, 'O Saadan, we will all go.' So they all made ready and set out for Irak, leaving a thousand horse to guard the castle.


LEITCH-FORD.

Meanwhile, Merdas arrived at the city of Cufa and going in to Agib, kissed the earth before him and wished him what is usually wished to kings. Then he made him a handsome present, saying, 'O my lord, I come to throw myself on thy protection.' 'Tell me who hath wronged thee,' answered Agib, 'that I may protect thee against him, though it were Sabour, King of the Persians and Turco mans and Medes.' 'O King,' replied Merdas, 'he who bath wronged me is none other than a youth whom I reared in my bosom. I found him in his mother's lap in a certain valley and took her to wife. She brought me a son, whom I named Sehim el Leil, and her own son, whose name was Gherib, grew up on my knees and became a consuming lightning and a great calamity, for he slew El Hemel, prince of the Benou Nebhan, and routed footmen and overcame horsemen. Now I have a daughter, who befits thee alone, and he sought her of me; so I required of him the head of the Ghoul of the Mountain [to her dowry;] wherefore he went to him and engaging him in single combat, made him prisoner and took the castle of Sasa ben Shith ben Sheddad ben Aad, wherein are the treasures of the ancients and the moderns, and the Ghoul is become one of his liegemen. Moreover, I hear that he is become a Muslim and goeth about, summoning the folk to his faith. He is now gone to carry the princess of Persia, whom he delivered from the Ghoul, back to her father, King Sabour, and will not return but with the treasures of the Persians.'

When Agib heard Merdas's story, he changed colour and was in ill case and made sure of destruction; then he said to Merdas, 'Is his mother with thee or with him?' 'She is with me,' answered Merdas; 'in my tents.' Quoth Agib, 'What is her name?' and Merdas said, 'Her name is Nusreh.' 'It is indeed she,' rejoined Agib and sent for her. When she came before him, he looked on her and knew her and said to her, 'O accursed woman, where are the two slaves I sent with thee?' 'They slew each other on my account,' replied she; whereupon he drew his sword and smote her and cut her in twain. Then they took her up and cast her out; but trouble entered into Agib's heart and he said to Merdas, 'Give me thy daughter to wife.' 'She is one of thine handmaids,' answered he; 'I give her to thee to wife, and I am thy slave.' Quoth Agib, 'I desire to look upon this whoreson, Gherib, that I may make an end of him and cause him taste all manner of torments.' Then he bade give Merdas, to his daughter's dowry, thirty thousand dinars and a hundred pieces of silk fringed and brocaded with gold and a hundred pieces of bordered stuffs and handkerchiefs and collars of gold. So he went forth with this splendid dowry and set himself to equip Mehdiyeh with all diligence.

Meanwhile, Gherib fared on till he came to El Jezireh, which is the first town of Irak and is a walled and fortified city, and here he called a halt. When the people of the city saw his army encamp before it, they shut the gates and manned the walls, then went to the king of the city, who was called Damigh for that he used to brain the champions in the open field, and told him. So he looked forth from the battlements of the palace and seeing an immense army of Persians encamped before the city, said to the citizens, 'O folk, what do yonder Persians want?' 'We know not,' answered they.

Now Damigh had among his officers a man called Sebul-kifar, keen of wit and subtle as he were a flame of fire; so he called him and bade him go to the stranger host and find out who they were and what they wanted and return quickly. Accordingly, he sped like the wind to the Persian camp, where a company of Arabs met him and said to him, 'Who art thou and what dost thou want?' Quoth he, 'I am a messenger and an

ambassador from the lord of the city to your chief.' So they took him and carried him through the lines of tents and standards, till they came to Gherib's pavilion and told him of the envoy. He bade them bring him in and they did so, whereupon he kissed the earth before Gherib and wished him length of days and honour. Quoth Gherib, 'What is thine errand?' and Sebulkifar answered, saying, 'I am an envoy from the lord of the city of Jezireh, Damigh, brother of King Kundemir, lord of the city of Cufa and the land of Irak.' When Gherib heard his father's name, the tears ran from his eyes and he looked at the messenger and said, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Sebulkifar,' answered he. 'O Sebulkifar,' said Gherib, 'return to thy master and tell him that the commander of this host is called Gherib, son of Kundemir, King of Cufa, whom his son Agib slew, and he is come to avenge his father on the perfidious dog Agib.'

So Sebulkifar returned to the city, rejoicing, and told Damigh all he had heard. The latter thought himself in a dream and said to the messenger, 'O Sebulkifar, is this thou tellest me true?' ' As thy head liveth,' replied Sebulkifar, 'it is true.' Then Damigh took horse forthright with his chief officers and rode out to the camp, where Gherib met him and they embraced and saluted one another; after which Gherib carried him to his pavilion and they sat down on beds of estate. And Damigh rejoiced in Gherib, his brother's son, and turning to him, said, 'I also have yearned to avenge thy father, but could not avail against the dog thy brother; for that his troops are many and mine few.' 'O uncle,' replied Gherib, 'I am come to avenge my father and blot out our reproach and rid the realm of Agib.' Quoth Damigh, 'O son of my brother, thou hast two wreaks to take, that of thy father and that of thy mother.' 'And what ails my mother?' asked Gherib. 'Thy brother Agib hath slain her,' replied Damigh and told him what had befallen, whereupon Gherib's reason fled and he swooned away and came nigh upon death. No sooner did he come to himself than he cried out to the troops, saying, 'To horse!' But Damign said to him, 'O son of my brother, wait till I make ready mine estate and mount with my men and fare with thee and at thy stirrup.' 'O uncle,' replied Gherib, 'I have no patience to wait; do thou equip thy troops and join me at Cufa.'

So Gherib mounted with his troops and rode, till he came to the town of Babel, whose folk took fright at him. Now there was in this town a king called Jemek, under whose hand were twenty thousand horsemen, and there gathered themselves together to him from the villages [round about] other fifty thousand horse, who pitched their tents under the walls of the city. Then Gherib wrote a letter and sent it to King Jemek by a messenger, who came up to the city-gate and cried out, saying, 'I am a messenger;' whereupon the keeper of the gate went in and told Jemek, who said, 'Bring him to me.' So the messenger entered and kissing the earth before the King, gave him the letter. Jemek opened it and read as follows: 'Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds and of all things, Who provideth all creatures and hath power over all! These from Gherib, son of Kundemir, lord of Irak and Cufa, to Jemek. As soon as this letter reaches thee, let not thy reply be other than to break thine idols and confess the unity of the All-knowing King, Creator of light and darkness and of all things, the All-powerful; and except thou do as I bid thee, I will make this day the blackest of thy days. Peace be on those who follow in the way of righteousness, fearing the issues of frowardness, and

obey the Most High King, Lord of this world and the next, Him who saith to a thing, "Be;" and it is'

When Jemek read this letter, his eyes rolled and his colour changed and he cried out to the messenger, saying, 'Go to thy lord and say to him, "To-morrow, at daybreak there shall be battle and conflict and it shall appear who is the master."' So he returned and told Gherib, who bade his men make ready for battle, whilst Jemek pitched his tents in face of Gherib's camp and his troops poured forth like the swollen sea and passed the night in expectation of battle. As soon as it was day, the two hosts mounted and drew up in battle array and beat their drums and spurred their swift horses, filling the plains; and the champions came out.

The first who sallied forth to the field was the Ghoul of the Mountain, bearing on his shoulder a terrible big tree, and he cried out between the two hosts, saying, 'I am Saadan the Ghoul: who is for fighting, who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come forth to me.' And he called out to his slaves, saying, 'Out on you! Bring me firewood and fire, for I am hungry.' So the slaves brought firewood and kindled a fire midmost the lists. Then there came out to him a man of the infidels, an Amalekite of the unbelieving Amalekites, bearing on his shoulder a mace as it were the mast of a ship, and drove at the Ghoul, saying, 'Woe to thee, O Saadan!' When the Ghoul heard this, be was angered and raising his club, aimed at the infidel a blow, that whistled through the air. The other met the stroke with his mace, but it beat down his guard and descending with its own weight and that of the mace upon his head, beat in his brain-pan, and he fell like a great palm-tree; whereupon Saadan cried to his slaves, saying, 'Take this fat calf and roast him quickly.' So they hastened to skin the infidel and roasted him and brought him to the Ghoul, who ate his flesh and crunched his bones.

When the infidels saw how Saadan did with their fellow, their skins quaked and their colour changed and their hearts died within them and they said to one another, 'Whoso goeth out against this Ghoul, he eats him and cracks his bones and maketh him to lack the wind of the world.' Wherefore they quailed for fear of the Ghoul and his sons and turned to fly, making for the town; but Gherib cried out to his troops, saying, 'Up and after them!' So the Persians and the Arabs drove after the King of Babel and his host and smote them with the sword, till they slew of them twenty thousand or more. Moreover, the fugitives crowded together in the gate of the city and there they slew of them much people; and they could not win to shut the gate. So the Persians and the Arabs entered with them, fighting, and Saadan, taking a mace from one of the slain, fought his way through the foe and broke into the King's palace, where be met with Jemek and smote him with the mace, that he fell senseless to the ground. Then he fell upon those who were in the palace and pounded them into fragments, till those who were left cried out for quarter and Saadan said to them, 'Bind your king.' So they bound Jemek and took him up, and Saadan drove them before him like sheep and brought them before Gherib, after the most part of the people of the city had perished by the swords of the latter's host.

When Jemek came to himself, he found himself bound and heard Saadan say, 'I will sup to-night off this king Jemek;' whereupon he turned to Gherib and said to him, 'I throw myself on thy mercy.' 'Become a Muslim,' replied Gherib, 'and thou shalt be

safe from the Ghoul and from the vengeance of the Living [God] who ceaseth not.' So Jemek professed Islam with heart and tongue and Gherib commanded his bonds to be loosed. Then he expounded the faith to his people and they all became Muslims; after which Jemek returned to the city and despatched thence meat and drink to the camp before Babel, where they passed the night. On the morrow, Gherib gave the signal for departure and they fared on till they came to Meyya Farikin, which they found empty, for its people had heard what had befallen Babel and had fled to Cufa and told Agib. When the latter heard the news, his gorge rose and he assembled his fighting men and bade them make ready to do battle with his brother's host; after which he numbered them and found them thirty thousand horse and ten thousand foot. So he levied other fifty thousand horse and foot and taking horse with a mighty host, rode forward five days, till he came upon his brother's army encamped before Mosul and pitched his tent in face of theirs.

Then Gherib wrote a letter and said to his officers, 'Which of you will carry this letter to Agib?' Whereupon up sprang Sehim and said, 'O King of the age, I will carry thy letter and bring thee back an answer.' So Gherib gave him the letter and he repaired to the pavilion of Agib, who bade admit him and said to him, 'Whence comest thou?' 'From the King of the Arabs and the Persians,' answered Sehim, 'son-in-law of Chosroës, King of the world, who sendeth thee a letter; so do thou return him an answer.' 'Give me the letter,' said Agib. So Sehim gave him the letter and he tore it open and read as follows: 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful! Peace be on Abraham the Friend! As soon as this letter comes to thy hands, do thou confess the unity of the Bountiful King, Causer of causes and Mover of the clouds, and leave worshipping idols. If thou do this thing, thou art my brother and ruler over us and I will pardon thee the deaths of my father and mother, nor will I reproach thee with what thou hast done. But if thou obey not my commandment, behold, I will hasten to thee and cut off thy head and lay waste thy dominions. Verily, I give thee good counsel, and peace be on those who follow in the way of righteousness and obey the Most High King!'

When Agib read these words and knew the threat they contained, his eyes sank into his head and he gnashed his teeth for rage. Then he tore the letter in pieces and threw it away, which vexed Sehim and he cried out upon Agib, saying, 'God wither thy hand for that thou hast done!' With this Agib cried out to his men, saying,'Seize yonder dog and cut him in pieces with your swords' So they ran at Sehim; but he drew his sword and fell upon them and killed more than fifty of them; after which he cut his way out and won back, covered with blood, to Gherib, who said, 'What is this, O Sehim?' And he told him what had passed, whereat he grew livid for rage and crying, 'God is most great!' bade the drums beat to battle. So the fighting-men donned their hauberks and coats of strait-woven mail and girt themselves with their swords; the footmen drew out in battle-array, whilst the horsemen mounted and set their long lances in the rest and the champions pricked into the field. Agib and his men also took horse and the two hosts charged down upon each other. Then ruled the Judge of Battle, in whose ordinance is no unright, for a seal is on his lips and he speaketh not, and the blood ran down in streams and laced the earth with curious broidery; heads grew gray [for terror] and the battle raged ever hotter and fiercer. Feet slipped and the valiant

stood firm and pushed forward, whilst the faint-heart turned and fled, nor did they leave fighting till the day waned and the night came with the darkness. Then the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart and returned to their tents, where they passed the night.

Next morning, as soon as it was day, the drums beat to battle, and the warriors donned their harness of war and girt on their fair swords and mounting their stout horses, couched their brown lances and cried out, saying, 'Let there be no budging to-day!' And the two hosts drew out in battle-array, like the swollen sea. The first to open the chapter of war was Sehim, who spurred his charger between the two hosts and played with swords and spears and plied all manner of martial exercises, till the choicest wits were confounded. Then he cried out, saying, 'Who is for fighting? Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out!' Whereupon there pricked out to him a horseman of the infidels, as he were a flame of fire; but it was not long before Sehim pierced him with his lance and overthrew him. Then a second came forth and he slew him also, and a third and he rent him in sunder, and a fourth, and he did him to death; nor did they leave to come out to him and he to slay them, till he had done to death two hundred fighting-men. Then Agib cried to his men to charge, and the two hosts met with a mighty shock and great was the clash of arms and the roar of the battle. The shining swords rang out and the blood ran in streams and men's skulls were as shoes to the horses' feet, nor did they cease from sore smiting till the day waned and the night came with the darkness, when they drew apart and returning to their tents, passed the night there.

As soon as it was day, the two hosts mounted and sought the field; and the Muslims looked for Gherib to mount and ride behind the standards as was his wont, but he came not. So Sehim sent a servant to his brother's pavilion, who, finding him not, questioned the tent-keepers, but they answered, 'We know nothing of him.' Whereat he was greatly concerned and went forth and told the troops, who refused to give battle, saying, 'If Gherib be absent from us, his enemy will destroy us.' Now there was for Gherib's absence a cause that we will set out in due order, and it was thus. When Agib returned to his camp on the preceding night, he called one of his officers by name Siyyar and said to him, 'O Siyyar, I have kept thee in reserve for a day like this; and now I bid thee go to Gherib's camp and show thy skill by bringing Gherib himself to me.' And Siyyar said, 'I hear and obey.' So he repaired to the enemy's camp and stealing into Gherib's pavilion, in the darkness of the night, when all the men had gone to rest, passed himself off for a servant and stood to serve Gherib, who presently, being athirst, called to him for water. So he brought him a flagon of water, drugged with henbane, whereof no sooner had Gherib drunk, than he fell down head fore-most; whereupon Siyyar wrapped him in his cloak and carrying him to Agib's tent, threw him down at his feet. Quoth Agib, 'O Siyyar, what is this?' 'This is thy brother Gherib,' answered he; whereat Agib rejoiced and said, 'The blessing of the idols light upon thee! Loose him and wake him.'

So they made him smell to vinegar and he came to himself and opened his eyes; then, finding himself bound and in a tent other than his own, said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then Agib cried out at him, saying, 'O dog, dost thou draw on me and seek to slay me and take on me thy wreak of

thy father and mother? This very day I will send thee to them and rid the world of thee.' 'O dog of the infidels, replied Gherib, 'thou shalt see against whom the wheels of fate shall revolve and who shall be overthrown of the Almighty King, Who knoweth what is in the hearts and Who shall leave thee in hell, tormented and confounded! Have pity on thyself and say with me, "There is no god but God and Abraham is the Friend of God!.' When Agib heard Gherib's words, he puffed and snorted and railed at his god of stone and called for the headsman and the carpet of blood; but his vizier, who was at heart a Muslim, though outwardly an infidel, rose and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, deal not hastily, but wait till we know the conquered from the conqueror. If we prove the victors, we shall be free to kill him, and if we be beaten, his being alive in our hands will be a strength to us.' And the Amirs said, 'The vizier says sooth.' So Agib bade lay Gherib in irons and chain him up in his own tent and appointed a thousand stout warriors to guard him.

Meanwhile Gherib's host, when they awoke and found not their chief, were as sheep without a shepherd; but Saadan the Ghoul cried out to them, saying, 'O folk, don your harness and trust to your Lord to defend you!' So the Arabs and the Persians donned their hauberks of iron and their strait-knit shirts of mail and mounting their horses, sallied forth to the field, with the chiefs and the ensigns in the van. Then pricked out the Ghoul of the Mountain, with a mace on his shoulder, two hundred pounds in weight, and advanced and retreated, saying, 'Ho, worshippers of idols, come ye out to-day, for it is a day of battle! Whoso knoweth me hath enough of my mischief and whoso knoweth me not, I will make myself known to him. I am Saadan, servant of King Gherib. Who is for jousting? Who is for fighting? Let no faint-heart or weakling come forth to me to-day.' And there came forth to him a champion of the infidels, as he were a flame of fire, and drove at him, but Saadan met him and dealt him a blow with his mace, which beat in his ribs and cast him lifeless to the earth. Then he called out to his sons and slaves, saying, 'Light the fire, and whoso falls of the infidels, do ye roast him well with fire and bring him to me, that I may make the morning meal of him.' So they kindled a fire amiddleward the field and laid the slain man therein, till he was cooked, when they brought him to Saadan, who gnawed his flesh and crunched his bones.

When the infidels saw this, they were sore affrighted, but Agib cried out to his men, saying, 'Out on you! Fall upon him and cut him in pieces with your swords!' So twenty thousand men ran at Saadan, whilst the footmen circled round him and rained darts and arrows upon him, so that he was wounded in four-and-twenty places and his blood ran down upon the earth, and he was alone. Then the host of the Muslims drove at the idolaters, calling for help upon the Lord of the World; and they ceased not from the battle till the day came to an end, when they drew apart. But the infidels had made Saadan prisoner, as he were a drunken man for loss of blood; and they bound him fast and set him by Gherib. When the latter saw the Ghoul a prisoner, he said, 'There is no force and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! O Saadan, what is this?' 'O my lord,' answered Saadan, 'it is God (exalted and glorified be He!) Who ordaineth misfortune and deliverance, and needs must this and that betide.' And Gherib said, 'Thou sayst sooth, O Saadan!' But Agib and his host passed the night in joy, and he

said to his men, 'To-morrow, we will fall upon the Muslims and leave not one of them alive.'

Meanwhile, the Muslims passed the night, dejected and weeping for their King and for Saadan; but Sehim said to them, 'O folk, be not concerned, for the relief of God the Most High is near.' Then he waited till midnight, when he disguised himself in the habit of a tent-keeper and repairing to Agib's camp, made his way between the tents, till he came to the King's pavilion, where he saw him seated on his throne, in the midst of his princes. So he entered and going up to the candles that burnt in the tent, snuffed them and sprinkled powdered henbane on the wicks; after which he withdrew and waited without the tent, till the smoke of the burning henbane reached Agib and his princes and they fell to the earth like dead men. Then he left them and went to the prison-tent, where he found Gherib and Saadan, guarded by a thousand men, who were drowsed with sleep. So he cried out at the guards, saying, 'Out on you! Sleep not; but watch your prisoners and light the cressets.'

Then he filled a cresset with firewood, on which he strewed henbane, and lighting it, went round about the tent with it, till the smoke of the henbane entered the nostrils of the guards, and they all fell asleep; when he entered the tent and finding Ghetib and Saadan insensible for the smoke of the henbane, which had been wafted in upon them, aroused them by making them smell to a sponge full of vinegar he had with him. Then he loosed their bonds, and when they saw him, they blessed him and rejoiced in him. Then they went forth and took all the guards' arms, and Sehim bade them go to their own camp; after which he re-entered Agib's camp, and wrapping him in his cloak, lifted him up and made for the Muslim camp. And the Merciful Lord protected him, so that he reached Gherib's tent in safety and unrolled the mantle before him. Gherib looked and seeing Agib bound, cried out, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory!' And he blessed Sehim and bade him arouse Agib. So he made him smell to vinegar, mixed with frankincense, and he opened his eyes and finding himself bound and shackled, hung down his head. 'O accursed one,' quoth Sehim, 'lift thy head!' So he raised his eyes and found himself amongst Arabs and Persians and saw his brother seated on the throne of his state and the place of his power, wherefore he was silent and spake not. Then Gherib cried out and said, 'Strip me this dog!' So they stripped him and beat him with whips, till his body was weakened and his pride subdued, after which Gherib set over him a guard of a hundred cavaliers.

Presently, they beard shouts of 'There is no god but God!' and 'God is Most Great!' from the infidel camp. Now the reason of this was that King Damigh, Gherib's uncle, had set out from El Jezireh, with twenty thousand horse, ten days after his nephew, and on nearing the field of battle, had despatched one of his riders to get news. The scout was absent a whole day, after which he returned and told Damigh all that had passed. So he waited till the night, when he fell upon the infidels, crying out, 'God is Most Great!' and put them to the edge of the sword. When Gherib heard the crying aforesaid, he said to Sehim, 'Go and find out the cause of these shouts.' So Sehim repaired to the field of battle and questioned the camp followers, who told him that King Damigh had come up with twenty thousand men and fallen upon the idolaters by night, saying, 'By the virtue of Abraham the friend, I will not forsake my

brother's son, but will do a brave man's part and beat back the infidels and please the Omnipotent King!'

So Sehim returned and told Gherib, who cried out to his men, saying, 'Don your arms and mount your horses and let us succour my uncle!' So they mounted and fell upon the infidels with the sharp sword. By the morning, they had killed nigh fifty thousand of them and made other thirty thousand prisoners, and the rest of Agib's army dispersed over the length and breadth of the land. Then the Muslims returned in triumph and Gherib rode out to meet his uncle, whom he saluted and thanked for his help. Quoth Damigh, 'I wonder if that dog Agib fell in this day's battle.' 'O uncle,' replied Gherib, 'have no care for him; know that he is with me in chains.' When Damigh heard this, he rejoiced mightily and the two kings dismounted and entered the pavilion, but found no Agib there; whereupon Gherib exclaimed, 'O glory of Abraham the Friend! What an evil end is this to a glorious day!' and he cried out to the tent-keepers, saying, 'Out on you! Where is my enemy?' Quoth they, 'When thou mountedst and we went with thee, thou didst not bid us guard him;' and Gherib exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' But Damigh said to him, 'Hasten not nor be concerned, for where can he go, and we in pursuit of him?'

Now the manner of Agib's escape was on this wise. His man Siyyar, being in the camp in disguise, saw Gherib mount and ride forth, leaving Agib unguarded, and could hardly credit his eyes; so he waited awhile and presently crept to the tent and taking Agib, who was senseless for the pain of the beating, on his back, made off with him into the open country and fared on at the top of his speed all that night and next day, till he came to a spring of water, under an apple-tree. There he set Agib down and washed his face, whereupon he opened his eyes and seeing Siyyar, said to him, 'O Siyyar, carry me to Cufa, that I may recover there and levy horsemen and soldiers, wherewith to overcome mine enemy: and know, O Siyyar, that I am anhungred.' So Siyyar went out to the desert and caught an ostrich-poult and brought it to his lord. Then he gathered firewood and striking a light, kindled a fire, by which he roasted the bird and fed Agib with its flesh and gave him to drink of the water of the spring, till his strength returned to him; after which he went to one of the Bedouin encampments, and stealing a horse thence, mounted Agib upon it and journeyed on with him till they drew near the city of Cufa. The governor of the city came out to meet and salute the King, whom he found weak with the beating his brother had inflicted on him; and Agib entered the city and calling his physicians, bade them heal him in less than than ten days' time. 'We hear and obey,' answered they and tended him till he became whole of the sickness that was upon him and of the beating. Then he commanded his viziers to write letters to all his vassals, and he wrote one-and-twenty letters and despatched them to the different governors, who assembled their troops and set out for Cufa by forced marches.

Meanwhile, Gherib, being troubled for Agib's escape, despatched a thousand horse in quest of him, who dispersed on all sides and sought him a day and a night, but found no trace of him; so they returned and told Gherib, wno called for his brother Sehim, but found him not; whereat he was sore concerned, fearing for him from the vicissitudes of fortune. However, presently, Sehim entered and kissed the earth before Gherib, who rose, when he saw him, and said, 'Where hast thou been, O

Sehim?' 'O King,' answered he, 'I have been to Cufa and find that the dog Agib hath made his way thither and is cured of his wounds. Moreover, he hath written letters to his vassals, who have brought him troops.' When Gherib heard this, he gave command to depart; so they struck the tents and marched for Cufa. When they came in sight of the city, they found it compassed about with a host like the swollen ocean, having neither beginning nor end. So Gherib encamped with his troops in face of the infidels and set up his standards, and the dark fell down upon the two hosts, whereupon they lighted fires and kept watch till daybreak. Then Gherib rose and making the ablution, prayed two inclinations, according to the rite of our father Abraham; after which he commanded the drums to sound the point of war. Accordingly, the drums beat to battle and the standards waved, whilst the fighting-men armed and mounted and sought the lists.

The first to open the chapter of war was King Damigh, who spurred his charger between the two armies and displayed himself and played with swords and spears, till both hosts were confounded and marvelled at him; after which he cried out, saying, 'Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out to me; for I am King Damigh, brother of King Kundemir.' Then there came forth a horseman of the infidels, as he were a flame of fire, and drove at Damigh, without word said; but the King received him with a lance-thrust in the breast, that the point issued from between his shoulders and God hurried his soul to the fire, and ill was the abiding-place [to which he went]. Then came forth a second and he slew him also, and a third, and they ceased not to come out to him and he to slay them, till he had made an end of six-and-seventy fighting-men.

Therewith the infidels hung back and would not encounter him; but Agib cried out to his men and said, 'Out on you, O folk! If ye all go forth against him, one after another, he will not leave one of you, sitting or standing. Charge on them, all at once, and sweep the earth clean of them and make their heads a pavement for your horses' hoofs!' So they waved the awe-striking standard and host fell upon host; the blood rained in streams upon the earth and the Judge of battle ruled, in whose ordinance is no unright. The valiant stood firm on his feet in the stead of war, whilst the faint-heart gave back and fled, thinking the day would never come to an end nor the night draw the curtains of the dusk; and they ceased not to battle and smite with swords, till the day waned and the night darkened with the shadows. Then the drums of the infidels beat the retreat, but Gherib, refusing to stay his arms, drove at the idolaters, and the believers in the unity of God followed him. How many heads and hands they sundered, how many necks and sinews they shore, how many knees and spines they crushed and how many grown men and youths they did to death! With the first peep of dawn the infidels broke and fled, and the Muslims followed them till noon and took over twenty thousand of them, whom they brought back bound.

Then Gherib sat down before the gate of Cufa and commanded a herald to proclaim pardon and safety to all who should leave the worship of idols and acknowledge the One All-knowing God, the Creator of mankind and of light and darkness. So proclamation was made as he bade in the streets of Cufa, and all that were therein embraced the true faith, great and small. Moreover, they all issued forth and made good their submission before King Gherib, who rejoiced in them with an

exceeding joy and his breast expanded and he was glad. Then he enquired of Merdas and his daughter Mehdiyeh, and being told that be had taken up his abode behind the Red Mountain, called Sehim and said to him, 'Find out for me what is come of thy father.' Sehim tarried not, but mounting, set his brown spear in the rest and fared on till he reached the Red Mountain, where he sought for his father, but found no trace of him nor of his tribe; but in their stead he saw an elder of the Arabs, a very old man, broken with excess of years, and asked him of the folk and whither they were gone. 'O my son,' replied he, 'when Merdas heard of Gherib's descent upon Cufa, he was smitten with great fear and taking his daughter, set out with his slaves, male and female, and all his tribe, into the deserts, and I know not whither he is gone.' So Sehim returned to Gherib and told him what he had learnt, whereat he was greatly concerned. Then he sat down on his father's throne and opening his treasuries, distributed largesse to his braves. And he took up his abode in Cufa and sent out spies, to get news of Agib. Moreover, he summoned the grandees of the realm, who came and did him homage; as also did the townsfolk, and he bestowed on them sumptuous dresses of honour and commended the people to their care.

One day, he went out to hunt, with a hundred horse, and fared on till he came to a valley, abounding in trees and fruits and streams and birds. It was a pasturing-place for antelopes and gazelles, delightsome to the spirit, and the fragrance of its flowers brought repose from the languor of strife. It was a brilliant day; so they encamped in the valley and passed the night there. On the morrow, Gherib made the ablution and prayed the morning prayers, offering up praise and thanks to God the Most High; when, behold, there arose a great clamour and tumult in the meadows, and he bade Sehim go and see what was the matter. So Sehim mounted and rode till he saw horsemen carrying off women and children, captive and crying out, and plundered goods and haltered horses; whereupon he questioned the shepherds and they said, 'This is the harem of Merdas, Chief of the Benou Kehtan, and his goods and those of his tribe; for yesterday Jemrcan slew Merdas and made prize of his women and children and household stuff and those of his tribe. It is his wont to go a-raiding and waylay travellers, and he is a mighty man of war; neither Arabs nor kings can avail against him and he is the scourge of the land.'

When Sehim heard this, he returned to Gherib and told him the case, wherefore fire was added to his fire and his blood boiled to avenge himself and wipe Out his reproach. So he rode after the robbers, till he overtook them and fell upon them, crying out and saying, 'God is Most Great! Down with the covetous oppressors, who deny Him!' And he slew in one onset one-and-twenty fighting men. Then he halted in mid-field, with no coward's heart, and cried out, saying, 'Where is Jemrcan? Let him come out to me, that I may make him quaff the cup of humiliation and rid the earth of him!' Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when out came Jemrcan, - a huge tall Amalekite, as he were a calamity of calamities or a piece of a mountain, cased in steel, and bearing a passing heavy club of China steel, wherewith if he smote a mountain, he crashed it, - and drove at Gherib like a fierce tyrant, without speech or salutation. Gherib met him like a hungry lion, and the brigand aimed a blow at his head with his club; but he evaded it and the club smote the earth and sank therein half a cubit deep. Then Gherib took his mace and smiting Jemrcan on the wrist, crushed his fingers and

the club dropped from his grasp; whereupon Gherib bent down from his saddle and snatching it up, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, smote him therewith full on the ribs, and he fell to the earth like a huge palm tree. So Sehim took him and binding him, haled him off with a rope, and Gherib's men fell on those of Jemrcan and slew fifty of them and put the rest to flight; nor did they draw bridle till they reached their camp and raised their voices in clamour; whereupon all who were in the stronghold came out to meet them and they told them what had passed, and when they heard that their chief was a prisoner, they set out for the valley, vying with each other in their haste to deliver him.

Meanwhile King Gherib dismounted and called for Jemrcan, who humbled himself before him, saying, 'I throw myself on thy mercy, O champion of the age!' 'O dog of the Arabs,' replied Gherib, 'dost thou waylay the servants of God the Most High and fearest not the Lord of the Worlds?' 'O my lord,' said Jemrcan, 'and who is the Lord of the Worlds?' 'O dog,' rejoined Gherib, 'and what calamity dost thou worship?' 'O my lord,' answered the brigand, 'I worship a god made of dates kneaded with butter and honey, and whiles I eat him and make me another.' When Gherib heard this, he laughed, till he fell backward, and said, 'O unhappy wretch, there is none worship-worth save God the Most High, who created thee and all things and provideth all creatures, from whom nothing is hidden and who hath power over all.' Quoth Jemrcan, 'And where is this mighty god, that I may worship him?' 'O fellow,' answered Gherib, 'know that this god's name is Allah, and it is He who created the heavens and the earth and maketh the trees to grow and the waters to run. He created beasts and birds and Paradise and Hell-fire and secludeth Himself from all eyes, seeing and being seen of none. Extolled be His perfection! There is no god but He!' When Jemrcan heard these words, the ears of his heart were opened and his skin shuddered and he said, 'O my lord, what shall I say that I may become one of you and that this mighty Lord may accept of me?' 'Say,' replied Gherib, "'There is no god but God and Abraham the Friend is the Apostle of God!"' So he repeated the profession of the faith and was written of the people of felicity. Then said Gherib, 'Hast thou tasted the sweetness of Islam?"Yes, answered the other; and Gherib said, 'Loose his bonds.' So they unbound him and he kissed the earth before Gherib and his feet.

At this moment they espied a great cloud of dust, that spread tilled it walled the world, and Gherib bade Sehim go and see what it was. So he went off, like a bird in full flight, and presently returning, said, 'O King of the age, it is the Benou Aamir, the comrades of Jemrcan.' Whereupon quoth Gherib to the latter, 'Ride out to thy people and expound to them Islam, and if they profess, they shall be saved; but, if they refuse, we will put them to the sword.' So Jemrcan mounted and Spurring towards his tribesmen, cried out to them; and they knew him and dismounting, came up to him on foot and said, 'We rejoice in thy safety, O our lord!' 'O folk,' said he, 'whoso obeyeth me shall be saved; but whoso gainsayeth me, I will cut him in twain with this sabre.' And they made answer, saying,' Command us what thou wilt, for we will not gainsay thy commandment' Quoth he, 'Then say with me, "There is no god but God and Abraham is the Friend of God!"' 'O our lord,' asked they, 'whence hast thou these words?' And he told them what had befallen him, adding, 'O folk, know ye not that I

am your chief and foremost among you in the field and stead of war, and yet a single man took me prisoner and made me quaff the cup of humiliation?'

When they heard his speech, they spoke the word of Unity, and Jemrcan led them to Gherib, at whose hands they affirmed their profession and wished him glory and victory, after they had kissed the earth before him. Gherib rejoiced in them and bade them return to their people and expound Islam to them; but they said, 'O our lord, we will never leave thee, whilst we live; but we will go and fetch our families and return to thee.' And Gherib said, 'Go, and join me at the city of Cufa.' So Jemrcan and his comrades returned to their camp and expounded Islam to their women and children, who all to a soul embraced the true faith, after which they dismantled their houses and struck their tents and set out for Cufa, driving before them their horses and sheep and camels.

Meanwhile Gherib returned to Cufa, where the horsemen met him and carried him into the city in state. He entered his palace and sat down on his throne, with his officers standing on either hand. Then the spies entered and informed him that his brother Agib had made his escape and taken refuge with Julned ben Kerker, the lord of the city of Oman and land of Yemen; whereupon Gherib bade his troops make ready to set out in three days' time. Then he expounded Islam to the thirty thousand men he had taken in the first battle and exhorted them to profess and take service with him. Twenty thousand embraced the faith, but the rest refused and he slew them. Then came Jemrcan and his tribe and kissed the earth before Gherib, who bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour and made him captain of his vanguard, saying, 'O Jemrcan, mount with the chiefs of thy kinsmen and twenty thousand horse and fare on before us to the land of Julned ben Kerker.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jemrcan and set forward with his men, leaving the women and children of the tribe in Cufa.

Then Gherib passed in review the harem of Merdas and his eye lit upon Mehdiyeh, who was among the women, whereupon he fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when he embraced Mehdiyeh and carried her into a privy chamber, where he sat with her; and they lay together that night without lewdness. Next morning, he went out and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, invested his uncle Damigh with a dress of honour and appointed him his viceroy over all Irak, commending Mehdiyeh to his care, till he should return from his expedition against Agib; after which he set out for the land of Yemen with twenty thousand horse and ten thousand foot.

Now, when Agib and his defeated army came in sight of Oman, King Julned saw the dust of their approach and sent scouts to find out its meaning, who returned and told him that this was the dust of Agib, lord of Irak. And Julned wondered at his coming and said to his officers, 'Go forth and meet him.' So they went forth and met him and pitched tents for him at the gate of the city; and Agib sent in to Julned, weeping and mournful-hearted. Now Julned's wife was the daughter of Agib's father's brother, and he had children by her. So, when he saw his kinsman in this plight, he asked what ailed him and Agib told him all that had befallen him, saying, 'O King, Gherib commandeth the folk to worship the Lord of the Heavens and forbiddeth them from the service of idols and other gods.' When Julned heard this, he was mightily enraged and said, 'By the virtue of the light-giving sun, I will not leave one of thy

brother's folk on life! But where didst thou leave them and how many men are they?' 'I left them in Cufa,' answered Agib; 'and they are fifty thousand horse.' Whereupon Julned called his Vizier Jawamerd, saying, 'Take seventy thousand horse and go to Cufa and bring me the Muslims alive, that I may torture them with all manner of tortures.'

So Jawamerd departed with his host and fared on seven days' journey towards Cufa, till he came to a valley abounding in trees and streams and fruits, where he called a halt and they rested till the middle of the night, when the Vizier gave the signal for departure and mounting, rode on before them till hard upon daybreak. A little before the dawn, he descended into a well-wooded valley, whose flowers were fragrant and whose birds warbled on the branches, as they swayed gracefully to and fro, and Satan blew into his sides [and puffed him up with pride] and he recited the following verses:

I put my battle-harness on and don my dreadful arms,
And here and there on every side I drive through the mellay;
I and my troops, we plunge into the seething sea of war
And of my prowess and my might the captives lead away.
The doughtiest horsemen of the world do know me for a fear,
A scourge and terror to my foes, my kinsmen's help and stay.
Lo, upon Gherib will I seize and drag him forth in chains!
Then, with a joyful heart and proud, I'll homeward wend my way.

Hardly had he made an end of his verses when there came out upon him from among the trees a horseman of noble presence, clad in complete steel, who cried out to him, saying, 'Stand, O brigand of the Arabs! Put off thy clothes and lay down thine arms and dismount and begone!' When Jawamerd heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and he drew his sabre and drove at Jemrcan, [for he it was,] saying, 'O thief of the Arabs, wilt thou play the highwayman with me, who am captain of the host of Julned ben Kerker and am come to bring Gherib and his men bound?' When Jemrcan heard these words, he said, 'How grateful is this to my heart!' And made at Jawamerd, reciting the following verses:

I am the cavalier renowned for valour in the field:
The foemen everywhere do dread my sabre and my spear.
I'm Jemrcan, whose whole delight is in the press of war,
And all the champions of the world my lance-thrust know and fear.
Gherib my lord and sultan is, the high-priest of my faith,
That is the lion of the fight, when hosts to strife draw near!
Devout and full of pious dread, a doughty chief is he;
Midmost the tented field he slays his enemies like deer.
Despite the gods of unbelief, verses he chants and bids
The folk to Abraham his faith, with clarion voice and clear.

Now Jemrcan had fared on with his men ten days' journey from Cufa and called a halt on the eleventh day till midnight, when he bade depart and rode on in advance, till he came to the valley aforesaid and heard Jawamerd reciting his braggart verses. So he drove at him, as he were a ravening lion, and smiting him with his sword, clove him

in twain and waited till his captains came up, when he told them what had passed and said to them, 'Let each of you take five thousand men and disperse round about the valley, whilst I and the Benou Aamir fall upon the enemy's van, crying out and saying, "God is Most Great!" When ye hear our shouts, do ye charge them with the same cry and smite them with the sword.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and turning back to their men, spread themselves about the sides of the valley in the fore-dawn twilight.

Presently up came the army of Yemen, like a flock of sheep, filling mountain and plain, and Jemrcan and the Benou Aamir fell upon them, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' Whereupon the Muslims in ambush in the valley cried out in answer and the hills and mountains echoed the cry and all things, green and dry, answered, saying, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who deny Him!' And the infidels were confounded and smote one another with the keen sabre, whilst the true believers fell upon them like flames of fire and nothing was seen but heads flying and blood spouting and faint-hearts giving back in dismay. By the time they could see each other's faces, two-thirds of the infidels had perished and God hastened their souls to the fire and ill was the abiding-place [to which they went]. The rest took to flight and dispersed about the deserts, whilst the Muslims pursued them, slaying and taking captive till midday, when they returned in triumph with seven thousand prisoners; and but six-and-twenty thousand of the infidels escaped and the most of them wounded.

Then the Muslims collected the arms and horses and tents and baggage of the enemy and despatched them to Cufa with an escort of a thousand horse; whilst Jemrcan and the rest of his force dismounted and expounded Islam to the prisoners, who made profession of the faith with heart and tongue; whereupon they released them and embraced them and rejoiced in them. Then Jemrcan made his troops rest a day and a night and set out with the dawn, intending for the city of Oman; whilst the thousand horse fared back to Cufa with the booty. When they reached the city, they went in to Gherib and told him what had passed, whereat he rejoiced and said to the Ghoul of the Mountain, 'Take horse and follow Jemrcan with twenty thousand men.' So Saadan and his sons mounted and set out for Oman with twenty thousand horse.

Meanwhile, the remains of the defeated army reached Oman and went in to Julned, weeping and crying, 'Woe!' and 'Ruin!' whereat he was amazed and said to them, 'What hath befallen you?' So they told him what had happened and he said, 'Out on you! How many men were they?' 'O King,' answered they, 'there were twenty standards, under each a thousand men.' When Julned heard this, he said, 'May the sun pour no blessing on you! Out on you! Shall twenty thousand overcome you, and you seventy thousand horse and Jawamerd equal to three thousand in the open field!' Then, in the excess of his rage and mortification, he drew his sword and cried out to those who were present, saying, 'Fall on them!' So the courtiers drew their swords upon the fugitives and slew them to the last man and cast them to the dogs. Then Julned cried out to his son (whose name was Courejan and than whom there was no doughtier cavalier in the army of his father, for he was wont to undertake three thousand horse, single-handed), saying, 'Take a hundred thousand horse and go to Irak and lay it waste altogether.' So Courejan and his host made haste to equip themselves and set out in

battle array, with the prince at their head, glorying in himself and reciting the following verses:

I'm El Courejan, the first-born of renown!
I vanquish the dwellers in desert and town.
How many a champion I've slain with my sword!
Like an ox, to the earth I have stricken him down.
How many a host have I scattered abroad
And their heads made like balls roll o'er desert and down!
Now for Irak I'm bound, for the enemies' land,
Where my foes in the sea of their blood I will drown.
I will lead away Gherib in chains with his chiefs,
So their fate to the wise for a warning be known!

They fared on twelve days' journey, till a great cloud of dust arose before them and covered the horizon and the country, and Courejan sent out scouts to reconnoitre, who returned and said to him, 'O King, this is the dust of the Muslims.' Whereat he was glad and said, 'Did ye count them?' And they answered, saying, 'We counted the standards, and they were twenty in number.' 'By my faith,' quoth the prince, 'I will not send one man-at-arms against them, but will go forth to them alone and strew their heads under the hoofs of the horses!'

Now this was the army of Jemrcan, who, espying the host of the infidels and seeing them as the swollen sea, called a halt; so his troops pitched the tents and set up the standards, calling upon the name of the All-wise Creator of light and darkness, Lord of all creatures, who seeth and is not seen, blessed and exalted be He! There is no god but He! The infidels also halted and pitched their tents, and Courejan said to them, 'Sleep upon your arms, for in the last watch of the night we will mount and trample yonder handful under our feet!' Now one of Jemrcan's spies was standing by and heard what Courejan purposed; so he returned and told his chief who said to his men, 'Arm yourselves and as soon it is dark, bring me all the camels and mules and hang all the bells and bangles and rattles ye have about their necks.' And they had with them more than twenty thousand camels and mules.

So they waited till the infidels were asleep, when Jemrcan commanded them to mount, and they took horse, committing themselves to God and seeking aid of the Lord of the Worlds. Then said Jemrcan, 'Goad the mules and camels with the points of your spears and drive them to the infidels' camp.' They did as he bade and the beasts rushed upon the enemy's camp, whilst the bells and bangles and rattles jangled and the Muslims followed at their heels, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' till all the hills and mountains resounded with the name of the Most High God, to whom belong glory and majesty! The cattle, hearing this terrible din, took fright and rushed upon the tents and trampled the folk, as they lay asleep; whereupon the idolaters started up in confusion and snatching up their arms, fell upon one another with smiting, till the most part of them were slain.

When the day broke, they looked at each other and found no Muslims slain, but saw them all on horseback, armed; wherefore they knew that this was a trick that had been played them, and Courejan cried out to the remnant of his folk, saying, 'O sons

of whores, what we had a mind to do with them, that have they done with us and their craft hath gotten the better of ours.' And they were about to charge, when, behold, a cloud of dust appeared and the wind smote it, so that it rose and hung vaulted in the air and there, appeared beneath it the glint of helmets and gleam of hauberks and splendid warriors, armed with tempered swords and supple spears. When the infidels saw this, they held back from the battle and each army sent out scouts, to know the meaning of this dust, who returned with the news that it was an army of Muslims.

Now this was the host of the Ghoul of the Mountain, whom Gherib had despatched to Jemrcan's aid, and Saadan himself rode in their van. So the two hosts of the true believers joined company and rushing upon the infidels, like a flame of fire, plied them with the keen sword and the straight and quivering spear, whilst the day was darkened and eyes blinded for the much dust. The valiant stood fast and the coward fled and sought the deserts, whilst the blood flowed like a tide over the earth; nor did they cease from the battle till the day departed and the night came with the darkness. Then the Muslims drew apart from the infidels and returned to their tents, where they ate and slept, till the darkness fled and gave place to the smiling morn; when they prayed the morning-prayer and mounted to battle.

Now, when Courejan found the most part of his men wounded, for indeed two-thirds of their number had perished by sword and spear, he said to them, 'To-morrow, I will go forth into the open field and play the champion in the stead of war.' So, as soon as the day broke and the morning appeared with its light and shone, the two hosts mounted and unsheathed their swords and couched their brown lances and cried out lustily and drew out in order of battle. The first to open the chapter of war was Courejan, who cried out, saying, 'Let no weakling come out to me to-day!' Whereupon there ran at him a captain of the Benou Aamir and the two drove at each other awhile, like two rains butting. Presently Courejan seized the Muslim by his coat of arms and tearing him from his saddle, threw him to the ground; where the infidels laid hands on him and bound him and bore him off to their tents; whilst Courejan wheeled about and curvetted and offered battle, till another captain came out, whom also he took prisoner; nor did he leave to do thus till he had made prize of seven captains before midday. Then Jemrcan gave such a cry, that the whole field resounded thereto and both armies heard it, and ran at Courejan with a heart on fire with anger, reciting the following verses:

Harkye, I'm Jemrcan, the champion stout and wight;
The terror of my stroke is feared of every knight.
I take the strengths by storm and leave the fortress-walls
To mourn the loss of those that held them in their might.
Wherefore, O Courejan, quit thou the erring path;
Turn from the froward ways and tread the road of right;
Confess to the one true God, who spread the heavens above,
Who made the streams to flow and hills to stand upright;
For, if the slave embrace the true, the only faith,
Hell's anguish shall he 'scape and win to heaven's delight.

When Courejan heard these words, he puffed and snorted and railed at the sun and the moon and drove at Jemrcan, repeating these verses:

I'm Courejan, the chief and champion of the age!
Es Shera's lions flee my shadow in affright!
I take the forts by storm and snare the beasts of prey,
And all the horsemen fear to meet me in the fight.
Wherefore, O Jemrcan, if thou believe me not,
Up to the middle field and try with me thy might!

Jemrcan met him with a stout heart and they hewed at each other with swords and thrust with spears, till the two hosts lamented for them and great was the clamour between them: nor did they leave fighting till the time of afternoon-prayer was passed and the day began to wane. Then Jemrcan drove at Courejan and smiting him on the breast with his mace, cast him to the ground, as he were the trunk of a palm-tree; and the Muslims bound him and haled him away with ropes like a camel.

When the idolaters saw their prince captive, a blind fury seized on them and they bore down upon the Muslims, thinking to rescue him; but the Muslim champions met them and left [many of] them prostrate on the earth, whilst the rest turned and sought safety in flight, with the sword clanking at their backs. The Muslims pursued them till they had scattered them over mountain and desert, when they returned to the spoil, good luck to it for a spoil! great store was there of horses and tents and so forth. Then Jemrcan went in to Courejan and expounded Islam to him, threatening him with death, except be embraced the faith; but he refused; so they cut off his head and sticking it on a spear, fared on towards Oman.

Meanwhile, the survivors of the routed host returned to Julned and made known to him the death of his son and the destruction of his army, whereupon he cast his crown to the earth and buffeting his face, till the blood spouted from his nostrils, fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself and cried to his Vizier, saying, 'Write letters to all my governors and bid them leave not a smiter with the sword nor a thruster with the spear nor a bender of the bow, but bring them all to me.' So he wrote letters and despatched them by runners to the governors, who levied their power and joined the King with an immense army, whose number was ninescore thousand men. Then they made ready tents and camels and swift horses and were about to depart, when up came Jemrcan and Saadan the Ghoul, with seventy thousand horse, as they were fierce lions, all clad in complete steel; which when Julned saw, he rejoiced and said, 'By the virtue of the light-giving Sun, I will not leave one of mine enemies alive, no, not one to carry the news, and I will lay waste the land of Irak, that I may take my wreak for my son, the havoc-making champion; nor shall my fire be quenched!'

Then he turned to Agib and said to him, 'O dog of Irak, it was thou that broughtest this calamity on us! But by the virtue of that which I worship, except I avenge me of mine enemy, I will put thee to death after the toulest fashion!' When Agib heard this, he was sore troubled and blamed himself; but he waited till nightfall, when he took those who were left to him of his suite apart from the camp and said to them, 'O my kinsmen, know that Julned and I are sore dismayed at the coming of the

Muslims, and I know that he will not avail to protect me from my brother nor from any other; so meseems we should do well to make our escape, whilst all men sleep, and flee to King Yaarub ben Kehtan, for that he hath more soldiers and is stronger of kingship.' they fell in with his proposal and he bade them kindle fires at the doors of their tents and set out under cover of the night. So they did his bidding and departing, by day-break were far away.

As soon as it was morning, the drums beat a point of war, and Julned mounted with two hundred and sixty thousand fighting-men, clad cap-a-pie in hauberks and cuirasses and strait-knit coats of mail, and drew out in order of battle. Then Jemrcan and Saadan rode out with forty thousand cavaliers, doughty champions, foremost in the fight. The two hosts drew out in battalia and bared their swords and couched their limber lances, for the drinking of the cup of death. The first to open the chapter of battle was Saadan, as he were a mountain of flint or a Marid of the Jinn. Then pricked out to him a champion of the infidels, and he slew him and casting him to the earth, cried out to his sons and servants, saying, 'Light the fire and roast me this dead man.' They did as he bade and brought him the roast, and he ate it and crunched the bones, whilst the infidels stood looking on from afar; and they cried out, saying, 'O light-giving Sun!' and were affrighted at Saadan.

Then Julned cried out to his men, saying, 'Slay me yonder foul beast!' Whereupon another captain of his host drove at the Ghoul; but he slew him, and he ceased not to slay horseman after horseman, till he had made an end of thirty men. with this the vile infidels held back and feared to face him, saying, 'Who shall cope with Jinn and Ghouls?' But Julned cried out, saying, 'Let a hundred horse charge him and bring him to me, alive or dead.' So a hundred horse ran at Saadan with swords and spears, and he met them with a heart firmer than fling, proclaiming the unity of the Requiting King, whom no one thing diverteth from another. Then he set on them, crying, 'God is Most Great!' and smote them with his sword and made their heads fly. In one onset he slew of them four-and-seventy and put the rest to flight.

Then Julned cried out to ten of his captains, having each a thousand men under his hand, and said to them, 'Shoot his horse with arrows, till it fall under him, and then lay hands on him.' So ten thousand horse drove at Saadan, who met them with a stout heart; and Jemrcan, seeing this, bore down upon the infidels with his Muslims, crying out, 'God is Most Great!' Before they could win to the Ghoul, the enemy had slain his horse and taken him prisoner; but they ceased not to charge the infidels, though they were amongst them as a white patch on a black bull, till the day grew dark [for dust] and eyes were blinded, and the sharp sword clanged, whilst the valiant stood firm and destruction overtook the faint-heart; nor did they stint from the mellay till the dark fell down, when they drew apart, after there had been slain of the infidels men without number.

Then Jemrcan and his men returned to their tents, in great grief for Saadan, so that neither meat nor sleep was sweet to them, and they counted their host and found that less than a thousand of them had fallen. And Jemrcan said, 'O folk, to-morrow I will go forth into the lists and slay their champions and make prize of them and their families and ransom Saadan therewith, if it please the Requiting King, whom no one

thing distracteth from another!' Wherefore their hearts were comforted and they separated to their tents, rejoicing.

Meanwhile, Julned entered his pavilion and sitting down on his bed of estate, with his grandees about him, called for Saadan and said to him, 'O raging dog and least of the Arabs and carrier of firewood, who was it slew my son Courejan, the champion of the age, slayer of heroes and caster down of warriors?' Quoth the Ghoul, 'Jemrcan slew him, captain of the host of King Gherib, prince of cavaliers, and I roasted and ate him, for I was anhungred.' When Julned heard this, his eyes started from his head for rage and he bade his swordbearer strike off Saadan's head. So he came forward in that intent, but Saadan stretched himself mightily and bursting his bonds, snatched the sword from the headsman and cut off his head. Then he made at Julned; but he cast himself down from the throne and fled; whilst Saadan fell on the bystanders and slew twenty of the King's chief officers, and the rest fled. Therewith great was the crying in the camp of the infidels and the Ghoul sallied forth of the pavilion and falling upon the troops, smote them with the sword, till they opened and left a lane for him to pass; nor did he cease to press forward, cutting at them right and left, till he won free of the tents and made for the Muslim camp. As soon as he was gone, the infidels and their King returned to their tents and Julned said to them, 'O folk, by the virtue of the light-giving sun and by the darkness of the night and the light of the day and the wandering stars, I thought not to have escaped death this day; for, had I fallen into yonder fellow's hands, he had eaten me, as I were a grain of wheat or a barley-corn.' 'O King,' answered they, 'never saw we any do the like of this Ghoul.' And he said, 'To-morrow do ye all don your arms and mount and trample them under your horses' feet.'

Meanwhile the Muslims heard the shouts of the infidels and said to each other, 'Haply, some succour hath reached them; but, as they stood wondering, up came Saadan. So they all rejoiced in him and gave him joy of his escape, and the gladdest of them all was Jemrcan, who said to them, 'To-morrow, I will show you my fashion and what behoveth the like of me, for, by the virtue of Abraham the Friend I will slay them on the foulest wise and smite them with the edge of the sword, till all who have understanding are confounded at them. But I mean to attack [both] the right and left wings; so, when ye see me drive at the King under the standards, do ye charge resolutely behind me, and with God is it to decree what shall betide!'

So the two hosts lay upon their arms till the day broke and the sun appeared to sight, when they mounted swiftlier than the twinkling of the eye. The raven of ill-omen croaked and the two hosts drew out in battalia and looked at each other with the evil eye. The first to open the chapter of war was Jemrcan, who wheeled and curvetted and offered battle; and Julned and his men were about to charge, when, behold a cloud of dust arose and spread till it covered the plains and obscured the day. Then the four winds smote it and it dispersed and there appeared beneath it cavaliers, black and white, and princely champions, with keen swords and piercing lances, and footmen who knew not fear, as they were lions. At this sight both armies left fighting and sent out scouts, who disappeared within the cloud of dust and returned after awhile with the news that the approaching host was one of Muslims, under the command of King Gherib. When the Muslims heard of the coming of their King, they rejoiced and

spurring out to meet him, dismounted and kissed the earth before him and saluted him, whilst he welcomed them and rejoiced in their safety. Then they escorted him to their camp and pitched pavilions for him and set up standards; and Gherib sat down on his couch of estate, with his grandees about him, and they related to him all that had befallen.

Meanwhile, the infidels sought for Agib and finding him not among them nor in their tents, told Julned of this, whereat his gorge rose and he bit his fingers, saying, 'By the light-giving sun, he is a perfidious dog and hath fled into the deserts with his crew of rascals! But nought save hard fighting will serve us to repel these enemies; so fortify your resolves and harden your hearts and beware of the Muslims.' And Gherib also said to the Muslims, Fortify your hearts and strengthen your courage and seek aid of your Lord, beseeching Him to vouchsafe you the victory over your enemies.' 'O King,' answered they, 'thou shalt see what we will do in the field and the stead of war.'

So the two hosts slept till the day arose with its light and the sun shone out upon hill and plain, when Gherib prayed two inclinations, after the rite of Abraham the Friend (on whom be peace) and wrote a letter, which he despatched by his brother Sehim to the King of the infidels. When Sehim reached the enemies' camp, the guards asked him what he wanted and he replied, 'I want your ruler.' Quoth they, 'Wait till we consult him;' and he waited, whilst they went in to their King and told him of the coming of a messenger, and he said, 'Bring him to me.' So they brought Sehim before Julned, who said to him, 'Who hath sent thee?' Quoth he, 'King Gherib sends me, whom God hath made ruler over the Arabs and Persians; take his letter and return an answer thereto.' So Julned took the letter and opening it, read as follows: 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Immemorial Lord, the Supreme, the One, the All-knowing, the Lord of Noah and Salih and Hood and Abraham and of all things! Peace be on him who followeth in the way of righteousness and feareth the issues of frowardness, who obeyeth the Almighty King and preferreth the next world to the present! O Julned, none is worthy of worship save God alone, the One, the Victorious, Creator of night and day and the re-volving sphere, who sendeth the holy prophets and maketh the streams to flow and the trees to grow, who vaulted the heavens and spread out the earth like a carpet and feedeth the birds in their nests and the wild beasts in the deserts; for He is the All-powerful God, the Forgiving, the Long-suffering, the Protector, whom no eye comprehendeth and who maketh the night to return upon the day, He who sent down the apostles and the Scripture. Know, O Juined, that there is no faith but the faith of Abraham the Friend; so do thou embrace the faith of submission and send me the dog Agib, that I may take my wreak of my father and mother. So shalt thou be saved from the sharp sword in this world and from the fiery torment in the world to come. But, if thou refuse, look for destruction and the wasting of thy realm and the cutting off of thy traces.'

When Julned had read this letter, he said to Sehini, 'Tell thy Lord that Agib hath fled, he and his people, and I know not whither he is gone; but, as for Julned, he will not forswear his faith, and to-morrow, there shall be battle between us and the Sun shall give us the victory.' So Sehim returned to his brother with this answer and on the morrow the Muslims donned their arms and bestrode their stout horses, calling aloud on the name of the All-conquering King, Creator of bodies and souls, and magnifying

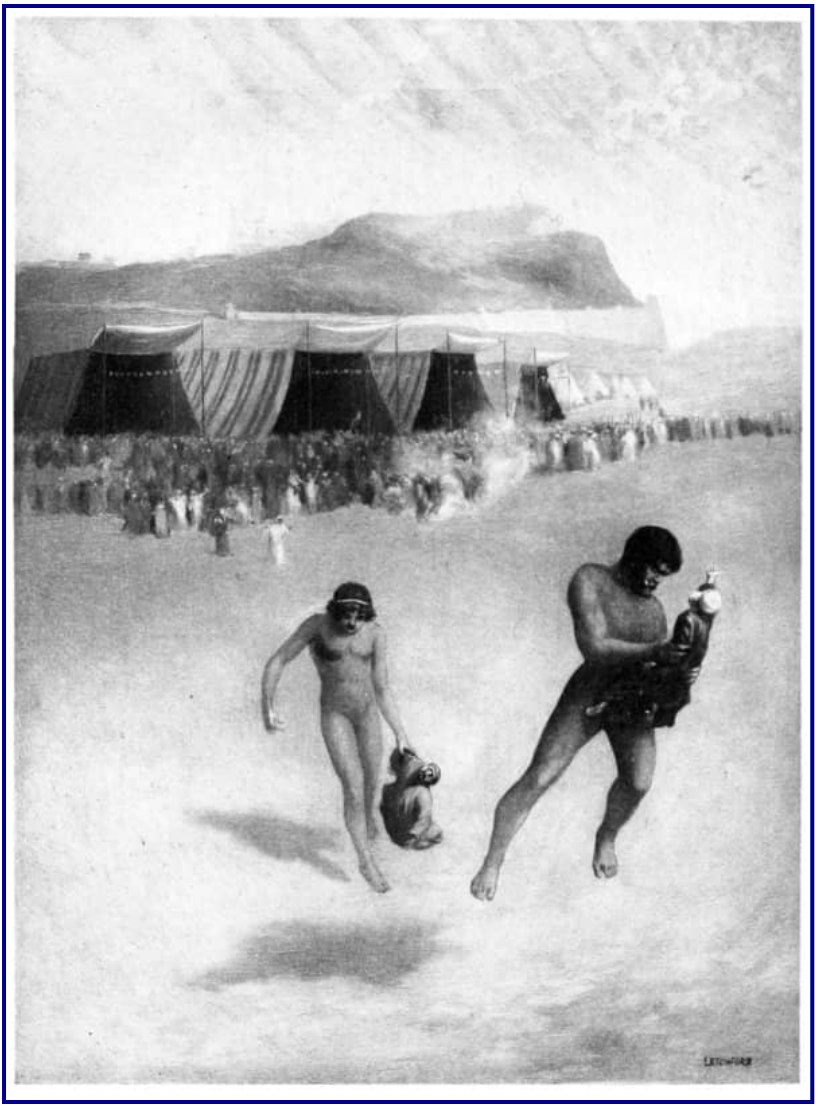
Him. The drums beat to battle, till the earth trembled, and all the lordly warriors and doughty champions sought the field.

The first to open the chapter of battle was Jemrcan, who spurred his charger into the mid-field and played with sword and javelin, till the understanding were amazed; after which he cried out, saying, 'Who is for jousting, who is for fighting? Let no sluggard nor weakling come out to me to-day! I am he who slew Courejan ben Julned; who will come forth to avenge him?' When Julned heard the name of his son, he cried out to his men, saying, 'O sons of whores, bring me yonder horseman who slew my son, that I may eat his flesh and drink his blood.' So a hundred fighting men ran at Jemrcan; but he slew the most part of them and put their chief to flight; which when Julned saw, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Charge upon him, all at once.' So the two hosts drove at one another and met in the mid-field, like two seas clashing together. The Yemen sword and spear wrought havoc and breasts and bellies were cloven, whilst the two armies saw the angel of death face to face and the dust of the battle rose up to the confines of the sky. Ears were deaf and tongues mute and death came on from every side, whilst the valiant stood fast and the faint-heart turned to flee; and they ceased not from the battle till ended day, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart and returned, each to its tent.

Then Gherib sat down on the throne of his kingship and the place of his dominion, whilst his chief officers ranged themselves about him, and said, 'I am sore troubled for the flight of the dog Agib and I know not whither he is gone. Except I overtake him and take my wreak of him, I shall die of despite.' Whereupon Sehim came forward and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O King, I will go to the army of the infidels and find out what is come of the perfidious dog Agib.' 'Go,' answered Gherib, 'and learn the truth regarding the hog.' So Sehim disguised himself in the habit of the infidels and became as he were of them; then, making for the enemy's camp, he found them all asleep, drunken with war and battle, and only the guards awake. Presently he came to the King's pavilion, where he found Julned asleep and unattended; so he made him smell to powdered henbane, and he became as one dead. Then Sehim went out and took a mule and wrapping the King in the coverlet of his bed, laid him on her back; after which he threw a mat over him and led the mule to the Muslim camp.

When he came to Gherib's pavilion and would have entered, the guards knew him not and forbade him entrance, saying, 'Who art thou?' He laughed and uncovered his face, and they knew him and admitted him. When Gherib saw him, he said, 'What hast thou there, O Sehim?' 'O King,' answered he, 'this is Julned ben Kerker.' Then he uncovered him, and Gherib knew him and said, 'Arouse him, O Sehim.' So he made him smell to vinegar and frankincense; and he cast the henbane from his nostrils and opening his eyes, found himself among the Muslims; whereupon, 'What is this foul dream ?' quoth he and closing his eyes again, would have slept; but Sehim dealt him a buffet, saying, 'Open thine eyes, O accursed one!' So he opened them and said, 'Where am I?' Quoth Sehim, 'Thou art in the presence of Gherib ben Kundemir, King of Irak.' When Julned heard this, he said, 'O King, I am at thy mercy. Know that I am not at fault, but that he who made us come forth to fight thee was thy brother, who

embroiled us with thee and fled.' 'Knowest thou whither he is gone?' asked Gherib. 'No, by the light-giving sun,' replied Juined, 'I know not.'



Then Gherib bade lay him in bonds and set guards over him, whilst each captain returned to his own tent, and amongst the rest Jemrcan, who said to his men, 'O sons of my uncle, I purpose this night to do a deed wherewith I may whiten my face with King Gherib.' 'Do what pleases thee,' answered they; 'we hearken and obey thy commandment.' Quoth he, 'Arm yourselves and disperse about the infidels' camp, muffling your steps, so that the very ants shall not be ware of you; and when you hear me magnfy God, do ye the like and cry out, saying, "God is Most Great!" and hold back and make for the gate of the city; and we seek aid from God the Most High.' So the folk armed themselves cap-a-pie and waited till midnight, when they dispersed about the enemy's camp and waited till Jemrcan smote his target with his sword and shouted, 'God is Most Great!' Whereupon they all cried out the like, till valley and mountain and hill and sands and ruins rang again with the noise. The infidels awoke in dismay and tell upon one another, and the sword went round amongst them; but the Muslims held aloof and made for the gate of the city, where they slew the warders and entering, made themselves masters of the town, with all that was therein of treasure and women and children.

Meanwhile, Gherib, hearing the noise and clamour of 'God is Most Great!' mounted with all his troops and sent Sehim on in advance. When the latter came near the field of battle, he saw that Jemrcan had fallen upon the infidels with the Benou Aamir by night and made them drink the cup of death. So he returned and told his brother, who called down blessings on Jemrcan. And the infidels ceased not to smite each other mightily with the sharp sword, till the day rose and lighted up the land, when Gherib cried out to his men, saying, 'Charge, O ye noble, and win the favour of the All-knowing King!' So the true believers fell upon the idolaters and plied them with the keen sword and the quivering spear, till they sought to take refuge in the city; but Jemrcan came forth Upon them with his tribesmen. So they hemmed them in, as between two mountain-ranges, and slew an innumerable host of them, and the rest fled into the deserts; nor did the Muslims give over pursuing them with the sword, till they had scattered them abroad in the plains and stony wastes. Then they returned to the city of Oman and Gherih entered the palace of the King and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, with his lords and officers on his either hand, sent for Julned. They brought him in haste and Gherib expounded to him Islam; but he refused to embrace the faith; wherefore Gherib let crucify him on the gate of the city, and they shot at him with arrows, till he was like unto a hedgehog. Then Gherib bestowed a dress of honour upon Jemrcan and said to him, 'Thou shalt be lord and ruler over this city, and thine be it to loose and to bind therein, for it was thou didst conquer it with thy sword and thy men.' And Jernrcan kissed the King's feet and wished him abiding victory and glory and fair fortune. Moreover, Gherih opened Julned's treasuries and saw what was therein and gave largesse to his captains and standard-bearers and fighting-men, yea, even to the women and children; and thus did he ten days long.

After this, one night he dreamt an ill dream and awoke, troubled and affrighted. So he aroused his brother Sehim and said to him, 'I dreamt that we were in a wide valley, when there swooped down on us two birds of prey, with legs like lances, never in my life saw I greater than they, and we were in fear of them.' 'O King,' answered Sehim, 'this portends some great enemy; be on thy guard, therefore, against him.'

Gherib slept not the rest of the night and when the day broke, he called for his courser and mounted. Quoth Sehim, 'Whither goest thou, my brother?' and Gherib answered, saying, 'I am heavy at heart this morning; so I mean to ride abroad ten days and lighten my breast.' Said Sehim, 'Take with thee a thousand men;' but Gherib replied, 'I will not go forth but with thee alone.' So the two brothers mounted and seeking the open country, fared on from valley to valley and from meadow to meadow, till they came to a valley abounding in sweet-smelling flowers and streams and trees laden with all manner eatable fruits, two of each kind. On the branches were birds warbling their various songs; the mocking-bird trilled out her sweet notes and the turtle filled the place with her voice. There sang the nightingale, whose chant arouses the sleeper, and the merle with its note like the human voice and the cushat and the ring-dove, whilst the popinjay answered them with its fluent tongue.

The valley pleased them and they ate of its fruits and drank of its waters, after which they sat under the shadow of the trees, till drowsiness overcame them and they slept, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! As they lay asleep, two fierce Marids swooped down on them and taking each one on his shoulders, flew up with them into the air, till they were above the clouds. Presently, Gherib and Sehim awoke and found themselves betwixt heaven and earth; so they looked at those who bore them and saw that they were two Marids, each as big as a great palm-tree, with hair like horses' tails and claws like lions' claws; the head of the one was as that of a dog and that of the other as that of an ape. When they saw this, they exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!'

Now the reason of this was that a certain king of the kings of the Jinn, Muraash by name, had a son called Saaic, who loved a damsel of the Jinn, named Nejmeh; and the twain used to foregather in the valley, in the guise of birds. Gherib and Sehim saw them thus and deeming them birds, shot at them with arrows and wounded Saaic, whose blood flowed. Nejmeh mourned over him, then, fearing lest the like should befall herself, caught up her lover and flew with him to his father's palace, where she cast him down at the gate. The warders bore him in and laid him before the King, who, sucing the arrow sticking in his side, exclaimed, 'Alas, son! Who hath done with thee this thing, that I may lay waste his abiding-place and hasten his destruction, though he were the greatest of the kings of the Jinn?' Thereupon Saaic opened his eyes and said, 'O my father, it was a mortal that slew me in the Valley of Springs.' Hardly had he made an end of these words, when his soul departed; whereupon his father buffeted his face, till the blood streamed from his mouth, and cried out to two Marids, saying: 'Go to the Valley of Springs and bring me all who are therein.' So they betook themselves to the valley in question, where they found Gherib and Sehim asleep and snatching them up, carried thme to their King, whom they saw seated on the throne of his kingship, as he were a huge mountain, with four heads on his body, the first that of a lion, the second that of an elephant, the third that of a panther and the fourth that of a lynx. The Marids set them down before Muraash and said to him, 'These are they whom we found in the Valley of Springs.'

Muraash looked at them with wrathful eyes and puffed and snorted and blew sparks from his nostrils, so that all who stood by feared him. Then said he, 'O dogs of mankind, ye have slain my son and kindled fire in my heart.' 'Who is thy son,' asked

Gherib, 'and who hath seen him?' Quoth Muraash, 'Were ye not in the Valley of Springs and did ye not see my son there, in the guise of a bird, and did ye not shoot at him with arrows, that he died?' 'I know not who slew him,' replied Garib; 'and by the virtue of the Great God, the One, the Immemorial, who knoweth all things, and of Abraham the Friend, we saw no bird, neither slew we bird nor beast!'

Now Muraash worshipped the Fire, not the All-powerful King; so, when he heard Gherib swear by God and His greatness and by Abraham the Friend, he knew that he was a Muslim and cried out to his people, saying, 'Bring me my mistress.' Accordingly they brought a brasier of gold and setting it before him, kindled therein fire and cast on drugs, whereupon there arose therefrom green and blue and yellow flames and the King and all who were present prostrated themselves before the brasier, whilst Gherib and Sehim ceased not to magnify God and attest His greatness and omnipotence. Presently, Muraash raised his head and seeing the two princes standing, said to them, 'O dogs, why do ye not prostrate yourselves?' 'Out on thee, O accursed one!' replied Gherib. 'Prostration befits not, save to the Worshipful King, who bringeth forth all creatures into being from nothingness and maketh water to well from the barren rock, Him who inclineth the heart of the father unto his new-born child and who may not be described as sitting or standing, the God of Noah and Salih and Houd and Abraham the Friend, who created Paradise and Hell-fire and trees and fruit, for He is God, the One, the All-powerful.'

When Muraash heard this, his eyes started from his head and he cried out to his guards, saying, 'Bind these two dogs and sacrifice them to my mistress.' So they bound them and were about to cast them into the fire, when, behold, one of the merlons of the parapet fell down upon the brasier and broke it and did out the fire, which became ashes flying in the air. Then said Gherib, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who deny Him and worship the Fire, not the Almighty King!' Quoth Muraash, 'Thou art a sorcerer and hast bewitched my mistress, so that this thing hath befallen her.' 'O madman,' answered Gherib, 'if the fire had soul or movement, it would ward off from itself that which doth it hurt.' When Muraash heard this, he roared and bellowed and reviled the Fire, saying, 'By my faith, I will not kill you save by the fire!'

Then he cast them into prison and calling a hundred Marids, bade them bring much firewood and set fire thereto. So they brought great plenty of wood and made a huge fire, which flamed up mightily till the morning, when Muraash mounted an elephant, bearing on its back a throne of gold set with jewels, and the tribes of the Jinn gathered about him, in their various kinds. Then they brought in Gherib and Sehim, who, seeing the flaming of the fire, sought help of the One God, the All-conquering Creator of night and day, Him who is mickle of might, whom no sight comprehendeth, but who comprehendeth all sights, for He is the Subtle, the All-knowing; and they ceased not to solicit Him, till, behold, a cloud arose from West to East and pouring down showers of rain, like the swollen sea, quenched the fire.

When the King saw this, he was affrighted, he and his troops, and entered the palace, where he turned to his Vizier and grandees and said to them, 'How say ye of these two men?' 'O King,' answered they, 'were they not in the right, this thing had not befallen the fire; wherefore we say that they speak sooth.' 'Indeed,' rejoined Muraash,

'the truth hath been shown forth to me, ay, and the manifest way, and I am certified that the worship of the fire is false; for, were it [god and] mistress, it had warded off from itself the rain that quenched it and the stone that broke its brasier and beat it into ashes. Wherefore I believe in Him Who created the fire and the light and the shade and the heat. And ye, what say ye?' 'O King,' answered they, 'we also hear and follow and obey.'

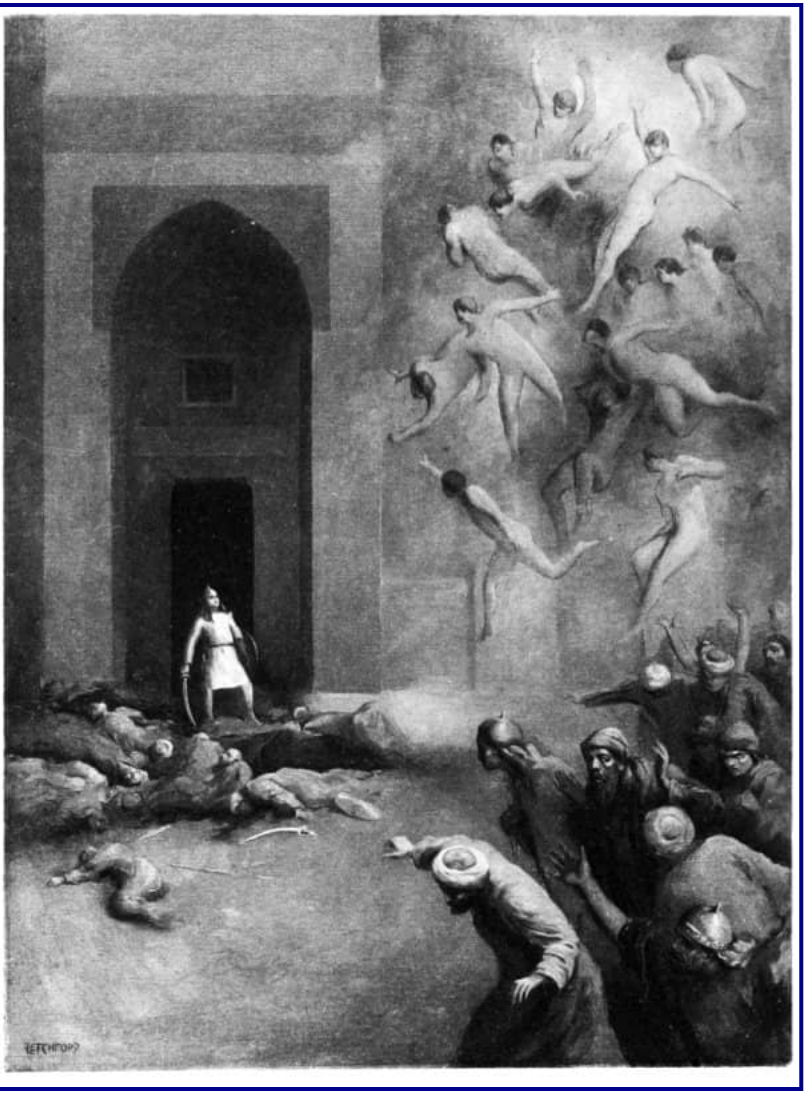
So the King called for Gherib and Sehim and embraced them and kissed them between the eyes; whereupon the bystanders all crowded to kiss their hands and heads. Then Muraash sat down on the throne of his kingship and seating Gherib on his right and Sehim on his left hand, said to them, 'O mortals, what shall we say, that we may become Muslims?' 'Say,' answered Gherib, "' There is no god but God, and Abraham is the Friend of God!"' So the King and his folk professed Islam with heart and tongue, and Gherib abode with them awhile, teaching them the ritual of prayer. But presently he called to mind his people and sighed, whereupon quoth Muraash, 'Verily, trouble is past and gone and joy and gladness are come.' 'O King,' said Gherib, 'I have many enemies and I fear for my people from them.' Then he related to him his history from first to last, and Muraash said, 'O King of men, I will send one who shall bring thee news of thy people, for I will not let thee go till I have had my fill of gazing on thy face.' Then he called two stout Marids, by name Kailjan and Courjan, and bade them repair to Yemen and bring him news of Gherib's army. They replied, 'We hear and obey,' and departed.

Meanwhile, when the captains of the Muslims arose in the morning and rode to Gherib's palace, to do their service to him, the servants told them that the King had ridden forth with his brother at point of day. So they made for the valleys and mountains and followed the track of the princes, till they came to the Valley of Springs, where they found their arms cast down and their horses grazing and said, 'By the glory of Abraham the Friend, the King is missing from this place!' Then they dispersed and sought in the valley and the mountains three days, but found no trace of them; whereupon they raised lamentations and despatched couriers to all the cities and strengths and fortresses, to seek news of their King. Accordingly, the couriers dispersed hither and thither and sought everywhere for Gherib, but found no trace of him.

Now, when the news came to Agib by his spies that his brother was missing, he rejoiced and going in to King Yaarub ben Kehtan, sought aid of him. He granted him the help he sought and gave him two hundred thousand Amalekites, with whom he set out for Yemen and sat down before the city of Oman. Jemrcan and Saadan sallied forth and gave him battle, and there were slain of the Muslims much people, wherefore the true believers retired into the city and shut the gates and manned the walls. At this juncture the two Marids arrived and seeing the Muslims beleaguered, waited till the night, when they fell upon the infidels and plied them with sharp swords of the swords of the Jinn, each twelve cubits long, if a man smote therewith a rock, he would cleave it in sunder. They attacked the idolaters, shouting, 'God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who deny the faith of Abraham the Friend!' whilst fire issued from their mouths and nostrils, and they made great slaughter amongst them. Thereupon the infidels ran out of their tents and seeing these strange things, were confounded and their flesh shuddered and their reason fled. So they snatched up their

arms and fell on each other, whilst the Marids shore off their heads, as a reaper cuts grain, crying, 'God is Most Great! We are the henchmen of King Gherib, the friend of Muraash, King of the Jinn!' The sword ceased not to go round amongst them till the night was half spent, when the misbelievers, imagining that the mountains were all Afrits, loaded their tents and treasure and baggage upon camels and made off; and the first to fly was Agib. The Marids ceased not from the pursuit, till they had driven them far away into the hills and deserts; and but fifty thousand infidels of two hundred thousand escaped with their lives and made for their own land, wounded and discomfited.

Meanwhile, the Muslims gathered together, marvelling at this that had betided the infidels and fearing the tribes-men of the Jinn; but presently the latter returned and said to them, 'O host of the Muslims, your lord King Gherib and his brother Sehim salute you; they are the guests of Muraash, King of the Jinn, and will be with you anon.' When Gherib's men knew that he was safe and well, they rejoiced greatly and said to the Marids, 'May God rejoice you with good news, O noble spirits!' So Courjan and Kailjan returned to Muraash and Gherib and acquainted them with that which had happened, whereat Gherib's heart was set at ease and he said, 'May God abundantly requite you!'



Then said King Muraash, 'O my brother, I have a mind to show thee our country and the city of Japhet son of Noah, on whom be peace!' 'O King,' replied Gherib, 'do what seemeth good to thee.' So he called for horses and mounting, he and Gherib and Sehim, set out with a thousand Marids, as they were a piece of a mountain cut endlong. They fared on, diverting themselves with the sight of valleys and mountains, till they came to the city of Japhet son of Noah (on whom be peace), where the townsfolk all, great and small, came forth to meet King Muraash and brought them into the city in great state. Then Muraash went up to the palace of Japhct son of Noah and sat down on the throne of his kingship, which was of alabaster, ten stages high, hung with all manner coloured silks and trellised with wands of gold. The people of the city stood before him and he said to them, 'O descendants of Japhet, what did your fathers and grandfathers worship?' Quoth they, 'We found them worshipping the fire and followed their example, as thou well knowest.' 'O folk,' rejoined Muraash, 'it hath been manifested to us that the fire is but one of the creatures of God the Most High, Creator of all things; and when we knew this, we submitted ourselves to God, the One, the All-powerful Maker of night and day and the revolving sphere, whom no sight comprehendeth, but who comprehendeth all sights, for He is the Subtle, the All-wise, So do ye likewise, and ye shall be saved from the wrath of the Almighty and from the fiery torment in the world to come.' And they embraced Islam with heart and tongue.

Then Muraash took Gherib by the hand and showed him the palace and its ordinance and all the marvels it contained, till they came to the armoury, wherein were the arms of Japhet son of Noah. Here Gherib saw a sword hanging to a peg of gold and said, 'O King, whose sword is that?' Quoth Muraash, 'It is the sword of Japhet son of Noah, wherewith he was wont to do battle against men and Jinn. The sage Jerdoun forged it and graved on its back names of might. It is named El Mahic, for that it never descends upon a man, but it annihilates him, nor upon a genie, but it crushes him; and it one smote therewith a mountain, it would over-throw it.' When Gherib heard tell of the virtues of the sword, he said, 'I desire to look on this sword;' and Muraash said, 'As thou wilt.' So Gherib put out his hand and taking the sword, drew it from its sheath; whereupon it flashed and death crept and glittered on its edge ; and it was twelve spans long and three broad. Now Gherib wished to take it, and Muraash said, 'If thou canst wield it, take it.' ' It is well,' answered Gherib, and took it up, and it was in his hand as a staff; wherefore all who were present, men and Jinn, marvelled and said, 'Well done, O prince of cavaliers!' Then said Muraash, 'Lay thy hand on this treasure, that the Kings of the earth sigh for in vain, and mount, that I may show thee the city.'

Then they took horse and rode forth the palace, with Jinn and men attending them on foot, and passed through the streets and thoroughfares of the town, threading their way through ranks of palaces and deserted mansions and gilded doorways, till they issued from the gates and entered gardens full of fruit-laden trees and running waters and birds speaking and celebrating the praises of Him to whom belong power and eternity; nor did they cease to take their pleasance in the land till nightfall, when they returned to the palace of Japhet son of Noah and they brought them the table of food. So they ate and Gherib turned to the King of the Jinn and said to him, 'O King, I would fain return to my people and my troops; for I know not their plight after me.'

'By Allah, O my brother,' answered Muraash, 'I will not part with thee for a full month, till I have had my fill of thy sight.'

Gherib could not say him nay, so he abode with him in the city of Japhet, eating and drinking and making merry, till the month was up, when Muraash clad him and Sehim in dresses of honour of gold-inwoven silk and set on Gherib's head a crown jewelled with pearls and diamonds of inestimable value. Moreover, he gave him great store of presents of emeralds and balass rubies and diamonds and other jewels and ingots of gold and silver and ambergris and musk and brocaded silks and other rarities and things of price. All these he made up into loads for him and calling five hundred Marids, said to them, 'Make ready to set out on the morrow, that we may bring King Gherib and Sehim back to their own country.' And they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So they passed the night in the city, purposing to depart on the morrow, but, next morning, as they were about to set forth, they espied a great host advancing upon the city, with horses neighing and drums beating and trumpets sounding, to the number of threescore and ten thousand Marids, flying and diving, under a king called Bercan, and the earth was filled with them.

Now this Bercan was lord of the City of Cornelian and the Castle of Gold and under his rule were five strongholds, in each five hundred thousand Marids; and he and his people worshipped the fire, not the Omnipotent King. He was the son of Muraash's father's brother and the cause of his coming was on this wise. It chanced that there was among the subjects of King Muraash a misbelieving Marid, who professed Islam hypocritically, and he stole away from his people and made for the Valley of Cornelian, where he went in to King Bercan and kissing the earth before him, wished him abiding glory and fair fortune. Then he told him of Muraash's conversion to Islam, and Bercan said, 'How came he to forsake his faith?' So the rebel told him what had passed and Bercan snorted and puffed and railed at the sun and the moon and the sparkling fire, saying, 'By the virtue of my faith, I will surely slay my cousin and his people and this mortal, nor will I leave one of them on life !' Then he cried out to the tribes of the Jinn and choosing of them seventy thousand Marids, set out and fared on till he came to the city of Japhet and encamped before its gates. When Muraash saw this, he despatched a Marid to learn what the stranger host wanted, bidding him return in haste. So the messenger repaired to Bercan's camp, where the Marids hastened to meet him and said to him, 'Who art thou?' Quoth he, 'I bear a message from King Muraash;' whereupon they carried him in to Bercan, before whom he prostrated himself saying, 'O my lord, my master hath sent me to thee, to know what brings thee hither.' 'Return to thy lord,' replied Bercan, 'and say to him, "This is thy cousin Bercan, who is come to salute thee."' So the messenger returned and told Muraash, who said to Gherib, 'Abide here whilst I go and salute my cousin and return to thee.' Then he mounted and rode to Bercan's camp.

Now this was a trick of Bercan, to bring Muraash out and seize upon him, and he said to his Marids, who were about him, 'When ye see me embrace my cousin, lay hold of him and bind his hands behind him. And they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So, when Muraash came up and entered Bercan's pavilion, the latter rose to him and embraced him, whereupon the Jinn fell upon Muraash and seized him and bound him. He looked at Bercan and said, 'What manner of thing is this?' Quoth Bercan, 'O

dog of the Jinn, wilt thou leave the faith of thy fathers and grandfathers and enter a faith thou knowest not?' 'O son of my uncle,' rejoined Muraash, 'indeed I have found the faith of Abraham the Friend to be the true faith and all other than it vain.' 'And who told thee of this?' asked Bercan. 'Gherib, King of Irak,' answered Muraash, 'whom I hold in the highest honour.' 'By the fire and the light and the shade and the heat,' cried Bercan, 'I will slay both thee and him!' And he cast him into prison.

Now, when Muraash's henchman saw what had befallen his lord, he fled back to the city and told the King's men, who cried out and mounted. Quoth Gherib, 'What is to do?' And they told him what had passed, whereupon he cried out to Sehim, saying, 'Saddle me one of the chargers that King Muraash gave me.' 'O my brother,' said Sehim, 'wilt thou do battle with the Jinn?' 'Yes,' answered Gherib; 'I will fight them with the sword of Japhet son of Noah, seeking help of the God of Abraham the Friend, (on whom be peace,) for He is Lord and Creator of all things. So Sehim saddled him a sorrel horse of the horses of the Jinn, as he were a castle, and he armed and mounting, rode out with the tribes of the Jinn, aimed cap-a-pie. Then Bercan and his host mounted also and the two hosts drew cut in battalia in face of one another. The first to open the chapter of war was Gherib, who spurred his charger into the mid-field and drew the enchanted sword, whence issued a glittering light, that dazzled the eyes of all the Jinn and struck terror to their heart. Then he played with the sword, till their wits were amazed, and cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great! I am Gherib, King of Irak. There is no faith save the faith of Abraham the Friend!'

When Bercan heard Gherib's words, he said, 'This is he who seduced my cousin from his faith; so, by the virtue of my faith, I will not sit down on my throne till I have cut off the head of this Gherih and made an end of his life and forced my cousin and his people back to their faith: and whoso baulketh me, I will destroy him.' Then he mounted a paper-white elephant, as he were a tower plastered with gypsum, and goaded him with a pike of steel, whereupon the elephant trumpeted and made for the middle of the field. When Bercan drew near Gherih, he cried out to him, saying, 'O dog of mankind, what made thee come into our land, to debauch my cousin and his people and pervert them from one faith to another? Know that this day is the last of thy worldly days.' And Gherib answered, saying, 'Avaunt, O vilest of the jinn!' Therewith Berean drew a javelin and poising it in his hand, cast it at Gherib; but it missed him. So he threw a second javelin at him; but Gherib caught it in mid-air and hurled it at the elephant. It smote him on the flank and came out on the other side, whereupon the beast fell down dead and Bercan was cast to the ground, like a great palm-tree. Before he could stir, Gherib smote him with the sword of Japhet flatlings on the nape of the neck, and he fell down in a swoon; whereupon the Marids swooped down on him and bound him.

When Bercan's people saw their king a prisoner, they drove at the others, seeking to rescue him, but Gherib and the true-believing Jinn fell upon them and bravo for Gherib! indeed that day he pleased God who answereth prayer and slaked his vengeance with the enchanted sword! Whomsoever he smote, he clove him in sunder and before his soul could depart, he became a heap of asshes in the fire; whilst the two hosts of the Jinn cast flames of fire at one another, till the battle-field was wrapped in smoke. And Gherib tourneyed right and left among the infidels and they gave way

before him, till be came to King Bercan's pavilion, with Kailjan and Courjan on his either hand, and cried out to them, saying, 'Loose your lord!' So they unbound Muraash and broke his fetters and he said to them, 'Bring me my arms and my winged horse.'

Now he had two flying horses, one of which he gave to Gherib and the other he mounted himself, after he had donned his battle-harness. Then he and Gherib fell upon the enemy, flying through the air on their winged horses, and the true-believing Jinn followed them, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' till the earth and hills and valleys and mountains answered them. The infidels fled before them and they returned, after having slain more than thirty thousand Marids and Satans, to the city of Japhet, where the two kings sat down on their beds of estate and sought for Bercan, but found him not; for, whilst they were diverted from him by stress of battle, an Afrit of his servants made his way to him and loosing him, carried him to his folk, of whom he found part slain and the rest in full flight. So he flew up with the King into the air and set him down in the City of Cornelian and Castle of Gold, where Bercan seated himself on the throne of his king-ship. Presently, those of his people who had escaped from the battle came in to him and gave him joy of his safety; and he said, 'O folk, where is safety? My army is slain and they took me prisoner and have rent in pieces my repute among the tribes of the Jinn.' 'O King,' answered they, 'it is ever thus that kings still smite and are smitten.' Quoth he, 'Needs must I take my revenge and wipe out my reproach, else shall I be for ever dishonoured among the tribes of the Jinn.' Then he wrote letters to the governors of his fortresses, who came to him with three hundred and twenty thousand fierce Marids and Satans; and he bade them make ready to set out in three days' time.

Meanwhile, when Muraash discovered Bercan's escape, it was grievous to him and he said, 'Had we set a hundred Marids to guard him, he had not fled; but whither shall he go from us?' Then said he to Gherib, 'Know, O my brother, that Bercan is perfidious and will never rest from avenging himself on us, but will assuredly assemble his clans and return upon us; wherefore I am minded to forestall him and fall on him, on the heels of his defeat, whilst he is yet weak by reason thereof.' 'This is well see;' replied Gherib; and Muraash said, 'O my brother, let the Marids bear thee back to thine own country and leave me to fight the battles of the Faith against the infidels, that I may be lightened of the burden of my sins.' 'By the virtue of the Clement, the Bountiful, the Protector,' answered Gherib, 'I will not go hence till I do to death all the mis-believing Jinn and God hasten their souls to the fire and evil shall be the abiding-place [to which they go;] and none shall be saved but those who worship God the One, the Victorious! But do thou send Sehim back to the city of Oman, so haply he may be healed of his sickness.' For Sehim was sick. So Muraash bade the Marids take up Sehim and the treasures and bear them to the city of Oman; and they took them and made for the land of men.

Then Muraash wrote letters to all his governors and captains of fortresses and they came to him with eight-score thousand men. So they made them ready and departed for the City of Cornelian. In one day, they marched a year's journey and halted in a valley, where they encamped and passed the night. Next morning, as they were about to set forth, the vanguard of Bercan's army appeared, whereupon the Jinn

cried out and the two hosts met and fell upon each other in that valley, that the earth trembled with the shock. Then there befell a sore strife and the battle swayed to and fro with a might clamour. Jest gave place to earnest and there was an end of parley, whilst long lives were cut short and trouble and confusion befell the unbelievers; for Gherib charged them, proclaiming the Unity of God, the Worshipful, the Exalted, and shore through necks and made heads roll in the dust; nor did the dark betide before nigh seventy thousand of the infidels were slain, and of the true believers over ten thousand Marids had fallen. Then the drums beat the retreat, and the two hosts drew apart. So Gherib and Muraash returned to their tents, after they had wiped their arms, and the evening meal being set before them, they ate and gave each other joy of their safety. As for Bercan, he returned to his tent, grieving for the slaughter of his champions, and said to his officers, 'If we abide here and do battle thus with them, we shall be cut off to the last man in three days' time.' Quoth they, 'And how shall we do, O King?' 'We will fall upon them under cover of the night,' said Bercan, 'whilst they sleep, and not one of them shall be left to tell the tale. So take your arms and when I give the word of command, fall on your enemies as one man.'

Now there was amongst them a Marid named Jendel whose heart inclined to Islam; so, when he heard the Infideis' plot, he stole away from them and going in to King Muraash and King Gherib, told them what Bercan had devised; whereupon Muraash turned to Gherib and said to him, 'O my brother, what shall we do?' Quoth Gherib, 'To-night we will fall upon the infidels and chase them into the mountains and deserts, if it be the will of the Omnipotent King.' Then he summoned the captains of the Jinn and said to them, 'Arm yourselves, you and your men, and as soon as it is dark, steal out of your tents on foot and hide among the mountains; and when ye see the enemy engaged among the tents, do ye fall upon them from all quarters. Strengthen your hearts and put your faith in your Lord, and ye shall conquer; and behold, I am with you!' So, as soon as it was dark, the infidels attacked the camp, invoking the aid of the light and the fire; but, when they came among the tents, the Muslims fell upon them, calling for help on the Lord of the Worlds and saying, 'O Most Merciful of those that show mercy, O Creator of all created things!' till they left them like mown grass, cut down and dead. By the morning the most part of the unbelievers were bodies without souls and the rest made for the marshes and deserts, whilst Gherib and Muraash returned in triumph and making prize of the enemy's baggage, rested till the morrow, when they set out for the City of Cornelian.

As for Bercan, when he saw that the battle had turned against him and that the most part of his men were slain, he fled with the remnant of his folk to his capital city, where he entered his palace and assembling his tribes, said to them, 'O folk, whoso hath aught of price, let him take it and follow me to the Mountain Caf, to the Blue King, lord of the Parti-coloured Palace; for he it is who shall avenge us.' So they took their women and children and goods and made for the Mountain Caf. Presently Muraash and Gherib arrived at the City of Cornelian and found the gates open and none left to give them news; whereupon they entered and Muraash took Gherib, that he might show him the city, whose walls were builded of emeralds and its gates of red cornelian, with nails of silver, and the roofs of its houses and mansions ceiled with aloes and sandal-wood. So they took their pleasance in its streets and alleys, till they

came to the palace of gold and entering, passed through seven vestibules, till they came to a building, whose walls were of royal balass rubies and its pavement of emerald and jacinth. The two kings were astounded at the goodliness of the place and fared on from vestibule to vestibule, till they came to the inner court of the palace, wherein they saw four estrades, each different from the others, and in the midst a fountain of red gold, compassed about with golden lions, from whose mouths issued water. The estrade at the upper end was hung and carpeted with brocaded silks of various colours and thereon stood two thrones of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels. So Muraash and Gherib sat down on the thrones and held high state in the palace of gold. Then said Gherib to Muraash, 'What thinkest thou to do?' And Muraash answered, saying, 'O King of men, I have despatched a hundred horse to learn where Bercan is, that we may pursue him.'

Then they abode three days in the palace, till the scouts returned with the news that Bercan had fled to the Mountain Caf and thrown himself on the protection of the Blue King; whereupon quoth Muraash to Gherib, 'What sayst thou, O my brother?' And Gherib answered, saying, 'Except we attack them, they will attack us.' So they made ready for departure and after three days, they were about to set out with their troops, when the Marids, who had carried Sehim back to Oman, returned and kissed the earth before Gherib. He questioned them of his people and they answered, saying, 'After the last battle, thy brother Agib fled to the King of Hind and sought his protection. The King granted his prayer and writing letters to all his governors, levied an army as it were the swollen sea, having neither beginning nor end, with which he purposes to invade Irak and lay it waste.' When Gherib heard this, he said, 'Perish the unbelievers! Verily, God the Most High shall give the victory to Islam and I will show them cutting and thrusting.' 'O King of men,' said Muraash, 'by the virtue of the Mighty Name, I must needs go with thee to thy kingdom and destroy thine enemies and bring thee to thy desire.' Ghenib thanked him and they rested till the morrow, when they set out, intending for the City of Alabaster and the Patti-coloured Palace.

Now this city was builded of alabaster and [precious] stones by Baric ben Fakia, father of the Jinn, and he built also the Patti-coloured Palace, which was so named for that the ordinance of its building was one brick of gold and one of silver, nor was there its like in all the world. When they came within half a day's journey of the city, they halted to rest, and Muraash sent out a scout to reconnoitre, who returned and said, 'O King, in the City of Alabaster are tribesmen of the Jinn in number as the leaves of the trees or as the drops of rain.' So Muraash said to Gherib, 'How shall we do, O King of men?' 'O King,' answered he, 'divide your men into four bodies and encompass the camp of the infidels with them ; then, in the middle of the night, let them cry out, saying, "God is Most Great!" and hold aloof and watch what happens among the tribes of the Jinn.' So Muraash did as Gherib counselled and the troops waited till midnight, when they cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great! Ho for the Faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!' The unbelievers awoke in affright and snatching up their arms, fell upon each other till the morning, when the most part of them were dead men and but few remained. Then Gherib cried out to the true believers, saying, 'Up and at the remnant of the infidels! Behold, I am with you, and God is your helper!' So the Muslims drove at the enemy and Gherib drew his sword El Mahic and fell upon

the foe, cutting off noses and sending heads flying. Presently be came up with Bercan and smote him and bereft him of life and he fell down, drenched in his blood. On like wise he did with the Blue King, and by the forenoon not one of the infidels was left alive to tell the tale.

Then Gherib and Muraash entered the Patti-coloured Palace and found its walls builded of alternate courses of gold and silver, with sills of crystal and keystones of emerald. In its midst was a fountain adorned with bells and pendants and figures of birds and beasts vomiting forth water, and thereby an estrade furnished with gold-brocaded silks, with borders of gold embroidered with jewels and they found the treasures of the palace past count or description. Then they entered the inner court, where they found a magnificent seraglio and Gherib saw, among the Blue King's women, a girl clad in a dress worth a thousand dinars, never had he beheld a goodlier. About her were a hundred slave-girls, holding up her skirts with hooks of gold, and she was in their midst as the moon among stars. When he saw her, his reason was confounded and he said to one of the waiting-women, 'Who is yonder damsel?' Quoth they, 'This is the Blue King's daughter, Morning Star.' Then Gherib turned to Muraash and said to him, 'O King of the Jinn, I have a mind to take yonder damsel to wife.' Quoth Muraash, 'The palace and all that therein is are the prize of thy right hand; for, hadst thou not devised a stratagem to destroy the Blue King and Bercan, they had cut us off to the last man wherefore the treasure is thy treasure and the people thy slaves.' Gherb thanked him for his fair speech and going up to the girl, gazed steadfastly upon her and loved her with an exceeding love, forgetting Fekhr Taj and Mehdiyeh.

Now her mother was the King's daughter of China, whom the Blue King had carried off from her palace and deflowered, and she conceived by him and bore this girl, whom he named Morning Star, by reason of her beauty and grace for she was the princess of the fair. Her mother died when she was a babe of forty days, and the nurses and eunuchs reared her, till she reached the age of seventeen; but she hated her father and rejoiced in his death. So Gherib put his hand in hers and went in to her that night and found her a virgin. Then he pulled down the Parti-coloured Palace and divided the spoil with the true-believing Jinn, and there fell to his share one and-twenty thousand bricks of gold and silver and money and treasure beyond count. Then Muraash took Gherib and showed him the Mountain Caf and all its marvels; after which they returned to Bercan's fortress and dismantled it and shared the spoil thereof.

Then they returned to Muraash's capital, where they abode five days, at the end of which time Gherib sought to go to his own country and Muraash said, 'O King of men, I will ride at thy stirrup and bring thee to thine own land 'Nay, by the virtue of Abraham the Friend,' answered Gherib; 'I will not suffer thee to weary thyself thus nor will I take any of the Jinn save Kailjan and Courjan.' Quoth the King, 'Take with thee ten thousand horsemen of the Jinn, to serve thee;' but Gherib said, 'I will take only as I said to thee.' So Muraash bade a thousand Marids take him up and carry him to his native land, with his share of the spoil; and he commanded Kailjan and Courjan to follow him and obey him; and they answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then said Gherib to the Marids, 'Do ye carry the treasure and Morning Star;' for he himself thought to ride his flying charger. But Muraash said to him, 'O my brother, this horse will live only in our clime, and if it come upon the earth, it will die but I have in my stables a sea horse,

whose like is not found in Irak, no, nor in all the world' So he caused bring forth the horse, and when Gherib saw it, it interposed between him and his reason. Then they bound it and Kailjan took it on his shoulders and Courjan took what he could carry. And Muraash embraced Gherib and wept for parting from him, saying, 'O my brother, if aught befall thee, to which thou art unable, send for me and I will come to thine aid with an army that may avail to lay waste the whole earth and all that is thereon.' Gherib thanked him for his courtesy and kindness and his zeal for the True Faith and took leave of him; whereupon the Marids set out with Gherib and his goods and after traversing fifty years' journey in two days and a night, alighted near the city of Oman and halted to rest.

Then Gherib sent out Kailjan, to learn news of his people, and he returned and said, 'O King, thy city is beleaguered by a host of infidels, as they were the swollen sea, and thy people are fighting them. The drums beat to battle and Jemrcan goeth forth to them in the field.' When Gherib heard this, he cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great!' and said to Kailjan, 'Saddle me the horse and bring me my arms; for to-day the valiant shall be known from the coward in the stead of war and battle. So Kailjan brought him all he sought and Gherib armed and girding on El Mahic, mounted the sea-horse and made toward the armies. Quoth Kailjan and Courjan to him, 'Set thy heart at ease and let us go to the infidels and scatter them abroad in the wastes and deserts till, by the help of God the Most High, the All-powerful, we leave not a soul of them on life, no, not a blower of the fire.' But Gherib said, 'By the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will not let you fight them without me!'

Now the manner of the coming of that great host was on this wise. When Agib fled from the field, after Yaarub's army had been put to the rout by Kailjan and Courjan, be said to his people, 'If we return to Yaarub ben Kehtan, he will say to us, "But for you, my son and my people had not been slain;" and he will put us to death, even to the last man. Wherefore, methinks we were better go to Terkenan, King of Hind, and beseech him to avenge us.' 'Come, let us go thither,' answered they; 'and the blessing of the Fire attend thee!' So they fared on days and nights till they reached King Terkenan's capital city and Agib went in to him and kissed the earth before him. Then he wished him what men use to wish to kings and said to him, 'O King, do thou protect me, so may the sparkling fire and the night with its thick darkness protect and defend thee!' Terkenan looked at Agib and said, 'Who art thou and what dost thou want?' 'I am Agib, King of Irak,' replied he; 'my brother hath usurped my throne and gotten the mastery of the land and the people have submitted themselves to him. Moreover, he has embraced the faith of Islam and ceases not to chase me from country to country; and behold, I am come to seek protection of thee and thy power.' When Terkenan heard Agib's words, he rose and sat down and said, 'By the virtue of the Fire, I will assuredly avenge thee and will let none serve other than my mistress the Fire!' And he cried out to his son, saying, 'O my son, make ready to go to Irak and lay it waste and bind all who serve aught but the Fire and punish them and make an example of them; yet slay them not, but bring them to me, that I may ply them with various tortures and make them taste the bitterness of humiliation and leave them a warning to all who will take warning in this time.' Then he chose out to accompany him fourscore thousand fighting-men on horse-back and the like number on giraffes, beside ten

thousand elephants, bearing on their backs turrets of sandal-wood, trellised with network of gold and railed and plated with gold and silver and guarded with shields of gold and emerald, and store of war-chariots, in each eight men fighting with all kinds of weapons.

Now the prince's name was Raadshah and he was the champion of his time, having no peer for prowess. So he and his army equipped them in ten days' time, then set out, as they were a bank of clouds, and fared on two months' journey, till they came to Oman and encompased it, to the joy of Agib, who thought himself assured of victory. So Jemrcan and Saadan and all their fighting-men sallied forth into the field, whilst the drums beat to battle and the horses neighed. At this moment up came King Gherib, who spurred his charger and entered among the infidels, waiting to see who should come forth and open the chapter of war. Then came out Saadan the Ghoul and offered battle, whereupon there issued forth to him one of the champions of Hind; but Saadan scarce let him take his stand in front of him ere he smote him to the earth with his mace and crushed his bones; and so did he with a second and a third, till he had slain thirty fighting-men. Then there pricked out to him an Indian cavalier, by name Bettash el Acran, uncle to King Terkenan and the doughtiest champion of his time, reckoned worth five thousand horse in battle, and cried out to Saadan, saying, 'O thief of the Arabs, what art thou that thou shouldst slay the Kings of Hind and their champions and capture their horsemen? But to-day is the last of thy worldly days.' When Saadan heard this, his eyes waxed bloodshot and he drove at Bettash and aimed a stroke at him with his club; but he evaded it and the force of the blow bore Saadan to the earth; and before he could recover himself, the Indians bound him and haled him off to their tents.

When Jemrcan saw his comrade a prisoner, he cried out, saying, Ho for the faith of Abraham the Friend!' and clapping spurs to his horse, ran at Bettash. They wheeled and feinted awhile, till Bettash drove at Jemrcan and catching him by his coat of arms, tore him from his saddle and threw him to the ground; whereupon the Indians bound him and dragged him away to their tents. And Bettash ceased not to overcome all who came out to him, till he had made prisoners of four-and-twenty captains of the Muslims, whereat the latter were sore dismayed. When Gherib saw what had befallen his men, he drew from beneath his knee a mace of gold, six-score nounds in weight, which had belonged to King Bercan, and set spurs to his sea-horse, which bore him like the wind into the middle of the field. Then he drove at Bettash, crying out, 'God is Most Great! he giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who reject the faith of Abraham the Friend!' and smote him with the mace, whereupon he fell to the ground and Gherib, turning to the Muslims, saw his brother Sehim and said to him, 'Bind this dog.' When Sehim heard his brother's words, he ran to Bettash and bound him fast and bore him off, whilst the Muslims wondered who this cavalier could be and the Indians said to one another, 'Who is this horseman that came out from amongst us and hath taken our chief prisoner?'

Meanwhile Gherib continued to offer battle and there came out to him a captain of the Indians, whom he felled to the earth with his mace, and Kailjan and Courjan bound him and delivered him to Sehim; nor did Gherib leave to do thus, till he had taken prisoner two-and-fifty of the doughtiest captains of the army of Hind. Then the

day came to an end and the drums beat the retreat; whereupon Gherib left the field and rode towards the Muslim camp. The first to meet him was his brother Sehimn, who kissed his feet in the stirrups and said, 'May thy hand never wither, O champion of the age! Tell us who thou art among the braves.' So Gherib raised his vizor and Sehim knew him and cried out, saying, 'This is your king and your lord Gherib, who is come back from the land of the Jinn!' When the Muslims heard Gherib's name, they threw themselves off their horses' backs and crowding about him, kissed his feet in the stirrups and saluted him, rejoicing in his safe return. Then they carried him into the city of Oman, where he entered his palace and sat down on the throne of his kingship, whilst his officers stood around him, in the utmost joy. Food was set on and they ate, after which Gherib related to them all that had befallen him with the Jinn in the Mountain Caf, and they marvelled thereat exceedingly and praised God for his safety. Then be dismissed them to their sleeping-places; so they withdrew to their several lodgings, and when none abode with him but Kailjan and Courjan, who never left him, he said to them, 'Can ye carry me to Cufa, that I may take my pleasure in my harem, and bring me back before the end of the night?' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'this thou askest is easy.'

Now the distance between Cufa and Oman is threescore days' journey for a diligent horseman, and Kailjan said to Courjan, 'I will carry him going and thou coming back.' So he took up Gherib and flew off with him, in company with Courjan; nor was an hour past before they set him down at the gate of his palace in Cufa. He went in to his uncle Damigh, who rose to him and saluted him; after which quoth Gherib, 'How is it with my wives Morning Star and Mehdiyeh?' And Damigh answered, saying, 'They are both well and in good case.' Then the eunuch went in and acquainted the women of the harem with Gherib's coming, whereat they rejoiced and raised cries of joy and gave him the reward for good news. Presently in came Gherib, and they rose and saluting him, conversed with him, till Damigh entered, when Gherib related to them all that had befallen him in the land of the Jinn, whereat they all marvelled. Then he lay with Morning Star till near daybreak, when he took leave of his uncle and wives and mounted Courjan's back, nor was the darkness dispelled before the two Marids set him down in the city of Oman. Then he and his men armed and he bade open the gates, when, behold, up came a horseman from the host of the Indians, with Jemrcan and Saadan and the rest of the captives, whom he had delivered, and committed them to Gherib. The Muslims rejoiced in their safety and the drums beat a point of war, whilst the two hosts drew out in battle array.

The first to open the chapter of war was Gherib, who drove his charger between the two ranks and drawing his sword El Mahic, cried out, saying, 'Whoso knoweth me hath enough of my prowess and whoso knoweth me not, I will make myself known to him. I am Gherib, King of Irak and Yemen, brother of Agib.' When Raadshah beard this, he cried out to his guards, saying, 'Bring me Agib.' So they brought him and Raadshah said to him, 'Thou knowest that this quarrel is thy quarrel and thou art the cause of all this slaughter. Now yonder stands thy brother Gherib amiddleward the field; go thou out to him and bring him to me prisoner, that I may set him on a camel, face to tail, and make a show of him and carry him to the land of Hind.' 'O King,' answered Agib, 'send out to him other than I, for I am in ill case this morning.' But

Raadshah puffed and snorted and said, 'By the virtue of the sparkling fire and the light and shade and heat, except thou go out to thy brother and bring him to me in haste, I will cut off thy head and make an end of thee.' So Agib took courage and spurring his horse up to his brother in mid-field, said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs and vilest of all who smite upon tent-pegs, wilt thou contend with kings? Take what cometh to thee and receive the tidings of thy death.' When Gherib heard this, he said to him, 'Who art thou among the kings?' And Agib answered, saying, 'I am thy brother, and to-day is the last of thy worldly days.'

When Gherib was assured that he was indeed his brother Agib, be cried out and said, 'Ho, to avenge my father and mother!' Then giving his sword to Kailjan, he drove at Agib and smote him with his mace a swashing blow, that all but beat in his ribs, and seizing him by the neckrings, tore him from the saddle and cast him to the ground; whereupcn the Marids fell on him and binding him fast, dragged him off, abject and humiliated; whilst Gherib rejoiced in the capture of his enemy and repeated the following verses of the poet:

I have won to my wish and the end of affrays:
Unto Thee, O my Lord, be the thanks and the praise!
I grew up, uncared for and abject and poor;
But God hath vouchsafed me the aim of my ways.
I have conquered the lands, I have mastered the folk:
But for Thee, I were nothing, O Ancient of Days!

When Raadshah saw how Agib fared with his brother, he called for his charger and donning his harness and coat of arms, mounted and pricked out into the field. As soon us he drew near Gherib, he cried out to him, saying, 'O vilest of Bedouin faggot-bearers, who art thou, that thou shouldst capture kings and warriors? Dismount and put thy hands behind thy back and kiss my feet and set my warriors free and go with me in chains to my kingdom, that I may pardon thee and make thee an elder in our country, so mayst thou eat a morsel of bread there.' When Gherib heard this, he laughed till he fell backward and answered, saving, 'O raging dog and scurvy wolf, thou shalt soon see against whom the shifts of Fate will turn!' Then he cried out to Sehim to bring him the prisoners; so he brought them, and Gherib smote off their heads; whereupon Raadshah drove at him, with the onslaught of a lordly champion and a fierce warrior, and they wheeled and feinted and hewed at each other till nightfall, when the drums beat the retreat and the two Kings returned, each to his own place, where his people gave him joy of his safety. And the Muslims said to Gherib, 'O King, it is not of thy wont to prolong a fight.' 'O folk,' answered he, 'I have done battle with many kings and champions; but never saw I a sturdier swordsman than this one. Had I chosen to draw El Mahic upon him, I had crushed his bones and made an end of his days: but I went about with him, thinking to take him prisoner and give him part in Islam.'

Meanwhile, Raadshah returned to his pavilion, where his chiefs came in to him and asked him of his adversary, and he said, 'By the sparkling fire, never in my life saw I the like of yonder warrior! But to-morrow I will take him prisoner and lead him away, abject and humbled.' Then they slept till daybreak, when the drums beat to battle and

the fighting-men girt on their scimitars and mounting their stout horses, raised their war-cries and drew out into the field, filling all the hills and plains and wide places. The first to open the chapter of battle was the prince of cavaliers and the lion of war, King Gherib, who drove his steed between the two hosts and spurred to and fro, crying, 'Who is for jousting, who is for fighting? Let no sluggard nor weakling come out to me to-day!' Before he had made an end of speaking, out came Raadshah, riding on an elephant, as he were a vast tower, in a howdah girthed with silken bands; and between the elephant's ears sat the driver, bearing in his hand a hook, wherewith he goaded the beast and directed him right and left. When the elephant drew near Gherib's horse, the latter, seeing a creature it had never before set eyes on, took fright; wherefore Gherib dismounted and gave the horse to Kailjan. Then he drew El Mahic and advanced to meet Raadshah on foot.

Now it was Raadshah's wont, when he found himself overmatched, to mount an elephant, taking with him an engine called the noose, which was in the shape of a net, narrow at top and wide at bottom, with a running cord of silk passed through rings along its edges. With this he would attack horsemen and casting the net over them, draw the running noose and pull the rider off his horse and make him prisoner; and thus had he conquered many cavaliers. So, when Gherib came up to him, he raised his hand and casting the net over him, pulled him on to the back of the elephant and cried out to the latter to return to the Indian camp. But Kailjan and Courjan, who had not left Gherib, laid hold of the elephant and falling upon Raadshah, bound him wlth a rope of palm-fibres, whilst Gherib strove with the net, till he rent it in sunder. Thereupon the two armies drove at each other and met with a shock like two seas crashing or two mountains smiting together, whilst the dust rose to the confines of the sky and all eyes were blinded. The battle waxed fierce and the blood ran in streams, nor did they cease to wage war lustily with push of pike and stroke of sword, till the day departed and the night brought on the darkness, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew asunder.

Now the Muslims were hard pushed that day by reason of the riders on elephants and giraffes, and many of them were slain and most of the rest wounded. This was grievous to Gherib, who commanded the wounded to be cared for and turning to his chief officers, asked them what they counselled. 'O King,' answered they, 'it is but the elephants and giraffes that irk us; were we but quit of them, we should overcome the enemy.' Quoth Kailjan and Courjan, 'We two will draw our swords and fall on them and slay the most part of them.' But there came forward a man of Oman, who had been privy counsellor to Julned, and said, 'O King, I will be surety for the army, if thou wilt but hearken to me and follow my counsel.' And Gherib turned to his captains and said to them, 'Obey this wise man in whatsoever he shall say to you.' And they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.' So he chose out ten captains and said to them, 'How many men have ye under your hands?' And they replied, 'Ten thousand fighting-men.' Then he carried them into the armoury and armed [five thousand of them with arquebuses and other] five thousand with cross-bows and taught them to shoot therewith.

As soon as it was day, the Indians came out to the field, armed cap-a-pie, with the elephants and giraffes in their van; whereupon Gherib and his men mounted and the

drums beat and both hosts drew out in battle array. Then the counsellor cried out to the archers and arquebusiers to shoot, and they plied the elephants and giraffes with shafts and bullets. The arrows and the lead entered the beasts' flanks, and they roared out and turning upon their own ranks, trampled them with their feet. Then the Muslims charged the misbelievers and set on them right and left, whilst the elephants and giraffes trampled them and drove them into the hills and deserts. Moreover, the Muslims followed hard upon them with the keen-edged sword and but few of the giraffes and elephants escaped.

Then Gherib and his folk returned, rejoicing in their victory; and on the morrow they divided the spoil and rested five days; after which King Gherib sat down on his throne and sending for his brother Agib, said to him, 'O dog, how hast thou assembled the kings against us! But He who hath power over all things hath given us the victory over thee. Wherefore do thou embrace Islam and thou shalt be saved, and I will forbear to avenge my father and mother on thee. Moreover, I will make thee King again as thou wast and will myself be under thy hand.' But Agib said, 'I will not leave my faith.' So Gherib bade lay him in irons and appointed a hundred stalwart slaves to guard him; after which he turned to Raadshah and said to him. 'How sayst thou of the faith of Islam?' 'O my lord,' answered Raadshah, 'I will enter thy faith, for, were it not a true faith and a goodly, thou hadst not carried it over us. So put forth thy hand and I will testify that there is no god but God and that Abraham the Friend is His apostle.' At this Gherib rejoiced and said to him 'Is thy heart indeed stablished in the sweetness of the Faith?' And he answered, saying, 'Yes, O my lord!' Then said Gherib, 'O Raadshah, wilt thou go to thy country and thy kingdom?' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'my father will put me to death, for that I have left his faith.' Quoth Gherib, 'I will go with thee and make thee King of the country and constrain the folk to obey thee, by the help of God the Bountiful, the Beneficent.' And Raadshah kissed his hands and feet. Then Gherib rewarded the counsellor, who had been the cause of the rout of the infidels, and gave him great riches; after which be turned to Kailjan and Courjan and said to them, 'O chiefs of the Jinn, it is my will that ye carry me, together with Raadshah and Jemrcan and Saadan, to the land of Hind.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they. So Courjan took up Jemrcan and Saadan, whilst Kailjan took Gherib and Raadshah, and flew on with them from sundown till the end of the night, when they set them down on the terrace of King Terkenan's palace at Cashmere.

Now news was come to Terkenan of the rout of his army and that his son [was a prisoner], whereat he was sore troubled and slept not neither took delight in aught. As he sat in his harem, pondering his case, behold, Gherib and his company descended the stairways of the palace and came in to him; and when he saw his son and those who were with him, he was confounded and fear took him of the Marids. Then Raadshah turned to him and said, 'How long wilt thou persist in thy frowardness, O traitor and worshipper of the Fire? Woe to thee! Leave worshipping the fire and serve the Magnanimous King, Creator of night and day, whom no sight attaineth.' When Terkenan heard his son's speech, he cast at him an iron mace he had by him; but he avoided it and it fell upon a buttress of the palace and smote out three stones. Then said the King, 'O dog, thou hast destroyed my troops and forsaken thy faith and comest now to make me do likewise!' With this Gherib stepped up to him and dealt

him a buffet on the neck, that knocked him down; whereupon the Marids bound him fast and all the women fled.

Then Gherib sat down on the throne and said to Raadshah, 'Do thou justice upon thy father.' So Raadshah turned to him and said, 'O perverse old man, become a Muslim and thou shalt be saved from the fire and the wrath of the Almighty.' And Terkenan said, 'I will die in my own faith.' Whereupon Gherib drew El Mahic and smote him therewith, and he fell to the earth in two piece; and God hurried his soul to the fire and ill was the abiding-place [to which he went]. Then Gherib bade hang his body over the gate of the palace and they hung one-half on the right hand and the other on the left and waited tilt day, when Gherib caused Raadshah don the royal habit and sit down on his father's throne, with himself on his right hand and Jemrcan and Saadan and the Marids standing right and left; and he said to Kailjan and Courjan,'Whoso entereth of the princes and officers, seize him and bind him, and let not a single captain escape you.' And they answered, saying, 'We hear and obey.'

Presently, the officers made for the palace, to do their service to the King, and the first to appear was the chief captain, who, seeing Terkenan's dead body cut in half and banging on either side the gate, was seized with horror and amazement. Then Kailjan laid hold of him by the collar and dragged him into the palace and bound him; and before sunrise they had bound three hundred and fifty captains and set them before Gherib, who said to them, 'Have you seen your King hanging at the palace-gate?' Quoth they, 'Who hath done this thing?' And he answered, 'I did it, by the help of God the Most High; and whoso gainsayeth me, I will do with him likewise.' Then said they, 'What is thy will with us?' 'I am Gherib, King of Irak,' answered he, 'he who slew your warriors; and now Raadshah has embraced the faith of submission and is become a mighty king and ruler over you. So do ye become true believers and all shall be well with you; but, If you refuse, you shall repent it.' So they pronounced the profession of the faith and were numbered of the people of felicity. Then said Gherib, 'Are your hearts indeed stablished in the sweetness of the Faith?' And they answered, 'Yes;' whereupon he bade release them and clad them in robes of honour, saying, 'Go to your people and expound Islam to them. Whosoever accepts the faith, spare him; but, if he refuse, slay him.' So they went out and assembling the men under their command, expounded Islam to them, and they all professed, except a few, whom they put to death; after which they returned and told Gherib, who praised God the Most High and glorified Him, saying, 'Praised be God who hath made this thing easy to us without strife!'

Then he abode in Cashmere forty days, till he had ordered the affairs of the country and cast down the shrines and temples of the Fire and built mosques and places of worship in their stead, whilst Raadshah made ready for him gifts and treasures beyond count and despatched them to Irak in ships. Then Gherib mounted on Kailjan's back and Jemrcan and Saadan on that of Courjan, after they had taken leave of Raadshah, and before daybreak they were in Oman, where their troops met them and saluted them and rejoiced in them. Then they set out for Cufa, where Gherib called for his brother Agib and commanded to crucify him on the city-gate and shoot at him with arrows. So Sehim brought hooks of iron and driving them into the

tendons of Agib's heels, hung him over the gate; and they riddled him with arrows, till be was like a porcupine.

Then Gherib entered his palace and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, passed the day in ordering the affairs of the state. At nightfall he went in to his harem, where Morning Star came to meet him and embraced him and gave him joy, she and her women, of his safety. He lay the night with her and on the morrow, after he had washed and prayed the morning prayer, he sat down on his throne and commanded preparation to be made for his marriage with Mehdiyeh. So they slaughtered three thousand head of sheep and two thousand oxen and a thousand goats and five hundred camels and the like number of horses, beside four thousand fowls and great store of geese; never was such a wedding in Islam to that day. Then he went in to Mehdiyeh and did away her maidenhead and abode with her ten days; after which he committed the kingdom to his uncle Damigh, charging him to rule the people justly, and journeyed with his women and warriors, till he came to the ships laden with presents, which Raadshah had sent him, and divided the treasure among his troops. Then they fared on till they reached the city of Babel, where he bestowed on Sehim a dress of honour and appointed him Sultan of the city. He abode with him ten days, at the end of which time he set out again and journeyed till he reached the castle of Saadan the Ghoul, where they rested five days.

Then said Gherib to Kailjan and Courjan, 'Go ye to Isbanir el Medain, to the palace of Chosroës, and find what is come of Fekhr Taj and bring me one of the King's kinsmen, who shall acquaint me with what has passed.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and set out forthright for Isbanir. As they flew between heaven and earth, they caught sight of a mighty army, as it were the swollen sea, and Kailjan said to Courjan, 'Let us descend and see what is this army.' So they alighted and walking among the troops, found them Persians and questioned the soldiers whose men they were and whither they were bound; to which they made answer, saying, 'We are bound for Irak, to kill Gherib and all who are with him.' When the Marids heard this, they repaired to the pavilion of the Persian general, whose name was Rustem, and waited till the soldiers slept, when they took up Rustem, bed and all, and made for Gherib's camp. They arrived there by mid night and going to the door of the King's pavilion, said, 'Permission;' which when the latter heard, he sat up and said, 'Enter.' So they entered and set down the couch with Rustem asleep thereon. Quoth Gherib, 'Who is this?' and they answered, 'This is a Persian prince, whom we met coming with a great host, thinking to slay thee and thine; and we have brought him to thee, that he may tell thee what thou hast a mind to know.' 'Fetch me a hundred men,' said Gherib, and they fetched them; whereupon he made them draw their swords and stand at Rustem's head.

Then they awoke him and he opened his eyes and finding a vault of steel over his head, shut them again, saying, 'What is this foul dream?' But Kailjan pricked him with his sword-point and he sat up and said 'Where am I?' Quoth Sehim, 'Thou art in the presence of King Gherib, son-in-law of the King of the Persians. What is thy name and whither goest thou?' When Rustem heard Gherib's name, he bethought himself and said, 'Am I asleep or on wake?' Whereupon Sehim dealt him a buffet, saving, 'Why dost thou not answer?' And he raised his head and said, 'Who brought me from my tent out of the midst of my men?' Quoth Gherib, 'These two Marids brought thee.' So he

looked at them and voided in his hose [for affright]. Then the Marids fell upon him, baring their tusks and brandishing their swords, and said to him, 'Wilt thou not rise and kiss the earth before King Gherib?' and he trembled at them and was assured that he was not asleep; so he stood up and kissed the earth before Gherib, saying, 'The blessing of the Fire be on thee, O King, and long be thy life!' 'O dog of the Persians,' answered Gherib, 'fire is not worshipful, for that it is harmful and profiteth not save for [cooking] food.' 'Who then is worshipful?' asked Rustem; and Gherib replied, saying, 'God alone is worshipworth, who made thee and formed thee and created the heavens and the earth.' Quoth the Persian, 'What shall I say, that I may become of the party of this Lord and enter thy faith?' 'Say,' rejoined Gherib, '"There is no god but God, and Abraham is the friend of God."' So Rustem pronounced the profession of the faith and was written of the people of felicity.

Then said he to Gherib, 'Know, O my lord, that thy father-in-law, King Sabour, seeks to kill thee and hath sent me with a hundred thousand men, charging me to spare none of you.' Quoth Gherib, 'Is this my reward for having delivered his daughter from death and dishonour? God will requite him his evil intent. But what is thy name?' And the Persian answered, saying, 'My name is Rustem, general of Sabour.' Quoth Gherib, 'Thou shalt have the like rank in my army. But tell me, O Rustem, how is it with the princess Fekhr Taj?' 'May thy head live, O King of the age!' answered Rustem. 'What was the cause of her death?' asked Gherib; and Rustem said, 'O my lord, no sooner badst thou left us, than one of the princess's women went in to King Sabour and said to him, "O my lord, didst thou give Gherib leave to lie with the princess my mistress?" " No, by the virtue of the fire!" answered he, and drawing his sword, went in to his daughter and said to her, "O filthy baggage, why didst thou suffer yonder Bedouin to lie with thee, without wedding or dower?" "O my father," answered she, "thou gavest him leave to lie with me." "Did he have to do with thee?" asked he. But she was silent and hung down her head. Then he cried out to the midwives and slave-girls, saying, "Bind this harlot's hands behind her and look at her privy parts!" So they did as he bade and said to him, "O King, she hath lost her maidenhead." Whereupon he ran at her and would have slain her, but her mother threw herself between them, saying, "O King, slay her not, lest thou be for ever dishonoured; but shut her in a cell till she die." So he cast her into prison till nightfall, when he called two of his officers and said to them, "Carry her afar off and cast her into the river Jihon and tell none." They did his commandment, and indeed her memory is forgotten and her time is past.'

When Gherib heard this, he said, 'By the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will assuredly go to yonder dog and destroy him and lay waste his kingdom!' Then he sent letters to Jemrcan and to the governors of Mosul and Meyya Farikin and turning to Rustem, said to him, 'How many men hadst thou in thine army?' 'A hundred thousand Persian horse,' answered he. And Gherib said, 'Take ten thousand horse and go to thy people and occupy them with war.' So Rustem took ten thousand Arab horse and departed, saying in himself, 'I will do a thing that shall whiten my face with King Gherib.' So he fared on seven days, till there remained but half a day's journey between him and the Persian camp; when he divided his men into four troops and bade them attack the Persians from different sides and fall on them with the sword. So they rode on from even-tide till midnight, when they came to the camp of the Persians, who were

asleep in security, and fell upon them, shouting, 'God is Most Great!' Whereupon the Persians started up from sleep and their feet slipped and the sabre went round amongst them; for the All-knowing King was wroth with them, and Rustem wrought amongst them as fire in dry firewood, till, by the end of the night, the whole of the Persian host was slain or wounded or fled, and the Muslims made prize of their tents and baggage and horses and camels and treasure-chests. Then they alighted and rested in the tents of the beaten army, till Gherib came up and seeing what Rustem had done, invested him with a dress of honour and said to him, 'O Rustem, it was thou didst put the Persians to the rout; wherefore all the spoil is thine.' So he kissed Gherib's hand and thanked him, and they rested till the end of the day, when they set out for King Sabour's capitaL

Meanwhile, the survivors of the defeated army reached Isbanir and went in to Sabour, crying out and saying, 'Alas!' and 'Ruin!' and 'Woe worth the day!' Quoth he, 'What hath befallen you and who hath smitten you with his mischief?' So they told him all that had passed and how his general Rustem had embraced Islam and fallen upon them in the darkness of the night and routed them. When the King heard this, he cast his crown to the ground and said, 'There is no worth left to us!' Then he turned to his son Werd Shah and said to him, 'O my son, there is none for this affair but thou.' 'By thy life, O my father,' answered Werd Shah, 'I will assuredly bring Gherib and his chiefs of the people in chains and slay all who are with him.' Then he numbered his army and found it eleven score thousand men. So they slept, intending to set forth on the morrow; but, next morning, as they were about to depart, a cloud of dust arose and spread till it covered the lands and baffled the sharpest sight.

Now Sabour had mounted to take leave of his son, and when he saw this great dust, he despatched a runner to discover the cause thereof, who went and returned, saying, 'O my lord, Gherib and his men are upon you;' where-upon they unloaded their beasts and drew out in order of battle. When Gherib came up and saw the Persians drawn out in battalia, he cried out to his men, saying, 'Charge, and the blessing of God be upon you!' So they waved the standards and the Arabs and the Persians drove at each other and people fell upon people. The blood ran in streams and all souls saw death face to face; the brave advanced and pressed forward and the coward turned and fled and they ceased not from the battle till ended day, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart. Then Sabour commanded to pitch his camp before the city-gate, and Gherib set up his tents in front of theirs and every one went to his tent until the morning. As soon as it was day, the two hosts mounted their strong horses and couched their lances and donned their harness of war; then they raised their war-cries and drew out in battle-array, whilst all the lordly champions and the lions of war came forth.

The first to open the chapter of battle was Rustem, who spurred his charger into the mid-field and cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great! I am Rustem, chief of the champions of the Arabs and the Persians. Who is for jousting, who is for fighting? Let no sluggard or weakling come out to me to-day!' Then there came forth to him a champion of the Persians and there befell between them a sore battle, till Rustem smote his adversary with a mace he had with him, seventy pounds in weight, and beat his head down upon his breast, and he fell to the earth, dead and drowned in his

blood. This was grievous to Sabour and he commanded his men to charge; so they drove at the Muslims, invoking the aid of the light-giving Sun, whilst the Muslims called for help upon the Magnanimous King. But the infidels outnumbered the true believers and made them drink the cup of death; which when Gherib saw, he drew his sword El Maliic and crying out [his war-cry], fell upon the Persian; with Kailjan and Courjan at his either stirrup; nor did he leave tourneying amongst them with the sword till he hewed his way to the standard-bearer and smote him on the head with the flat of his sword, whereupon he fell down in a swoon and the two Marids carried him off to their camp. When the Persians saw the standard fallen, they turned and fled towards the gates of the city; but the Muslims followed them with the sword and they crowded together to enter the city, so that they could not shut the gates and there died of them much people. Then Rustem and Saadan and Jemrcan and Sehim and Kailjan and Courjan and all the Muslim braves and the champions of the Faith of Unity fell upon the misbelieving Persians in the gates and the blood of the infidels ran in the streets like a tide, till they threw down their arms and harness and called out for quarter; whereupon the Muslims stayed their hands from the slaughter and drove them to their tents, as one drives a flock of sheep.

Meanwhile, Gherib returned to his pavilion, where he did off his harness and washed himself of the blood of the infidels; after which he donned his royal robes and sat down on his chair of estate. Then he called for the King of the Persians and said to him, 'O dog of the Persian; what moved thee to deal thus with thy daughter? How seest thou me unworthy to be her husband?' And Sabour answered, saying, 'O King, be not wroth with me for that which I did; for I repent me and came out to thee in battle but in my fear of thee.' When Gherib heard this, he bade throw him down and beat him. So they beat him, till he could no longer groan, and cast him among the prisoners. Then Gherib expounded Islam to the Persians and six-score thousand of them embraced he faith, and the rest he put to the sword. Moreover, all the townsfolk professed Islam and Gherib mounted and entered the city in great state.

Then he went into the King's palace and sitting down on his throne, gave gifts and largesse and distributed the booty and treasure among the Arabs and Persians, wherefore they loved him and wished him power and victory and length of days. But Fekhr Taj's mother remembered her daughter and raised the voice of mourning for her, and the palace was filled with crying and lamentation. Gherib heard this and entering the harem, asked the women what ailed them, whereupon the princess's mother came forward and said, 'O my lord, thy presence put me in mind of my daughter and how she would have joyed in thy coming, had she been alive.' Gherib wept for her and sitting down on his throne, called for Sabour, and they brought him, stumbling in his shackles. Quoth Gherib to him, 'O dog of the Persians, what didst thou with thy daughter?' 'I gave her to such an one and such an one,' answered the King, 'saying, "Drown her in the river Jihon."' So Gherib sent for the two men and said to them, 'Is what he saith true?' 'Yes, O King,' answered they; 'yet did we not drown her, but took pity on her and left her on the banks of the Jihon, saying, "Save thyself and do not return to the city, lest the King put thee to death and us with thee." This is all we know of her.' When Gherib heard this, he summoned the astrologers and said to them, 'Draw me a geomantic figure and find out what is come of Fekhr Taj and whether she is still

in the chains of life or dead.' So they levelled a table of sand and drawing a geomantic figure, said, 'O King, the princess is alive and hath borne a male child; but she is with a tribe of the Jinn and will be absent from thee twenty years; look, therefore, how many years thou hast been absent.' So he reckoned up the years of his absence and found them eight years and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he sent for all Sabour's governors of towns and strongholds and they came and did him homage.

One day after this, as he sat in his palace, a cloud of dust appeared in the distance and spread till it covered the whole country and darkened the horizon. So he despatcbed the two Marids to reconnoitre, and they went forth and snatching up a horseman of the advancing army, returned and set him down before Gherib, saying, 'Ask this fellow, for he is of the army.' Quoth Gherib, 'Whose army is this?' And the man answered, 'O King, it is the army of Khired Shah, King of Shiraz, who is come to do battle with thee.' Now the manner of Khired Shah's coming was on this wise. When Gherib defeated Sabour's army, as hath been related, and took the King himself, the latter's son fled, with a handful of his father's men, to Shiraz, where he went in to King Khired Shah and kissed the earth before him, whilst the tears ran down his cheeks. When the King saw him in this case, he said to him, 'Lift thy head, O youth, and tell me what makes thee weep.' 'O King,' answered the prince, 'a King of the Arabs, by name Gherib, hath fallen on us and taken the King my father prisoner and slain the Persians and made them drink the cup of death.' And he told him all that had befallen. Quoth Khired Shah, 'Is my wife well?' And the prince answered, saying, 'Gherib hath taken her.' 'As my head liveth,' cried the King, 'I will not leave a Bedouin or a Muslim on the face of the earth!' So he wrote letters to his governors, who levied their troops and joined him with an army of fourscore and five thousand men. Then he opened his armouries and distributed arms and armour to the troops, after which he set out with them and journeyed till he came to Isbanir and encamped before the city-gate.

With this Kailjan and Courjan came in to Gherib and kissing his knee, said to him, 'O King, heal our hearts and give us this army to our share!' And he said, 'Up and at them!' So they flew up into the air and lighting down in the pavilion of the King of Shiraz, found him seated on his chair of estate, with the Prince of Persia sitting on his right hand, and about him his captains, with whom he was taking counsel for the slaughter of the Muslims. Kailjan caught up the Prince and Courjan the King and flew back with them to Gherib, who caused beat them, till they fainted. Then the Marids returned to the Shirazi camp and drawing their swords, which no mortal man might wield, fell upon the infidels, and God hurried their souls to the fire and evil was the abiding-place [to which they went], whilst they saw nothing but two swords flashing and reaping men, as a husbandman reaps corn. So they forsook their tents and mounting their horses bare-backed, fled for their lives. The Marids pursued them two days and slew of them much people, after which they returned and kissed Gherib's hand. He thanked them for that which they had done and said to them, 'The spoil of the infidels is yours alone: none shall share with you therein.' So they called down blessings on him and going forth gathered the booty together and abode in their own place.

Meanwhile, the remains of the beaten army drew not bridle, till they reached the city of Shiraz and there lifted up the voice of weeping for those that had been slain of them. Now King Khired Shah had a brother by name Siran the Sorcerer, than whom there was no greater wizard in his day, and he lived apart from his brother in a certain stronghold, called the Castle of Fruits, in a place abounding in trees and streams and birds and flowers, half a day's journey from Shiraz. So the fugitives betook them thither and went in to Siran, weeping and crying out. Quoth he, 'O folk, what ails you to weep?' And they told him all that had happened, whereupon the light in his eyes

became darkness and he said, 'By the virtue of my faith, I will slay Gherib and all his men and leave not one alive to tell the tale!' Then he pronounced certain magical words and summoned the Red King, who appeared and Siran said to him, 'Go to Isbanir and fall on Gherib, as he sits upon his throne.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the genie, and gathering his troops, repaired to Isbanir and set upon Gherib. When the latter saw him, he drew his sword El Mahic and he and Kailjan and Courjan fell upon the army of the Red King and slew of them five hundred and thirty and wounded the King himself grievously; whereupon he and his people fled and stayed not in their flight, till they reached the Castle of Fruits and went in to Siran, crying out and saying, 'Woe!' and 'Ruin!' And the Red King said to Siran, 'O sage, Gherib hath with him the enchanted sword of Japhet son of Noah, whomsoever he smites withal, he cuts him in sunder, and with him also are two Marids from the Mountain Caf, given him by King Muraash. He it is who slew the Blue King and Bercan, lord of the Cornelian City, and did to death much people of the Jinn.'

When Siran heard this, he dismissed the Red King and conjuring up a Marid, by name Zuazia, gave him a drachm of powdered henbane and said to him, 'Take the form of a sparrow and go to King Gherib's palace at Isbanir. Wait till he is asleep and there is none with him; then put the henbane up his nostrils and bring him to me.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Marid and changing himself into a sparrow, flew to Isbanir, where he perched on a window of the palace and waited till all Gherib's attendants retired and the King himself slept. Then he flew down and going up to Gherib, blew the powdered henbane into his nostrils, till he lost his senses, whereupon he wrapped him in the coverlet of the bed and flew off with him, like the storm-wind, to the Castle of Fruits; where he arrived at midnight and laid his prize before Siran. The enchanter thanked him and would have put Gherib to death, as he lay senseless; but a man of his people withheld him, saying, 'O sage, if thou slay him, his friend King Muraash will fall on us with all his Jinn and lay waste our realm.' 'How then shall we do with him? asked Siran. 'Cast him into the Jihon,' answered the other, 'and he will ho drowned and none will know who threw him in.' And Siran bade the Marid take Gherib and cast him into the Jihon. So he carried him down to the river-bank, but it was grievous to him to drown him, wherefore he made a raft of wood and binding it with cords, pushed it and Gherib thereon out into the current, which carried it away.

Meanwhile, when Gherib's people awoke in the morning and went in to do their service to their King, they found him not and seeing his rosary on the throne, awaited him awhile, but he came not. So they sought out the chamberlain and said to him, 'Go into the harem and look for the King; for it is not his wont to tarry till this time.' Accordingly, the chamberlain entered the harem and enquired for the King, but the women said, 'We have not seen him mince yesterday.' So he returned and told the officers, who were confounded and said, 'Let us see if he have gone to take his pleasure in the gardens.' Then they went out and questioned the gardeners if they had seen the King, and they answered, 'No;' whereat they were sore concerned and searched all the gardens till the end of the day, when they returned, weeping. Moreover, the Marids sought for him all round the town, but returned after three days, without having come on any tidings of him. So the people donned black and made their complaint to the Lord of all Creatures, who doth what pleaseth Him.

Meanwhile, the current bore the raft along for five days, till it brought it to the salt sea, where the waves played with Gherib and his stomach, being troubled, threw up the henbane. Then he opened his eyes and finding himself in the midst of the sea, tossed about by the waves, said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most Uigh, the Supreme! I wonder who hath done this thing with me!' Presently, as he lay, knowing not what to make of his case, he caught sight of a ship and signalled with his sleeve to the sailors, who came to him and took him up, saying, 'Who art thou and whence comest thou?' Quoth he, 'Do ye feed me and give me to drink, till I recover myself, and after I will tell you who I am.' So they brought him water and victual, and he ate and drank and God restored his reason to him. Then said he to them, 'O folk, what countrymen are ye and what is your faith? 'We are from Kerej,' answered they, 'and worship an idol called Mincash.' 'Perdition to you and your idol!' cried Gherib. 'O dogs, none is worthy of worship save God who created all things, who saith to a thing "Be!" and it is.' When they heard this, they fell upon him in great wrath and would have seized him. Now he was unarmed, but whomsoever he struck, he smote down and deprived of life, till he had felled forty men, after which they overcame him by force of numbers and bound him fast, saying. 'We will not put him to death save in our own country, that we may [first] show him to our King.'

Then they sailed on till they came to the city of Kerej, the builder whereof was a fierce Amalekite and set up at each gate of the city a magical figure of brass, which, whenever a stranger entered, blew a blast on a trumpet, that all in the city heard it and fell upon the stranger and slew him, except he embraced their faith. When Gherib entered the city, the brazen figure stationed at the gate blew such a terrible blast that the King was affrighted and going in to his idol, found fire and smoke issuing from its eyes and mouth and nostrils. Now a devil had entered the belly of the idol and speaking as with its tongue, said to the King of the city, 'O King, there is come to thy city one Gherib, King of Irak, who uses to bid the folk quit their faith and worship his Lord; wherefore, when they bring him before thee, look thou spare him not' So the King went out and sat down on his throne; and presently, the sailors brought in Gherib, saying, 'O King, we found this youth shipwrecked in the midst of the sea, and he believeth not in our gods.' Then they told him all that had passed and the King said, 'Carry him to the house of the great idol and cut his throat before him, so haply he may look favourably upon us.' But the Vizier said, 'O King, it befits not to slaughter him thus, for he would die forthright; rather let us burn him with fire.'

So the King commanded to cast Gherib into prison and caused wood to be brought; and they made a great pyre and set fire to it, and it burnt till the morning. Then the King and the people of the city came forth and the King sent to fetch Gherib; but his men found him not; so they returned and told the King, who said, 'How made he his escape?' Quoth they, 'We found the doors locked and the chains and shackles cast down.' Whereat the King marvelled and said, 'Hath this fellow flown up to heaven or sunk into the earth?' And they said, 'We know not.' Then said the King, 'I will go and ask my god, and he will tell me whither he is gone.' So he rose and went in, to prostrate himself to his idol, but found it not and began to rub his eyes and say, 'Am I asleep or awake?' Then he turned to his Vizier and said to him, 'Where is my god and where is the prisoner? By my faith, O dog of Vmziers, hadst thou not counselled me to

burn him, I had slaughtered him; for it is he who hath stolen my god and fled; and needs must I be avenged of him I' Then he drew his sword and cut off the Vizier's head.

Now there was a strange cause for Gherib's escape, and it was on this wise. When they had shut him up in a cell adjoining the temple of the idol, he rose to pray, calling upon the name of God the Most High and seeking deliverance of Him, may He be exalted and glorified! The Marid who had charge of the idol and spoke in its name, heard him and fear gat hold upon his heart and he said, 'Confusion! Who is this that seeth me and whom I see not?' So he went in to Gherib and throwing himself at his feet, said to him, 'O my lord, what must I say that I may become of thy company and enter thy religion?' 'Say,' answered Gherib, "'There is no god but God, and Abraham is the Friend of God."' So the Marid pronounced the profession of the faith and was written of the people of felicity. Now his name was Zelzal, son of El Muzelzel, one of the chief of the Kings of the Jinn. Then he unbound Gherib and taking him and the idol, made for the upper air.

When the King's soldiers saw what had befallen, they renounced the worship of the idol and drawing their swords, slew the King; after which they fell on one another, and the sword went round amongst them three days, till there abode alive but two men, one of whom overcame the other and killed him. Then the boys attacked the survivor and slew him and fell to fighting amongst themselves, till they were all killed; and the women and girls fled to the hamlets and villages; wherefore the city became desert and none dwelt therein but the owl.

Meanwhile, the Marid Zelzal flew with Gherib towards his own country, the Islands of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal and the land of the Enchanted Calf, so called because its King, Muzelzel, had a pied calf which he clad in housings of gold brocade and worshipped as a god. One day, the King and his people went in to the calf and found him trembling; so the King said, 'O my god, what hath troubled thee?' Whereupon the Satan in the calf's belly cried out and said, 'O Muzelzel, thy son hath deserted to the faith of Abraham the Friend, at the hands of Gherib, King of Irak.' When the King heard this, he was confounded and going forth, sat down upon his throne. Then he summoned his grandees and told them what be had heard from the idol, whereat they marvelled and said, 'What shall we do, O King?' Quoth he, 'When my son comes and ye see me embrance him, do ye lay hold of him.' And they said, 'We hear and obey.'

After two days came Zelzal and Gherib, with the King's idol of Kerej, but no sooner had they entered the palace gate than the Jinn seized on them and carried them before Muzelzel, who looked at his son with angry eyes and said to him, 'O dog of a genie, hast thou left thy faith and that of thy fathers and grandfathers?' Quoth Zelzal, 'I have embraced the true faith, and thou, do thou likewise and thou shalt be saved from the wrath of the Almighty King, Creator of Night and Day.' Therewith his father waxed wroth and said, 'O whoreson, dost thou affront me with these words?' Then he bade clap him in prison and turning to Gherib, said to him, 'O wretch of a mortal, how hast thou abused my son's wit and seduced him from his faith?' Quoth Gherib, 'Indeed, I have brought him out of error into the way of righteousness, out of Hell into Paradise and out of idolatry to the true faith.' Whereupon the King cried out to a

Marid called Siyyar, saying, 'Take this dog and cast him into the Valley of Fire, that he may perish.'

Now this valley was situate in the desert quarter of the world and was so named by reason of the excess of its heat and the flaming of its fire, which was so fierce that none who fell therein could live an hour, but was destroyed; and it was compassed about by high and slippery mountains, wherein was no opening. So Siyyar took up Gherib and flew with him towards the Valley of Fire, till he came within an hour's journey thereof, when, being aweary, he alighted in a valley full of trees and streams and fruits, and setting down Gherib, chained as he was, fell asleep for weariness. When Gherib saw that he slept and heard him snore, be strove with his bonds till he burst them; then, taking up a heavy stone, he cast it down on the Marid's head and crushed his bones, so that he died forthright. Then he fared on into the valley and found himself in a great island in mid-ocean, full of all fruits, that lips and tongue could desire. So he abode alone on the island, drinking of its waters and eating of its fruits and of fish that he caught, and days and years passed over him, till he had sojourned there seven years.

One day, as he sat, there came down on him from the air two Marids, each carrying a man; and they said to him, 'Who art thou, O fellow, and of which of the tribes art thou?' Now they took him for a genie, because his hair was grown long; and he replied, saying, 'I am no genie,' and told them all that had befallen him; whereupon they grieved for him and said, 'Abide here till we carry these two lambs to our king, that he may make the morning meal of the one and sup on the other, and after we will come back and carry thee to thine own country.' He thanked them and said, 'Where are the lambs?' Quoth they, 'These two mortals are the lambs.' And Gherib said, 'I crave the protection of the God of Abraham the Friend, the Lord of all creatures, who hath power over everything!' Then the Marids flew away and Gherib abode awaiting them two days, when one of them returned, bringing with him a suit of clothes, in which he clad him. Then he took him up and flew with him out of sight of earth, till Gherib heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, and a flaming arrow issued from amongst them and made for the Marid, who fled from it towards the earth. The arrow pursued him, till he came within a spear's cast of the earth, when Gherib leapt from his back, and the fiery shaft overtook the Marid, who became a heap of ashes.

As for Gherib, he fell into the sea and sank two fathoms deep, after which he came to the surface and swam for two days and two nights, till his strength failed him and he despaired of life. But, on the third day, he caught sight of a steep and mountainous island; so he made for it and landing, walked on inland, where he rested a day and a night, feeding on the fruits of the earth. Then he climbed to the mountain-top and descending the opposite slope, fared on two days till he came in sight of a wailed and fortified city, abounding in trees and streams. So he made for it, but, when he reached the gate, the warders seized on him and carried him to their queen, whose name was Janshah. Now she was five hundred years old, and every man who entered the city, they brought to her and she lay with him; then, when he had done his work, she put him to death, and so had she slain many men. When she saw Gherib, he pleased her and she said to him, 'What is thy name and faith and whence comest thou?' Quoth he, 'My name is Gherib, King of Irak, and I am a Muslim.' 'Leave this

faith,' said she, 'and enter mine and I will marry thee and make thee king.' But he looked at her with angry eyes and said, 'Thy faith perish with thee!' Quoth she, 'Dost thou blaspheme my idol, the which is of red cornelian, set with pearls and jewels?' And she cried out to her men, saying, 'Imprison him in the house of the idol; peradventure it will soften his heart.' So they shut him up in the temple and locking the doors upon him, went their way. As soon as they were gone, Gherib went up to the idol, which was of red cornelian, with collars of pearls and precious stones about its neck, and lifting it up, dashed it on the ground and broke it in pieces; after which he lay down and slept till daybreak.

Next morning, the Queen sat down on her bed of estate and said to her men, 'Bring me the prisoner.' So they opened the temple doors and entering, found the idol broken in pieces, whereupon they buffeted their faces, till the blood ran from the corners of their eyes. Then they made at Gherib, to seize him; but he smote one of them with his fist and killed him, and so did he with another and another, till he had slain five-and-twenty of them and the rest fled to Queen Janshah, crying out. Quoth she, 'What is the matter?' And they said, 'The prisoner hath broken thine idol and slain thy men,' and told her all that had passed. When she heard this, she cast her crown to the ground and said, 'There is no worth left in idols!' Then she mounted with a thousand fighting-men and rode to the temple, where she found Gherib had gotten him a sword and come forth and was slaying men and over-throwing warriors. When she saw his prowess, her heart was drowned in the love of him and she said in herself, 'I have no need of the idol and care for nought but this Gherib, that he may lie in my bosom the rest of my life.' Then she bade her men hold aloof from Gherib, and going up to him, muttered certain magical words, whereupon his arm became benumbed and the sword dropped from his grasp. So they seized him and bound him, as he stood confounded and stupefied.

Then the Queen returned to her palace and seating herself on her throne, bade her people withdraw and leave Gherib with her. When they were alone, she said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs, wilt thou break my idol and slay my men?' 'O accursed woman,' answered he, 'had he been a god, he had defended himself!' Quoth she, 'Lie with me and I will forgive thee that which thou hast done.' But he replied, saying, 'I will do nought of this.' And she said, 'By the virtue of my faith, I will punish thee grievously!' So she took water and conjuring over it, sprinkled it upon him and he became an ape. And she used to feed and keep him in a closet, appointing one to care for him; and in this plight he abode two years. Then she called him to her one day and said to him, 'Wilt thou hearken to me?' And he signed to her with his head, as who should say, 'Yes.' So she rejoiced and freed him from the enchantment. Then she brought him food and he ate and toyed with her and kissed her, so that she trusted in him. When it was night, she lay down and said to him, 'Come, do thy business.' 'It is well,' answered he and mounting on her breast, seized her by the neck and broke it, nor did he arise from her till life had left her. Then, seeing an open cabinet, he went in and found there a sword of watered steel and a buckler of Chinese iron; so he armed himself cap-a-pie and waited till the day.

As soon as it was morning, he went forth and stood at the gate of the palace. When the Amirs came and would have gone in to do their service to the Queen, they

found Gherib standing at the gate, clad in complete steel; and he said to them, 'O folk, leave the service of idols and worship the All-wise King, Creator of Night and Day, who giveth life to dry bones, for He made all things and hath dominion over all.' When they heard this, they ran at him, but he fell on them like a ravening lion and slew of them much people; but, when the night came, they overcame him by dint of numbers and would have taken him, when behold, there descended upon the infidels a thousand Marids, under the command of Zelzal, who plied them with the keen sabre and made them drink the cup of perdition, whilst God hurried their souls to the fire, till but few were left of the people of Janshah and the rest cried out for quarter and believed in the Requiting King, whom no one thing diverteth from another, the Destroyer of tyrants and Exterminator of the Chosroës, Lord of this world and the next.

Then Zelzal saluted Gherib and gave him joy of his safety; and Gherib said to him, 'How knewest thou of my plight?' 'O my lord,' answered Zelzal, 'my father kept me in prison two years, after which he released me, and I abode with him another year, till I was restored to favour with him, when I slew him and his subjects submitted to me. I ruled them for a year's space, till, one night, I lay down to sleep, having thee in my mind, and saw thee, in a dream, fighting against Janshah's people; wherefore I took these thousand Marids and came to thee.' And Gherib marvelled at this happy chance. Then he took Janshah's treasures and those of the slain and appointed a ruler over the city, after which the Marids took up Gherib and the treasure and he lay the same night in the palace of Crystal. He abode Zelzal's guest six months, at the end of which time he desired to depart; so Zelzal gave him rich presents and despatched three thousand Marids, who brought the spoils of the city of Kerej and added them to those of Janshah. Then Zelzal loaded forty thousand Marids with the treasure and himself taking up Gherib, flew with his host towards the city of Isbanir, where they arrived at midnight.

Gherib looked and seeing the city invested on all sides by a vast army, as it were the swollen sea, said to Zelzal, 'O my brother, how cometh the city thus beleaguered and what is this army?' Then he alighted on the roof of his palace and cried out, saying, 'Ho, Morning Star! Ho, Mehdiyeh!' Whereupon they started up from sleep in amazement and said, 'Who calleth us at this hour?'" Quoth he, 'It is I, your lord, Gherib of the wondrous deeds.' When the princesses heard their lord's voice, they rejoiced and so did the eunuchs and women. Then Gherib went down to them and they threw themselves upon him and raised cries of joy, that all the palace rang again and the captains of the army awoke and said, 'What is to do?' So they made for the palace and said to the eunuchs, 'Hath one of the King's women given birth to a child?' 'No,' answered they; 'but rejoice, for King Gherib hath returned to you.' So they rejoiced, and Gherib came forth to his comrades, who threw themselves upon him and kissed his hands and feet, returning thanks to God the Most High. Then he sat down on his throne, with his officers about him, and questioned them of the beleaguering army. 'O King,' answered they, 'they sat down before the city three days ago, and we know not what they want; for we have had with them neither battle nor speech.'

Now the name of the commander of the besieging army was Murad Shah and he had with him a hundred thousand horse and three thousand foot, besides two hundred tribesmen of the Jinn; and the manner of his coming was on this wise. When

the two men, whom Sabour had charged to drown his daughter Fekhr Taj, let her go, bidding her flee for her life, she went forth distracted, knowing not whither to go and saying, 'Where is thine eye, O Gherib, that thou mayst see my case?' and wandered on from place to place and country to country, till she came to a valley abounding in trees and streams, in whose midst stood a lofty and strong-builded castle, as it were one of the pavilions of Paradise. So she betook herself thither and entering the castle, found it hung and carpeted with stuffs of silk, and therein were a hundred beautiful damsels and great plenty of gold and silver vessels. When the damsels saw her, they came up to her and saluted her, deeming her of the damsels of the Jinn, and asked her of her case. Quoth she, 'I am the King's daughter of the Persians,' and told them all that had befallen her; which when they heard, they wept over her and condoled with her, saying, 'Take comfort and be of good cheer, for here shalt thou have meat and drink and raiment, and we all are thy hand-maids.' She called down blessings on them and they brought her food, of which she ate till she was satisfied. Then said she to them, 'Who is the owner of this palace and lord over you?' Quoth they, 'King Selsal, son of Dal, is our master; he passes a night here once in every month and departs in the morning to rule over the tribes of the Jinn.'

So Fekhr Taj took up her abode with them and after five days she gave birth to a male child, as he were the moon. They cut the cord of his navel and anointing his eyes with kohl, named him Murad Shah, and he grew up in his mother's lap. After awhile came Selsal, riding on a paper-white elephant, as he were a tower plastered with gypsum, and attended by the troops of the Jinn. He entered the palace, where the hundred damsels met him and kissed the earth before him, and amongst them Fekhr Taj. When he saw her, he looked at her and said to the others, 'Who is yonder damsel?' And they answered, saying, 'She is the daughter of Sabour, King of the Persians and Turcomans and Medes.' Quoth he, 'Who brought her hither?' And they repeated to him her story; whereat he was moved to pity for her and said to her, 'Grieve not, but take patience till thy son be grown a man, when I will go to the land of the Persians and strike thy father's head from his shoulders and seat thy son on the throne in his stead.' So she rose and kissed his hands and blessed him.

Then she abode in the castle and her son grew up and was reared with the children of the King. They used to ride forth together a-hunting, and he became skilled in the chase of the wild beasts and of the ravening lions and ate of their flesh, till his heart became harder than the rock. When he reached the age of fifteen, his spirit waxed big in him and he said to Fekhr Taj, 'O my mother, who is my father?' 'O my son,' answered she, 'Gherib, King of Irak, is thy father and I am the King's daughter of the Persians,' and she told him her story. Quoth he, 'Did my grandfather indeed give orders to slay thee and my father Gherib ? And she answered, 'Yes.' Whereupon, 'By the claim thou hast on me for that thou rearedst me,' cried he, 'I will assuredly go to thy father's city and cut off his head and bring it to thee!' And she rejoiced in his speech.

Then he used to go a-riding with two hundred Marids till he grew to man's estate, when he fell to making raids and excursions in quest of plunder, till, one day, he attacked the city of Shiraz and took it and cut off the King's head, as he sat on his throne, and slew many of his troop; whereupon the rest, to the number of ten thousand horse, cried out for quarter and kissed his stirrups. He led them to Balkh,

where he slew the King of the city and put his men to the rout and made himself master of the riches of the place. Thence he passed to Nourain, at the head of an army of thirty thousand horse, and the King of the city came out to him, with presents and tribute, and did him homage. Then he went on to Samarcand of the Persians and took the city, and after that to Akhlat and took that town also; nor was there any city he came to but he took it. On this wise he became at the head of a great army, and all the booty he made he divided among his soldiers, who loved him for his valour and munificence. At last he came to Isbanir el Medain and sat down before it, saying, 'Let us wait till the rest of my army come up, when I will seize on my grandfather and solace my mother's heart by striking off his head in her presence.' So he sent for her, and by reason of this, there was no battle for three days, at the end of which time Gherib and Zelzal arrived with the forty thousand Marids, laden with treasure. Presently came Fekhr Taj, and her son Murad Shah embraced her, saying, 'Abide in thy tent till I bring thy father to thee.' And she sought succour for him of the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of the heavens and the earths.

Next morning, as soon as it was day, Murad Shah mounted and rode forth, with the two hundred Marids on his right hand and the kings of men on his left, whilst the drums beat a point of war. When Gherib heard this, he also took horse and calling his people to battle, rode out, with the Jinn on his right hand and the men on his left. Then came forth Murad Shah, armed cap-a-pie, and spurred his charger right and left, saying, 'O folk, let none come forth to me but your King. If he conquer me, he shall be lord of both armies, and if I conquer him, I will slay him, as I have slain others.' When Gherib heard his speech, he said, 'Avaunt, O dog of the Arabs!' And they drove at each other and thrust with spears, till they broke, then hewed at each other with swords, till the blades were notched; nor did they cease to advance and retreat and wheel and feint, till the day was half spent and their horses fell down under them, when they dismounted and gripped each other. Then Murad Shah lifted Gherib up and strove to dash him to the ground; but Gherib seized him by the ears and pulled them with his might, till it seemed to him as if the heavens were falling on the earth and he cried out, with his heart in his mouth, saying, 'I yield myself to thy mercy, O champion of the age!' So Gherib bound him, and the Marids his comrades would have charged and rescued him, but Gherib fell on them with a thousand Marids and was about to smite them down, when they cried out for quarter and threw down their arms.

Then Gherib returned to his pavilion, which was of green silk, embroidered with red gold and set with pearls and jewels, and seating himself on his throne, called for Murad Shah. So they brought him, shuffling in his fetters, and Gherib said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs, who art thou that thou shouidst ride forth and measure thyself against kings?' 'O my lord,' replied Murad Shah, 'reproach me not, for indeed I have excuse.' Quoth Gherib, 'What is thine excuse?' And he answered, saying, 'Know, O my lord, that I came out to avenge my mother and my father on Sabaur, King of the Persians; for he would have slain them; but my mother escaped and I know not whether he killed my father or not.' 'By Allah! rejoined Gherib, 'thou art indeed excusable! But who were thy father and mother and what are their names?' Quoth Murad Shah, 'My father was Gherib, King of Irak, and my mother Fekhr Taj, daughter of King Sabour of Persia.' When Gherib heard this, he gave a great cry and fell down in

a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on him, till he came to himself, when he said to Murad Shah, 'Art thou indeed Gherib's son by Fekhr Taj?' And he answered, 'Yes.' Quoth Gherib, 'Thou art a champion, the son of a champion. Loose my son.' And Sehim and Kailjan went up to Murad Shah and loosed him.

Then Gherib embraced him and seating him beside himself, said to him, 'Where is thy mother?' 'She is with me in my tent,' answered Murad Shah; and Gherib said, 'Bring her to me.' So Murad Shah mounted and repaired to his camp, where his men met him, rejoicing in his safety, and asked him of his case; but he answered, saying, 'This is no time for questions.' Then he went in to his mother and told her what had passed; whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy. So he carried her to Gherib, and they embraced and rejoiced in each other. Then Fekhr Taj and Murad Shah embraced Islam and expounded the faith to their troops, who all made profession with heart and tongue. After this, Gherib sent for Sabour and his son Wird Shah and upbraided them for their evil dealing and expounded Islam to them; but they refused to profess. So he crucified them on the gate of the city and the people decorated the town and held high festival. Then Gherib crowned Murad Shah with the crown of the Chosroës and made him King of the Persians and Turcomans and Medes. Moreover, he made his uncle, King Damigh, King over Irak, and all peoples and lands submitted themselves to Gherib. Then he abode in his kingship, doing justice among his subjects, wherefore all the people loved him, and he and his wives and comrades ceased not from all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, and extolled be the perfection of Him whose glory endureth for ever and whose benefits embrace all His creatures! This is all that hath come down to us of the history of Gherib and Agib.

Otbeh and Reyya.

(QUOTH Abdallah ben Maamer el Caisi), I went one year on the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God, and when I had accomplished my pilgrimage, I turned back to visit the tomb of the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve! One night, as I sat in the Garden, between the tomb and the pulpit, I heard a low moaning in a soft voice; so I listened and heard one repeat the following verses:

Is it the lamentation of the doves of the lotus-tree
That stirs the springs of sadness up in the heart of thee?
Or doth remembrance irk thee of maiden fair and sweet,
That hath thy soul afflicted with care and misery?
O night, thou lingerest sadly on one who's sick for love!
Of love and lack of patience full sore complaineth he.
Thou makest him still wakeful, who's all with passion's heat
Consumed, as on live embers he burns unquenchably.
The full moon is my witness that I am passion's slave,
Love-maddened for a maiden who's like the moon to see.
I deemed not I should ever enamoured be, until
This wise I was afflicted and knew it not, ah me!

Then the voice ceased and I abode perplexed, not knowing whence it came to me; but presently it again took up its lament and recited the following verses:

Was it the ghost of Reyya that racked thy heart, when she,
By night black-tressed and sombre, in dreams did visit thee?
Doth longing to thine eyelids cleave with its wakefulness,
And doth the nightly phantom still rob thy soul of glee?
Unto my night, whilst darkness even as an ocean was,
Wherein waves clashed and billowed, sea surging against sea,
I cried, "O night, thou weariest a lover unto whom,
Except the morn, nor helper nor succour may there be."
But, "Rail not at my slowness; for love's the present cause
Of sadness and affliction," it answered unto me.

Now, at the first of the verses, I sprang up and made for the quarter whence the sound came, nor had the voice made an end of repeating them, ere I was with the speaker and saw a youth of the utmost beauty, the hair of whose face had not sprouted and in whose cheeks tears had worn two furrows. Quoth I to him, 'Fair befall thee for a youth!' And he, 'And thee also. Who art thou?' 'Abdallah ben Maamer el Caisi,' answered I, and he said, 'Dost thou want aught?' Quoth I, 'I was sitting in the Garden and nought hath troubled me this night but thy voice. With my life would I ransom thee! What aileth thee?' And he replied, 'Sit down.' So I sat down and he said, 'I am Otbeh ben el Hubab ben el Mundhir ben El Jemouh the Ansari. I went out in the morning to the Mosque of El Ahzab and occupied myself there awhile with inclinations and prostrations, after which I withdrew apart, to worship [privily].

Presently, up came women, as they were moons, walking with a swaying gait, and midmost them a damsel of surpassing loveliness, accomplished in beauty and grace, who stopped before me and said, 'O Otbeh, what sayst thou of union with one who seeks union with thee?' So saying, she left me and went away; and since then I have had no tidings of her nor come upon any trace of her; and behold, I am distracted and do nought but remove from place to place.' Then he cried out and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, it was as if the damask of his cheeks were dyed with turmeric, and he recited the following verses:

I see you with my heart from lands that yet far distant are;
I wonder eke if with your hearts ye see me from afar.
My heart and eyes alike for you do sorrow; yea, with you
My soul abideth and the thoughts of you with me still are.
I cannot take delight in life, till I upon you look;
Your lack the very pleasantness of Paradise would mar.

'O Otbeh, O son of my uncle,' said I, 'repent to thy Lord and seek pardon for thine offence; for before thee is the terror of the standing up [to judgment].' 'Away!' answered he. 'I shall never leave to love till the two mimosa-gatherers return.'

I abode with him till daybreak, when I said to him, 'Come, let us go to the Mosque [of El Ahzab].' So we went thither and sat there, till we had prayed the midday prayers, when up came the women; but the damsel was not among them. Quoth they to him, 'O Otbeh, what deemest thou of her who seeketh union with thee?' 'And what of her?' asked he. 'Her father hath taken her,' answered they, 'and departed to Es Semaweh.' I asked them the name of the damsel and they said, 'She is called Reyya, daughter of El Ghitrif es Suleimi.' Whereupon Otbeh raised his head and recited these verses:

Reyya hath mounted, O my friends, and fared away at dawn;
Unto Semaweh's distant land her caravan is gone.
Friends, I have wept till I can weep no more: hath any tears,
That I may borrow them and weep my love from me withdrawn?

Then said I to him, 'O Otbeh, I have brought with me great store of wealth, wherewith I desire to succour men of merit; and by Allah, I will lavish it before thee, so thou mayst come to thy desire and more than thy desire! Come with me to the assembly of the Ansaris.' So we arose and went, till we came to their assembly, when I saluted them and they returned my greeting on goodly wise. Then said I to them, 'O assembly, what say ye of Otbeh and his father?' And they answered, saying, 'They are of the chiefs of the Arabs.' Quoth I, 'Know that he is smitten with the calamity of love and I desire your furtherance to Es Semaweh.' And they said, 'We hear and obey.' So they mounted with us and we rode till we drew near the place of the Benou Suleim.

When Ghitrif heard of our coming, he hastened forth to meet us, saying, 'Long life to you, O nobles!' 'And to thee also!' answered we. 'Behold we are thy guests.' Quoth he, 'Ye have lighted down at a most hospitable and well-furnished abode.' So saying, he alighted and cried out, 'Ho, all ye serving folk, come down!' So the slaves came down and spread rugs and cushions and slaughtered sheep and cattle; but we said,

'We will not taste of thy victual, till thou have accomplished our need.' 'And what is your need?' asked he. Quoth we, 'We demand thy noble daughter in marriage for the illustrious and well-born Otbeh ben Hubab ben Mundhir.' 'O my brethren,' said he, 'she whom you demand is her own mistress, and I will go in to her and tell her?' So he arose in anger and went in to Reyya, who said to him, 'O my father, why do I see anger apparent on thee?' And he answered, saying, 'Certain of the Ansaris have come to demand thy hand of me in marriage.' Quoth she, 'They are noble chiefs; the Prophet, on whom be the most excellent of blessings and peace, intercedeth for them [with God]. For whom among them do they ask me in marriage?' 'For a youth known as Otbeh ben el Hubab,' answered he; and she said, 'I have heard of this Otbeh that he performs what he promises and attains what he seeks.' Quoth Ghitrif, 'I swear that I will never marry thee to him, for there hath been reported to me somewhat of thy converse with him.' 'What was that?' said she. 'But in any case, I swear that the Ansaris shall not be uncivilly rejected; wherefore do thou make them a fair answer.' 'How so?' asked he; and she, 'Make the dowry heavy to them and they will desist.' Quoth he, 'Thou sayst well,' and going out in haste, said to the Ansaris, 'The girl consents; but she requires a dowry worthy herself; who, then, engageth for this?' 'I,' answered I. Then said he, 'I require for her a thousand bracelets of red gold and five thousand dirhems of the coinage of Hejer and a hundred pieces of woollen stuffs and striped stuffs of Yemen and five bladders of ambergris.' 'Thou shalt have this,' answered I; 'dost thou consent?' And he said, 'I do consent.' So I despatched to Medina the Luminous a company of the Ansaris, who brought all for which I had engaged; whereupon they slaughtered sheep and cattle and the folk assembled to eat of the food.

We abode thus forty days, at the end of which time Ghitrif said to us, 'Take your bride.' So we set her in a litter and her father equipped her with thirty camel-loads of things of price; after which we took leave of him and journeyed till we came within a day's journey of Medina, when there fell upon us horsemen, with intent to plunder, and methinks they were of the Benou Suleim. Otbeh drove at them and slew of them much people, but presently fell back, wounded by a spear-thrust, and dropped to the earth. Then there came to us a succour of the country people, who drove away the highwaymen; but Otbeh's days were ended. So we said, 'Alas for Otbeh!' Which when the damsel heard, she cast herself down from the camel and throwing herself upon him, cried out grievously and recited the following verses:

Patience I feign, yet natheless am not patient, verily:
I soothe my soul but with the thought that I shall follow thee.
Had my soul dealt but righteously by me, it would indeed
Have gone to death before thyself, forestalling all that be.
None, whenas thou and I are gone away, unto a friend
Will just and righteous be, I trow, nor soul with soul agree.

Then she sobbed once and gave up the ghost. We dug one grave for them and laid them in the earth, and I returned to the dwellings of my people, where I abode seven years. Then I betook me again to the Hejaz and entering Medina the Luminous, to visit [the tomb of the Prophet], said in myself, 'By Allah, I will go again to Otbeh's tomb!' So I repaired thither, and behold, over the grave was a tall tree, on which hung fillets of red and green and yellow stuffs. So I said to the people of the place, 'How is

this tree called?' And they answered, 'The tree of the Bride and the Bridegroom.' I abode by the tomb a day and a night, then went my way; and this is all I know of Otbeh, may God the Most High have mercy upon him!

Hind Daughter of En Numan and El Hejjaj.

IT is related that Hind daughter of En Numan was the fairest woman of her day, and her beauty and grace were reported to El Hejjaj, who sought in marriage and lavished much treasure on her. So he took her to wife, engaging to give her a dowry of two hundred thousand dirhems in case of divorce, and when he went in to her, he abode with her a great while. One day after this, he went in to her and found her looking at her face in the mirror and saying:

Hind is an Arab filly born and bred of purest stock
And blood, that by a mongrel mule, alack! hath covered been;
So, if she bear a stallion-colt, God-gifted sure is she;
But if a mule she bear, the mule must bear the blame, I ween.

When he heard this, he turned back and went his way unseen of Hind; then, being minded to put her away, he sent Abdallah ben Tahir to her, to divorce her. So Abdallah went in to her and said to her, 'El Hejjaj Abou Mohammed saith to thee, "Here be the two hundred thousand dirhems of thy contingent dowry;" and he hath deputed me to divorce thee.' 'O Ibn Tahir,' replied she, 'I consent gladly; for know that I never for one day took pleasure in him; so, if we separate, by Allah, I shall never regret him, and the two hundred thousand dirhems I give to thee as a reward for the glad tidings thou bringest me of my release from yonder dog of a Thekifi.'

After this, the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan heard of her beauty and symmetry and the amorous grace of her glances and sent to her, to demand her in marriage; and she wrote him in reply a letter, in which, after the customary glorification of God and benediction of His Prophet, she said, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that the dog hath lapped in the vase.' When the Khalif read her answer, he laughed and wrote to her, citing the prophet's saying, 'If a dog lap in the vessel of one of you, let him wash it seven times, once thereof with earth,' and adding, 'Wash the affront from the place of usance.' With this, she could not gainsay him; so she replied to him, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I will not consent save on condition that El Hejjaj lead my camel to thine abiding-place, barefoot and clad as he is.'

When the Khalif read her letter, he laughed long and loudly and wrote to El Hejjaj, bidding him do as she wished. The latter dared not disobey, so he submitted to the Khalif's commandment and sent to Hind, bidding her make ready for the journey. So she made ready and mounted her litter, whilst her damsels and eunuchs rode about her. Then came El Hejjaj with his suite and dismounting at Hind's door, took the halter of her camel and led it along, barefooted, whilst she and her damsels and tirewomen laughed and jeered at him and made mock of him. Then she said to her tirewoman, 'Draw back the curtain of the litter;' and she drew back the curtain, till Hind was face to face with El Hejjaj, whereupon she laughed at him and he recited the following verse:

O Hind, for all thy jeering, how many and many a night, Of yore I've left thee wakeful, lamenting for despite!

And she answered him with these:

We reck not, we, so that our life be safe and free our soul,
Of what we lose of goods and gear; it worketh us no dole.
For wealth anew may gotten be and rank and power regained,
If but man of malady and trouble be made whole.

And she ceased not to laugh at him and make sport of him, till they drew near the city of the Khalif, when she threw down a dinar and said to El Hejjaj, 'O camel-driver, I have dropped a dirhem; look for it and give it me.' So he looked and seeing nought but the dinar, said, 'This is a dinar.' 'Nay,' answered she, 'it is a dirhem.' But he said, 'It is a dinar.' Then said she, 'Praised be God who hath given us a dinar in exchange for a paltry dirhem! Give it us.' And he was abashed at this. Then he carried her to the palace of the Commander of the Faithful, and she went in to him and became his favourite.

Khuzeimeh Ben Bishr and Ikrimeh El Feyyaz.

THERE lived once, in the days of the Khalif Suleiman ben Abdulmelik, a man of the Benou Ased, by name Khuzeimeh ben Bishr, who was notorious for benevolence and excellence and abounding generosity and righteous dealing with his brethren. After awhile, times grew strait with him and he became in need of the aid of those on whom he had lavished favour and kindness. So they succoured him awhile and then grew weary of him, which when he saw, he went in to his wife, who was the daughter of his father's brother, and said to her, 'O my cousin, I find that my brethren are changed to me; wherefore I am resolved to keep my house till death come to me.' So he shut his doors and abode in his house, living on that which he had by him, till it was spent and he knew not what to do. Now Ikrimeh er Rebaï [surnamed] el Feyyaz, governor of Mesopotamia, had known him, and one day, as he sat in his audience-chamber, mention was made of Khuzeimeh, whereupon quoth Ikrimeh, 'How is it with him?' And they answered, saying, 'He is in a plight past telling, and hath shut his door and keeps the house.' Quoth Ikrimeh, 'This comes but of his excessive generosity: but how is it that Khuzeimeh ben Bishr finds none to succour him or requite him his benefits?' And they replied, 'He hath found nought of this.'

When it was night, Ikrimeh took four thousand dinars and laid them in one purse; then, bidding saddle his beast, he mounted and rode privily to Khuzeimeh's house, attended only by one of his servants, carrying the money. When he came to the door, he alighted and taking the purse from the servant, made him withdraw afar off; after which he went up to the door and knocked. Khuzeimeh came out to him, and he gave him the purse, saying, 'Better thy condition with this.' He took it and finding it heavy, put it from his hand and laying hold of the bridle of Ikrimeh's horse, said, 'Who art thou? My soul be thy ransom!' 'O man,' answered Ikrimeh, 'I come not to thee at the like of this time desiring that thou shouldst know me.' Khuzeimeh rejoined, saying, 'I will not let thee go till thou make thyself known to me.' And Ikrimeh said, 'I am Jabir Athrat el Kiram.' Quoth Khuzeimeh, 'Tell me more.' But Ikrimeh answered, 'No,' and went away, whilst Khuzeimeh went in to his wife and said to her, 'Rejoice, for God hath sent us speedy relief; if these be but dirhems, yet are they many. Arise and light the lamp.' But she said, 'I have not wherewithal to do this.' So he spent the night handling the coins and felt by their roughness that they were dinars, but could not credit it.

Meanwhile, Ikrimeh returned to his own house and found that his wife had missed him and enquiring for him, had been told of his riding forth, wherefore she misdoubted of him and said to him, 'The governor of Mesopotamia rideth not abroad, unattended and secretly, after such an hour of the night, save to a wife or a concubine.' 'God knows,' answered he, 'that I went not forth to either of these.' 'Tell me then,' said she, 'wherefore thou wentest forth?' and he, 'I went not forth at this hour save that none should know it.' But she rejoined, saying, 'I must needs be told.' Quoth he, 'Wilt thou keep the matter secret, if I tell thee?' and she said, 'Yes.' So he told her the state of the case, adding, 'Wilt thou have me swear to thee?' 'No, no,' answered she; 'my heart is set at ease and trusteth in that which thou hast told me.'

As for Khuzeimeh, as soon as it was day, he made his peace with his creditors and set his affairs in order; after which he made ready and set out for the Court of the Khalif, who was then sojourning in Palestine. When he came to the royal palace, he sought admission of the chamberlain, who went in and told the Khalif of his presence. Now he was renowned for his beneficence and Suleiman knew of him; so he bade admit him. When he entered, he saluted the Khalif after the usual fashion, and the latter said to him, 'O Khuzeimeh, what hath kept thee so long from us?' 'Evil case,' answered he. Quoth the Khalif, 'What hindered thee from having recourse to us?' And he said, 'My infirmity, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'And why,' asked Suleiman, 'comest thou to us now?' 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Khuzeimeh, 'that I was sitting one night late in my house, when one knocked at the door;' and he went on to tell him of all that had passed between Ikrimeh and himself. 'Knowest thou the man?' asked Suleiman. 'No, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Khuzeimeh, 'he was disguised and would say nought but "I am Jabir Athrat el Kiram."' When Suleiman heard this, his heart burned within him to know the man, and he said, 'If we knew him, we would requite him his generosity.' Then he tied Khuzeimeh an ensign and made him governor of Mesopotamia, in the stead of Ikrimeh; and he set out for El Jezireh.

When he drew near the city, Ikrimeh and the people of the place came forth to meet him and they saluted each other and went on into the town, where Khuzeimeh took up his lodging in the government house and bade take security for Ikrimeh and that he should be called to account. So an account was taken against him and he was found to be in default for much money, whereupon Khuzeimeh required him of payment; but he said, 'I have no means of paying aught.' Quoth Khuzeimeh, 'It must be paid;' and Ikrimeh answered, saying, 'I have it not; do what thou hast to do.' So Khuzeimeh ordered him to prison and sent to him again, to demand payment of the money; but he replied, 'I am not of those who preserve their wealth at the expense of their honour; do what thou wilt.' Then Khuzeimeh bade load him with irons and kept him in prison a month or more, till imprisonment began to tell upon him and he became wasted.

After this, news of his plight came to his wife, who was sore troubled thereat and sending for a freedwoman of hers, a woman of great wit and judgment, said to her, 'Go forthwith to the Amir Khuzeimeh's gate and say, "I have a counsel for the Amir." If they ask what it is, say, "I will not tell it save to himself;" and when thou winnest to him, ask to see him in private and say to him, "What is this thou hast done? Hath Jabir Athrat el Kiram deserved of thee no better requital than to be cast into strait prison and laden with irons?"' The woman did as she was bidden, and when Khuzeimeh heard her words, he cried out at the top of his voice, saying, 'Alas, the shame of it! Was it indeed he?' And she answered, 'Yes.' Then he bade saddle his beast forthright and summoning the chief men of the city, repaired with them to the prison and opening the door, went in with them to Ikrimeh, whom they found sitting in evil case, worn out and wasted with blows and misery. When he saw Khuzeimeh, he was abashed and hung his head; but the other bent down to him and kissed his face; whereupon he raised his head and said, 'What maketh thee do this?' 'The generosity of thy dealing,'

replied Khuzeimeh, 'and the scurviness of my requital.' And Ikrimeh said, 'God pardon us and thee!'

Then Khuzeimeh bade the jailor strike off Ikrimeh's shackles and clap them on his own feet; but Ikrimeh said, 'What is this thou wilt do?' Quoth the other, 'I have mind to suffer what thou hast suffered.' 'I conjure thee by Allah,' cried Ikrimeh, 'do not so!' Then they both went out and returned to Khuzeimeh's house, where Ikrimeh would have taken leave of him and gone his way; but he forbade him and Ikrimeh said, 'What is thy will of me?' Quoth Khuzeimeh, 'I wish to change thy case, for my shame before the daughter of thine uncle is yet greater than my shame before thee.' So he caused clear the bath and entering with Ikrimeh, served him, himself, after which he bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour and mounted him and gave him much money. Then he carried him to his house and asked his leave to make his excuses to his wife and did so.

After this, he besought him to accompany him to the Khalif, who was then abiding at Remleh and he agreed. So they journeyed thither and when they reached the palace, the chamberlain went in and acquainted the Khalif with Khuzeimeh's coming, whereat he was troubled and said, 'Is the governor of Mesopotamia come without our order? This can only be on some grave occasion.' Then he bade admit him and said to him, before he could salute him, 'What is behind thee, O Khuzeimeh?' 'Good, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he. 'What bringeth thee?' asked Suleiman; and he answered, saying, 'I have discovered Jabir el Athrat el Kiram and thought to gladden thee with him, knowing thine excessive desire for his acquaintance and thy longing to see him.' 'Who is he?' asked the Khalif and Khuzeimeh said, 'He is Ikrimeh el Feyyaz. So Suleiman called for Ikrimeh, who approached and saluted him as Khalif; and the prince bade him welcome and making him draw near to his sitting place, said to him, 'O Ikrimeh, thy good deed to him hath brought thee nought but trouble. But now write in a scroll all thy needs and that which thou desirest.' He did so and the Khalif commanded to do all that he asked and that forthright. Moreover, he gave him ten thousand dinars and twenty chests of clothes over and above that he sought, and calling for a spear, tied him an ensign [and made him governor] over Armenia and Azerbijan and Mesopotamia, saying, 'Khuzeimeh's case is in thy hands; if thou wilt, continue him in his office, and if thou wilt, depose him.' And Ikrimeh said, 'Nay, but I restore him to his office, O Commander of the Faithful.' Then they went out from him and ceased not to be governors under Suleiman ben Abdulmelik all the days of his Khalifate.

Younus the Scribe and the Khalif Welid Ben Sehl.

THERE lived in the reign of the Khalif Hisham a noted [man of letters] called Younus the Scribe, and he set out one day on a journey to Damascus, having with him a slave girl of surpassing beauty and grace, whom he had taught all that was needful to her and whose price was a hundred thousand dirhems. When they drew near Damascus, the caravan halted by the side of a lake and Younus went aside with his damsel and took out some victual he had with him and a leather bottle of wine. As he sat at meat, there came up a young man of goodly presence and dignified aspect, mounted on a sorrel horse and followed by two servants, and said to him, 'Wilt thou accept me to guest?' 'Yes,' answered Younus. So the stranger alighted and said, 'Give me to drink of thy wine.' Younus gave him to drink and he said, 'If it please thee, sing us a song.' So Younus sang this verse:

Charms, never in one mortal yet combined compriseth she, And tears and wakefulness are sweet, for love of her, to me.

At which the stranger rejoiced exceedingly and Younus gave him to drink again and again, till drunkenness got the better of him and he said, 'Bid thy slave-girl sing.' So she sang this verse:

A houri, by whose charms my heart confounded is, ah me! Nor wand nor sun nor moon, indeed, may evened with her be.

The stranger was much pleased with this and they sat drinking till nightfall, when they prayed the evening-prayer and the youth said to Younus, 'What brings thee hither?' He answered, '[I come in quest of] wherewithal to discharge my debts and better my case.' Quoth the stranger, 'Wilt thou sell me this thy slave-girl for thirty thousand dirhems?' 'I must have more than that,' answered Younus. 'Will forty thousand content thee?' asked the other; but Younus said, 'That would only pay my debts, and I should remain empty-handed.' Quoth the stranger, 'I will take her of thee at fifty thousand dirhems and give thee a suit of clothes to boot and the expenses of thy journey and make thee a sharer in my estate, as long as thou livest.' 'I sell her to thee on these terms,' answered Younus. Then said the young man, 'Wilt thou let me take her with me and trust me to bring thee the money to-morrow, or shall she abide with thee till I bring thee her price?' And the fumes of the wine and shamefastness and awe of the stranger led Younus to reply, 'I will trust thee; take her and may God bless thee in her!' Whereupon the stranger bade one of his servants take her up before him on his beast, and mounting his own horse, took leave of Younus and rode away.

Hardly had he left him, when Younus bethought himself and knew that he had erred in selling her and said in himself, 'What have I done? I have delivered my slave-girl to a man with whom I am unacquainted, neither know I who he is; and grant that I did know him, how am I to get at him?' So he abode absorbed in anxious thought, till the morning, when he prayed the appointed prayers and his companions entered Damascus, whilst he sat, perplexed and knowing not what to do, till the sun scorched him and he misliked to abide there and thought to enter the city, but said in himself, 'If I enter Damascus, I cannot be sure but that the messenger will come and find me

not, in which case I shall have sinned against myself a second time.' So he sat down in the shade of a wall that was there, and towards end of day, up came one of the servants whom he had seen with the young man, at sight of whom great joy possessed Younus and he said in himself, 'I know not that aught hath ever given me more delight than the sight of this servant.' When the man reached him, he said to him, 'O my lord, we have kept thee long waiting;' but Younus said nothing to him of the anxiety he had suffered. Then said the servant, 'Knowest thou the man who bought the girl of thee?' 'No,' answered Younus, and the servant said, 'It was Welid ben Sehl the Heir Apparent.' And Younus was silent.

Then the other made him mount a horse he had with him and they rode till they came to a house, where they dismounted and entered. Here Younus found the damsel, who sprang up at his sight and saluted him. He asked her how she had fared with him who had bought her and she said, 'He lodged me in this apartment and ordered me all I wanted.' Then he sat with her awhile, till one of the servants of the master of the house came in and bade him rise and follow him. So he followed the servant into the presence of his yesternight's guest, whom he found seated on his couch and who said to him, 'Who art thou?' 'I am Younus the Scribe,' answered the other. 'Welcome to thee, O Younus!' rejoined the prince. 'By Allah, I have long wished to look on thee; for I have heard of thy report. How didst thou pass the night?' 'Well,' answered Younus; 'may God the Most High advance thee!' 'Peradventure,' said the prince, 'thou repentedst thee of that thou didst yesterday and saidst in thyself, "I have delivered my slave-girl to a man whom I know not, neither know I his name nor whence he cometh?"' 'God forbid, O Amir,' replied Younus, 'that I should repent over her! Had I made gift of her to the prince, she were the least of the gifts that are given unto him, for indeed she is not worthy of his rank.' 'By Allah,' rejoined Welid, 'but I repented me of having taken her from thee and said in myself, "This man is a stranger and knows me not, and I have taken him by surprise and acted inconsiderately by him, in my haste to take the damsel!" Dost thou recall what passed between us?' 'Yes,' answered Younus. Quoth Welid, 'Dost thou sell her to me for fifty thousand dirhems?' And Younus said, 'I do.'

Then the prince called to one of his servants, to bring him fifty thousand dirhems and a thousand and five hundred dinars to boot, and gave them all to Younus, saying, 'The thousand dinars are for thy fair thought of us and the five hundred for the expenses of thy journey and what thou shalt buy for thy people. Art thou content?' 'I am content,' answered Younus and kissed his hands, saying, 'By Allah, thou hast filled my eyes and my hands and my heart!' Quoth Welid, 'By Allah, I have as yet had no privacy of her nor have I taken my fill of her singing. Bring her to me.' So she came and he bade her sit, then said to her, 'Sing.' And she sang these verses:

Thou that comprisest all charms of every kind,
O sweet of nature and great of amorous grace,
In Turks and Arabs are beauties all; but none
Like thee, my loveling, doth all in all embrace.
O bless thy lover, my fair, with thy promised sight,
Though but in visions of dreams, that flit apace!
Sweet are the sleepless nights, for thy sake, to me

And goodly even abasement and disgrace.
I'm not the first one distraught for thee; ere me,
How many a mortal thou'st slain with that fair face!
Thou, as my portion o' th' world, wouldst me content;
To me thou'rt dearer than life and goods and place.

When he heard this, he was greatly delighted and praised Younus's excellent teaching of her and the fair education he had given her. Then he bade his servants bring him a hackney, with its trappings and furniture, for his riding, and a mule to carry his gear, and said to him, 'O Younus, when thou hearest that the Khalifate has fallen to me, come thou to me, and by Allah, I will fill thy hands with good and advance thee to honour and make thee rich as long as thou livest!' So Younus took his goods and departed; and when he heard that Welid had succeeded to the Khalifate, he repaired to him; and by Allah, he kept his promise to him and entreated him with exceeding munificence. Then Younus abode with him in all content and honour and his affairs prospered and his wealth increased and goods and farms became his, such as sufficed him and his heirs after him; nor did he cease to abide with Welid, till he was slain, the mercy of God the Most High be on him!

The Khalif Haroun Er Reshid and the Arab Girl

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid was walking one day with Jaafer the Barmecide, when he espied a company of girls drawing water and went up to them, having a mind to drink. As he drew near, one of them turned to her fellows and recited the following verses:

Bid thou thy spright from my couch, I pray,
At the season of slumber turn away,
So I may rest me and eke the fire
In my bones that rages may have allay.
For me, the love-lorn, whom passion's hands
Turn on the carpet of sickness aye,
Thou knowest well how it is with me:
Doth thy favour last for a single day?

The Khalif marvelled at her beauty and eloquence and said to her, 'O daughter of nobles, are these verses thine own or a quotation?' 'They are my own,' answered she. 'If thou say sooth,' rejoined the Khalif, 'keep the sense and change the rhyme.' So she said:

Bid thou thy phantom forswear my stead
At the season of sleep and drowsihead,
So I may rest me and eke the fire
Be quenched in my body that rages red.
For me, a sick one, whom passion's hands
Turn on affliction's unrestful bed,
Thou knowest well how it is with me:
Can aught of thy favours stand in stead?

Quoth the Khalif, 'This also is stolen.' 'Nay,' replied she, 'it is my own.' 'If it be indeed thine own,' said Er Reshid, 'change the rhyme again and keep the sense.' So she recited the following:

Bid thine image hold off from my place of repose,
What time in slumber men's eyes do close,
So I may rest me and eke the fire
Be quenched in mine entrails that ever glows.
For me, a sick one, whom passion's hands
Turn on the carpet of wake and woes,
Thou knowest well how it is with me:
Are thy favours bought with a price, who knows?

Quoth Er Reshid, 'This too is stolen.' 'Not so,' said she; 'it is mine.' 'If it be so,' rejoined he, 'change the rhyme once more.' And she recited as follows:

Bid thou thine image no more molest
My couch at the season of sleep and rest,

So I may ease me and eke the fire
Be quenched that flames in my tortured breast.
For me, a sick one, whom passion's hands
On the couch of weeping turn East and West,
My plight thou know'st; will thy favour ne'er
Come back, relenting, to make me blest?

Then said the Khalif, 'Of what [part] of this encampment [art thou]?' And she answered, 'Of its midmost in dwelling and of its highest in tent-pole.' Wherefore he knew that she was the chief's daughter of the tribe. 'And thou,' asked she, 'of what [art thou among] the guardians of the horses?' Quoth he, 'Of the highest in tree and of the ripest in fruit.' 'God protect thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' said she and called down blessings on him. Then she went away with the maidens of the Arabs, and the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Needs must I take her to wife.' So Jaafer repaired to her father and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful hath a mind to thy daughter.' 'With all my heart,' replied he; 'she is a gift as a handmaid to His Highness our lord the Commander of the Faithful.' So he equipped her and carried her to the Khalif, who took her to wife and went in to her, and she became of the dearest of his women to him.

Moreover, he bestowed on her father largesse such as succoured him among the Arabs, till he was transported to the mercy of God the Most High. The Khalif, hearing of his death, went in to her, troubled; and when she saw him thus, she entered her chamber and putting off all that was upon her of rich apparel, donned mourning raiment and raised lament for her father. It was said to her, 'What is the reason of this?' And she answered, saying, 'My father is dead.' So they went in to the Khalif and told him and he rose and going in to her, asked her who had given her to know of her father's death; and she answered, 'It was thy face, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'How so?' asked he; and she said, 'Since I have been with thee, I never saw thee thus till now, and there was none for whom I feared save my father, by reason of his great age; but may thy head live, O Commander of the Faithful!' When the Khalif heard this, his eyes filled with tears and he condoled with her; but she ceased not to mourn for her father, till she followed him [to the grave,] may God have mercy on them both!

El Asmaï and the Three Girls of Bassora.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid was exceeding restless one night and rising from his bed, fared from chamber to chamber, but could not compose himself to sleep. As soon as it was day, he said, 'Fetch me El Asmaï. So the eunuch went out and told the doorkeepers, who sent for the poet and when he came, informed the Khalif. The latter bade admit him and said to him, 'O Asmaï, I wish thee to tell me the best thou hast heard of stories of women and their verses.' 'I hear and obey,' answered El Asmaï. 'I have heard great store of women's verses; but none pleased me save three lines I once heard from three girls.' 'Tell me of them,' said the Khalif. 'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the poet, 'that I once abode a year in Bassora, and one day, as I was walking about, the heat was sore upon me and I sought for a place where I might take the noonday rest, but found none. Presently, however, I came upon a porch swept and watered, at the upper end whereof was an open lattice-window, whence exhaled a scent of musk and thereunder a wooden bench. I entered the porch, and lying down on the bench, would have slept, when, behold, I heard from within a girl's sweet voice talking and saying, "O my sisters, we are sat here to spend this day in each other's company; so come, let us each put down a hundred dinars and recite a line of verse; and whoso recites the goodliest and sweetest line, the three hundred dinars shall be hers." "With all our hearts," said the others; and the eldest recited the following verse:

By Allah, I should delight in him, if in dreams to my couch came he! But, an he visited me on wake, 'twould yet more marvellous be.

Quoth the second:

Only his image, in very deed, in slumber visited me; And 'Welcome!' straightway I said to him, 'a welcome fair and free!'

Then said the youngest:

With my soul and my folk I will ransom him, whom my bedfellow still I see Each night and whose scent is pleasanter than the scent of musk to me!"

Quoth I, "If [the speaker] have beauty after the measure [of the goodliness] of this [her speech] the thing is every way complete." Then I rose and was about to go away, when the door opened and out came a slave-girl, who said to me, "Sit, O elder." So I sat down again, and she gave me a scroll, wherein was written, in characters of the utmost beauty, with straight Alifs, big-bellied Has and rounded Waws, the following: "We would have the Sheikh (whose days God prolong) to know that we are three maidens, sisters, sitting in friendly converse, who have laid down each a hundred dinars, on condition that whoso recites the best and most agreeable line of verse shall have the whole three hundred dinars; and we appoint thee judge between us: so decide as thou seest best, and peace be on thee!" Quoth I to the girl, "Bring me inkhorn and paper." So she went in and returning after a little, brought me a silvered inkhorn and gilded pens, with which I wrote the following verses:

I've heard of young beauties once that sat in converse frank and free
And talked the talk of a man who's seen and proved all things that be;
Three like the dawnings of new-born day, they ravished every heart;
Yea, tormentful to the yearner's soul were they, these maidens three.
They'd cloistered them, where no vision lewd their modesty might affront;
The eyes of the spy were shut in sleep and none was there to see.
So they discovered the secret thoughts in their breasts that hidden lay
And then to making of verse they fell, for pastime, in their glee.
Quoth one of them thus, – a loveling rare, fulfilled of amorous grace,
Her teeth for the sweet of her speech did smile at every word spake she, –
"By Allah, I should delight in him, if in dreams to my couch came he!
But, an he visited me on wake, 'twould yet more marvellous be."
And when she had ended that which she gilt with smiles, the second sighed
And warbled these words with a trilling note, like a bird upon a tree:
"Only his image, in very deed, in slumber visited me, And,
"Welcome," straightway quoth I to him, "a welcome fair and free!"
But the third did better than th' other twain, for, answering, thus said she,
With a word of her own that was sweeter still and goodlier, perdie,
"With my soul and my folk I will ransom him, whom my bedfellow still I see
Each night and whose scent is pleasanter than the scent of musk to me!"
So, when I considered that which they said and sentence passed thereon,
I judged not so as to give the wits a cause for mockery;
Nay, judgment I gave for the youngest maid and deemed her verse the best,
For that I judged the words she spake e'en nearest the truth to be.

Then I gave the scroll to the girl, who went in with it, and presently I heard a noise of dancing and clapping of hands and tumult. Quoth I to myself, "It is time for me to go." So I rose from the bench and was about to go away, when the damsel cried out to me, saying, "Sit down, O Asmaï!" "Who gave thee to know that I was El Asmaï?" asked I, and she, "If thy name be unknown to us, thy poetry is not." So I sat down again and behold, the door opened and out came the first damsel, with a dish of fruits and another of sweetmeats. I ate of both and praised their fashion and would have gone away; but she cried out, saying, "Sit down, O Asmaï!" Wherewith I raised my eyes to her and saw a rosy palm in a saffron sleeve, meseemed it was the full moon breaking out from under the clouds. Then she threw me a purse containing three hundred dinars and said to me, "This is mine and I give it to thee in requital of thy judgment."

Quoth the Khalif, 'Why didst thou decide for the youngest?' 'O Commander of the Faithful, whose life God prolong,' answered El Asmaï, 'the eldest said, "I should delight in him, if he visited my couch in sleep." Now this is restricted and dependent upon a condition, that may befall or may not befall; whilst, for the second, an image of dreams came to her in sleep, and she saluted it; but the youngest said that she actually lay with her lover and smelt his breath sweeter than musk and she engaged her soul and her folk for him, which she had not done, were he not dearer to her than her soul.' 'Thou didst well, O Asmaï,' said the Khalif and gave him other three hundred dinars, in payment of his story.

Ibrahim of Mosul and the Devil.

(QUOTH Abou Ishac Ibrahim el Mausili), I asked Er Reshid once to give me a day's leave that I might be private with the people of my household and my friends, and he gave me leave for Saturday. So I went home and betook myself to making ready meat and drink and other necessaries and bade the doorkeepers shut the doors and let none come in to me. However, presently, as I sat in my sitting-chamber, with my women about me, I was ware of an old man of comely and reverend aspect, clad in white clothes and a shirt of fine stuff, with a doctor's hood on his head and a silver-handled staff in his hand, and the house and porch were full of the sweet smell of the essences with which he was scented. I was greatly vexed at his coming in to me and thought to turn away the doorkeepers; but he saluted me after the goodliest fashion and I returned his greeting and bade him be seated. So he sat down and entertained me with stories of the Arabs and their verses, till my anger left me and methought my servants had sought to pleasure me by admitting a man of such good breeding and elegant culture.

Then said I to him, 'Art thou for meat?' 'I have no need of it,' answered he. 'And for drink?' asked I. 'That is as thou wilt,' said he. So I drank off a pint of wine and poured him out the like. Then said he, 'O Abou Ishac, wilt thou sing us somewhat, so we may hear of thy fashion that wherein thou excellest high and low?' His words vexed me; but I dissembled my annoyance and taking the lute, played and sang. 'Well done, O Abou Ishac!' said he; whereat my anger redoubled and I said to myself, 'Is it not enough that he should come in to me, without my leave, and importune me thus, but he must call me by my name, as though he knew not the right way to address me?' Quoth he, 'If thou wilt sing again, we will requite thee.' I swallowed my annoyance and took the lute and sang again, taking pains with what I sang and rising thereto altogether, because of his saying, 'We will requite thee.' He was delighted and said, 'Well done, O my lord!' Then said he, 'Dost thou give me leave to sing?' 'As thou wilt,' answered I, deeming him weak of wit, in that he should think to sing before me, after that which he had heard from me. So he took the lute and swept the strings, and by Allah, meseemed they spoke in the Arabic tongue, with a sweet and liquid and murmurous voice; then he began and sang the following verses:

A heart that is cankered with grief I have: who will sell me therefor
A heart that of cankers is whole, unwounded of ulcer or sore?
But no, not a soul will consent to barter a heart against mine;
For whoso should buy were condemned to sickness and woe evermore.
He'd groan with the groaning of him who's wounded and choking with wine,
For the longing that lives in my heart and gnaws at its innermost core.

And by Allah, meseemed the doors and the walls and all that was in the house answered and sang with him, for the beauty of his voice, so that methought my very limbs and clothes answered him, and I abode amazed and unable to speak or move, for the trouble of my heart. Then he sang these verses:

Hark ye, O doves of Liwa, come back unto your nest:
With longing for your voices my bosom is opprest.
Back to the copse they winged it and me well-nigh did slay;
Well-nigh to them my secrets I had made manifest.
They call on one departed, with cooing, as it were
They'd drunken wine and madness did sojourn in their breast.
Ne'er saw mine eyes, I swear it, the like of them for doves!
They weep: yet not a tear-drop is from their eyes exprest.

And also these:

O wind of Nejed, when thou blowst from Nejed far and wide,
Thy wafts add longing unto that for which long time I've sighed!
Lo, in the freshness of the morn, from out the trellised boughs
Of laurel and of cassia, to me a turtle cried.
She moaned, as moans the youth for love, and eke discovered thus
The secret of my yearning pain, that yet I fain would hide.
They say that, when a lover's near, he wearies of his love,
And that by absence passion's cured; 'tis false, for I have tried
Both remedies, but am not cured of that which is with me,
Withal that nearness easier is than distance to abide.
Yet nearness of abode, forsooth, may nowise profit thee,
An if the grace of her thou lov'st be unto thee denied.

Then said he, 'O Ibrahim, sing this song after me and do after the fashion thereof in thy singing and teach it to thy slave-girls.' Quoth I, 'Repeat it to me.' But he answered, 'There needs no repetition; thou hast it by heart,' and vanished from my sight. At this I was amazed and running to my sword, drew it and made for the door of the harem, but found it closed and said to the women, 'What have ye heard?' Quoth they, 'We have heard the sweetest and goodliest of singing.' Then I went forth, in amazement, to the door of the house and finding it locked, questioned the doorkeepers of the old man. 'What old man?' said they. 'By Allah, no one hath gone in to thee this day!' So I returned, pondering the matter, when, behold, he cried out from one of the corners of the house, [though I saw none,] saying, 'Fear not, O Abou Ishac; no harm shall befall thee. It is I, Abou Murreh, who have been thy boon-companion this day.' Then I mounted and rode to Er Reshid, to whom I told what had passed, and he said, 'Repeat to me the airs thou heardest from him.' So I took the lute and played and sang them to him; for, behold, they were rooted in my heart. The Khalif was charmed with them and drank thereto, albeit he was no great wine-bibber, saying, 'Would he would some day pleasure us with his company, as he hath pleasured thee!' Then he ordered me a present and I took it and went away.

The Lovers of the Benou Udhreh.

(QUOTH Mesrour the Eunuch), The Khalif Haroun er Reshid was very wakeful one night and said to me, 'See which of the poets is at the door to-night.' So I went out and finding Jemil ben Maamer el Udhri in the ante-chamber, said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' Quoth he, 'I hear and obey,' and going in with me, saluted the Khalif, who returned his greeting and bade him sit down. Then he said to him, 'O Jemil, hast thou any new stories to tell us?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he. 'Whether wouldst thou liefer hear, that which I have seen with mine eyes or that which I have [but] heard tell?' 'Tell me something thou hast actually seen,' said the Khalif. Quoth Jemil, 'It is well, O Commander of the Faithful; incline thy heart to me and lend me thine ears.' The Khalif took a cushion of red brocade, embroidered with gold and stuffed with ostrich-feathers, and laying it under his thighs, propped up his elbows thereon; then he said to Jemil, 'Now for thy tale, O Jemil!'

'Know, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'that I was once desperately enamoured of a certain girl and used to pay her frequent visits, for that she was my desire and delight of all the things of this world. After awhile, her people removed with her, by reason of scarcity of pasture, and I abode some time without seeing her, till I grew restless for desire and longed for her sight and my soul urged me to journey to her. One night, I could hold out no longer; so I rose and saddling my she-camel, bound on my turban and donned my oldest clothes. Then I girt myself with my sword and slinging my spear behind me, mounted and rode forth in quest of her. I fared on diligently till, one night, it was pitch dark and exceeding black and I heard on all sides the roaring of lions and howling of wolves and the cries of the wild beasts; whereat my reason was troubled and my heart sank within me; but for all that I ceased not to press on, descending into valleys and climbing mountains, whilst my tongue ceased not to call on the name of God the Most High.

As I went along thus, sleep overtook me and the camel carried me aside out of my road, till, presently, something smote me on the head, and I woke, startled and alarmed, and found myself in a meadow, full of interlacing trees and streams and birds on the branches, warbling their various notes. So I alighted and taking my camel's halter in my hand, fared on softly with her, till I won clear of the trees and came out into the open country, where I adjusted her saddle and mounted again, knowing not where to go nor whither the fates should lead me; but, presently, peering into the desert, I espied a fire afar off. So I smote my camel and made toward the fire. When I drew near, I saw a tent pitched and thereby a spear stuck in the ground, with a pennon flying and horses tethered and camels feeding, and said in myself, "Doubtless there hangs some grave matter by this tent, for I see none other than it in the desert." So I went up to it and said, "Peace be upon you, O people of the tent, and the mercy of God and His blessings!" Whereupon there came forth to me a young man, nineteen years old, who was as the shining full moon, with valour written between his eyes, and answered, saying, "And on thee be peace, O brother of the Arabs, and God's mercy and blessing! Methinks thou hast lost thy way?" "Even so," replied I. "Direct me aright,

God have mercy on thee!" "O brother of the Arabs," rejoined he, "of a truth this our land is infested with lions and the night is exceeding dark and cold and dreary, and I fear lest the wild beasts tear thee in pieces; wherefore do thou alight and abide with me this night in ease and comfort, and to-morrow I will put thee in the right way."

Accordingly, I alighted and hobbled my camel with the end of her halter; then I put off my heavy upper clothes and sat down. Presently the young man took a sheep and slaughtered it and kindled a brisk fire; after which he went into the tent and bringing out fine salt and powdered spices, fell to cutting off pieces of the flesh of the sheep and roasting them over the fire and feeding me therewith, weeping one while and sighing another. Then he groaned heavily and wept sore and recited the following verses:

Nothing is left him but a fluttering spright,
Ay, and an eye bereavéd of its light;
Nor in his members is a single joint
But sickness there is constant day and night.
His tears flow ever and his heart burns aye;
Yet for all this still silent is the wight.
His foes weep, pitying him; alas for those
Who pity in th' exultant foe excite!

By this I knew that the youth was a distracted lover, — for none knoweth passion save he who hath tasted the savour thereof, — and said to myself, "Shall I ask him?" But I bethought me and said, "How shall I intrude on him with questioning, and I in his abode?" So I restrained myself and ate my sufficiency of the meat. When we had made an end of eating, the young man arose and entering the tent, brought out an elegant basin and ewer and a silken napkin, fringed with broidery of red gold, and a casting-bottle full of rose-water, mingled with musk. I marvelled at his elegance and the daintiness of his fashion and said in myself, "Never knew I of elegance in the desert." Then we washed our hands and talked awhile, after which he went into the tent and making a partition between himself and me with a piece of red brocade, said to me, "Enter, O chief of the Arabs, and take thy rest; for thou hast suffered toil and travel galore this night and in this thy journey." So I entered and finding a bed of green brocade, pulled off my clothes and passed a night such as I had never passed in my life.

I lay, pondering the young man's case, till it was dark night and all eyes slept, when I was aroused by the sound of a low voice, never heard I a softer or sweeter. I raised the curtain and saw, by the young man's side, a damsel, never beheld I a fairer of face, and they were both weeping and complaining, one to the other, of the pangs of passion and desire and of the excess of their longing for each other's sight. "By Allah," quoth I, "I wonder who this can be! When I entered this tent, there was none therein but this young man. Doubtless this damsel is of the daughters of the Jinn and is enamoured of this youth; so they have secluded themselves with one another in this place." Then I considered her attentively and behold, she was a mortal and an Arab girl, whose face, when she unveiled it, put to shame the shining sun, and the tent was illumined by the light of her countenance. When I was assured that she was his mistress, I bethought me of a lover's jealousy; so I let fall the curtain and covering my

face, fell asleep. As soon as it was day, I arose and donning my clothes, made the ablution and prayed such prayers as were due from me. Then I said to my host, "O brother of the Arabs, wilt thou add to thy favours by directing me into the right road?" "At thy leisure, O chief of the Arabs," answered he. "The time of a guest's stay is three days, and I am not one to let thee go before that time."

So I abode with him three days, and on the fourth day, as we sat talking, I asked him of his name and lineage. Quoth he, "As for my lineage, I am of the Benou Udhreh; my name is such an one, son of such an one and my father's brother is called such an one." And behold, O Commander of the Faithful, he was the son of my father's brother and of the noblest house of the Benou Udhreh. "O my cousin," said I, "what moved thee to leave thy fair estate and that of thy fathers and thy slaves and handmaids and seclude thyself alone in this desert?" When he heard my words, his eyes filled with tears and he replied, saying, "Know, O my cousin, that I was passionately enamoured of the daughter of my father's brother and distracted for love of her; so I sought her in marriage of her father, but he refused and married her to a man of the Benou Udhreh, who went in to her and carried her to his abiding-place this last year. When she became thus removed from me and I was prevented from looking on her, the pangs of passion and excess of love-longing and desire drove me to forsake my people and friends and fortune and take up my abode in this desert, where I have grown used to my solitude." "Where are their dwellings?" asked I. And he said, "They are hard by, on the top of yonder hill; and every night, at the dead time when all eyes sleep, she steals secretly out of the camp, unseen of any, and I satisfy my desire of her converse and she of mine." So I abide thus, comforting [or solacing] myself with her [company] a part of the night, till God accomplish that which is to be; either I shall compass my desire, in spite of the envious, or God will determine for me, and He is the best of those that determine."

When I knew his case, O Commander of the Faithful, I was concerned for him and perplexed by reason of [my] jealousy [for his welfare]; so I said to him, "O my cousin, wilt thou that I counsel thee a plan, wherein, if it please God, thou shalt find a source of amendment and the way of advisement and success and whereby God shall do away from thee that thou dreadest?" "Say on, O my cousin," answered he. Quoth I, "When it is night and the girl cometh, set her on my camel; for she is swift of going, and mount thou thy courser, whilst I mount one of these she-camels. So will we fare on with her all night and by the morrow, we shall have traversed deserts and plains, and thou wilt have attained thy desire and won the beloved of thy heart. God's earth is wide, and by Allah, I will succour thee with heart and wealth and sword, as long as I live!" "O cousin," answered he, "wait till I take counsel with her, for she is prudent and quick-witted and hath insight into affairs."

When the night darkened and the hour of her coming arrived, and he awaiting her at the appointed season, she delayed beyond her usual time, and I saw him go forth the door of the tent and opening his mouth, inhale the wafts of air that came from her quarter, as if to snuff her odour, and he repeated the following verses:

Wind of the East, thou waftest a gentle air to me,
From out the loved one's country, the place where sojourns she.

O wind, thou bear'st a token from her I hold so dear:
Canst thou not give me tidings when will her coming be?

Then he entered the tent and sat awhile, weeping; after which he said to me, "O my cousin, some mischance must have betided the daughter of my uncle, to hinder her from coming to me this night. But abide where thou art, till I bring thee news." And he took his sword and buckler and was absent awhile of the night, after which he returned, carrying something, and called to me. So I hastened to him and he said, "O my cousin, knowst thou what hath happened?" "No, by Allah!" answered I. Quoth he, "Verily, I am smitten with mourning for my cousin this night; for she was coming to me, as of wont, when a lion met her in the way and rent her, and there remaineth of her but what thou seest." So saying, he threw down what he had in his hand, and behold, it was the damsel's turban and what was left of her bones. Then he wept sore and casting down his shield, took a bag and went forth again, saying, "Stir not hence, till I return to thee, if it please God the Most High."

He was absent awhile and presently returned, bearing in his hand a lion's head, which he threw on the ground and called for water. So I brought him water, with which he washed the lion's mouth and fell to kissing it and weeping: and he mourned for her passing sore and recited the following verses:

O lion, that thyself indeed didst on perdition throw,
Perished hast thou and for her loss hast filled my heart with woe.
Thou hast bereaved me of my love and eke the cold earth's womb
Hast made her dwelling till the day that calls up high and low.
To Fate, that with the loss of her afflicteth me, quoth I,
"Now God forbid that one to take her place to me thou show!"

Then said he to me, "O cousin, I conjure thee by Allah and the rights of kindred and sympathy betwixt us, keep my charge. Thou wilt presently see me dead before thee, whereupon do thou wash me and shroud me and these that remain of my cousin's bones in this mantle and bury us both in one grave and write thereon these verses:

Upon the earth a fire we lived of solace and delight;
In land and house foregathered we full many a day and night.
But fortune and the shifts of time did rend our loves apart
And now within its bosom strait the shroud doth us unite.

Then he wept sore and entering the tent, was absent awhile, after which he came forth, groaning and crying out. Then he gave one sob and departed this world. When I saw that he was indeed dead, it was grievous to me and so sore was my sorrow for him that I had well nigh followed him for excess of lamentation over him. Then I laid him out and did as he had enjoined me, shrouding the damsel's remains with him in one garment and burying them in one grave. I abode by their grave three days, after which I departed and continued to pay frequent visits to the place for two years. This then is their story, O Commander of the Faithful.'

The Khalif was pleased with Jemil's story and rewarded him with a dress of honour and a handsome present.

The Bedouin and His Wife.

THE Khalif Muawiyeh was sitting one day in his palace at Damascus, in a room the windows whereof were open on all four sides, that the breeze might enter from all quarters. Now it was a day of excessive heat, with no air stirring, and in the middle of the day, when the heat was at its sultriest, the Khalif, chancing to look forth, saw a man coming along, scorched by the heat of the ground and limping, as he fared on barefoot. Muawiyeh considered him awhile and said to his courtiers, 'Hath God [may He be blessed and glorified!] created any more wretched than he who needs must stir abroad at such an hour and in such weather as this?' Quoth one of them, 'Peradventure, he seeketh the Commander of the Faithful.' 'By Allah,' exclaimed the Khalif, 'if he seek me, I will assuredly give to him, and if he be wronged, I will succour him. Ho, boy I Stand at the door, and if yonder Arab seek to come in to me, forbid him not therefrom.'

So the page went out and presently the Arab came up to him and he said, 'What dost thou want?' 'I want the Commander of the Faithful,' answered the other, and the page said, 'Enter.' So he entered and saluted the Khalif, who said to him, 'Who art thou?' 'I am a man of the Benou Temim,' answered the Arab. 'And what brings thee here at this season?' asked Muawiyeh. Quoth the Arab, 'I come to thee, complaining to thee and imploring thy protection.' 'Against whom?' asked the Khalif 'Against Merwan ben el Hekem, thy deputy,' answered the man and recited the following verses:

Muawiyeh, pitiful, munificent and kind,
Thou in whom righteousness and grace and wisdom are combined,
I come to thee for that my way on earth is strait on me:
O help! nor cut thou off my hope, but justice let me find.
Vouchsafe thou me redress 'gainst him, the tyrant who hath wrought
Me such unright as death itself were lighter to my mind.
Unjustly hath he dealt by me and tyrant-wise bereft
Me of my wife, of Suad, dear to me o'er all her kind.
Yea, he in truth hath gone about to slay me, ere my tale
Of days be told or come the term to me of God assigned.

When Muawiyeh heard him recite these verses, with the fire flashing from his mouth, he said to him, 'Thou art welcome, O brother of the Arabs! Tell me thy tale and expound to me thy case.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Arab, 'I had a wife, whom I loved passing dear and who was the solace of my eyes and the delight of my heart; and I had a herd of camels, with whose produce I made shift to maintain my condition; but there came upon us a year [of calamity], which killed off hoof and horn and bereft me of all I had. When what was in my hand failed me and I fell into evil case, I became abject and burdensome to those who had used to wish to visit me; which when my wife's father knew, he took her from me and abjured me and drove me forth without pity.

So I repaired to thy deputy, Merwan ben el Hekem, and sought succour of him. He summoned my father-in-law and questioned him, and he denied any knowledge of

me. "May God amend the Amir!" said I. "If it please him to send for the woman and question her of her father's saying, the truth will appear." So he sent for her; but no sooner had he set eyes on her than he fell passionately in love with her and becoming my rival, denied me succour and was wroth with me. Moreover, he sent me to prison, and I became as I had fallen from heaven and the wind had cast me down in a far country. Then said Merwan to my father-in-law, "Wilt thou give her to me to wife, at a [present] dowry of a thousand diners and [a contingent one of] ten thousand dirhems, and I will engage to quit her of yonder Arab?" Her father was seduced by the bribe and agreed to the bargain; whereupon Merwan sent for me and looking at me like an angry lion, said to me, "O Arab, put away Suad." "I will not put her away," answered I; but he set on me a company of his servants, who tortured me with all manner tortures, till I found no help for it but to do as he bade. So I divorced her and he sent me back to prison, where I abode till the days of her purification were accomplished, when he married her and set me free. So now I come to thee, hoping in thee, and imploring thy succour and throwing myself on thy protection.' And he recited the following verses:

A fire is in the heart of me,
That flameth still unquenchably.
My body's sick and leaches all
Are baffled by my malady.
Yea, and live coals, that cast forth sparks,
For ever in mine entrails be:
Mine eyes rain tears without relent
That down my cheeks in torrents flee
Nor have I hope of help except
In God my Lord and eke in thee.

Then he was convulsed, and his teeth chattered and he fell down in a fit, writhing like a slain snake. When Muawiyeh heard his story, he said, 'Verily, Merwan ben el Hekem hath transgressed against the laws of the Faith and hath done oppression and violated the harem of a true believer! O Arab, thou comest to me with a story, the like whereof I never heard!' Then he called for inkhorn and paper and wrote to Merwan as follows: 'It hath reached me that thou transgressest the laws of the Faith with regard to thy subjects. Now it behoves him who is a governor to keep his eyes from their lusts and restrain his soul from its delights.' And after he wrote many words, which [quoth he who tells the tale] I omit, for brevity's sake, and amongst them these verses:

Thou wast invested with a rule whereto thou art unapt:
Ask pardon [out on thee!] of God for thine adulterous deed.
Lo, the unhappy man to us complaining came of thee;
Of severance he made his moan and for redress did plead.
Hark ye, I've ta'en an oath to God, I'll not be false unto,
Nay, I will quit me of what's due unto my faith and creed;
An if thou cross me in this thing I write to thee, I swear,
Vultures and eagles presently upon thy flesh shall feed.
Divorce Suad and by Kumeit and Nesr ben Dhiban
Unto my presence all equipped, despatch her with all speed.

Then he folded the letter and sealing it with his seal, delivered it to El Kumeit and Nesr ben Dhiban [whom it was his wont to employ on matters of weight, because of their trustiness] who took the letter and carried it to Medina, where they went in to Merwan and saluting him, delivered to him the letter and told him how the case stood. He read the letter and fell a-weeping; but it was not in his power to refuse obedience to the Khalif; so he went in to Suad and acquainting her with the case, divorced her in the presence of Kumeit and Nesr; after which he equipped her and delivered her to them, together with a letter to the Khalif, under his own hand and seal, to the following purport:

Prince of the Faithful, hasten not: with a good grace thy vow
I will accomplish, nor constraint to force me dost thou need
Why styl'st thou me adulterer and traitor? If she pleased
My fancy, 'twas in me no sin, as eke thou wilt concede;
For lo, there comes to thee a sun; amongst all folk that be,
Mortals or Jinn, there's none may match with her in very deed.

So the messengers returned with Suad to Damascus and delivered to Muawiyeh the letter, which when he had read, he said, 'Verily, he hath obeyed handsomely, but he is extravagant in his praise of the woman.' Then he called for her and found her such a beauty as he had never seen, for grace and elegance and symmetry; moreover, he talked with her and found her fluent of speech and happy in diction and expression. Quoth he, 'Bring me the Arab.' So they fetched the man, who came, sore disordered for the evil dealing of fortune, and Muawiyeh said to him, 'O Arab, if thou wilt give her up to me, I will give thee in her stead three slave-girls, high-bosomed maids like moons, and a thousand dinars with each. Moreover, I will assign thee on the treasury such an annual sum as shall content and enrich thee.' When the Arab heard this, he gave a groan [and swooned away], so that Muawiyeh thought he was dead. When he revived, the Khalif said to him, 'What ails thee?' And the Arab answered, 'With heavy heart and in sore need, I appeal to thee from the injustice of Merwan ben el Hekem; but to whom shall I appeal from thine injustice?' And he recited the following verses:

God save the Khalif! Make me not, as one,
I prithee, who For succour from the burning sands unto the fire doth sue.
Suad restore to one distraught, afflicted, morn and eve
In memory who passeth still and anguish ever new.
Loose thou my bonds and give her back, nor grudge her unto me.
Thou'lt find me no ungrateful one, if thus with me thou do.

Then said he, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wert thou to give me all the riches of the Khalifate, yet would I not take them without Suad.' And he recited this verse:

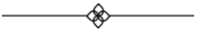
My heart to love other than Suad to me Denies, for my drink and my victual is she.

Quoth the Khalif, 'Thou confessest to having divorced her and Merwan hath done the like; so now we will give her her choice. If she choose other than thee, we will marry her to him, and if she choose thee, we will restore her to thee.' 'Be it so,' replied the Arab. So Muawiyeh said to her, 'What sayst thou, O Suad? Which dost thou

choose? The Commander of the Faithful, with his power and glory and dominion and palaces and treasures and all else thou seest at his command, or Merwan ben el Hekem, with his violence and tyranny, or this Arab, with his hunger and poverty?' So she recited the following verses:

This man, for all he be in hunger and distress,
Dearer to me than folk and neighbour is, nathelesse;
Yea, he is more to me than he who wears the crown,
Merwan his governor and all who wealth possess.

Then said she, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I will not forsake him by reason of the shifts of fortune or the perfidies of Fate, for there is between us old companionship, that may not be forgotten, and love beyond proof; and indeed it is but just that I should have patience with him in his stress, even as I shared fair fortune with him in better days.' The Khalif marvelled at her wit and love and constancy and ordering her ten thousand dirhems, delivered her to the Arab, who took his wife and went away.



The Lovers of Bassora.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid was sleepless one night; so he sent for El Asmai and Hussein el Khelia and said to them, 'Tell me a story and do thou begin, O Hussein.' It is well, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Hussein. 'Some years ago, I went down to Bassora, to present to Mohammed ben Suleiman er Rebiy an ode I had composed in his honour; and he accepted it and bade me abide [at his court]. One day, I went out to El Mirbed, by way of El Muhalliyeh, and being oppressed by the great heat, went up to a great door, to ask for drink, when I was aware of a damsel, as she were a swaying willow-wand, with languishing eyes, eyebrows arched and finely pencilled and smooth and polished cheeks. She was clad in a shift the colour of a pomegranate-flower, and a vest of Senaa work; but the whiteness of her body overcame the redness of her shift, through which glittered two breasts like twin pomegranates and a belly, as it were a roll of fine Egyptian linen, with creases like scrolls of pure white paper, filled with musk. Round her neck she wore a [chain and] amulet of red gold, that fell down between her breasts, and on the table of her forehead were browlocks like jet. Her eyebrows joined one another and her eyes were like lakes; she had an aquiline nose and thereunder teeth like pearls. In fine, pleasantness prevailed in every part of her; but she seemed dejected and distracted and came and went in the vestibule, walking upon the hearts of her lovers, whilst her legs made mute the voices of their ankle-rings; and indeed she was as saith the poet:

Each member of her charms so sweet and good Hath given rise to its similitude.

I was smitten with awe of her, O Commander of the Faithful, and drew near to salute her, and behold, the house and vestibule and street were fragrant with music.

So I saluted her and she returned my greeting with a dejected voice and a grieving heart, consumed with the ardour of passion. Then said I to her, "O my lady, I am an old man and a stranger, and sore opprest of thirst. Wilt thou order me a draught of water, and God will requite thee?" "Away, O old man!" answered she. "I am distracted from [all thoughts of] meat and drink." " By what ailment, O my lady?" asked I. Quoth she, "I love one who dealeth not justly by me and desire one who will none of me. Wherefore I am afflicted with the wakefulness of those who watch the stars." "O my lady," said I, "is there on the face of the earth one to whom thou hast mind and who hath no mind to thee?" " Yes," answered she; "and this by reason of the perfection of beauty and amorous grace with which he is endowed." "And why standest thou in this porch? "asked I. " This is his road," answered she, "and the hour of his passing by." "O my lady," said I, "have ye ever foregathered and had such commerce as might cause this passion?" At this she heaved a deep sigh; the tears rained down upon her cheeks, as they were dew falling upon roses, and she recited these verses?

Even as two cassia boughs entwined above a mead we were;
We drank the fragrance of delights in all life has of fair.
But this branch rent itself away from that, and now thou seest
One lo" and yearning unto that which was its mate whilere.

Quoth I, "And what betideth thee of thy love for this youth?" She answered, "I see the sun upon the walls of his people and I think that it is he; or haply I catch sight of him unexpectedly and am confounded and the blood and the life flee from my body and I abide without reason for weeks." "Excuse me," said I; "for I also have suffered for love-longing, that which is upon thee of distraction of soul and wasting of body and loss of strength; and I see in thee pallor and emaciation, such as testify of the fever-fits of passion. But how shouldst thou be unsmitten of passion, and thou a sojourner in the land of Bassora?" " By Allah," said she, "before I became enamoured of this youth, I was endowed with the uttermost of amorous grace and was resplendent with beauty and perfection and ravished all the princes of Bassora, till he fell in love with me!" "And who parted you?" asked I. "The vicissitudes of fortune," answered she; "but the manner of our separation was a strange one; and it was on this wise.

One New Year's day I had invited the damsels of Bassora and amongst them a girl belonging to Siran, who had bought her out of Oman for fourscore thousand dirhems. She was madly in love with me and when she entered, she threw herself upon me and well-nigh tore me in pieces with bites and pinches. Then we withdrew apart, to drink wine at our ease, till our meat was ready and our delight was complete, and she toyed with me and I with her, and now I was upon her and now she upon me. Presently, the fumes of the wine moved her to strike her hand on the ribbon of my trousers, whereby it became loosed, unknown of either of us, and my trousers fell down in our play. At this moment, he came in, unobserved, and seeing me thus, was wroth and made off, as doth the Arab filly, when she hears the tinkle of her bridle. This, O elder, was three years ago, and since that time I have never ceased to excuse myself to him and entreat him with soft words and implore his indulgence, but he will neither cast a look at me nor write me a word nor speak to me by a messenger nor hear aught from me." Quoth I, "Is he an Arab or a foreigner?" And she, "Out on thee! He is of the princes of Bassora." "Is he old or young?" asked I. She looked at me laughingly and said, "Thou art certainly a fool! He is like the moon at its full, smooth-cheeked and beardless, nor is there any defect in him except his aversion to me." "What is his name?" asked I, and she, "What wilt thou do with him?" "I will do my endeavour to come at him," answered I, "that I may bring about reunion between you." Quoth she, "I will tell thee, on condition that thou carry him a letter." And I said, "I have no objection to that." Then said she, "His name is Zemreh ben el Mughaireh, hight Aboussekhaa, and his palace is at El Mirbed."

Therewith she called to those within for inkhorn and paper and tucking up her sleeves, showed two wrists like bracelets of silver. She headed her letter with "In the name of God etc.;" then wrote as follows, "O my lord, the forbearance of an invocation at the head of this my letter proclaimeth my insufficiency, and know that if my prayer had been answered, thou wouldst not have left me; for how often have I prayed that thou shouldest not leave me, and yet thou didst leave me! Were it not that distress with me transcends the bounds of restraint, that which thy servant hath forced herself to do in writing this letter were succourable to her, for all her despair of thee, of her knowledge of thee that thou wilt forbear to answer. Do thou fulfil her desire, O my lord, of a sight of thee from the porch, as thou passest in the street, wherewith thou wilt revive the dead soul in her. Or better still, do thou write her a letter with thine

own hand (which God endow with all excellence!) and appoint it in requital of the privities that were between us in the nights of time past, whereof thou knowest. O my lord, was I not to thee a lover wasted with passion? If thou answer my prayer, I will give thee thanks and to God praise; and so peace be on thee!"

Then she gave me the letter and I went away. Next morning I repaired to the Viceroy's door, where I found an assembly of the notables of Bassora, and amongst them a youth who adorned the place and surpassed in grace and majesty all who were there; and indeed the Amir Mohammed set him above himself. I asked who he was and behold, it was Zemreh himself: so I said to myself, "Verily, there hath betided yonder unhappy one that which hath betided her!" Then I betook myself to El Mirbed and waited at the door of his house, till he came riding up in state, when I accosted him and invoking lavish blessings on him, gave him the letter. When he read it, he said to me, "O old man, we have taken another in her stead. Wilt thou see the substitute?" And I answered, "Yes." Whereupon he called out a woman's name, and there came forth a damsel who put to shame the sun and moon, swelling-breasted, walking the gait of one who hastens without fear, to whom he gave the letter, saying, "Do thou answer it." When she read it, she turned pale and said to me, "O old man, ask pardon of God for this that thou hast brought." So I went out, dragging my feet, and returned to her. When she saw me, she said, "What is behind thee?" I answered, "Evil and despair." And she said, "Have thou no concern of him. Where are God and Providence?" Then she ordered me five hundred dinars and I took them and went away.

Some days after I passed by the place and saw there horsemen and footmen. So I went in and lo, these were the companions of Zemreh, who were begging her to return to him; but she said, "No, by Allah, I will not look him in the face!" And she prostrated herself in gratitude to God and exultation over Zemreh. Then I drew near her, and she pulled out to me a letter, wherein was written, after the invocation of the Deity, the following: "O my lady, but for my forbearance towards thee, [may God prolong thy life!] I would relate somewhat of what betided from thee and set out my excuse, in that thou transgressedst against me, whenas thou wast manifestly a sinner against thyself and me in breach of vows and lack of faith and preference of another to me; for, by Allah, on whom we call for help against that which was of thy free-will, thou didst transgress against the love of me; and so peace be on thee!" Then she showed me the presents and things of price he had sent her, which were of the value of thirty thousand diners. I saw her again after this, and Zemreh had married her.'

Quoth Er Reshid, 'Had not Zemreh been beforehand with us, I had certainly had to do with her myself'

Isaac of Mosul and His Mistress and the Devil

(QUOTH Isaac ben Ibrahim el Mausili), I was in my house one night in the winter-time, when the clouds spread themselves [over the sky] and the rains poured down in torrents, as from the mouths of water-skins, and the folk forbore to come and go about the ways by reason of that which was therein of rain and mire. Now I was heavy at heart for that none of my brethren came to me nor could I go to them, for the mud and mire: so I said to my servant, 'Bring me wherewithal I may divert myself.' So he brought me meat and drink, but I had no heart to eat, without some one to bear me company, and I ceased not to look out of window and watch the ways till nightfall, when I bethought myself of a damsel belonging to one of the sons of El Mehdi, of whom I was enamoured and who was skilled in singing and playing upon instruments of music, and said to myself, 'Were she here with us tonight, my joy would be complete and my night would be abridged of the melancholy and restlessness that are upon me.'

At this moment one knocked at the door, saying, 'Shall a beloved enter, who standeth at the door?' Quoth I, 'Meseems the plant of my desire hath fruited.' So I went to the door and found my mistress, with a long green skirt wrapped about her and a kerchief of brocade on her head, to fend her from the rain. She was covered with mud to her knees and all that was upon her was drenched with water from the gutters; in short, she was in a rare pickle. So I said to her, 'O my lady, what brings thee hither through all this mud?' Quoth she, 'Thy messenger came to me and set forth to me that which was with thee of love and longing, so that I could not choose but yield and hasten to thee.' I marvelled at this, but was ashamed to tell her that I had sent no messenger; so I said, 'Praised be God that He hath brought us together, after all I have suffered for the pangs of patience! Verily, hadst thou delayed an hour longer, I must have run to thee, because of my much love and longing for thee.'

Then I called to my boy for water, that I might better her plight, and he brought a kettle full of hot water. I bade them pour it over her feet, whilst I set to work to wash them myself; after which I made her doff what she had on and calling for one of my richest dresses, clad her therein. Then I would have called for food, but she refused and I said to her, 'Art thou for wine?' 'Yes,' answered she. So I fetched cups and she said to me, 'Who shall sing?' 'I, O my lady, answered I. But she said, 'I care not for that.' 'One of my damsels?' suggested I. 'I have no mind to that either" said she. 'Then,' quoth I, 'do thou sing thyself;' 'Not I,' replied she. 'Who then shall sing for thee ?' asked I. Quoth she, 'Go out and seek some one to sing for me.' So I went out, in obedience to her, though I despaired of finding any one at such a time, and fared on till I came to the main street, where I saw a blind man striking the earth with his staff and saying, 'May God not requite with good those with whom I was! When I sang, they hearkened not, and when I was silent, they despised me.' So I said to him, 'Art thou a singer?' 'Yes,' answered he. Quoth I, 'Wilt thou finish thy night with us and cheer us with thy company?' 'If it be thy will,' replied he, 'take my hand.'

So I took his hand and leading him to my house, said to the damsel, 'O my mistress, I have brought a blind singer, with whom we may take our pleasure and he

will not see us.' 'Bring him to me,' said she. So I brought him in and invited him to eat. He ate a little and washed his hands, after which I brought him wine and he drank three cupsful. Then he said to me, 'Who art thou?' And I answered, 'I am Isaac ben Ibrahim el Mausili.' Quoth he, 'I have heard of thee and now I rejoice in thy company.' And I said, 'O my lord, I am glad in thy gladness.' 'O Isaac,' said he, 'sing to me.' So I took the lute, by way of jest, and said, 'I hear and obey.' When I had made an end of my song, he said to me, 'O Isaac, verily thou comest nigh to be a singer!' His words belittled me in mine own eyes and I threw the lute from my hand; whereupon he said, 'Hast thou not with thee some one who is skilled in singing?' 'I have a damsel with me,' answered I; and he said, 'Bid her sing.' Quoth I, 'Wilt thou sing, when thou hast had enough of her singing?' 'Yes,' answered he. So she sang and he said, 'Nay, thou hast achieved nought.' Whereupon she threw the lute from her hand in anger and said, 'We have done our best: if thou have aught, favour us with it.' Quoth he, 'Bring me a lute which no hand has touched.' So I bade the servant bring him a new lute and he tuned it and preluding in a mode I knew not, sang the following verses:

Across the middle dusk of night a maid fares swift and straight,
Who knows the visitation-tides, to where her love doth wait.
'Twas but her greeting startled us and eke her voice that said,
"Shall a beloved enter in who standeth at the gate?"

When she heard this, she looked at me askance and said, 'Could not thy breast hold the secret that was between us an hour, but thou must discover it to this man?' But I swore to her [that I had not told him] and excused myself to her and fell to kissing her hands and tickling her breasts and biting her cheeks, till she laughed and turning to the blind man, said to him, 'Sing, O my lord!' So he took the lute and sang as follows:

How often have I visited the fair and side by side,
With soft caressing hands have stroked the fingers henna-dyed!
How often have I handled eke the breasts' pomegranates ripe
And the plump apples of the cheeks with bites and kisses plied!

So I said to her, 'O my lady, who can have told him what we were about.' 'True,' answered she, and we removed to a distance from him. Presently quoth he, 'I have a need to make water.' And I said, 'O boy, take the candle and go before him.' Then he went out and tarried a long while. So we went in search of him, but could not find him; and behold, the doors were locked and the keys in the closet, and we knew not whether he had flown up to heaven or sunk into the earth. Wherefore I knew that he was Iblis and that he had done me a pander's office and returned, recalling to myself the words of Abou Nuwas in the following verses:

I marvel at Iblis no less for his pride
Than the lewdness and meanness that mark his intent.
To Adam himself he refused to prostrate,
Yet his lineage to serve as a pimp is content.

The Lovers of Medina.

(QUOTH Ibrahim Abou Ishac), I was once in my house, when one knocked at the door; so my servant went out and returned, saying, 'A comely youth is at the door, seeking admission.' I bade admit him and there came in to me a young man, on whom were traces of sickness, and he said, 'I have long wished to meet thee, for I have an occasion to thee.' 'What is it?' asked I. Whereupon he pulled out three hundred diners and laying them before me, said, 'I beseech thee to accept these and compose me an air to two lines of verse I have made.' 'Repeat them to me,' said I. And he recited the following lines:

By Allah, O mine eyes that sinned against my heart of yore,
Quench with your tears the fire of woe that burneth ever sore.
Fate is of those that chide at me for her, my heart's abode,
Whom, though in grave-clothes I be lapped, I never shall see more

So I set the verses to a plaintive air and sang it to him; whereupon he swooned away and I thought that he was dead. However, after awhile, he came to himself and said to me, 'Repeat the air.' But I conjured him by Allah to excuse me, saying, 'I fear lest thou die.' 'Would it might be so!' replied he and ceased not to importune me, till I had pity on him and repeated it; whereupon he cried out grievously and fell into a worse [swoon] than before and I doubted not but that he was dead; but, after I had sprinkled rose-water on him awhile, he revived and sat up. I praised God for his recovery and laying the dinars before him, said to him, 'Take thy money and depart from me.' Quoth he, 'I have no need of the money and thou shalt have the like of it, if thou wilt repeat the air.' My heart rejoiced in the money and I said, 'I will repeat it, but on three conditions: the first, that thou abide with me and eat of my victual, till thou regain strength; the second, that thou drink wine enough to cheer thy heart; and the third, that thou tell me thy story.'

He agreed to this and ate and drank; after which he said, 'I am of the people of Medina and I went forth one day a-pleasuring with my friends and following the road to El Akic, saw a company of girls and amongst them a damsel as she were a branch pearled with dew, with eyes whose glances stole away his soul who looked on them. They rested in the shade till the end of the day, when they went away, leaving in my heart wounds slow to heal. I returned [next day], to seek news of her, but found none who could tell me of her; so I sought her in the streets and markets, but could come on no trace of her; wherefore I fell ill of grief and told my case to one of my kinsmen, who said to me, "No harm shall befall thee: the days of spring are not yet past and by and by it will rain, whereupon she will go forth, and I will go out with thee, and do thou thy will." His words comforted my heart and I waited till El Akic ran [with water], when I went forth with my friends and kinsmen and sat in the same place as before. We had not sat long before up came the women, like horses running for a wager; and I said to a girl of my kindred, "Say to yonder damsel, 'Quoth yonder man to thee, "He did well who said:

She shot a shaft at me that pierced my bosom through and through Then turned away and by that act did wound and scars renew." "'

So she went to her and repeated my words, to which she replied, saying, "Tell him that he said well who answered thus:

'There is with us the like of that whereof thou dost complain: Patience belike, to heal our hearts relief shall soon ensue.'"

I refrained from further speech for fear of scandal and rose to go away. She rose at my rising, and I followed and she looked back at me, till she saw I had noted her abode. Then she began to come to me and I to go to her, so that we foregathered and met often, till the thing was noised abroad and grew notorious and her father came to know it. However, I ceased not to do my endeavour to meet her and complained of my case to my father, who assembled our kindred and repaired to her father, to ask her in marriage for me. But her father said, "Had this been proposed to me before he dishonoured her, I would have consented; but now the thing is notorious and I am loath to verify the saying of the folk."'

Then (continues Ibrahim) I repeated the air to him and he went away, after having acquainted me with his abode, and we became friends. Now I was devoted to the Barmecides; so next time Jaafer ben Yehya sat [to receive visits], I attended, as of my wont, and sang to him the young man's verses. They pleased him and he drank some cups of wine and said, 'Out on thee! Whose song is that?' So I told him the young man's story and he bade me ride to him and give him assurance of the attainment of his desire. Accordingly I fetched him to Jaafer, who asked him to repeat his story. He did so and Jaafer said, 'Trust me, I will marry thee to her.' So his heart was comforted and he abode with us.

On the morrow, Jaafer mounted and went in to Er Reshid, to whom he related the story. The Khalif was pleased with it and sending for the young man and myself, commanded me to repeat the air and drank thereto. Then he wrote to the governor of the Hejaz, bidding him send the girl's father and his household to his court in honourable fashion and spare no expense for their outfit. So, in a little while, they came and the Khalif, sending for the man, commanded him to marry his daughter to her lover; after which he gave him a hundred thousand dinars, and the man returned to his people. As for the young man, he abode one of Jaafer's boon-companions, till there happened what happened; whereupon he returned with his household to Medina, may God the Most High have mercy upon all their souls!

El Melik En Nasir and His Vizier

THERE was given to Abou Aamir ben Merwan, Vizier [to El Melik en Nasir of Egypt], a boy of the Christians, than whom never fell eyes on a handsomer. En Nasir saw him and said to the Vizier, 'Whence comes this boy?' 'From God,' answered Abou Aamir; whereupon, 'Wilt thou fright us with stars,' quoth the King, 'and captive us with moons?' Abou Aamir excused himself to him and making up a present, sent it to him with the boy, to whom he said, 'Be thou part of the present: were it not of necessity, my soul had not consented to give thee away.' And he wrote with him these verses:

Behold the full moon, O my lord, that cometh to thy sky;
For none, that heaven than earth of moons is worthier, may deny.
My soul, to pleasure thee, I give, nor ever yet of one,
His soul to pleasure one who gave, before myself, heard I.

The thing pleased En Nasir and he requited him with much treasure and the Vizier became high in favour with him. After this, a slave-girl, one of the loveliest women in the world, was presented to the Vizier, and he feared lest this should come to the King's ears and he desire her, and the like should happen as with the boy. So he made up a present still costlier than the first and sent it with her to the King, together with these verses:

My lord, the very sun is this; the moon thou hadst before:
So now these planets twain shall meet and glitter side by side;
A combination presaging fair fortune to my life.
Do thou with them in all delight of Paradise abide;
For they, by Allah, have no third in beauty nor hast thou
A second dominion in all the world so wide.

Wherefore his credit redoubled with En Nasir; but after awhile, one of his enemies maligned him to the King, alleging that there still lurked in him desire for the boy and that he ceased not to lust after him, whenever the North wind moved him, and to gnash his teeth for that he had given him away. Quoth the King, 'Wag not thou thy tongue at him, or I will cut off thy head.' However, he wrote Abou Aamir a letter, as from the boy, to the following effect: 'O my lord, thou knowest that thou wast all and one to me and that I never ceased from delight with thee. Albeit I am with the Sultan, yet would I choose rather solitude with thee, but that I fear the King's mischief: wherefore contrive thou to demand me of him.' This letter he sent to Abou Aamir by a little page, whom he enjoined to say, 'This is from such an one: the King never speaks to him.' When the Vizier read the letter and heard the cheating message, he smelt a rat and wrote on the back of the scroll the following lines:

After experience's laws, doth it become a man
Of sense unto the lion's lair his steps foolwise to bend?
I'm none of those whose reason love and passion overcrow;
Nor am I ignorant of that the envious do pretend.

Wert thou my soul, I gave thee up obediently, and now
Shall soul, from body sundered, back again thereunto wend ?

When En Nasir knew of this answer, he marvelled at the Vizier's quickness of wit and would never again lend ear to any insinuation against him. Then said he to him, 'How didst thou escape falling into the snare?' And he answered, saying, 'Because my reason is unentangled in the toils of passion.'

The Rogueries of Delileh the Crafty and Her Daughter Zeyneb the Trickstress.

THERE lived in the Khalifate of Haroun er Reshid two men named Ahmed ed Denef and Hassan Shouman, past masters in trick and cunning, who had done rare things in their time; wherefore the Khalif invested them with dresses of honour and made them captains of the watch for Baghdad, Ahmed of the right hand and Hassan of the left hand. Moreover, to Ahmed he committed the ward of [the district] without [the city walls] and appointed each of them a stipend of a thousand dinars a month and forty men to be at their commandment. So Ahmed and Hassan went forth in company of the Amir Khalid, the Master of Police, attended each by his forty followers on horseback and preceded by the crier, proclaiming aloud and saying, 'By order of the Khalif, none is captain of the watch of the right hand but Ahmed ed Denef and none is captain of the watch of the left hand but Hassan Shouman, and it behoveth all to give ear to their word and pay them respect.'

Now there was in the city an old woman called Delileh the Crafty, who had a daughter by name Zeyneb the Trickstress. They heard the proclamation aforesaid and Zeyneb said to her mother, 'O my mother, see yonder fellow, Ahmed ed Denef. He came hither from Cairo, a fugitive, and played the double-dealer in Baghdad till he foisted himself into the Khalif's favour and is now become captain of the watch of the right hand, whilst that mangy knave Hassan Shouman is captain of the left hand, and each has a monthly wage of a thousand dinars and a table spread morning and evening, whilst we abide unemployed and neglected in this house, without estate and without honour, and have none to ask of us.'

Now Delileh was a past mistress in all manner of craft and trickery and double-dealing; she could wile the very serpents out of their holes and Iblis himself might have learnt deceit of her. Her father had been governor of the carrier-pigeons to the Khalif and used to rear them to carry letters and messages, wherefore each bird in time of need was dearer to the Khalif than one of his sons; and in this capacity he had a stipend of a thousand dinars a month. Moreover, her husband had been town captain of Baghdad and had a monthly wage from the Khalif of a thousand dinars; but he died, leaving two daughters, one of whom was married and had a son, by name Ahmed el Lekit, and the other, Zeyneb, unmarried. So Zeyneb said to her mother, 'Up and play off some trick that may make us notorious in Baghdad, so haply we may get our father's stipends for ourselves.' 'As thy head liveth, O my daughter,' answered the old woman, 'I will play off such rogueries in Baghdad as never did Ahmed ed Denef nor Hassan Shouman!'

So saying, she rose and bound her face with the chinveil and donned clothes such as the Soufi Fakirs wear, trousers of white wool falling over her heels, and a gown of the like stuff and a broad girdle. Moreover, she took an ewer and filled it to the neck with water; after which she set three dinars in the mouth and stopped it up with palm fibre. Then she threw round her neck a rosary as big as a load of firewood and taking in her hand a flag, made of parti-coloured rags, red and yellow and green, went out, saying,

'Allah! Allah!' with tongue celebrating the praises of God, whilst her heart galloped in the race-course of abominations, seeking how she might play some sharping trick in the town. She fared on from street to street, till she came to an alley swept and watered and paved with marble, where she saw a vaulted gateway, with a threshold of alabaster, and a Moorish porter standing at the door, which was of sandal-wood, plated with brass and furnished with a ring of silver.

Now this house belonged to the Chief of the Khalif's Ushers, a man of great wealth in lands and houses and stipends, and he was called the Amir Hassan Sherr et Teric for that his blow forewent his word. He was married to a handsome girl, whom he loved and who had made him swear, on the night of his going in to her, that he would take none other to wife nor lie abroad from her a night. One day, he went to the Divan and saw that each Amir had with him a son or two. Then he entered the bath and looking at his face in the mirror, saw that the white hairs in his beard outnumbered the black and said in himself, 'Will not He who took thy father vouchsafe thee a son?' So he went in to his wife, in an angry mood, and she said to him, 'Good-even to thee.' 'Away from my sight!' answered he. 'From the day I saw thee I have seen nothing of good.' 'How so?' asked she. Quoth he, 'On the night of my going in to thee, thou madest me swear to take no other wife than thee, and to-day I have seen each Amir with a son and some with two. So I bethought me of death and called to mind that I had been blessed with neither son nor daughter and that he who leaves no male child is not remembered. This, then, is the reason of my anger, for thou art barren and conceivest not by me.' 'The name of God be upon thee!' answered she. 'Indeed, I have worn out the mortars with beating wool and pounding drugs, and I am not to blame; the fault of my barrenness is with thee, for that thou art a snub-nosed mule and thy sperm is thin and impregnateth not neither getteth children.' Quoth he, 'When I return from my journey, I will take another wife.' And she said, 'My portion is with God!' Then he went out from her and each of them repented of the sharp words spoken to the other.

As the Amir's wife looked forth of her lattice, as she were a bride of the treasures, for the jewellery upon her, Delileh espied her and seeing her clad in costly clothes and ornaments, said to herself, 'O Delileh, it would be a rare trick to entice yonder young lady from her husband's house and strip her of all her clothes and jewels and make off with them!' So she took up her stand under the windows of the Amir's house, and fell to calling aloud upon the name of God and saying, 'Be present, O ye friends of God!' Whereupon all the women of the street looked from their lattices and seeing the old woman clad, after the Soufi manner, in clothes of white wool, as she were a pavilion of light, said, 'God vouchsafe us a blessing by the intermission of this pious old woman, from whose face issueth light!' And Khatoun, the wife of the Amir Hassan, wept and said to her maid, 'Go down and kiss the hand of Sheikh Abou Ali, the porter, and say to him, " Let yonder pious old woman enter, so haply we may get a blessing of her."' So she went down to the porter and kissing his hand, said to him, 'Quoth my mistress to thee, "Let yonder pious old woman come in to her, so she may get a blessing of her;" and belike her benediction may extend to us likewise.' Accordingly, he went up to Delileh and kissed her hand, but she forbade him, saying, 'Away from me, lest my ablution be avoided! Thou, also, O Abou Ali, art absorbed [in the contemplation of the

Deity,] one of the elect of God and under His especial guardianship. Verily, He shall deliver thee from this servitude.'

Now the Amir owed the porter three months' wage and he was straitened for want thereof, but knew not how to recover it from him; so he said to the old woman, 'O my mother, give me to drink from thy pitcher, so I may have a blessing through thee.' So she took the pitcher from her shoulder and waved it in the air, so that the stopper flew out and the three diners fell to the ground. The porter saw them and picked them up, saying in himself, 'Glory to God! This old woman is one of the saints that have hidden treasures at their commandment! It hath been revealed to her that I am in want of money; so she hath conjured me these three diners out of the air.' Then said he to her, 'O my aunt, take these three diners that fell from thy pitcher.' 'Away with them from me!' answered she. 'I am of the folk that occupy not themselves with the things of the world. Take them and use them for thine own benefit, in lieu of those the Amir owes thee.' Quoth he, 'Glory to Allah for succour! This is of the chapter of revelation!'

Then the maid accosted her and kissing her hands; carried her up to her mistress, whom she found as she were a treasure, whose guardian spells had been done away; and Khatoun bade her welcome and kissed her hand. 'O my daughter,' said Delileh, 'I come not to thee but by God's [especial] advertisement.' Then Khatoun set food before her; but she said, 'O my daughter, I eat but of the food of Paradise and fast continually, breaking my fast but five days in the year. But I see thee troubled and desire that thou tell me the cause of thy trouble.' 'O my mother,' answered Khatoun, 'I made my husband swear, on my wedding-night, that he would take none other than me to wife, and he saw others with children and longed for them and said to me, " Thou art barren." And I answered, " Thou art a mule that begetteth not." Whereupon he left me in anger, saying, "When I come back from my journey, I will take another wife." So, O my mother, I fear lest he put me away and take another wife, for he hath houses and lands and stipends galore, and if he have children by another, they will possess the property from me.' 'O my daughter,' said Delileh, 'knowest thou not of my master, the Sheikh Abouihemlat, whom if a debtor visit, God quiteth him his debt, and if a barren woman, she conceiveth?' 'O my mother,' answered Khatoun, 'since the day of my wedding, I have not gone forth the house, no, not even to pay visits of congratulation or condolence.' Quoth the old woman, 'I will carry thee to him and do thou cast thy burden on him and make a vow to him; so peradventure, when thy husband returns from his journey, he will lie with thee and thou shalt conceive by him and bear a girl or a boy: but, be it male or female, it shall be a dervish of the Sheikh Aboulhemlat.'

So Khatoun rose and arraying herself in her richest clothes, donned all her jewellery and said to her maid, 'Keep thou an eye on the house.' And she said, 'I hear and obey, O my lady.' Then she went down and the porter met her and said to her, 'Whither away, O my lady?' 'I go to visit the Sheikh Aboulhemlat,' answered she; and he said, 'Be a year's fast incumbent on me! Verily yon old woman is of the saints of God and full of holiness! Moreover, O my lady, she hath hidden treasure at her commandment, for she gave me three diners of red gold and divined my case, without my asking her, and knew that I was needy.' Then the old woman went out with Khatoun, saying to her, 'God willing, O my daughter, when thou hast visited the Sheikh Aboulhemlat, there shall betide thee solace of soul and by God's leave thou

shalt conceive, and thy husband shall love thee by the blessing of the Sheikh and shall never again say a despiteful word to thee.' Quoth Khatoun, 'I will go with thee to him, O my mother!' But Delileh said in herself, 'Where shall I strip her and take her clothes and jewellery, with the folk coming and going?' Then she said to her, 'O my daughter, walk thou behind me, within sight of me, for thy mother is a woman sorely burthened; every one who hath a burden casteth it on me and all who have pious offerings to make give them to me and kiss my hand.'

So the lady followed her at a distance, whilst her anklets tinkled and the coins and ornaments plaited in the tresses of her hair clinked as she went, till they reached the bazaar of the merchants. Presently, they came to the shop of a young merchant, by name Sidi Hassan, who had no hair on his face and was very handsome. He saw the lady coming and fell to casting stolen glances at her, which when the old woman saw, she beckoned to her and said, 'Sit down in this shop, till I return to thee.' So Khatoun sat down before the shop of the young merchant, who cast one glance at her, that cost him a thousand sighs. Then the old woman accosted him and saluted him, saying, 'Is not thy name Sidi Hassan,son of the merchant Muhsin?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'who told thee my name?' Quoth she, 'Folk of repute directed me to thee. Know that this young lady is my daughter and her father was a merchant, who died and left her much good. She is come of marriageable age and the wise say, " Offer thy daughter in marriage and not thy son; " and all her life she hath not come forth the house till this day. Now I have had a divine advertisement and it hath been commanded me in secret to marry her to thee; so, if thou art poor, I will give thee capital and will open thee two shops, instead of one.'

When the young merchant heard this, he said in himself, 'I asked God for a bride, and He hath given me three things, coin and caze and clothing.' Then he said to the old woman, 'O my mother, that which thou proposest to me is well; but this long while my mother saith to me, " I wish to marry thee," and I reply, " I will not marry, except on the sight of mine own eyes."' 'Rise and follow me,' answered Delileh, 'and I will show her to thee, naked.' So he rose and shut his shop and took a purse of a thousand diners, saying in himself, 'Belike we may need to buy somewhat or pay the fees for drawing up the [marriage] contract.' The old woman bade him walk behind rhe young lady, so as to keep her in sight, and said to herself, 'Where shall I carry the young merchant and the lady, that I may strip them?'

Then she walked on and Khatoun after her, followed by the young merchant, till she came to a dyery, kept by a master-dyer, by name Hajj Mohammed, a man of ill repute, cutting male and female, like the colocasia seller's knife, and loving to eat both figs and pomegranates.' He heard the tinkle of the ankle-rings and raising his head, saw the lady and the young man. Presently the old woman came up to him and said, 'Art thou not Hajj Mohammed?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'What dost thou want?' Quoth she, 'Folk of repute have directed me to thee. Look at yonder handsome girl, who is my daughter, and that comely beardless youth, who is my son. I brought them both up and spent much money on them. Now I have an old ruinous house, which I have shored up with wood, and the builder says to me, "Go and live in some other place, till this be repaired, lest perchance it fall upon thee." So I went forth to seek me a lodging, and people of worth directed me to thee, and I wish to lodge my son and daughter with

thee.'Quoth the dyer in himself, 'Verily, here is fresh butter upon muffins come to me.' But he said to the old woman, 'True is it I have a house and saloon and upper chamber; but I cannot spare any part thereof, for I want it all for guests and for the indigo-growers [who come to me from time to time].' 'O my son,' answered she, 'it will but be for a month or two at the most, till our house be repaired, and we are strangers. Let the guest-chamber be shared between us and thee, and if thou desire that thy guests be ours, we will welcome them and eat and sleep with them.' So he gave her the keys, one big and one small and one crooked, and said to her, 'The big key is that of the house, the crooked one that of the saloon and the little one that of the upper chamber.'

Delileh took the keys and fared on, followed by the lady and the young merchant, till she came to the street in which was the house. She opened the door and entered, followed by the lady, to whom said she, 'O my daughter, this,' pointing to the saloon, 'is the lodging of the Sheikh Aboulhemlat; but go thou into the upper chamber and loose thy veil and wait till I come to thee.' So she went up and sat down. Presently up came the young merchant, whom Delileh carried into the saloon, saying, 'Sit down, whilst I fetch my daughter and show her to thee.' So he sat down and the old woman went up to Khatoun, who said to her, 'I wish to visit the Sheikh, before the folk come.' 'O my daughter,' said the old woman, 'we fear for thee.' 'Why so?' asked Khatoun. 'Because,' answered Delileh, 'here is a son of mine, a natural who knows not summer from winter, but goes ever naked. He is the Sheikh's deputy, and if he saw a girl like thee come to visit him, he would snatch her earrings and wound her ears and tear her silken clothes. So do thou doff thy jewellery and clothes and I will keep them for thee, till thou hast made thy visit.' So she did off her [upper] clothes and jewels and gave them to the old woman, who said, 'I will lay them for thee on the Sheikh's curtain, that a blessing may betide thee.'

Then she went out, leaving the lady in her shift and trousers, and hid the clothes and jewels in a place on the stairs; after which she betook herself to the young merchant, whom she found awaiting the girl, and he said, 'Where is thy daughter, that I may see her?' But she smote upon her breast and he said, 'What ails thee?' 'Would there were no such thing as ill and envious neighbours!' answered she. 'My neighbours saw thee enter the house with me and asked me of thee; and I said, "This is a bridegroom I have found for my daughter." They envied me on shine account and said to my daughter, "Is thy mother tired of maintaining thee, that she marries thee to a leper?" So I swore to her that she should see thee naked.' Quoth he, 'I take refuge with God from the envious!' and bearing his fore-arm, showed her that it was like silver. 'Have no fear,' said she; 'thou shalt see her naked, even as she shall see thee.' And he said, 'Let her come and see me.' Then he put off his sable pelisse and girdle and dagger and the rest of his clothes, except his shirt and trousers, and laid the purse of a thousand dinars with them. Quoth Delileh, 'Give them to me, that I may take care of them.' So she took them and fetching the girl's clothes and jewellery, went out with the whole and locked the door upon them.

She deposited her purchase with a druggist of her acquaintance and returned to the dyer, whom she found sitting, awaiting her. Quoth he, 'God willing, the house pleaseth thee?' 'There is a blessing in it,' answered she,'and I go now to fetch porters to carry our goods and bedding thither. But my children would have me bring them

meat-patties; so do thou take this dinar and buy the patties and go and eat the morning meal with them.' 'Who shall guard the dyery meanwhile and the people's goods that are therein?' asked the dyer. 'Thy boy,' answered the old woman. 'So be it,' rejoined he and taking a covered dish, went out to do her bidding. As soon as he was gone, she fetched the clothes and jewels she had left with the druggist and going back to the dyery, said to the boy, 'Run after thy master, and I will not stir hence till you both return.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and went away.

Presently, there came up an ass-driver, a scavenger, who had been out of work for a week, and she called to him, saying, 'Hither, O ass-driver!' So he came to her and she said, 'Knowest thou my son the dyer?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'I know him.' And she said, 'The poor fellow is insolvent and loaded with debts, and as often as he is put in prison, I set him free. Now they are about to declare him bankrupt and I am going to return the goods to their owners; so do thou lend me thine ass for that purpose and take this dinar to his hire. When I am gone, take the handsaw and empty out the vats and jars and break them, that, if there come an officer from the Cadi's court, he may find nothing in the dyery.' Quoth he, 'I owe the Hajj a kindness and will do somewhat for the love of God.'

So she laid the things on the ass and made for her own house; and [God] the Protector protected her, so that she arrived there in safety and went in to her daughter Zeyneb, who said to her, 'O my mother, my heart has been with thee! What hast thou done by way of roguery?' 'I have played off four tricks on four people,' answered Delileh; the wife of the Chief Usher, a young merchant, a dyer and an ass-driver, and have brought thee all their spoil on the latter's ass.' 'O my mother,' said Zeyneb, 'thou wilt nevermore be able to go about the town, for fear of the Chief Usher, whose wife's clothes and jewellery thou hast taken, and the merchant whom thou hast stripped, and the dyer whose customer's goods thou hast stolen and the owner of the ass.' 'Pshaw, my daughter!' rejoined the old woman, 'I reck not of them, save the ass-driver, who knows me.'

Meanwhile, the dyer bought the meat-patties and set out for the house, followed by his servant, bearing the food on his head. On his way thither, he passed his shop, where he found the ass-man breaking the vats and jars and saw that there was neither stuff nor liquor left in them and that the shop was in ruins. So he said to him, 'Hold thy hand, O ass-driver!' Whereupon the latter desisted and said, 'Praised be God for thy safety, O Hajj! Indeed, my heart was with thee.' 'Why so?' asked the dyer. 'Thou art become bankrupt and they have filed a docket of thine insolvency.' 'Who told thee this?' asked the dyer. 'Thy mother told me,' answered the other, 'and bade me break the jars and empty the vats, that the apparitors might find nothing in the shop, if they should come.' 'God confound thee!' cried the dyer. 'My mother died long ago.' And he beat his breast, saying, 'Alas for the loss of my goods and those of the folk!' The ass-man also wept and said, 'Alas, for the loss of my ass!' And he said to the dyer, 'Give me back my ass, that thy mother stole from me.' The dyer laid hold of him by the throat and fell to pummelling him, saying, 'Bring me the old woman;' whilst the other pummelled him back, saying, 'Give me back my ass.' So they beat and cursed each other, till the folk collected round them and one of them said, 'What is the matter, O Hajj Mohammed?' Quoth the ass-driver, 'I will tell thee the case,' and related to them

his story, saying, 'I thought I was doing the dyer a good turn; but, when he saw me, he said, " My mother is dead," and beat his breast. And now I require my ass of him, for that it is he who hath put this trick on me, that he might make me lose my beast.'

Then said the folk to the dyer, 'O Hajj Mohammed, cost thou know this old woman, that thou didst trust her with the dyery and what was therein?' And he answered, saying, 'I know her not; but she took lodgings with me to-day, she and her son and daughter.' Quoth one, 'In my judgment, the dyer is bound to indemnify the ass-driver.' 'Why so?' asked another. 'Because, replied the first, 'he trusted not the old woman nor gave her his ass, but because he saw that the dyer had entrusted her with the dyery and its contents.' And a third said, 'O Hajj, since thou hast lodged her with thee, it behoves thee to get the man back his ass.' Then they made for the house, and the tale will come round to them again.

Meanwhile, the young merchant abode awaiting the old woman's coming with her daughter, but she came not; whilst the lady in like manner sat expecting her return with leave from her son, the possessed, the Sheikh's deputy, to go in to him. When she was weary of waiting, she rose to visit the Sheikh by herself and went down into the saloon, where she found the young merchant, who said to her, 'Come: where is thy mother, who brought me hither to marry thee?' 'My mother is dead,' answered she; 'art thou the old woman's son the ecstatic, the deputy of the Sheikh Aboulhemlat?' Quoth he, 'The swindling old beldam is no mother of mine; she hath cheated me and taken my clothes and a thousand dinars.' 'And me also hath she swindled,' said Khatoun; 'for she brought me to see the Sheikh Aboulhemlat and stripped me.' Quoth he, 'I look to thee for my clothes and my thousand dinars.' 'And I,' answered she, 'look to thee to make good my clothes and jewellery.'

At this moment in came the dyer and seeing them both stripped of their clothes, said to them, 'Tell me where your mother is.' So they told him their several cases and he exclaimed, 'Alas, for the loss of my goods and those of the folk!' And the ass-driver said, 'Alas for my ass! Give me my ass, O dyer!' Then said the dyer, 'This old woman is a sharper. Come forth, that I may lock the door.' Quoth the young merchant, 'It were a disgrace to thee that we should enter thy house, clothed, and leave it, naked.' So the dyer clad him and the damsel and sent her back to her house. Then he shut the dyery and said to the young merchant, 'Come, let us go and search for the old woman and hand her over to the chief of the police.' So they and the ass-man repaired to the house of the master of police and made their complaint to him. Quoth he, 'How many old women are there not in the town! Go and seek for her and lay hands on her and bring her to me, and I will torture her for you and make her confess.' So they went out and sought for her all round the town; and so we will leave them for the present.

Presently, Delileh said to her daughter, 'I have a mind to play off another trick.' 'O my mother,' answered Zeyneb, 'I fear for thee;' but the old woman said, 'I am like bean-husks, proof against fire and water.' So she rose and donning a handmaid's habit, of such as serve people of condition, went out to look for some one to swindle. Presently she came to a by-street, spread with carpets and lighted with hanging lamps, and heard a noise of singing-women and beating of tambourines. Here she saw a slave-girl, bearing on her shoulder a boy, clad in trousers embroidered with silver and velvet jacket, with a pearl-embroidered cap on his head and a collar of gold set with jewels

about his neck. Now the house belonged to the Provost of the Merchants of Baghdad, and the boy was his son. Moreover, he had a virgin daughter, to boot, who was promised in marriage, and it was her betrothal they were celebrating that day. There was with her mother a company of ladies and singing-women, and whenever she went up or down, the boy clung to her. So she called the slave-girl and said to her, 'Take thy young master and play with him, till the company break up.'

Said Delileh to the maid, 'What festivities are these in your mistress's house?' 'She celebrates her daughter's betrothal to-day,' answered the girl, 'and she hath singing-women with her.' Quoth the old woman to herself, 'O Delileh, the thing to do is to spirit away the boy from the maid.' And she cried out, saying, 'O disgrace! O ill luck!' Then, pulling out a brass token, resembling a dinar, she said to the maid, who was a simpleton, 'Take this diner and go in to thy mistress and say to her, " Umm el Khair rejoices with thee and is beholden to thee for thy favours, and she and her daughters will visit thee on the day of the assembly and handsel the tiring-women."' 'O my mother,' said the girl, 'my young master here catches hold of his mother, whenever he sees her.' 'Give him to me,' answered the old woman, 'whilst thou goest in and comest back.'

So she gave her the child and taking the token, went in; whereupon Delileh made off with the boy to a by-lane, where she stripped him of his clothes and jewels, saying to herself, 'O Delileh, it would indeed be a fine trick, even as thou hast cheated the maid and taken the boy from her, so now to pawn him for a thousand dinars' worth.' So she repaired to the jewel-bazaar, where she saw a Jew goldsmith seated, with a tray full of jewellery before him, and said to herself, 'It would be a rare trick to get a thousand dinars' worth of jewellery from this Jew and leave the boy in pledge with him for it.' Presently the Jew looked at them and seeing the boy, knew him for the son of the Provost of the Merchants.

Now he was a man of great wealth, but would envy his neighbour, if he sold and he himself did not; so, when he saw Delileh, he said to her, 'What seekest thou, O my mistress?' 'Art thou Master Azariah the Jew?' asked she, having first enquired his name; and he answered, 'Yes.' Quoth she, 'This boy's sister, the Provost's daughter of the Merchants, is a promised bride, and to-day they celebrate her betrothal; and she hath need of jewellery. So give me two pairs of gold ankle-rings and a pair of gold bracelets and a girdle and pearl ear-drops and a poignard and seal-ring.' Accordingly, he brought out to her what she sought and she took of him a thousand dinars' worth of jewellery, saying, 'I will take these on approval; and what pleases them, they will keep and I will bring thee the price and leave the boy with thee till then.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' answered he. So she took the jewellery and made off to her own house, where her daughter asked her how she had sped. She told her all she had done and Zeyneb said, 'Thou wilt never be able to walk abroad again in the town.'

Meanwhile, the maid went in to her mistress and said to her, 'O my lady, Umm el Khair salutes thee and rejoices with thee, and will come, she and her daughters, on the day of the assembly and give the customary presents.' Quoth her mistress, 'Where is thy young master?' 'I left him with her,' answered the maid, 'lest he should cling to thee, and she gave me this, as largesse for the singing-women.' So the lady said to the chief of the singers, 'Take thy money ;' and she took it and found it a brass token;

whereupon quoth the lady to the maid, 'O baggage, go down and look to thy young master.' Accordingly, she went down and finding neither boy nor old woman, shrieked aloud and fell on her face, and their joy was changed into mourning.

When the Provost came in, his wife told him what had befallen and he went out in quest of the child, whilst the other merchants also went forth and sought, each his own road. Presently, the Provost espied the boy seated, naked, in the Jew's shop and said to the latter, 'This is my son.' 'It is well,' answered the Jew. So he took him up, without asking for his clothes, of the excess of his joy at finding him; but the Jew laid hold of him, saying, 'God succour the Khalif against thee!' Quoth the Provost,'What ails thee, O Jew?' And he answered, saying, 'The old woman took of me a thousand dinars' worth of jewellery for thy daughter, and left the boy in pledge for the price; and I had not trusted her, but that I knew the child for thy son.' 'My daughter needs no jewellery,' said the Provost; 'give me the boy's clothes.'

The Jew cried out, saying, 'Come to my aid, O Muslims!' but at that moment up came the dyer and the ass-man and the young merchant, who were going about, seeking the old woman, and enquired the cause of their quarrel. So they told them the case and they said, 'This old woman is a cheat, who has cheated us before you.' Then they told them how she had dealt with them, and the Provost said, 'Since I have found my son, be his clothes his ransom! If I come upon the old woman, I will require them of her.' And he carried the child home to his mother, who rejoiced in his safety. Then said the Jew to the three others, 'Whither go ye?' And they answered, saying, 'We go to look for her.' Quoth the Jew, 'Take me with you. Is there any one of you knows her?' 'I know her,' answered the ass-driver; and the Jew said, 'If we go all together, we shall never catch her; for she will flee from us. Let us each take a different road, and be our rendezvous at the shop of Hajj Mesaoud, the Moorish barber.' They agreed to this and set off, each in a different direction.

Presently, Delileh sallied forth again in quest of prey, and the ass-driver met her and knew her. So he caught hold of her and said to her, 'Out on thee! Hast thou been long at this trade?' 'What ails thee?' asked she; and he answered, 'Give me back my ass.' 'O my son,' said she, 'cover what God covers! Dost thou seek thine ass and the people's things?' Quoth he, 'I want my ass; that's all.' And she said, 'I saw that thou wast poor; so I deposited thine ass for thee with the Moorish barber. Stand off, whilst I speak him fair, that he may give thee the beast.' So she went up to the barber and kissed his hand and wept. He asked her what ailed her and she said, 'O my son, look at my son who stands yonder. He was ill and exposed himself to the air, which corrupted his wit. He used to buy asses and now, whether he sit or stand or walk, he saith nothing but "My ass!" Now I have been told by a certain physician that his mind is disordered and that nothing will cure him but drawing two of his grinders and cauterizing him twice on the temples. So do thou take this dinar and call him to thee, saying," Thine ass is with me."' 'May I fast for a year,' said the barber, 'if I do not give him his ass in his fist! 'Now he had with him two journeymen; so he said to one of them, 'Heat the irons.'

Then the old woman went her way and the barber called to the ass-driver, saying, 'Harkye, good fellow! Thine ass is with me; come and take him, and as thou livest, I will give him into thy hand.' So he came to him and the barber carried him into a dark room, where he knocked him down and the journeymen bound him hand and foot.

Then he pulled out two of his grinders and cauterized him on both temples; after which he let him go, and he rose and said, 'O Moor, why hast thou used me thus?' Quoth the barber, 'Thy mother told me that thou hadst taken cold, whilst ill, and lost thy reason, so that, whether sitting or standing or walking, thou wouldst say nothing but "My ass!" So here is thine ass in thy fist.' 'God requite thee,' said the other, 'for pulling out my teeth!' Then the barber told him all that the old woman had said and he exclaimed, 'May God torment her!' And the two went out, disputing, and left the shop. When the barber returned, he found his shop empty, for, whilst he was absent, the old woman had taken all that was therein and made off with it to her daughter, to whom she told all that had befallen. The barber, seeing this, caught hold of the ass-driver and said to him, 'Bring me thy mother.' But he answered, saying, 'She is not my mother, but a sharper, who has swindled much people and stolen my ass.'

At this moment up came the dyer and the Jew and the young merchant, who, seeing the barber holding on to the ass-driver and the latter cauterized on both temples, said to him, 'What hath befallen thee, O ass driver?' So he told them what had happened to him and the barber did the like; and the others in turn related to the Moor the tricks the old woman had served them. Then he shut up his shop and went with them to the Master of police, to whom they said, 'We look to thee for compensation.' Quoth he, 'How many old women are there not in Baghdad! Doth any of you know her?' 'I do,' answered the ass-man; 'give me ten of thine officers.' So he gave them half a score men and they all five went out, followed by the sergeants, and patrolled the city, till they met the old woman, when they laid hands on her and carrying her to the house of the Master of police, stood waiting without, till he should come forth.

Presently the officers fell asleep, for excess of watching with their chief, and Delileh feigned to follow their example, till the ass-man and his fellows slept also, when she stole away from them and going in to the harem of the Master of police, kissed the hand of the mistress of the house and said to her, 'Where is the Chief of the police?' 'He is asleep,' answered the lady; 'what wouldst thou with him?' Quoth Delileh, 'My husband is a slave-merchant and gave me five slaves to sell, whilst he went on a journey. The Master of police met me and bought them of me for a thousand dinars and two hundred for myself, saying, " Bring them to my house." So I have brought them.'

Now the Master of police had given his wife a thousand dinars, saying, 'Keep them by thee, that we may buy male slaves with them.' So she believed the old woman's story and said to her, 'Where are the slaves?' 'They are asleep under the window,' replied Delileh; whereupon the lady looked out and seeing the barber clad in a Levantine habit and the young merchant as he were a drunken white slave and the Jew and the dyer and the ass-driver as they were shaven white slaves, said in herself, 'Each of these is worth more than a thousand dinars.' So she opened a chest and gave the old woman the thousand dinars, saying, 'Come back anon and when my husband wakes, I will get thee the other two hundred from him.' 'O my lady,' answered the old woman, 'a hundred of them are thine, under the sherbet-gugglet whereof thou drinkest, and the other hundred do thou keep for me till I come back. Now let me out by the private door.' So she let her out, and [God] the Protector protected her and she made her way home to her daughter, to whom she related all that had passed, saying, 'The one that

troubles me most is the ass-driver, for he knows me.' 'O my mother,' said Zeyneb, 'abide quiet [awhile] and let what thou hast done suffice thee, for not always comes the pitcher off unbroken.'

When the Chief of the police awoke, his wife said to him, 'I give thee joy of the five slaves thou hast bought of the old woman.' 'What slaves?' asked he. 'Why dost thou mock me?' answered she. 'God willing, they shall become people of condition like unto thee.' 'As my head liveth,' rejoined he, 'I have bought no slaves! Who saith this?' 'The old woman, the brokeress,' replied she,'from whom thou boughtest them; and thou didst promise her a thousand dinars for them and two hundred for herself.' Quoth he, 'Didst thou give her the money?' 'Yes,' answered she; 'for I saw the slaves with my own eyes, and on each is a suit of clothes worth a thousand dinars; so I sent out to bid the sergeants have an eye to them.'

So he went out and said to the officers, 'Where are the five slaves we bought for a thousand dinars of the old woman?' 'There are no slaves here,' answered they; 'only these five men, who found the old woman and brought her hither. We fell asleep, whilst waiting for thee, and she stole away and entered the harem. Presently out came a maid and said to us, 'Are the five with you with whom the old woman came?' And we answered, 'Yes.' 'By Allah,' cried the Master of police, 'this is a rare great swindle!' And the five men said, 'We look to thee for our goods.' Quoth the Master of police, 'The old woman, your mistress, sold you to me for a thousand dinars.' 'That were not allowed of God,' answered they: 'we are free-born men and may not be sold, and we appeal from thee to the Khalif.' 'None showed her the way to the house save you,' rejoined the Master of police, 'and I will sell you to the galleys for two hundred dinars apiece.'

Just then, up came the Amir Hassan Sherr et Teric, who, on his return from his journey, had found his wife stripped of her clothes and jewellery and heard from her all that had passed; whereupon quoth he, 'The Master of police shall answer me this;' and repairing to him, said, 'Dost thou suffer old women to go round about the town and cozen folk of their goods? This is thy business and I look to thee for my wife's property.' Then said he to the five men, 'What is to do with you?' So they told him their stories and he said, 'Ye are oppressed,' and turning to the Master of police, said to him, 'Why dost thou detain them?' 'It was they who brought her to my house,' answered he, 'so that she took a thousand dinars of my money and sold them to my women.' 'O Amir Hassan,' cried the five men, 'be thou our advocate in this affair.'

Then said the Master of police to the Amir, 'Thy wife's goods are at my charge and I will be surety for the old woman. But which of you knows her?' 'We all know her,' answered they. 'Send ten men with us, and we will take her.' So he gave them ten men, and the ass-driver said to them, 'Follow me, for I should know her with blue eyes." Then they went out and presently they met the old woman coming out of a by-street: so they laid hands on her and brought her to the master of the police, who said to her, 'Where are the people's goods?' And she answered, saying, 'I have neither taken them nor seen them.' Then said he to the gaoler, 'Take her and clap her into prison till the morning' But he said, 'I will not take her, lest she play a trick on me and I be answerable for her.' So the Master of police took horse and rode out with Delileh and the rest to the bank of the Tigris, where he bade the executioner crucify her by her hair.

So he bound her on the cross and drew her up by the pulley; after which the Master of police set ten men to guard her and went home. Presently, the night fell down and sleep overcame the watchmen.

Now a certain Bedouin heard one man say to another, 'Praised be God for thy safe return! Where hast thou been?' 'In Baghdad,' answered the other, 'where I breakfasted on honey-fritters.' Quoth the Bedouin to himself, 'Needs must I go to Baghdad and eat honey-fritters;' for in all his life he had never entered Baghdad nor seen fritters of the sort. So he mounted his horse and rode on towards Baghdad, saying in himself, 'It is a fine thing to eat honey-fritters! On the honour of an Arab, I will not break my fast on nothing else!' till he came to the place where Delileh was crucified and she heard him saying this. So he went up to her and said to her, 'What art thou?' Quoth she, 'O Sheik of the Arabs, I throw myself on thy protection!' 'May God indeed protect thee!' answered he. 'But what is the cause of thy crucifixion?' Said she, 'I have an enemy, an oilman, who fries fritters, and I stopped to buy of him, when I chanced to spit and the spittle fell on the fritters. So he made his complaint to the judge, who commanded to crucify me, saying, "I adjudge that ye take ten pounds of honey-fritters and feed her therewith. If she eat them, let her go, but if not, leave her hanging." And my stomach will not brook sweet things.' 'By the honour of the Arabs,' cried the Bedouin, 'I departed not the camp but that I might eat honey-fritters! I will eat them for thee.' Quoth she, 'None may eat them, except he be hung up in my place.' He fell into the trap and unbound her; whereupon she bound him in her room, after she had stripped him of his clothes and turban and put them on; then, mounting his horse, she rode to her house, where Zeyneb said to her, 'What meaneth this plight?' And she answered, saying, 'They crucified me :' and told her all that had befallen her.

To return to the watchmen; the first who woke roused his companions and they saw that the day had risen. So one of them raised his eyes and said, 'Delileh!' 'By Allah!' answered the Bedouin, 'I have not eaten all night. Have ye brought the honey-fritters?' And they said, 'This is a man and a Bedouin.' Then said one of them to him, 'O Bedouin, where is Delileh and who loosed her?' 'It was I,' answered he; 'she shall not eat the honey-fritters against her will; for her soul abhorreth them.' So they knew that he was a man ignorant of her case, whom she had cozened, and said to one another, 'Shall we flee or abide the accomplishment of that which God hath decreed to us?'

As they were talking, up came the chief of the police, with all the folk whom the old woman had cheated, and said to the guards, 'Arise, loose Delileh.' Quoth the Bedouin, 'We have not eaten to-night. Hast thou brought the honey-fritters?' Whereupon the Master of police raised his eyes and seeing the Bedouin strung up in place of the old woman, said to the watchmen, 'What is this?' 'Pardon, O our lord!' cried they; and he said, 'Tell me what has happened' 'We were weary with watching with thee on guard,' answered they, 'and said, " Delileh is crucified." So we fell asleep, and when we awoke, we found the Bedouin strung up in her stead; and we are at thy mercy.' 'God's pardon be upon you!' answered the master of police. 'She is indeed a clever cheat!' Then they unbound the Bedouin, who laid hold of the master of police, saying, 'God succour the Khalif against thee! I look to none but thee for my horse and clothes! So the chief of the police questioned him and he told him what had passed

between Delileh and himself. 'Why didst thou release her?' asked the magistrate, and the Bedouin said, 'I knew not that she was a swindler.' Then said the others, 'O chief of the police, we look to thee for our goods; for we delivered the old woman into thy hands and she was in thy guard; and we cite thee before the Divan of the Khalif.'

Now the Amir Hassan had gone up to the Divan, when in came the master of police with the Bedouin and the five others, saying, 'We are wronged men!' 'Who hath wronged you?' asked the Khalif. So each came forward in turn and told his story, after which said the master of police, 'O Commander of the Faithful, the old woman cheated me also and sold me these five men as slaves for a thousand dinars, albeit they are free-born.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'I take upon myself all that you have lost.' Then he said to the master of police, 'I charge thee with the old woman.' But he shook his collar, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I will not answer for her; for, after I had strung her up on the cross, she tricked this Bedouin and tied him up in her room and made off with his clothes and horse.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Whom but thee shall I charge with her?' Charge Ahmed ed Denef,' answered the Master of police; 'for he has a thousand dinars a month and one-and-forty followers, at a monthly wage of a hundred dinars each.' So the Khalif said, 'Harkye, Captain Ahmed!' 'At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he; and the Khalif said, 'I charge thee to bring the old woman before me.' 'I will answer for her,' replied Ahmed.

Then the Khalif kept the Bedouin and the five complainants with him, whilst Ahmed and his men went down to their hall, saying to one another, 'How shall we lay hands on her, seeing that there are many old women in the town?' [And Ahrned said to Hassan Shouman, 'What counsellest thou?'] Whereupon quoth one of them, by name Ali Kitf el Jemel, to Ed Denef, 'Of what dost thou take counsel with Hassan Shouman? Is he any great matter?' 'O Ali,' said Hassan, 'why dost thou disparage me? By the Mighty Name, I will not company with thee at this time!' And he rose and went out in anger. Then said Ahmed, 'O lads, let each sergeant take ten men and search for Delileh, each in his own quarter.' And they agreed to rendezvous in such a place.

It was noised abroad in the city that Ahmed ed Denef had undertaken to lay hands on Delileh the Crafty, and Zeyneb said to her mother, 'O my mother, if thou be indeed a trickstress, do thou befool Ahmed ed Denef and his company.' 'I fear none but Hassan Shouman,' answered Delileh; and Zeyneb said, 'By my browlock, I will get thee the clothes of all the one-and-forty.' Then she dressed and veiled herself and going to a druggist, who had a saloon with two doors, gave him a dinar and said to him, 'Let me thy saloon till the end of the day and take this dinar to its hire.' So he gave her the keys and she fetched carpets and so forth on the stolen ass and furnishing the place, set in each estrade a table of meat and wine. Then she went out and stood at the door, with her face uncovered.

Presently, up came Ali Kitf and his men, and she kissed his hand. He fell in love with her, seeing her to be a handsome girl, and said to her, 'What dost thou want?' Quoth she, 'Art thou Captain Ahmed ed Denef?' 'No, answered he; 'but I am of his company and my name is Ali Kitf el Jemel.' 'Whither go you?' asked she, and he said, 'We go in quest of a sharkish old woman, who has stolen the people's goods, and we mean to lay hands on her. But who art thou and what is thy business?' Quoth she, 'My father was a vintner at Mosul and he died and left me much money. So I came hither,

for fear of the judges, and asked the people who would protect me, to which they replied, " None but Ahmed et Denef"' 'From this day forth,' said the men, 'thou art under his protection;' and she said, 'Favour me by eating a morsel and drinking a draught.' They consented and entering, ate and drank till they were drunken, when she drugged them with henbane and stripped them of their clothes and arms; and on like wise she did with the three other companies.

Presently, Ahmed ed Denef went out to look for Delileh' but found her not, neither set eyes on any of his followers, and went on till he came to the door where Zeyneb was standing. She kissed his hand and he looked on her and fell in love with her. Quoth she, 'Art thou Captain Ahmed ed Denef?' 'Yes,' answered he. 'Who art thou?' And she said, 'I am a stranger. My father was a vintner at Mosul and he died and left me much wealth, with which I came to this city, for fear of the judges, and opened this wine-shop. The Master of police hath imposed a tax on me, but it is my desire to put myself under thy protection and pay thee what the police would take of me, for thou hast the better right to it.' Quoth he, 'Thou shalt have my protection and welcome: do not pay him aught.' Then said she, 'Heal my heart and eat of my victual.' So he entered and ate and drank, till he could not sit upright, when she drugged him and took his clothes and arms. Then she loaded her purchase on the ass and the Bedouin's horse and made off with it, after she had aroused Ali Kitf. The latter awoke and found himself naked and saw Ahmed and his men drugged and stripped. So he revived them with the counter-drug and they awoke and saw themselves naked. Quoth Ahmed, 'O lads, what is this? We were going about to catch her, and lo, this strumpet hath caught us! How Hassan Shouman will crow over us! But we will wait till it is dark and then go away.'

Meanwhile Hassan Shouman said to the hall-keeper, 'Where are the men?' As he spoke, up they came, naked; and he recited the following verses:

Men in their purpose are alike and what they hope and fear:
'Tis in the issues, 'twixt the folk, that difference doth appear.
Some men for ignorant are known and other some for wise,
Even as in heaven some stars are dull and others bright and clear.

Then he said to them, 'Who hath played you this trick?' and they answered, saying, 'We were in quest of an old woman, and a handsome girl stripped us.' 'She hath done well,' said Hassan. 'Dost thou know her?' asked they. 'Yes,' answered Hassan; 'I know her and the old woman too.' Quoth they, 'What shall we say to the Khalif?' And he said, 'O Denef, do thou shake thy collar before him, and if he ask why thou hast not caught her, say thou, " We know her not; but charge Hassan Shouman with her." And if he give her into my charge, I will lay hands on her.'

So they slept that night and on the morrow they repaired to the Khalif's Divan and kissed the earth before him. Quoth he, 'Where is the old woman, O Captain Ahmed?' But he shook his collar. The Khalif asked him why he did so, and he answered, 'I know her not; but charge Hassan Shouman to lay hands on her, for he knows her and her daughter also.' Then Hassan interceded for her with the Khalif, saying, 'Indeed, she hath played off these tricks, not because she coveted the folk's goods, but to show her address and that of her daughter, to the intent that thou

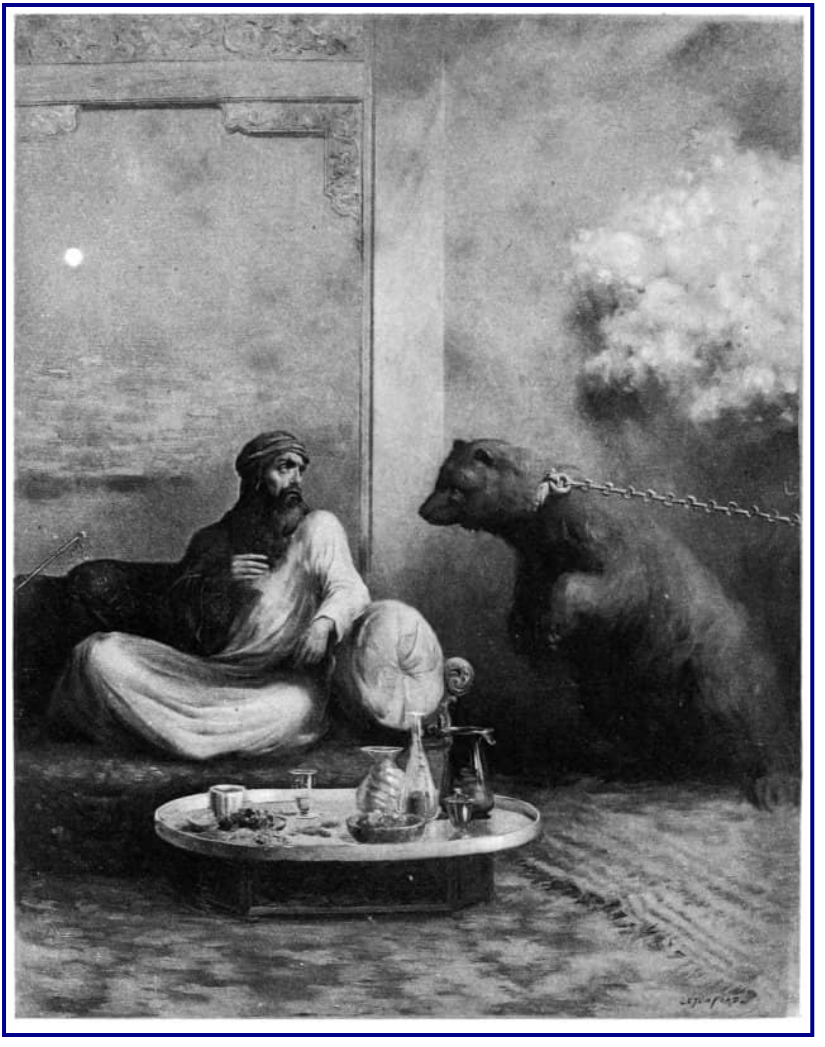
shouldst continue to her her husband's stipend and that of her father to her daughter. So, if thou wilt spare her life, I will fetch her to thee.' 'By the life of my ancestors,' said Er Reshid, 'if she restore the people's goods, I will pardon her, on thine intercession!' And he gave him the handkerchief of pardon.

So Hassan repaired to Delileh's house and called to her. Her daughter Zeyneb answered him and he said to her, 'Where is thy mother?' 'Upstairs,' answered she; and he said, 'Bid her take the people's goods and come with me to the Khalif; for I have brought her the handkerchief of pardon, and if she will not come with a good grace, let her blame none but herself.' So Delileh tied the kerchief [of truce] about her neck and coming down, gave him the people's goods on the ass and the Bedouin's horse. Quoth he, 'There remain the clothes of my chief and his men.' 'By the Most Great Name,' replied she, 'it was not I who stripped them!' 'Thou sayst sooth,' rejoined Hassan; 'it was thy daughter Zeyneb's doing, and this was a good turn she did thee.' Then he carried her to the Divan and laid the people's goods before the Khalif, who, as soon as he saw the old woman, commanded to throw her down on the carpet of blood. Quoth she, 'I cast myself on thy protection, O Shouman!' So he rose and kissing the Khalif's hands, said, 'Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful! Indeed, thou gavest me the handkerchief of pardon.' 'I pardon her for thy sake,' said Er Reshid. 'Come hither, O old woman; what is thy name?' 'My name is Delileh,' answered she, and the Khalif said, 'Thou art indeed crafty and full of artifice. Whence she was dubbed Delileh the Crafty.

Then said he, 'Why hast thou played all these tricks on the folk and wearied our hearts?' Quoth she, 'I did it not of desire for their goods, but because I had heard of the tricks which Ahmed ed Denef and Hassan Shouman played in Baghdad and said in myself, " I will do the like." And behold, I have returned the folk their goods.' But the ass-driver rose and said, 'I invoke the law of God between her and me; for it sufficed her not to take my ass, but she must needs egg on the barber to pull out my teeth and cauterize me on both temples.' The Khalif bade give him a hundred dinars and ordered the dyer the like, saying, 'Go; set up thy dyery again.' So they called down blessings on his head and went away. The Bedouin also took his clothes and horse and departed, saying, 'It is forbidden to me to enter Baghdad and eat honey-fritters.' And the others took their goods and went away.

Then said the Khalif, 'Ask a boon of me, O Delileh!' And she said, 'My father was governor of the carrier-pigeons to thee and I know how to rear them, and my husband was town-captain of Baghdad. Now I wish to have the reversion of my husband and my daughter wishes to have that of her father.' The Khalif granted their requests and she said, 'I ask of thee that I may be portress of thy khan.' Now he had built a khan of three stories, for the merchants to lodge in, and had assigned to its service forty slaves, which latter he had brought from the King of Suleimaniyeh, when he deposed him, and let make collars for them; and there was in the khan a cook-slave, who cooked for the slaves and fed the dogs. 'O Delileh,' said the Khalif, 'I will write thee a patent of guardianship of the khan, and if aught be lost therefrom, thou shalt be answerable for it.' 'It is well,' replied she; 'but do thou lodge my daughter in the pavilion at the door of the khan, for it hath terraced roofs, and carrier-pigeons may not be reared to advantage save in an open space.'

The Khalif granted her this also and she and her daughter removed to the pavilion in question, where Zeyneb hung up the one-and-forty dresses of Ahmed ed Denef and his company. Moreover, they delivered to Delileh the forty pigeons that carried the royal messages, and the Khalif appointed her mistress over the forty slaves and charged them to obey her. She made the place of her session behind the door of the khan, and every day she used to go up to the Khalif's Divan, lest he should need to send a message by pigeon-post, whilst the forty slaves abode on guard at the khan; nor did she return till ended day, when they loosed the forty dogs, that they might keep watch over the place by night.



The Adventures of Quicksilver Ali of Cairo: Being a Sequel to the Rogueries of Delileh the Crafty.

There lived once at Cairo, in the days of Selah the Egyptian, who was chief of the Cairo police and had forty men under him, a sharper named Ali, for whom the Master of Police used to set snares and think that he had fallen therein; but, when they sought for him, they found that he had fled like quicksilver, wherefore they dubbed him Quicksilver Ali. One day, as he sat with his men in his hall, his heart became heavy within him and his breast was straitened. The hall-keeper saw him sitting frowning-faced and said to him, 'What ails thee, O my thief? If thy breast be straitened, go out and take a turn in the streets of Cairo, for assuredly walking in its markets will do away thine oppression.' So he went out and walked the streets awhile, but only redoubled in dejection and heaviness of heart. Presently, he came to a wine-shop and said to himself, 'I will go in and drink wine.' So he went in and seeing seven rows of people in the shop, said to the tavern-keeper, 'Harkye, taverner! I will not sit but by myself.' Accordingly, the vintner seated him in a chamber by himself and set wine before him, of which he drank till he lost his senses. Then he sallied forth again and walked till he came to the street called Red, whilst the people left the road clear before him, out of fear of him.

Presently, he turned and saw a water-carrier going along, with his skin and mug, crying out and saying, 'O exchange! There is no drink but from raisins, there is no love-delight but of the beloved and none sitteth in the place of honour save the man of sense!" So he said to him, 'Here, give me to drink!' The water-carrier looked at him and gave him the mug. He took it and looking into it, shook it up and poured it out on the ground. 'Why dost thou not drink?' asked the water-carrier; and he answered, saying, 'Give me to drink.' So the man filled the cup a second time and he took it and shook it and emptied it on the ground; and thus he did a third time. Quoth the water-carrier, 'If thou wilt not drink, begone.' And Ali said, 'Give me to drink.' So he filled the cup a fourth time and gave it him; and he drank and gave the man a dinar. The water-carrier looked at him with disdain and said, 'Good luck to thee! Good luck to thee! Little folk are one thing and great folk another!, When Ali heard this, he caught hold of the man's gown and drawing on him a poignard of price, such an one as that whereof the poet speaks when he says,

A whittle of watered steel, perfect of temper and bright,
With vipers poison it plies the folk whom it meets in fight;
If it fall, it sundereth limbs and sheddeth the blood forthright
And picks up a jewel, to boot, from marble hard and white.

said to him, 'O old man, speak reasonably to me! Thy water-skin is at the utmost worth three dirhems, and the cups I emptied on the ground held a pint or so of water.' 'It is well,' replied the water-carrier; and Ali said, 'I gave thee a dinar: why, then, dost thou belittle me? Hast thou ever seen any more valiant than I or more generous?' 'Ay,' answered the water-carrier; 'I have seen one more valiant than thou and eke more generous; for, never, since women have borne children, was there on the face of the

earth a man of valour who was not generous.' 'And who is he whom thou deemest braver and more generous than I?' asked Ali.

'Know,' replied the other, 'that I had a strange adventure of late. My father was Sheikh of the water-carriers in Cairo, and when he died, he left me five camels and a mule and shop and house: but the poor man is never content; or, if he be content, he dieth. So I said to myself, "I will go to the Hejaz," and taking a file of camels, bought [goods] on credit, till I had run in debt for five hundred dinars, all of which I lost in the pilgrimage. Then I said in myself, "If I return to Cairo, the folk will put me in prison for their goods." So I returned with the Syrian pilgrims to Aleppo, and thence I went on to Baghdad, where I sought out the Sheikh of the water-carriers of the city and repeated the first chapter of the Koran to him. He questioned me of my case and I told him what had befallen me, whereupon he assigned me a shop and gave me a water-skin and gear. So I sallied forth, trusting in God to provide, and went round about the city. I offered the cup to one, that he might drink; but he said, "I have eaten nought whereon to drink; for a niggardly fellow invited me to-day and set two gugglets before me; so I said to him, 'O son of the sordid, hast thou given me aught to eat, that I should drink after it?' So go thy ways, O water-carrier, till I have eaten somewhat. Then come and give me to drink." Then I accosted another and he said, "God provide thee!" And so I went on till noon, without taking aught, and I said to myself, "Would I had never come to Baghdad I"

Presently, I saw the folk running; so I followed them and saw a long file of cavaliers, riding two and two and clad in steel, with double neck-rings and felt bonnets and burnouses and swords and bucklers. I asked one of the folk whose suite this was, and he answered, "That of Captain Ahmed ed Denef." Quoth I, "And what is he?" "He is town-captain of Baghdad," answered the other, "and to him is committed the care of the suburbs. He gets a thousand dinars a month from the Khalif and Hassan Shouman has the like. Moreover, each of his men gets a hundred dinars a month; and they are now returning to their barrack from the Divan." Ahmed saw me and cried out to me to give him to drink. So I filled the cup and gave it him, and he shook it and emptied it out, like unto thee; and thus he did a second time. Then I filled the cup a third time and he took a draught; after which he said to me, "O water-carrier, whence comest thou?" "From Cairo," answered I, and he, "May God keep Cairo and her people! What brings thee hither?" So I told him my story and gave him to know that I was a debtor fleeing from debt and distress. Quoth he, "Thou art welcome to Baghdad." Then he gave me five dinars and said to his men, "Be generous to him, for the love of God." So each of them gave me a dinar and Ahmed said to me, "What while thou abidest in Baghdad, thou shalt have of us the like every time thou givest us to drink."

Accordingly, I paid them frequent visits and good ceased not to come to me from the folk, till, one day, reckoning up the profit I had made of them, I found it a thousand dinars and said in myself, "The best thing I can do is to return to Egypt." So I went to Ahmed's house and kissed his hand, and he said, "What seekest thou?" Quoth I, "I have a mind to depart;" and I repeated the following verses:

The stranger's sojourning in any land of lands
Even as the building is of mansions on the wind.

The waftings of the breeze cast down what he hath built,
And now to fare away the stranger hath a mind.

"The caravan is about to start for Cairo," added I, "and I wish to return to my people." So he gave me a mule and a hundred dinars and said to me, "I desire to send somewhat by thee. Dost thou know the people of Cairo?" "Yes," answered I; and he said, "Take this letter and carry it to Quicksilver Ali of Cairo and say to him, 'Thy captain salutes thee and he is now with the Khalif.'" So I took the letter and jouneyed back to Cairo, where I paid my debts and plied my trade of a water-carrier; but I have not delivered the letter, because I know not the abode of Quicksilver Ali.' Quoth Ali, 'o elder, be of good cheer: I am that Ali, the first of the lads of Captain Ahmed: give me the letter.' So he gave him the letter and he opened it and read as follows:

'I've written unto thee, adornment of the fair,
A letter that indeed the passing winds shall bear.
Could I but fly, I'd flown for longing after thee;
But how shall he who's clipped of pinions wing the air?

From Captain Ahmed ed Denef to the eldest of his sons, Quicksilver Ali of Cairo, greeting. Thou knowest that I tormented Selaheddin the Cairene and befooled him till I buried him alive and reduced his lads to obey me, and amongst them Ali Kitf el Jemel; and I am now become town-captain of Baghdad and overseer of the suburbs. If thou be still mindful of our love, come to me; haply thou shalt play some trick in Baghdad that may advance thee to the Khalif's service, so he may appoint thee stipends and allowances and assign thee a lodging, which is what thou desirest, and so peace be on thee.'

When Ali read this letter, he kissed it and laying it on his head, gave the water-carrier ten dinars; after which he returned to his lodging and told his comrades and commended them to one another. Then he changed his clothes and donning a tarboosh and a travelling cloak, took a case, containing a bamboo spear, four-and-twenty cubits long, made in several pieces, to fit into each other. Quoth his lieutenant, 'Wilt thou go a journey, whenas the treasury is empty?' 'When I reach Damascus,' answered Ali, 'I will send you what shall suffice you.' Then he set out and fared on, till he overtook a caravan about to start, whereof were the Provost of the Merchants and forty other merchants. They had all loaded their beasts, except the Provost, whose loads lay upon the ground, and Ali heard his caravan-leader, who was a Syrian, say to the muleteers, 'Help me, one of you!' But they mocked him and reviled him. Quoth Ali in himself, 'None will suit me so well to travel withal as this leader.'

Now Ali was beardless and well-favoured; so he went up to the leader and saluted him. The latter welcomed him and said, 'What seekest thou?' 'O my uncle,' replied Ali, 'I see thee alone with forty mule-loads of goods; but why hast thou not brought men to help thee?' 'O my son,' rejoined the other, 'I hired two lads and clothed them and put in each one's pocket two hundred dinars; and they helped me till we came to the Dervishes' Convent,' when they ran away.' Quoth All, 'Whither are you bound?' 'To Aleppo,' answered the Syrian, and Ali said, 'I will help thee.' So they loaded the beasts and the Provost mounted his mule and they set out. The leader rejoiced in Ali and loved him and made much of him and they fared on till nightfall, when they halted

and ate and drank. Then came the time of sleep and Ali lay down and made as if he slept; whereupon the Syrian laid himself near him and Ali rose and sat down at the door of the merchant's pavilion. Presently, the Syrian turned over and would have taken Ali in his arms, but found him not and said in himself, 'It would seem as though he had promised another and he hath taken him; but I have the first right and another night I will keep him.'

Ali sat at the door of the tent till nigh upon daybreak, when he returned and lay down near the Syrian, who found him by his side, when he awoke, and said in himself, 'If I ask him where he has been, he will leave me and go away.' So he dissembled with him and they went on till they came to a forest, in which was a cave, where dwelt a ferocious lion. Now, whenever a caravan passed, they would draw lots among themselves and throw him on whom the lot fell to the lion. So they drew lots and the lot fell upon the Provost of the Merchants. Now the lion stopped the way, awaiting his prey, wherefore the Provost was sore distressed and said to the leader, 'God disappoint thy enterprise and bring thy journey to nought! I charge thee, after my death, give my loads to my children.' Quoth Ali, 'What meaneth all this?' So they told him the case and he said, 'Why do ye run from the cat of the desert? I warrant you I will kill him.'

So the Syrian went to the Provost and told him of this and he said, 'If he kill him, I will give him a thousand dinars.' 'And we,' said the other merchants, 'will reward him likewise.' With this Ali put off his mantle and there appeared upon him armour of steel; then he took a whinyard of steel and [opening it] turned the ring; after which he went forth alone and standing in the road before the lion, cried out at him. The lion ran at him, but Ali smote him between the eyes with his cutlass and cut him in sunder, whilst the caravan-leader and the merchants looked on. Then said he to the leader, 'Have no fear, o my uncle!' and the Syrian answered, saying, 'O my son, I am thy servant for all time.' Then the Provost embraced him and kissed him between the eyes and gave him the thousand dinars, and each of the other merchants gave him twenty dinars.

He deposited all the money with the Provost and they slept that night till the morning, when they set out again, intending for Baghdad, and fared on till they came to the Lion's Wood and the Valley of Dogs, where lay a Bedouin brigand and his tribe, who sallied forth on them. The folk fled from the highwaymen and the Provost said, 'My goods are lost!' When, behold, up came Ali in a coat of leather, full of bells, and bringing out his long lance, fitted it together. Then he seized one of the Arab's horses and mounting it, shook his bells and cried out to the Bedouin chief; saying, 'Come out to me with spears!' The Bedouin's mare took fright at the noise of the bells and Ali struck the chief's spear and broke it. Then he smote him on the neck and cut off his head. When the Bedouins saw their chief fall, they all ran at Ali, but he cried out, saying, 'God is Most Great!' and falling on them, put them to flight. Then he raised the chiefs head on the point of his spear and returned to the merchants, who rewarded him liberally and continued heir journey.

When they reached Baghdad, Au took his money from the Provost and committed it to the Syrian, saying, 'When thou returnest to Cairo, enquire for my lodging and give the money to my deputy.' Then he slept that night and on the morrow he entered the city and enquired for Ahmed ed Denefs lodging; but none

would direct him thereto. So he walked on, till he came to a square called En Nefz, where he saw children at play, and amongst them a lad called Ahmed el Lekit, and said to himself, 'Thou shalt not get news of them but of their little ones.' Then be turned and seeing a sweetmeat-seller, bought cakes of him and called to the children; but Ahmed el Lekit drove the rest away and coming up to him, said, 'What seekest thou?' Quoth Ali, 'I had a son and he died and I saw him in a dream asking for sweetmeats: wherefore I have bought sweetmeats and wish to give each child some.' So saying, he gave Ahmed a cake, and he looked at it and seeing a dinar sticking to it, said, 'Begone! I am no catamite: seek another than I.' 'O my son,' answered Ali, 'it is a sharp fellow who takes the hire, even as is he who gives it. I have sought all day tor Ahmed ed Denef's barrack, but none would direct me thereto; so the dinar is thine, if thou wilt guide me thither.' Quoth the lad, 'I will run before thee, till I come to the place, when I will catch up a stone with my foot and kick it against the door; and so shalt thou know it.'

So he ran on and Ali after him, till they came to the place, when the boy caught up a pebble and kicked it against the door. Ali laid hold of him and would have taken the dinar from him, but could not; so he said to him, 'Go: thou deservest liberality, for thou art a sharp fellow, whole of wit and stout. God willing, if I become captain to the Khalif, I will make thee one of my lads.' Then the boy made off and Ali went up to the door and knocked; whereupon quoth Ahmed ed Denef to the doorkeeper, 'Open the door; that is the knock of Quicksilver Ali.' So he opened the door and Ali entered and saluted Ahmed, who embraced him, and the forty saluted him. And Ahmed gave him a suit of clothes, saying, 'When the Khalif made me captain, he clothed my lads and I kept this suit for thee.' Then they seated him in the place of honour and setting on meat and drink, ate and drank and made merry till the morning, when Ahmed said to Ali, 'Look thou walk not about Baghdad, but abide here.' 'Why so?' asked All. 'I came not hither to be shut up, but to look about me and divert myself' 'O my son,' rejoined Ahmed, 'think not that Baghdad is like Cairo. Baghdad is the seat of the Khalifate: sharpers abound in it and rogueries spring in it as plants spring in the earth.' So Ali abode in the barrack three days, at the end of which time Ahmed said to him, 'I wish to present thee to the Khalif; that he may assign thee an allowance.' But he answered, saying, 'When the time comes.' So he let him go his own way.

One day, as Ali sat in the barrack, his breast became straitened and his soul troubled and he said to himself, 'Come, let us walk awhile in Baghdad and lighten my heart.' So he went out and walked from street to street, till he came to the bazaar, where he entered a cookshop and ate the morning-meal; after which he went out to wash his hands. Presently, he saw forty slaves, with bonnets of felt and cutlasses of steel, come walking, two by two; and last of all came Delileh the Crafty, riding on a mule and clad in a coat of mail, with a gilded helmet on her head. Now she was returning from the Divan to the khan of which she was portress; and when she espied Ali, she looked at him fixedly and saw that he resembled Ahmed ed Denef in height and breadth. Moreover, he was clad in a striped cloak and a burnouse, with a steel cutlass by his side, and valour shone from his eyes, testifying for him and not against him. So she returned to the khan and going in to her daughter, fetched a table of sand, which she levelled and drew a geomantic figure, by which she discovered that the stranger's name

was Ali of Cairo and that his fortune overrode her own and that of her daughter. 'O my mother,' said Zeyneb, 'what has befallen thee, that thou hast recourse to the table of sand?' 'O my daughter,' answered Delileh, 'I have seen this day a young man who resembles Ahmed ed Denef, and I fear lest he come to hear how thou didst strip Ahmed and his men and enter the khan and play us a trick, in revenge for what we did with his chief and the forty; for methinks he hath taken up his lodging with Ed Denef.' 'What is this?' rejoined Zeyneb. 'Methinks thou bast taken his measure.'

Then she donned her finest clothes and went out into the town. When the people saw her, they all made love to her and she promised and retracted and listened and coquetted and passed from market to market, till she saw Ali coming, when she went up to him and rubbed her shoulder against him. Then she turned and said, 'God preserve folk of discrimination!' Quoth he, 'How goodly is thy fashion! To whom dost thou belong?' 'To the gallant like thee,' answered she; and he said, 'Art thou married or single?' 'Married,' replied she. 'Shall it be in my lodging or thine?' asked Ali, and she said, 'I am a merchant's daughter and a merchant's wife and in all my life I have never been out of doors till to-day, when I made ready food and thought to eat, but found I had no mind thereto [without company]. When I saw thee, love of thee entered my heart: so wilt thou solace my soul and eat a mouthful with me?' Quoth he, 'Whoso is invited, let him accept.' So she went on and he followed her from street to street: but presently he bethought himself and said, 'What wilt thou do and thou a stranger? Verily it is said, "Whoso doth whoredom in his strangerhood, God will send him back disappointed." But I will put her off with fair words.' So he said to her, 'Take this dinar and appoint me a day other than this.' 'By the Mighty Name,' answered she, 'it may not be but thou shalt go home with me this very day and I will take thee to friend.'

So he followed her till she came to a house with a lofty porch and a padlock on the door and said to him, 'Open this lock.' 'Where is the key?' asked he. And she answered, 'It is lost.' Quoth he, 'He who opens a lock without a key is a knave, whom it behoves the judge to punish, and I know not how to open doors without keys.' With this she raised her veil and showed him her face, at which he took one look that cost him a thousand sighs. Then she let fall her veil on the lock and repeating over it the names of the mother of Moses, opened it without a key and entered. He followed her and saw swords and armour of steel hanging up; and she put off her veil and sat down with him. Quoth he to himself, '[Needs must thou] accomplish what God hath decreed to thee,' and bent to her, to take a kiss of her cheek; but she covered it with her hand, saying, 'This beseemeth not but by night.' Then she brought a tray of food and wine, and they ate and drank; after which she rose and drawing water from the well, poured from the ewer over his bands, whilst he washed them.

Presently, she cried out and beat upon her breast, saying, 'My husband had a signet ring of ruby, which was pledged to him for five hundred dinars, and I put it on ; but it was too large for me, so I straitened it with wax, and when I let down the bucket into the water, the ring [must have] dropped into the well. So turn thy face to the door, whilst I put off my clothes and go down into the well and fetch it.' Quoth Ali, 'It were shame on me that thou shouldst go down into the well, whilst I am present; none shall do it but I.' So saying, he put off his clothes and tied the rope about himself and she let him down into the well. Now there was much water therein and she said to him, 'The

rope is too short; loose thyself and drop down.' So he did himself loose from the rope and dropped into the water, in which he sank fathoms deep, without touching the bottom of the well; wlilst she veiled herself and taking his clothes, returned to her mother, to whom said she, 'I have stripped Ali the Egyptian and cast him into the Amir Hassan's well, from which there is no chance of his escaping.'

Presently, the Amir Hassan, the master of the house, who had been absent at the Divan, came home and finding the door open, said to his groom, 'Why didst thou not lock the door?' 'O my lord,' answered the groom, 'indeed I locked it with my own hand.' Quoth the Amir, 'As my head liveth, some thief hath entered my house!' Then he went in and searched right and left, but found none and said to the groom, 'Fill the ewer, that I may make the ablution.' So the man lowered the bucket into the well; but, when he drew it up, he found it heavy and looking down, saw one sitting therein; whereupon he let it fall into the water and cried out, saying, 'O my lord, an Afrit came up to me out of the well!' Quoth the Amir, 'Go and fetch four doctors of the law, that they may read the Koran over him, till he go away.' So he fetched the doctors and the Amir said to them, 'Sit round the well and exorcise me this Afrit.' They did as he bade them; after which the groom and another servant lowered the bucket again and Ali clung to it and hid himself under it, till he came near the top, when he sprang out and landed among the doctors, who fell a-cuffing each other and crying out, 'Afrit! Afrit!'

The Amir looked at Ali and seeing him a young man, said to him, 'Art thou a thief?' 'No,' answered Ali. 'Then what dost thou in the well?' asked the Amir; and Ali said, 'I was asleep and dreamt a dream of dalliance; so I went down to the Tigris to wash myself and dived, whereupon the current carried me under the earth and I came up in this well.' 'Tell the truth,' said the Amir. So Ali told him all that had befallen him, and the Amir gave him an old gown and let him go. He returned to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging and told him all that had passed. Quoth Ahmed, 'Did I not tell thee that Baghdad is full of women who play tricks upon men?' And Ali Kitf el Jemel said, 'I conjure thee by the Mighty Name, tell me how it is that thou art the chief of the lads of Cairo and yet hast been stripped by a girl?' This was grievous to Ali and he repented him of not having followed Ahmed's advice.

Then Ed Denef gave him another suit of clothes and Hassan Shouman said to him, 'Dost thou know the girl?' 'No,' answered Ali; and Hassan said, 'It was Zeyneb, the daughter of Delileh the Crafty, the portress of the Khalif's khan and hast thou fallen into her toils, O Ali?' 'Yes,' replied he; and Hassan said, 'O Ali, it was she who took thy chief's clothes and those of all his men.' Quoth Ali, 'This is a disgrace to you all.' Then said Hassan, 'And what thinkest thou to do?' And he answered, 'I purpose to marry her.' 'Put away that thought from thee,' rejoined the other, 'and console thy heart of her.' Quoth Ali, 'O Hassan, do thou counsel me how I shall do to marry her.' 'With all my heart,' replied his comrade. 'If thou wilt drink from my hand and march under my banner, I will bring thee to thy will of her.' And Ali answered, saying, 'I will well.'

So Hassan made him put off his clothes and taking a saucepan, heated therein somewhat as it were pitch, with which he anointed him, and he became like unto a black slave. Moreover, he anointed his lips and smeared his eyes with red kohL Then he clad him in a slave's habit and giving him a tray of kabobs and wine, said to him,

‘There is a black cook in the khan, and thou art now become his like; so go thou to him and accost him in friendly fashion and speak to him in the blacks’ lingo, saying, “It is long since we foregathered in the beer-shop.” He will answer thee, “I have been too busy for this; for I have on my hands forty slaves, for whom I cook the morning and the evening meals, besides making ready a tray for Delileh and the like for her daughter Zeyneb and the dogs’ food.” And do thou say to him, “Come, let us eat kabobs and drink wine.” Then go in with him into the saloon and make him drunk and question him of his service, how many and what dishes he has to cook, and ask him of the dogs’ food and the keys of the kitchen and the larder; and he will tell thee, for a man, when he is drunk, tells all that he would conceal, were he sober. [When thou hast learned all this of him,] drug him and don his clothes and sticking the two knives in thy girdle, take the vegetable-basket and go to the market and buy meat and greens, with which do thou return to the khan and enter the kitchen and the larder and cook the food. Dish it up and put henbane in it, so as to drug the dogs and the slaves and Delileh and Zeyneb. Then serve up and when they are all asleep, go up into the upper chamber and bring away all the clothes thou wilt find hanging there. And if thou have a mind to marry Zeyneb, bring also the forty carrier-pigeons.’

So Ali went to the khan and going in to the cook, saluted him and said, ‘It is long since I have foregathered with thee in the beer-shop.’ Quoth the cook, ‘I have been busy cooking for the slaves and the dogs.’ Then he took him and making him drunk, questioned him of his duties. Said the cook, ‘Every day I cook five dishes for the morning and the like for the evening meal; and yesterday they sought of me a sixth dish, rice dressed with honey and saffron, and a seventh, a mass of cooked pomegranate-seed.’ ‘And what is the order of thy service?’ asked Ali. ‘First,’ answered the cook, ‘I serve up Zeyneb’s tray, then that of Delileh; then I serve the slaves and give the dogs their sufficiency of meat, and the least that satisfies them is a pound each.’ But, as fate would have it, he forgot to ask him of the keys. Then he drugged him and donned his clothes; after which he took the basket and went to the market. There he bought meat and greens and returning to the khan, with the two knives stuck in his girdle, saw Delileh seated at the gate, watching those that went in and out, and the forty slaves with her, armed.

He took courage and entered; but Delileh knew him and said to him,’Back, O captain of thieves! Wilt thou play a trick on me in the khan?’ When he heard this, he turned and said to her, ‘What sayst thou, O portress?’ ‘What hast thou done with the cook?’ asked she. ‘What cook?’ answered he. ‘Is there here another cook than I?’ ‘Thou liest,’ rejoined she; ‘thou art Quicksilver Ali the Cairene.’ And he said to her, in slaves’ lingo, ‘O portress, are Cairenes black or white? I have always been a servant.’ Then said the slaves to him, ‘What is the matter, cousin?’ Quoth Delileh, ‘This is none of your cousin, but Quicksilver Ali the Egyptian; and meseems he hath either killed your cousin or drugged him.’ But they said, ‘Indeed this is our cousin, Saadullah the cook.’ ‘Not so,’ answered she; ‘it is Quicksilver Ali, and he hath dyed his skin.’ Quoth the sharper, ‘And who is Ali? I am Saadullah.’ Then she fetched ointment of proof, with which she anointed Ali’s forearm and rubbed it; but the black did not come off; whereupon quoth the slaves, ‘Let him go and dress us the morning meal.’ ‘If he be indeed your cousin,’ said Delileh, ‘he knows what you sought of him yesternight and

how many dishes he cooks every day.' So they asked him of this and he said, 'Every day I cook you five dishes for the morning and the like for the evening meal, lentils and rice and broth and fricassee and sherbet of roses, and [yesternight ye sought of me] a sixth dish and a seventh, to wit, rice dressed with honey and saffron and cooked pomegranate-seed.' And the slaves said, 'Right.' Then said Delileh, 'Take him in, and if he knows the kitchen and the larder, he is indeed your cousin; but, if not, kill him.'

Now the cook had a cat, which he had brought up, and whenever he entered, it would stand at the door of the kitchen and spring on his shoulders, as soon as he went in. So, when Ali entered, the cat saw him and jumped on his shoulders; but he threw it off and it ran before him to the door of the kitchen and stopped there. He guessed that this was the kitchen-door; so he took the keys and seeing one with traces of feathers thereon, knew it for the key of the kitchen and opened the door therewith. Then he entered and setting down the greens, went out again, guided by the cat, which ran before him and stopped at another door. He guessed that this was the larder and seeing one of the keys with marks of grease thereon, knew it for the key and opened the door therewith; whereupon quoth the slaves, 'O Delileh, were he a stranger, he had not known the kitchen and the larder, nor had he been able to distinguish the keys thereof from the rest; verily, he is our cousin Saadullah.' Quoth she, 'He knew the places by the cat and distinguished the keys, one from the other, by their appearance: but this imposeth not upon me.' Then he returned to the kitchen, where he cooked the morning-meal and carrying Zeyneb's tray up to her apartment, saw all the stolen clothes hanging up; after which he went down and carried Delileh her tray and gave the slaves and the dogs their ration. The like he did at sundown and drugged Delileh's food and that of Zeyneb and the slaves.

Now the doors of the khan were opened and shut with the sun: so he went forth and cried out, saying, 'O dwellers in the khan, the watch is set and we have loosed the dogs; so whoso stirs out after this hath but himself to blame.' Now he had delayed the dogs' supper and put poison therein; so, when he set it before them, they ate of it and died. Then he went up and took all the clothes and the carrier-pigeons and opening the gate, made off to the barrack of the Forty, where he found Hassan Shouman, who asked him how he had fared. So he told him what had passed and he praised him. Then he caused him put off his clothes and made a decoction of herbs, with which he washed him, and his skin became white as before; after which he donned his own clothes and going back to the khan, clad the cook in the clothes he had taken from him and made him smell to the counter-drug: whereupon he awoke and going forth to the greengrocer's, bought vegetables and returned to the khan.

When the day broke, one of the lodgers in the khan came out of his chamber and seeing the gate open and the slaves drugged and the dogs dead, went in to Delileh, whom he found lying drugged, with a scroll on her neck and at her head a sponge steeped in the counter-drug. He set the sponge to her nostrils and she awoke and said, 'Where am I?' Quoth he, 'When I came down from my chamber, I saw the gate of the khan open and the dogs dead and found the slaves and thee drugged.' So she took up the scroll and read therein these words, 'None did this thing save Ali the Egyptian.' Then she awoke the slaves and Zeyneb by making them smell to the counter-drug and said to them, 'Did I not tell you that this was Ali of Cairo? But do ye conceal the

matter.' Then she said to her daughter, 'How often have I told thee that Ali would not forego his revenge? He hath done this in requital of that which thou didst with him and he bad it in his power to do with thee other than this; but he refrained therefrom out of courtesy and a desire that there should be friendship between us.' So saying, she put off her man's clothes and donned woman's attire and tying the kerchief [of truce] about her neck, repaired to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging.

Now when Ali entered with the clothes and the carrier-pigeons, Hassan Shouman gave the hall-keeper the price of forty pigeons and he bought them and cooked them before the men. Presently there came a knock at the door and Ahmed ed Denef said to the hall-keeper, 'That is Delileh's knock: rise and open to her.' So he admitted her and Hassan said to her, 'What brings thee hither, O ill-omened old woman? Verily, thou and thy brother Zureic the fish-monger are of a piece!' 'O captain,' answered she, 'I am in the wrong and my neck is at your mercy; but tell me which of you it was that played me this trick?' Quoth Ahmed, 'It was the first of my lads.' 'For God's sake,' rejoined Delileh, 'intercede with him to give me back the carrier-pigeons and what not, and thou wilt lay me under great obligation.' When Hassan heard this, he said to Ali, 'God requite thee, O Ali! Why didst thou cook the pigeons?' And Ali answered, 'I knew not that they were carrier-pigeons.' Then said Ahmed to the hall-keeper, 'Bring us the cooked pigeons.' So he brought them and Delileh took a piece and tasting it, said, 'This is none of the carrier-pigeons' flesh, for I fed them on grains of musk and their flesh is become even as musk.' Quoth Hassan, 'An thou wilt have the carrier-pigeons, comply with Ali's desire.' 'What is that?' asked she, and Hassan answered, saying, 'He would have thee marry him to thy daughter Zeyneb.' 'I have no power over her except of affection,' said she; and Hassan said to Ali, 'Give her the pigeons.' So he gave them to her, and she took them and rejoiced in them.

Then said Hassan to her, 'Needs must thou give us a sufficient answer.' 'If it be indeed his wish to marry her,' replied Delileh, 'it availed nothing to play this trick upon us: it behoveth him rather to demand her in marriage of her uncle Captain Zureic, him who cries out, saying, "A pound of fish for two farthings!" and hangs up in his shop a nurse containing two thousand dinars; for he is her guardian.' When the forty heard this, they all rose and cried out, saying, 'What manner of talk is this, O strumpet? Dost thou wish to bereave us of our brother Ali of Cairo?' Then she returned to the khan and said to her daughter, 'Ali the Egyptian seeks thee in marriage.' Whereat Zeyneb rejoiced, for she loved him because of his forbearance towards her, and asked her mother what had passed. So she told her, adding, 'I made it a condition that he should demand thy hand of thine uncle, so I might make him fall into destruction.'

Meanwhile Ali turned to his fellows and said to them, 'What manner of man is this Zureic?' 'He was chief of the sharpers of the land of Irak,' answered they, 'and could all but pierce mountains and lay hold upon the stars. He would steal the very kohl from the eye and in brief, be had not his match for roguery; but he hath repented and forsworn his old way of life and opened him a fish shop. Moreover, he has amassed two thousand dinars by the sale of fish and laid them in a purse with strings of silk, to which he has tied bells and rings and rattles of brass. Every time he opens his shop, he hangs up the purse on a peg within the door and cries out, saying, "Where are

ye, o sharpers of Egypt, O cutters of Irak, O tricksters of the land of the Persians? Behold, Zureic the fishmonger hath hung up a purse in front of his shop, and whoso pretendeth to sleight and cunning and can take it by craft, it is his." So the light-fingered gentry come and try to take the purse, but cannot; for he lays at his feet cakes of lead, whilst he fries his fish and tends the fire; and whenever a thief thinks to take him unawares and makes a snatch at the purse, he casts a disc of lead at him and kills him or does him a mischief. So, O Ali, wert thou to tackle him, thou wouldst be as one who jostles a funeral, unknowing who is dead; for thou art no match for him, and we fear his mischief for thee. Indeed, thou hast no call to marry Zeyneb, and he who leaves a thing alone lives without it.' 'This were shame, O comrades,' answered Ali. 'Needs must I take the purse: but bring me a woman's habit.'

So they brought him women's clothes and he clad himself therein and stained his hands with henna. Then he took a lamb and killing it, took out the guts and filled them with the blood and bound them between his thighs; after which he donned women's trousers and walking boots. Moreover, he made himself a pair of false breasts with pelican's pouches and filled them with milk and tied round his hips a piece of linen, which he stuffed with cotton, [to represent a big belly and buttocks], girding himself over all with a silk handkerchief well starched. Then he veiled himself and went out, whilst all who saw him exclaimed, 'What a fine pair of buttocks!' Presently he saw an ass-driver coming, so he gave him a dinar and mounting, rode till he came to Zureic's shop, where he saw the purse hung up and the gold glittering through the meshes. Now Zureic was frying fish, and Ali said to the ass-man, 'O driver, what is that smell?' 'It is the smell of Zureic's fish,' answered he. Quoth Ali, 'I am with child and the smell irketh me; go, fetch me a piece of the fish.' So the man said to Zureic, 'What ails thee to fry fish so early and annoy pregnant women with the smell? I have here the wife of the Amir Hassan Sherr et Teric, and she is with child; so give her a piece of fish, for the child stirs in her belly. O Protector, O my God, avert from us this day's mischief!' So Zureic took a piece of fish and would have fried it, but the fire had gone out and he went in, to rekindle it.

Meanwhile Ali dismounted and sitting down, pressed upon the lamb's gut till it burst and the blood ran out from between his legs. Then he cried out, saying, 'O my back! o my side!' Whereupon the driver turned and seeing the blood running, said, 'What ails thee, O my lady?' 'I have miscarried,' answered Ali, whereupon Zureic looked out and seeing the blood, was affrighted and fled into the [inner] shop. Quoth the driver, 'God torment thee, O Zureic! The lady has miscarried and thou art no match for her husband. Why must thou make a stench so early in the morning? I bade thee bring her a piece, but thou wouldst not.' So saying, he took his ass and went his way, whilst Ali put out his hand to the purse; but no sooner had he touched it than the bells and rings began to jingle and the gold to chink. Quoth Zureic, 'Thy perfidy is discovered, O gallows-bird! Wilt thou put a cheat on me and thou in a woman's habit? Take what cometh to thee!' And he threw a cake of lead at him, but it went askew and lighted on another; whereupon the people rose against Zureic and said to him, 'Art thou a tradesman or a swashbuckler? If thou be a tradesman, take down thy purse and spare the folk thy mischief.' 'In the name of God! On my head be it,' answered he.

As for Ali, he made off to the barrack and told Hassan Shouman what had happened, after which he put off his woman's clothes and donning a groom's habit, took a dish and five dirhems. Then he returned to Zureic's shop and the fishmonger said to him, 'What dost thou want, my master?' He showed him the five dirhems and Zureic would have given him of the fish in the tray, but he said, 'I must have hot fish.' So he put fish in the pan and finding the fire dead, went in to relight it; whereupon Ali put out his hand to the purse and caught hold of the end of it. The bells and rings and rattles jingled and Zureic said, 'Thy trick hath not deceived me. I knew thee by the grip of thy hand on the dish and the dirhems, for all thou art disguised as a groom.' So saying, he threw the lead at him, but he avoided it and it fell into the pan full of hot fish and broke it and overturned it, fat and all, upon the shoulders of the Cadi, who was passing. The fat ran down inside his clothes to his privy parts and he cried out, saying, 'O my privities! What a pickle you are in! Alas, unhappy that I am! Who hath played me this trick?' 'O my lord,' answered the people, 'it was some boy that threw a stone into the pan: but for God's protection, it had been worse.' Then they turned and seeing the piece of lead and that it was Zureic who had thrown it, said to him, 'O Zureic, this is not allowed of God! Take down the purse, or it will be the worse for thee.' 'If it please God,' answered he, 'I will take it down.'

Meanwhile, Ali returned to the barrack and told his comrades what had passed and they said, 'Thou hast exhausted two-thirds of his sharpness.' Then he changed his groom's dress for that of a merchant and going out, met a snake-charmer, with a bag of serpents and another of gear, to whom said he, 'O charmer, come and amuse my lads, and thou shalt have largesse.' So he accompanied him to the barrack, where he fed him and drugging him, took his clothes and put them on. Then he took the bagi and repairing to Zureic's shop, began to play the flute. Quoth Zureic, 'God provide thee!' But Ali took out the serpents and cast them down before him; whereat the fish-seller, who was afraid of snakes, fled from them into the [inner] shop. Then Ali picked up the snakes and thrusting them back into the bag, put out his hard and caught hold of the end of the purse. The bells rang and the rings and rattles jangled, and Zureic said, 'Wilt thou never cease to play me tricks? Now thou feignest thyself a serpent-charmer.' So saying, he took up a piece of lead and hurled it at Ali; [but he avoided it,] and it fell on the head of a groom, who was passing by, in attendance upon his master, a trooper, and knocked him down. Quoth the soldier, 'Who did that?' And the folk said, 'It was a stone fell from the roof.' So the soldier passed on and the people, seeing the piece of lead, went up to Zureic and said to him, Take down the purse;' and he said, 'God willing, I will take it down this very night.'

Ali ceased not to play tricks upon Zureic, till he had made seven different attempts for the purse, but without success. Then he returned the snake-charmer his clothes and gear and gave him a present; after which he went back to Zureic's shop and heard him say, 'If I leave the purse here to-night, he will break in and take it; I will carrry it home with me.' So he shut his shop and putting the purse in his sleeve, set out home, and Ali followed hin. till he came near his house, when he saw a wedding toward in a neighbour's house and said in himself, 'I will go home and give my wife the purse and change my clothes and return to the wedding.' Now he was married to a black girl, one of the freed women of the Vizier Jaafer, and she had borne him a son,

whom he named Abdallah, and he had promised her to spend the money in the purse on the occasion of the boy's circumcision and marriage. So he went into his house and Ali, following him by stealth, stepped into a closet, whence he could hear and see all that passed. When Zureic entered, his wife saw that his face was overcast and asked him what had vexed him. Quoth he, 'God hath afflicted me this day with a sharking fellow, who hath made seven attempts to get the purse, but without avail' And she said, 'Give it to me, that I may lay it up against the boy's festival-day.' So he gave her the purse and changed his clothes, saying, 'Keep the purse safely, O Umm Abdallah, for I am going to the wedding.' But she said, 'Sleep awhile.' So he lay down and fell asleep. Presently, Ali rose and going on tiptoe to the purse, took it and went to the house of the wedding and stood there, looking on.

Meanwhile, Zureic dreamt that he saw a bird fly away with the purse and awaking in affright, said to his wife, 'Rise; look for the purse.' So she looked and finding it gone, buffeted her face and said, 'Alas, the blackness of thy fortune, O Umm Abdallah! A thief bath taken the purse.' 'By Allah,' quoth Zureic, 'it can be none othei than the rascal [who has plagued me all day!] He has followed me home and taken the purse; and needs must I go and get it back.' 'Except thou bring it,' answered his wife, 'I will lock the door on thee and leave thee to pass the night in the street.' So he went up to the house of the wedding, and seeing Ali looking on, said to himself, 'This is he who took the purse; but he lodges with Ahmed ed Denef.' So he ran on before him to the barrack and climbing up at the back, made his way into the saloon, where he found every one asleep. Presently there came a knock at the door and Zureic said, 'Who is there?' 'Ali of Cairo,' answered the knocker; and Zureic said, 'Hast thou brought the purse?' Ali thought it was Hassan Shouman and answered, 'Yes; open the door.' Quoth Zureic, 'I cannot open to thee till I see the purse; for the chief and I have laid a wager about it.' 'Put out thy hand,' said Ali. So he put out his hand through the hole of the door and Ali laid the purse in it; whereupon Zureic took it and going forth, as he had come in, returned to the wedding.

Ali stood awhile at the door, but none opened to him; and at last he gave a thundering knock that awoke all the men and they said, 'That was Ali of Cairo's knock.' So the hail-keeper opened to him and Hassan Shouman said to him, 'Hast thou brought the purse?' 'Enough of jesting, O Shouman,' replied All. 'Didst thou not swear that thou wouldst not open to me till I showed thee the purse, and did I not give it thee through the hole of the door?' 'By Allah,' said Hassan, 'it was not I who took it, but Zureic!' Quoth All, 'Needs must I get it again,' and repaired to the house of the wedding, where he heard the buffoon say, 'Largesse, O Abou Abdallah I Good luck to thee with thy son!' Quoth Ali, 'My luck is in the ascendant,' and going to the fishmonger's house, climbed over the back wall and found his wife asleep. So he drugged her and clad himself in her clothes. Then he took the child in his arms and went round, searching, till he found a basket containing gimblet-cakes, which Zureic, of his niggardliness, had kept from the Feast of the New Moon. Presently, the fishmonger returned and knocked at the door, whereupon Ali imitated his wife's voice and said, 'Who is at the door?' 'Abou Abdallah,' answered Zureic, and Ali said, 'I swore that I would not open the door to thee, except thou broughtest back the purse.' Quoth the fishmonger, 'I have brought it.' 'Then give it into my band,' said Ali, 'before I open

the door;' and Zureic answered, saying, 'Let down the basket and take it therein.' So Ali let down the basket and the other put the purse therein, whereupon Ali took it and drugged the child. Then he aroused the woman and making off by the back way as he had entered, returned with the child and the purse and the basket of cakes to the barrack and showed them all to the forty, who praised his dexterity. Then he gave them the cakes, which they ate, and delivered the boy to Hassan Shouman, saying, 'This is Zureic's child; hide it.' So he hid it and fetching a lamb, gave it to the hail-keeper, who cooked it whole, wrapped in a cloth, and laid it out, with a shroud over it, as it were a dead body.

Meanwhile Zureic stood awhile, waiting at the door then gave a thundering knock, and his wife said to him, 'Hast thou brought the purse?' 'Didst thou not take it up in the basket but now?' answered he, and she said, 'I let no basket down to thee, nor have I set eyes on the purse.' 'By Allah,' quoth he, 'the sharper hath been beforehand with me and hath taken the purse again!' Then he searched the house and found the basket of cakes gone and the child missing and cried out, saying, 'Alas, my child!' Whereupon the woman beat her breast and said, 'I will complain of thee to the Vizier, for none has killed my child but this sharper, and all because of thee.' Quoth Zureic, 'I will answer for him.' So he tied the kerchief [of truce] about his neck and going to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging, knocked at the door. The hall-keeper admitted him and Hassan Shouman said to him, 'What brings thee here?' Quoth he, 'Do ye intercede with Ali the Cairene to restore me my child and I will give him the purse.' 'God requite thee, O Ali!' said Hassan. 'Why didst thou not tell me it was his child?' 'What has befallen him?' asked Zureic, and Hassan answered, saying, 'We gave him raisins to eat, and he choked and died; and here he is.' Quoth Zureic, 'Alas, my child! What shall I say to his mother?' Then he rose and opening the shroud, saw it was a lamb cooked whole and said, 'Thou makest sport of me, O Ali!' Then they gave him the child, and Ahmed ed Denef said to him, 'Thou didst hang up the purse, proclaiming that it should be the property of any sharper who should avail to take it, and Ali has taken it; so it is his.' Quoth Zureic, 'I make him a present of it.' But Ali said to him, 'Do thou accept it on account of thy niece Zeyneb.' And Zureic replied, 'I accept it.'

Then said the forty, 'We demand of thee Zeyneb in marriage for Ali of Cairo.' But he answered, saying, 'I have no control over her but of courtesy.' Quoth Hassan, 'Dost thou grant our suit?' 'Yes,' replied he; 'I will grant her in marriage to him who can avail to her dowry.' 'And what is her dowry?' asked Hassan. Quoth Zureic, 'She hath sworn that none shall mount her breast except he bring her the robe of Kemer, daughter of Azariah the Jew, and her crown and girdle and pantable of gold.' 'If I do not bring her the robe this very night,' said Ali, 'I renounce my claim to her.' 'O Ali,' rejoined Zureic, 'if thou play any tricks on Kemer, thou art a dead man.' 'Why so?' asked Ali, and the other said, 'Her father Azariah is a skilful magician, wily and perfidious, and has the Jinn at his service. He has without the city a palace, the walls whereof are one brick of gold and one of silver and which is only visible to the folk whilst he is therein: but, when he goes forth, it disappears. He brought his daughter this robe I speak of from an enchanted treasure, and every day he lays it in a dish of gold and opening the windows of the palace, cries out, saying, "Where are the sharpers of Cairo, the cutters of Irak, the master-thieves of the land of the Persians? Whoso availeth to take this robe, it is his."

So all the light-fingered gentry essayed the adventure, but availed not to take it, and he turned them into apes and asses.' But Ali said, 'I will assuredly take it and Zeyneb shall be displayed therein.'

So he went to the shop of the Jew and found him a man of stern and forbidding aspect, seated with scales and weights and gold and silver and nests of drawers and so forth before him, and a mule tethered hard by. Presently he rose and shutting his shop, laid the gold and silver in*two purses, which he placed in a pair of saddle-bags and set on the mule's back. Then he mounted and rode, followed, without his knowledge, by Ali, till he came some way without the city, when he took out a little dust from a purse he carried in his pocket and muttering over it certain magical words, sprinkled it in the air. No sooner had he done this than there appeared a palace, which had not its like, and the Jew mounted the steps without alighting; after which he dismounted and taking the saddle-bags off the mule's back, dismissed the latter, which was a genie he had pressed into his service, and it vanished. Then he entered the palace and sat down, whilst Ali watched him from behind the door. Presently he arose and opening the lattices, took a wand of gold, [which he set up in the open window,] and hanging thereto a golden tray by chains of the same metal, laid in it the robe and cried out, saying, 'Where are the sharpers of Cairo? Where are the cutpurses of Irak, the master-thieves of the land of the Persians? Whoso can take this robe by practice, it is his!' Then he pronounced certain conjurations and behold, a tray of food spread itself before him. He ate and conjured a second time, whereupon the tray disappeared and a table of wine appeared in its stead, and he drank. Quoth Ali, 'I know not how I am to take the robe, except if he be drunken.'

Then he stole up behind the Jew, with his drawn sword in his hand; but the other turned and conjured, saying to his hand, 'Hold with the sword;' whereupon Ali's right arm was arrested and abode half-way in the air, holding the sword. He put out his left hand to the weapon, but it also abode fixed in the air, and so with his right foot, leaving him standing on one foot. Then the Jew dispelled the charm from him and Ali became as before. Then Azariah levelled a table of sand and drew a geomantic figure, by which he found that the intruder's name was Quicksilver Ali of Cairo; so he turned to him and said, 'Who art thou and what dost thou here?' 'I am Ali of Cairo,' answered the sharper, 'of the band of Ahmed ed Denef. I sought the hand of Zeyneb, daughter of Delileh the Crafty, and she demanded thy daughter's robe to her dowry; give it to me and become a Muslim, if thou wouldst save thy life.' 'After thy death,' answered the Jew. 'Many have gone about to steal the robe, but could not avail thereto; so, if thou wilt take good advice, thou wilt begone and save thyself; for they only seek the robe of thee, that thou mayst fall into destruction; and indeed, had I not found by geomancy that thy fortune overritdeth my own, I had cut off thy head.'

Ali rejoiced to hear that his luck overrode that of the Jew and said to him, 'There is no help for it but I must have the robe and thou must become a true believer.' 'Is this thy last word?' asked the Jew, and Ali answered, 'Yes.' So the Jew took a cup and filling it with water, conjured over it and said to Ali, 'Quit this shape of a man for that of an ass.' Then he sprinkled him with the water and straightway he became an ass, with hoofs and long ears, and fell to braying after the manner of asses. The Jew drew a circle round him, which became a wall against him, and drank on till the morning,

when he said to Ali, 'I will ride thee to-day and give the mule a rest.' So he locked up the robe and tray and rod in a cupboard and conjured over Ali, who followed him. Then he laid the saddle-bags on his back and mounting, rode forth of the palace, whereupon it disappeared and he rode into Baghdad, till he came to his shop, where he alighted and emptied the bags of gold and silver into the trays before him. As for Ali, he tied him up by the shop-door, where he stood, hearing and understanding all that passed, without being able to speak.

Presently, up came a young merchant with whom fortune had played the tyrant and who could find no easier way of earning his livelihood than water-carrying. So he brought his wife's bracelets to the Jew and said to him, 'Give me the worth of these bracelets, that I may buy me an ass.' 'What wilt thou do with him?' asked the Jew, and the other answered, 'I mean to fetch water from the river on his back, and earn my living thereby.' Quoth the Jew, 'Take this ass of mine.' So he sold him the bracelets and received Ali of Cairo in part payment, in the shape of an ass, and carried him home. Quoth Ali in himself, 'If the ass-man clap the pannel on me and load me with water-skins and go half a score journeys a day with me, he will ruin my health and I shall die.' So, when the water-carrier's wife came to bring him his fodder, he butted her with his head and she fell on her back; whereupon he sprang on her and smiting her head with his mouth, put out that which his father left him. She cried out and the neighbours came to her assistance and beat him and drove him off her breast. When her husband came home, she said to him, 'Either divorce me or return the ass to [his former] owner.' 'What has happened?' asked he; and she answered, saying, 'This is a devil in the guise of an ass. He sprang upon me, and had not the neighbours beaten him off me, he had done a foul thing with me.'

So he carried the ass back to the Jew, who said to him, 'Why hast thou brought him back?' and he replied, 'He did a foul thing with my wife.' So the Jew gave him his money again and he went away; and Azariah said to Ali, 'Unlucky wretch that thou art, hast thou recourse to knavery to cause him return thee to me? But since it pleases thee to be an ass, I will make thee a laughing-stock to great and small.' Then he mounted him and rode till he came without the city, when he brought out the powder and conjuring over it, cast it abroad in the air, and immediately the palace appeared. He entered and taking the saddle-bags off the ass, set up the rod and dish and hung out the robe, proclaiming aloud as of his wont. Then he conjured, and meat and wine appeared before him and he ate and drank; after which he took a cup of water and pronouncing certain words thereover, sprinkled it on Ali, saying, 'Quit this shape and return to thy former one.' Ali straightway became a man again and Azariah said to him, 'O Ali, take good advice and be content with [what thou hast felt of] my mischief. Thou hast no call to marry Zeyneb nor to take my daughter's robe, for it is no easy matter for thee; so leave covetise and it will be better for thee. Else will I turn thee into a bear or an ape or set an Afrit on thee, who will cast thee behind the Mountain Caf.' 'O Azariah,' answered Ali, 'I have engaged to take the robe and needs must I have it and thou must become a Muslim; else I will kill thee.' 'O Ali,' rejoined the Jew, 'thou art like a walnut; unless it be broken, it cannot be eaten.'

Then he took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled Ali with it, saying, 'Take the shape of a bear;' whereupon he instantly became a bear and the Jew muzzled

him and putting a collar about his neck, chained him to a picket of iron. Then he sat down and ate and drank, now and then throwing him a morsel and emptying the dregs of the cup over him, till the morning, when he rose and lay by the tray and the robe and conjured over the bear, which followed him to the shop. There he tied him up by the chain and he abode, hearing and seeing and understanding, but unable to speak, whilst the Jew sat down and emptied the gold and silver into the trays before him. Presently up came a merchant, who accosted the Jew and said to him, 'Wilt thou sell me yonder bear? I have a wife who is my cousin [and is sick;] and it hath been prescribed to her to eat bears' flesh and anoint herself with the grease.' At this the Jew rejoiced and said in himself, 'I will sell him to this merchant, so he may slaughter him and we be at peace from him,' And Ali thought in himself, 'By Allah, this fellow means to slaughter me; but deliverance is with God.' Then said the Jew, 'He is a present from me to thee.' So the merchant took him and carried him to the butcher, to whom he said, 'Take thy tools and follow me.' So the butcher took his knives and followed the merchant to his house, where he bound the beast and fell to sharpening his knife; but when he went up to him to kill him, the bear escaped from his hands and rising into the air, disappeared from sight.

Now the reason of this was on this wise. When the Jew returned to his palace, his daughter questioned him of Ali and he told her what had happened; whereupon, 'Call a genie,' said she, 'and ask him of the youth, whether he be indeed Quicksilver Ali or another who seeketh to put a cheat on thee.' So Azariah called a genie and questioned him of Ali. And he answered, saying, 'It is Ali of Cairo himself. The butcher has bound him and whetted his knife to kill him.' Quoth the Jew, 'Go, snatch him up and bring him hither, ere the butcher slaughter him.' So the genie flew off and snatching Ali out of the butcher's hands, carried him to the palace and set him down before the Jew, who took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled him therewith, saying, 'Return to thine own shape.' And he straightway became a man again as before. The Jew's daughter Kemer, seeing him to be a handsome young man, fell in love with him and he with her; and she said to him, 'O unlucky one, why dost thou go about to take my robe and enforce my father deal thus with thee?' Quoth he, 'I have engaged to get it for Zeyneb the Trickstress, that I may wed her therewith.' And she said, 'Others than thou have gone about with my father to get the robe, but could not compass it: so put away this thought from thee.' But he answered, saying, 'Needs must I have it, and thy father must become a Muslim; or I will kill him.'

Then said the Jew, 'See, O my daughter, how this unlucky fellow seeks his own destruction. But I will turn him into a dog.' So he took a cup graven with characters and full of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled Ali therefrom, saying, 'Take the form of a dog.' Whereupon he straightway became a dog, and the Jew and his daughter drank together till the morning, when the former laid up the robe and tray and mounted his mule. Then he conjured over the dog, which followed him, as he rode towards the town, and all the dogs barked at Ali, as he passed, till he came to the shop of a broker, who rose and drove away the dogs, and Ali lay down before him. The Jew turned and looked for him, but finding him not, [rode on].

Presently, the broker shut up his shop and went home, followed by the dog. When his daughter saw the dog enter the house, she veiled her face and said, 'O my father,

why dost thou bring a strange man in to me?' 'O my daughter,' answered the broker, 'this is a dog.' 'Not so,' quoth she, 'it is Ali of Cairo, whom the Jew Azariah hath enchanted.' And she turned to the dog and said to him, 'Art thou not Ali of Cairo?' And he signed to her with his head, as who should say, 'Yes.' Then said her father to her, 'Why did the Jew enchant him?' And she answered, 'Because of his daughter Kemer's robe; but I can release him.' 'If thou canst indeed do him this good office,' said the broker, 'now is the time.' Quoth she, 'If he will marry me, I will release him.' And he signed to her with his head, as who should say, 'Yes.' So she took a cup of water, graven with certain signs and characters, and conjuring over it, [was about to sprinkle Ali therewith,] when she heard a great cry and the cup fell from her hand. She turned and lo, it was her father's maid, who had cried out; and she said to her, 'O my mistress, is it thus thou keepest thy covenant between me and thee? None taught thee this fashion but I, and thou didst covenant with me that thou wouldst do nought without consulting me and that he who took thee to wife should marry me also, and that one night should be mine and one thine.' And the broker's daughter said, 'It is well.'

When the broker heard the maid's words, he said to his daughter, 'Who taught the maid?' And she answered, 'herself.' So he asked her and she said, 'Know, O my lord, that, when I was with Azariah the Jew, I used to spy upon him and listen to him, when he performed his magical operations; and when he went forth to his shop in Baghdad, I opened his books and read in them, till I became skilled in the Cabala. One day, he was warm with wine and would have me lie with him, but I refused, saying, "I may not grant thee this except thou become a Muslim." He refused and I required him to carry me to the Sultan's market and sell me there. So he sold me to thee and I taught my young mistress, making it a condition with her that she should do nought, without taking counsel with me, and that whoso married her should marry me also, one night for her and one for me.' Then she took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled the dog therewith; saying, 'Return to the form of a man.' And he was straightway restored to his former shape; whereupon the broker saluted him and asked him the manner of his enchantment. So Ali told him all that had passed and the broker said to him, 'Will [not] my daughter and the maid suffice thee?' But he answered, saying, 'Needs must I have Zeyneb [also].'

At this moment there came a knock at the door and the maid said, 'Who is at the door?' 'Kemer, daughter of Azariah the Jew,' answered the new comer. 'Is Ali of Cairo with you?' 'O Jew's daughter,' answered the young lady, 'if he be with us, what wilt thou with him? Go down, O maid, and open to her.' So the maid let her in, and when Ali saw her, he said to her, 'What brings thee hither, O dog's daughter?' Quoth she, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God. Do men in the faith of Islam give marriage-portions to women or women to men?' 'Men endow women,' answered Ali. 'Then,' said she, 'I come and dower myself for thee, bringing thee, as my marriage-portion, my robe, together with the rod and tray and chains and the head of my father, thine enemy and the enemy of God.' And she threw down the Jew's head before him. Now the manner of her killing her father was as follows. On the night of his turning Ali into a dog, she saw, in a dream, one who said to her, 'Become a Muslim.' And she did so. Next morning, as soon as she awoke, she

expounded Islam to her father, but he refused to embrace the faith; so she drugged him and killed him. As for Ali, he took the gear and giving the broker rendezvous for the morrow at the Divan of the Khalif, that he might take his daughter and the maid to wife, set out, rejoicing, to return to the barrack of the Forty.

On his way, he met a sweetmeat-seller, who was beating hand upon hand and saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Folk's labour is become sin and men are active but in fraud!, Then said he to Ali, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, taste of this marchpane!' So Ali took a piece and ate it and fell down senseless, for there was henbane therein; whereupon the sweetmeat-seller took the robe and the tray and the rest of the gear and thrusting them into the box in which he kept his sweetmeats, made off. Presently he met a cadi, who called to him, saying, 'Come hither, O sweetmeat-seller?' So he went up to him and setting down his sack, laid the tray of sweetmeats thereon and said, 'What dost thou want?' 'Marchpane and sugar-almonds,' answered the cadi and taking some in his hand, said, 'These are adulterated.' Then he brought out sweetmeats from his sleeve and gave them to the sweetmeat-seller, saying, 'Look at this ware; how excellent it is! Eat it and make the like.' So he ate and fell down senseless, for the sweet-meats were drugged, whereupon the sham cadi, who was none other than Hassan Shouman, bundled him into the sack and made off with him, tray and chest and all, to the barrack of the Forty. Now the reason of this was as follows. When Ali had been gone some days in quest of the robe and they heard no news of him, Ahmed ed Denef said to his men, 'O lads, go and seek for your brother Ali.' So they sallied forth in quest of him and among the rest Hassan Shouman, disguised in a cadi's habit. He came across the sweetmeat-seller and knowing him for Ahmed el Lekit [Delileh's grandson,] suspected him of having played some trick upon Ali; so be drugged him and did as we have seen.

Meanwhile, the other forty went about, making search in different directions, and amongst them Ali Kitf el Jemel, who, seeing a crowd of people, made towards them and found Quicksilver Ali lying drugged and senseless in their midst. So he revived him and he came to himself and said, 'Where am I?' 'We found thee lying here drugged,' answered El Jemel, 'but know not who drugged thee.' Quoth Ali, 'It was a certain sweetmeat-seller who drugged me and took the gear from me: but where is he gone?' 'We have seen nothing of him,' replied his comrades; 'but come, rise and go home with us.' So they returned to the barrack, where they found Ahmed ed Denef, who greeted Ali and enquired if he had brought the robe. Quoth he, 'I was coming hither with it and the Jew's head and what not else, when a sweetmeat-seller met me and drugged me and took them ftom me; but, if I come across him again, I will requite him.'

Presently Hassan Shouman came out of a closet and said to him, 'O Ali, hast thou gotten the gear?' So he told him what had befallen him and added, 'If I knew where to find the knave, I would pay him out.' 'Knowest thou whither he went?' 'Yes,' answered Hassan; 'I know where he is,' and opening the door of the closet, showed him the sweetmeat-seller within, drugged and senseless. Then he aroused him and he opened his eyes and finding himself in presence of Quicksilver Ali and Ahmed ed Denef and the Forty, started up and said, 'Where am I and who has laid hands on me?' 'It was I laid hands on thee,' answered Hassan; and Ali said, 'O perfidious wretch, wilt

thou play thy tricks on me?' And he would have slain him: but Hassan said to him, 'Hold thy hand, for this fellow is become thy kinsman.' 'How so?' asked Ali; and Hassan said, 'This is Ahmed el Lekit, Zeyneb's sister's son.'

Then said Ali to the prisoner, 'Why didst thou thus, O Lekit?' and he answered, saying, 'My grandmother, Delileh the Crafty, bade me do it; because Zureic the fishmonger foregathered with her and said, "Quicksilver Ali is a sharper and a past master in craft and knavery, and he will certainly kill the Jew and bring back the robe." So she sent for me and said to me, "O Ahmed, dost thou know Ali of Cairo?" "Yes," answered I; "it was I who directed him to Ahmed ed Denef's lodging, when he first came to Baghdad." Quoth she, "Go and set thy snares for him, and if he have brought back the gear, put a cheat on him and take it from him." So I went round about the city, till I met a sweetmeat-seller and buying his clothes and stock-in-trade and gear for ten dinars, did with thee as thou knowest.' Quoth All, 'Go back to thy grandmother and Zureic and tell them that I have brought the gear and the Jew's head and bid them meet me to-morrow at the Khalif's Divan, to receive Zeyneb's dowry.' And Ahmed ed Denef rejoiced in this and said to Ali, 'Thou hast not disappointed our pains in rearing thee, O Ali!'

Next morning, Ali took the robe and tray and the rod and chains of gold, together with the Jew's head on a pike, and went up, accompanied by Ahmed ed Denef and the Forty, to the Divan, where they kissed the ground before the Khalif, who turned and seeing a youth of the most valiant aspect, enquired of Ahmed ed Denef concerning him. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Ahmed, 'this is Quicksilver Ali the Egyptian, captain of the brave boys of Cairo, and he is the first of my lads.' And the Khalif loved him for the valour that shone from between his eyes, testifying for him and not against him. Then Ali rose and cast the Jew's head down before him, saying, 'May all thine enemies be like this one, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth Er Reshid, 'Whose head is this?' And Ali answered, 'It is the head of Azariah the Jew.' 'Who slew him?' asked the Khalif. So Ali related to him all that had passed, from first to last, and the Khalif said, 'I had not thought thou wouldst kill him, for that he was a sorcerer.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Ali, 'my Lord made me able to his slaughter.' Then the Khalif sent the chief of the police to the Jew's palace, where he found him lying headless; so he laid the body on a bier, and carried it to Er Reshid, who commanded to burn it.

At this moment up came Kemer and kissing the earth before the Khalif, informed him that she was the Jew's daughter and that she had become a Muslim. Then she renewed her profession before the Commander of the Faithful and said to him, 'Be thou my intercessor with Quicksilver Ali that he take me to wife.' [So Er Reshid interceded with Ali] and she appointed him her guardian to consent to her marriage with the sharper, to whom he gave the Jew's palace and all its contents, saying, 'Ask a boon of me.' Quoth Ali, 'I beg of thee to let me stand on thy carpet and eat of thy table.' And the Khalif said, 'O Ali, hast thou any lads?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'I have forty lads; but they are in Cairo.' 'Send to Cairo,' said the Khalif' and fetch them hither. But hast thou a lodging for them?' 'No,' replied Ali; and Hassan Shouman said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I make him a present of my barrack, with all that is therein.' But the Khalif answered, saying, 'O Hassan, thy lodging is thine own.' And

bade his treasurer give the court architect ten thousand dinars, that he might build Ali a hall with four estrades and forty sleeping-closets for his lads. Then said he, 'O Ali, hast thou any further wish, that we may order its fulfilment?' 'O King of the age,' answered Ali, 'be thou my intercessor with Delileh the Crafty that she give me her daughter Zeyneb to wife and take the Jew's robe and gear in lieu of dower.' Delileh accepted the Khalif's intercession and took the robe and dish and what not, and they drew up the marriage contracts between Ali and Zeyneb and Kemer, the Jew's daughter and the broker's daughter and the maid. Moreover, the Khalif assigned him stipends and gratuities and a table morning and evening, together with allowances for fodder and what not.

Then Ali fell to making ready for the wedding festivities and after thirty days, he wrote a letter to his comrades in Cairo, wherein he gave them to know of the favours that the Khalif had bestowed upon him and said, 'I have married four girls and needs must ye come to the wedding.' So, after awhile, the forty lads arrived and they held high festival. Moreover, he lodged them in his barrack and entreated them with the utmost honour and presented them to the Khalif, who bestowed on them dresses of honour and largesse. Then the tiring-women displayed Zeyneb before Ali in the robe of the Jew's daughter, and he went in to her and found her an unpierced pearl and a filly that none but he had ridden. Then he went in to the three other girls and found them accomplished in beauty and grace.

After this, it befell that Ali was one night on guard by the Khalif and the latter said to him, 'O Ali, I wish thee to tell me all that has befallen thee from first to last.' So Ali related to him all his adventures and the Khalif bade record them and lay them up in the royal treasuries. So they wrote down all that had befallen him and laid it up with other histories for the people of the Best of Men. And Ali and his wives and comrades abode in all delight and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies; and blessed and exalted be Allah, for He [alone] is All-knowing!

Ardeshir and Heyat En Nufous.

THERE was once in the city of Shiraz a mighty king called Seif el Aazem Shah, who had grown old, without being blessed with a son. So he summoned the doctors and sages and said to them, 'I am grown old and ye know my case and the state and ordinance of the kingdom, and I fear for my subjects after me, for that up to now God hath not vouchsafed me a son.' 'We will compound thee drugs,' answered they, 'wherein, if it please God the Most High, there shall be efficacy.' So they mixed him drugs, which he used and lay with his wife, and she conceived by leave of God the Most High, who saith to a thing, 'Be,' and it is. When her months were accomplished, she gave birth to a son like the moon, whom his father named Ardeshir, and he grew up and throve and applied himself to the study of science and polite letters, till he attained the age of fifteen.

Now there was in Irak a king called Abdulcadir, who had a daughter, by name Heyat en Nufous, and she was like the rising full moon; but she had an aversion to men and the folk scarce dared name them in her presence. The kings of the Chosroes had sought her in marriage of her father; but, when he spoke with her thereof, she said, 'Never will I do this thing; and if thou force me, I will slay myself.' Ardeshir heard of her and fell in love with her and told his father, who, seeing his case, took pity on him and promised him that he should marry her. So he despatched his Vizier to demand her in marriage of King Abdulcadir; but he refused, and when the Vizier returned to King Seif el Aazem and acquainted him with the failure of his mission, he was exceeding wroth and said, 'Shall the like of me send to one of the kings on an occasion and he accomplish it not?' Then he let make proclamation to his troops, bidding them get out the tents and equip them for war with all diligence, though they should borrow money for the necessary expenses; and he said, 'I will not turn back, till I have laid waste King Abdulcadir's dominions and slain his men and plundered his treasures and blotted out his traces!'

When the report of this reached Ardeshir, he rose from his bed and going in to his father, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O mighty King, burden not thyself with this thing and levy not thy troops neither spend thy money. Thou art stronger than King Abdulcadir, and if thou loose upon him this thy host, thou wilt lay waste his dominions and spoil his good and slay his men and himself; but, when his daughter comes to know what hath befallen her father and his people on her account, she will kill herself, and I shall die for love of her; for I can never live after her.' 'And what then thinkest thou to do, O my son?' asked the King. 'I will don a merchant's habit and cast about how I may win to the princess and compass my desire of her.' Quoth Seif al Aazem, 'Art thou determined upon this?' And the prince said, 'Yes, O my father;' whereupon the King called his Vizier and said to him, 'Do thou journey with my son, the darling of my heart, and help him to his desire and watch over him and guide him with thy sound judgment and stand to him in my stead.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier; and the King gave his son three hundred thousand dinars in gold and great store of jewels and precious stones and goldsmiths' ware and stuffs and other things of price. Then Ardeshir went in to his mother and kissed her hands

and asked her blessing. She blessed him and opening her treasuries, brought out to him necklaces and trinkets and apparel and all manner of other precious things laid up from the time of the bygone kings, whose price might not be evened with money. Moreover, he took with him of his servants and slaves and cattle all that he needed for the road and clad himself and the Vizier and their company in merchants' habits.

Then he bade his parents and kinsfolk and friends farewell and setting out, fared on over deserts and wastes all tides of the day and watches of the night; and whenas the way was long with him, he recited the following verses:

Passion and longing and unease are heavy on my spright,
Nor is there one to succour me 'gainst destiny's unright.
Arcturus and the Pleiades I watch, as 'twere for love
A servant of the stars I'd grown; yea, all the tides of night
Still for the morning-star I look, till, when at last it comes,
I'm yearning, maddened and my pain redouble for its sight.
From the religion of thy love I have not strayed, I swear;
Nay, wakeful-lidded aye am I, a love distracted wight.
Though that I hope be hard to win and languor waste me sore
And patience after thee to live and helpers fail me quite,
Yet will I constantly await till God our loves unite
And mortify the foe and bring to nought the enviers' spite.

Then he swooned away and the Vizier sprinkled rose- water on him, till he came to himself, when he said to him, 'O king's son, possess thy soul in patience; for the issue of patience is solace, and behold, thou art on the way to that thou desirest.' And he ceased not to speak him fair and comfort him, till his trouble subsided and they continued their journey with all diligence. Presently, the prince again became impatient of the length of the way and bethought him of his beloved and recited these verses:

Absence is long and restlessness and care upon me weigh;
Yea, and my heart in flames of fire consumeth night and day.
Mine eyes stream still with floods of tears and for the burning stress
Of longing that afflicteth me, my very head's grown gray.
O thou my hope, my wishes' term, I swear by Him who made
Both branch and leaf and every thing and moulded man of clay,
A load of passion for thy sake, O my desire, I bear;
None else amongst the folk of love to bear it might essay.
Question the night of me and it will tell thee if therein,
Through all the watches of the dark, my lids in sleep close aye.

Then he wept sore and complained of that which he suffered for stress of passion and love-longing; but the Vizier comforted him and spoke him fair, promising him the attainment of his desire; after which they fared on again, till, in a few days, they came in sight of the White City, [the capital of King Abdulcadir,] soon after sunrise. Then said the Vizier to the prince, 'Rejoice, O king's son, in all good; for see, yonder is the White City, that which thou seekest.' Whereat the prince rejoiced with an exceeding joy and recited the following verses:

Friends, I am longing-hearted, distraught with love and dole:
Desire abides and yearning cleaves fast unto my soul.
Even as a mourning mother, who wakes for woe, I moan,
When night falls down. None pities nor doth with me condole.
Yet, when from out thy country the winds breathe fresh and sweet,
Meseems as if refreshment upon my spirit stole.
My lids, like clouds rain-laden, pour ever, and my heart
Swims in their tears' salt ocean, that never leaves to roll.

Then they entered the White City and took up their lodging at the Khan of the Merchants, where they hired three magazines and laid up therein all their goods and gear. They abode in the khan till they were rested, when the Vizier applied himself to devise a plan of conduct for the prince, and said to him, 'I have bethought me of somewhat, wherein methinks will be advantage for thee, so it please God the Most High.' 'O Vizier of good counsel,' replied Ardeshir, 'do what cometh to thy mind, and may God direct thy wit aright!' Quoth the Vizier, 'I purpose to hire thee a shop in the bazaar of the stuff- sellers and set thee therein; for all that, great and small, have occasion to the bazaar, and methinks, when the folk see thee sitting in the shop, their hearts will incline to thee and thou wilt thus be able to attain that thou seekest, for thou art fair of favour and souls incline to thee and eyes rejoice in thee.' 'Do what seemeth good to thee,' answered Ardeshir.

So the Vizier clad the prince and himself in their richest raiment and putting a purse of a thousand dinars in his pocket, went forth and walked about the city, whilst all who saw them marvelled at the prince's beauty, saying, 'Glory be to Him who created this youth of vile water! Blessed be God, the most excellent of Creators!' Great was the talk of him and some said, 'This is no mortal, but a noble angel;' and others, 'Hath Rizwan, the door- keeper of Paradise, left the gate unguarded, that this youth hath come forth?' The people followed them to the stuff-market, where they entered and stood, till there came up to them an old man of venerable appearance, who saluted them, and they returned his salute. Then said he to them, 'O my lords, have ye any need, that we may have the honour of accomplishing?' Quoth the Vizier, 'Who art thou, O elder?' And he answered, 'I am the overseer of the market.' 'Know then, O elder,' said the Vizier, 'that this youth is my son and I wish to take him a shop in the bazaar, that he may sit therein and learn to buy and sell and give and take and come to know the ways and habits of merchants.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the overseer and straightway brought them the key of a shop, which he caused the brokers sweep and clean. Then the Vizier sent for a high divan, stuffed with ostrich-down, and set it up in the shop, together with a small prayer-carpet, fringed with broidery of red gold, and a cushion: and he transported thither so much of the goods and stuff that he had brought with him as filled the shop.

Next morning, the prince came and opening the shop, seated himself on the divan, and stationed two white slaves, clad in the richest of raiment, before him and two black slaves of the goodliest of the Abyssinians without the shop. The Vizier enjoined him to keep his secret from the folk, so thereby he might find assistance in the accomplishment of his wishes; then, charging him to acquaint him with what befell him in the shop, day by day, he left him and returned to the khan. The prince sat in

the shop all day, as he were the moon at its full, whilst the folk, hearing tell of his beauty, flocked to the place, without errand, to gaze on his beauty and grace and symmetry and glorify God who created and shaped him, till none could pass through the bazaar for the crowding of the folk about him. Ardeshir turned right and left, abashed at the throng of people that stared at him, hoping to make acquaintance with some one about the court, of whom he might get news of the princess, but found no way to this, wherefore his breast was straitened.

On this wise the case abode some time, whilst the Vizier daily promised him the attainment of his desire, till, one day, as he sat in the shop, there came up an old woman of venerable and respectable appearance, clad in raiment of [white wool, such as is worn of] devotees and followed by two slave-girls like moons. She stopped before the shop and considered the prince awhile, after which, 'Glory be to God,' said she, 'who fashioned that face and wrought that handiwork to perfection!' Then she saluted him and he returned her greeting and seated her by his side. Quoth she, 'Whence comest thou, O fair of face?' 'From the parts of Hind, O my mother,' answered he; 'and I have come to his city to see the world and look about me.' 'Honour to thee for a visitor!' rejoined she. 'What goods and stuffs hast thou? Show me something handsome, fit for kings.' Quoth he, 'If thou wish for handsome stuffs, I will show them to thee; for I have wares that beseem persons of every condition.' 'O my son,' answered he, 'I want somewhat costly and fair of fashion; brief, the best thou hast.' Said he, 'Thou must needs tell me for whom thou seekest it, that I may show thee goods according to the rank of the person in question.' 'Thou sayst sooth, O my son,' replied she. 'I want somewhat for my mistress Heyat en Nufous, daughter of Abdulcadir, lord of this land and king of this country.'

When Ardeshir heard his mistress's name, his reason fled for joy and his heart fluttered and he gave no order to slave or servant, but, putting his hand behind him, pulled out a purse of a hundred dinars and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'This is for the washing of thy clothes.' Then he brought out of a wrapper a dress worth ten thousand dinars or more and said to her, 'This is of that which I have brought hither.' When the old woman saw it, it pleased her and she said, 'What is the price of this dress, O perfect in beauty?' 'I will take no price for it,' answered he; whereupon she thanked him and repeated her question; but he said, 'By Allah, I will take no price for it! If the princess will not accept it, I make thee a present of it and it is a guess-gift from me to thee. Praised be God who hath brought us together, so that, if one day I have a want, I shall find thee a helper to me in its accomplishment!' She marvelled at the goodliness of his speech and the excess of his generosity and courtesy, and said to him, 'What is thy name, O my lord?' 'My name is Ardeshir,' answered he; and she said, 'By Allah, this is a rare name! Therewith are kings' sons named, and thou art in the guise of the sons of the merchants.' Quoth he, 'Of the love my father bore me, he gave me this name, but a name signifies nothing.' And she wondered at him and said, 'O my son, take the price of thy goods.' But he swore that he would take nothing.

Then said she to him, 'O my son, truth is the greatest of all things and thou hadst not dealt thus generously by me but for a special reason: so tell me thy case and thy secret thought; belike thou hast some need to the accomplishment of which I may help thee.' Thereupon he laid his hand in hers and swearing her to secrecy, told her the

whole story of his passion for the princess and his sufferings by reason thereof. The old woman shook her head and said, 'True, O my son; but the wise say, in the current adage, "If thou wouldst be obeyed, abstain from ordering that which may not be;" and thou, my son, thy name is "Merchant," and though thou hadst the keys of the hidden treasures, yet wouldst thou be called nought but "Merchant." If thou have a find to advance thyself in rank according to thy station, seek the hand of a Cadi's daughter or an emir's; but why, O my son, aspirest thou to none but the daughter of the King of the age and the time, and she a clean maid, who knows nought of the things of the world and has never in her life seen aught but her palace in which she dwells? Yet, for all her tender age, she is intelligent, shrewd, vivacious and quick-witted, well-advised and prudent in action. Her father hath no other child than her and she is dearer to him than his life. Every morning he comes to her and gives her good-morrow, and all who dwell in the palace stand in awe of her. Think not, O my son, that any dare bespeak her with aught of these words; as for me, there is no way for me thereto. By Allah, O my son, my heart and bowels love thee and were it in my power to give thee access to her, I would assuredly do it; but I will tell thee somewhat, wherein Allah may haply appoint the healing of thy heart, and will venture my life and my goods for thee, till I accomplish thy desire for thee.' 'And what is that, O my mother?' asked he. 'Seek of me the daughter of a Vizier or an Amir,' answered she, 'and I will grant thy request; but it may not be that one should mount from earth to heaven at one bound.'

When the prince heard this, he replied to her with courtesy and reasonableness, saying, 'O my mother, thou art a woman of sense and knowest how things go. Doth a man, when his head irketh him, bind up his hand?' 'No, by Allah, O my son,' said she. 'Even so,' rejoined he, 'my heart seeketh none but her and nought slayeth me but the love of her. By Allah, I am a lost man, an I find not one to counsel me aright and succour me! God on thee, O my mother, have pity on my strangerhood and the streaming of my tears!' 'By Allah, O my son,' answered the old woman, 'thy words rend my heart, but I know not how to help thee.' Quoth he, 'I beseech thee of thy favour, carry her a letter and kiss her hands for me.' So she took compassion on him and said, 'Write what thou wilt and I will carry it to her.' When he heard this, he was transported for joy and calling for pen and ink and paper, wrote the following verses:

O Heyat en Nufous, be gracious and incline
Unto a lover who for severance doth pine.
I was in all delight and ease of life, but now
Distraction and despair consume this heart of mine.
I company the night with sorrows in discourse
And wakefulness cleaves fast all tides unto mine eyne.
Pity a lover sad, afflicted with desire,
Whose lids are ulcered aye with yearning's tears of brine;
And when the morning comes at last, the tardy morn,
He's drunken and distraught with passion's heady wine.

Then he folded the letter and kissing it, gave it to the old woman; after which he put his hand to a chest and took out a second purse of a hundred dinars, which he gave her, saying, 'Divide this among the slave-girls.' She refused it and said, 'By Allah, O my son, I am not with thee for aught of this!' But he thanked her and said, 'Thou must

indeed take it.' So she took it and kissing his hands, returned to the princess, to whom said she, 'O my lady, I have brought thee somewhat the like whereof is not with the people of our city, and it comes from a handsome young man, than whom there is not a goodlier on the surface of the earth.' 'O my nurse,' answered the princess, 'and whence cometh he?' 'From the parts of Hind,' replied the old woman; 'and he hath given me this dress of gold brocade, embroidered with pearls and jewels and worth the kingdom of Chosroes and Caesar.' So saying, she opened the dress and spread it out before her, whereupon the whole palace was illumined by its brightness, by reason of the beauty of its fashion and the wealth of pearls and jewels with which it was broidered, and all who were present marvelled at it. The princess examined it and judging it to be worth no less than a whole year's revenue of her father's kingdom, said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, comes this dress from him or another?' 'From him,' answered she; and Heyat en Nufous said, 'Is he of our town or a stranger?' 'He is a stranger,' replied the old woman, 'newly come hither; and he hath slaves and servants and is fair of face, symmetrical of shape, well-mannered, open-handed and open-hearted, never saw I a goodlier than he, except thyself.'

'O my nurse,' rejoined the princess, 'this is an extraordinary thing, that a dress like this, which money cannot buy, should be in the hands of a merchant! What price did he set on it?' 'He would set no price on it,' answered the old woman, 'but gave me back the money thou sentest by me and swore that he would take nought thereof, saying, 'It is a gift from me to the King's daughter; for it beseemeth none but her; and if she will not accept it, I make thee a present of it.' 'By Allah,' said the princess, 'this is indeed rare liberality and wonderful munificence! But I fear the issue of his affair, lest he be brought to necessity. Why didst thou not ask him, O my nurse, if he had any desire, that we might fulfil it for him?' 'O my lady,' answered the nurse, 'I did ask him, and he said to me, "I have indeed a desire," but would not tell me what it was. However, he gave me this letter and said, "Carry it to the princess."' So Heyat en Nufous took the letter and opened and read it; whereupon she was sore chafed and changing colour for anger, cried out to the old woman, saying, 'Out on thee, O nurse! What is the name of this dog who dares to write thus to a king's daughter? What affinity is there between him and me, that this dog should address me thus? By the great God, Lord of the well Zemzem and of the Kaabeh, but that I fear God the Most High, I would send and bind the dog's hands behind him and slit his nostrils and cut off his nose and ears and crucify him on the gate of the bazaar wherein is his shop!'

When the old woman heard this, she turned pale and trembled in every nerve and her tongue clave to her mouth; but she took courage and said, 'Softly, O my lady! What is there in his letter to trouble thee thus? Is it aught but a memorial, wherein he taketh his complaint to thee of poverty or oppression, from which he hopes to be relieved by thy favour?' 'By Allah, O my nurse,' replied the princess, 'it is nought of this; but verses and shameful words! Needs must the dog be in one of three cases: either he is mad and hath no wit or he seeks his own slaughter, or else he is assisted to his wish of me by some one of exceeding puissance and a mighty Sultan. Or hath he heard that I am one of the light o' loves of the city, who lie a night or two with whosoever seeketh them, that he writeth me shameful verses to debauch my reason withal?' 'By Allah, O my lady,' rejoined the old woman, 'thou sayst sooth! But reck not thou of yonder ignorant

dog, for thou art seated in thy high-builded and unapproachable palace, to which the very birds cannot soar neither the wind pass over it, and he is distracted. Wherefore do thou write him a letter and chide him roundly and spare him no kind of reproof, but threaten him exceedingly and menace him with death and say to him, "Whence hast thou knowledge of me, that thou darest to write to me, O dog of a merchant, that trudgest far and wide all thy days in deserts and wastes for the sake of gaining a dirhem or a dinar? By Allah, except thou awake from thy sleep and put off thine intoxication, I will crucify thee on the gate of the bazaar wherein is thy shop!"' Quoth the princess, 'I fear lest he [be encouraged to] presume, if I write to him.' 'And what is he,' rejoined the nurse, 'that he should presume to us? Indeed, we write to him but to the intent that his presumption may be cut off and his fear magnified.' And she ceased not to persuade her, till she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote him the following verses:

O thou that feignest thee the prey of love and wakefulness,
Thou that for passion spendst the nights in transport and distress,
O self-deluder, dost thou seek enjoyment of a moon?
Did ever any of the moon win grace and love-liesse?
I rede thee hearken to my word; I give thee counsel fair;
Desist, for danger, ay, and death do hard upon thee press.
If thou to this request return, a grievous punishment
Shall surely fall on thee from us and ruin past redress.
Be reasonable, then: behold, I give thee good advice:
Return unto thy wit and stint from this thy frowardness.
By Him who did all things that be from nothingness create,
Who with the golden glittering stars the face of heaven did dress,
I'll surely have thee crucified upon a cross of tree,
If in the like of this thy speech thou do again transgress!

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, who repaired to Ardeshir's shop and delivered it to him, saying, 'Here is thine answer, and thou must know that, when she read thy verses, she was exceeding wroth; but I soothed her and spoke her fair, till she consented to write thee an answer.' He took the letter joyfully, but, when he had read it and apprehended its purport, he wept sore, whereat the old woman's heart ached and she said, 'O my son, may God spare thine eyes to weep and thy heart to mourn! What can be more gracious than that she should answer thy letter, under the circumstances?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'how shall I do for a subtler device? Behold, she writes to me, threatening me with death and crucifixion and forbidding me from writing to her, and by Allah, I see my death to be better than my life; but I beg thee of thy favour to carry her another letter from me.' 'Write,' said she, 'and I warrant I'll bring thee an answer. By Allah, I will venture my life to bring thee to thy desire, though I die to pleasure thee!'

He thanked her and kissing her hands, wrote the following verses:

Dost thou with slaughter threaten me, for that I love thee dear?
Death is decreed and slaughter eke to me were easefulness.
Better death end a lover's woes than that a weary life
He live, rejected and reviled, forbidden from liesse.

Visit a lover, for God's sake, whose every helper fails;
For praiseworthy it is in men to strive to soothe distress.
An thou on aught determined be, up, then, and do thy will;
I am thy worshipper and eke thy bondslave none the less.
What shall I do? I cannot live without thee: otherguise
How should it be, since lovers' hearts constraint doth still oppress?
Have ruth, O lady mine, on one who's sick for love of thee;
For all who love the noble stand excused of wantonness.

He folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, together with two purses, containing two hundred dinars, which she would have refused, but he conjured her to take them. So she took them and said, 'Needs must I bring thee to thy desire, despite thine enemies!' Then she returned to the palace and gave the letter to Heyat en Nufous, who said, 'What is this, O my nurse? Here are we in correspondence [with a man] and thou coming and going! Indeed, I fear lest the matter get wind and we be disgraced.' 'How so, O my lady?' rejoined the old woman. 'Who dare speak such a word?' So she took the letter and read it and smote hand on hand, saying, 'Verily, this is a calamity that is fallen upon us, and I know not whence this young man came to us!' 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'God on thee, write him another letter; but be round with him this time and say to him, "If thou write me another word after this, I will have thy head struck off."' 'O my nurse,' answered the princess, 'I am assured that the thing will not end after this fashion; it were better to leave it unanswered, and except the dog take warning by my previous threats, I will strike off his head.' Quoth the old woman, 'Then write him a letter and give him to know this.' So Heyat en Nufous called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Thou that, heedless, letst the lessons of experience pass by,
Thou whose amorous heart and doating doth for my possession sigh,
Hopest thou, O self-deluder, to the heavens to attain?
Dost thou think the moon to come at, shining in the distant sky?
With a fire whose flames are quenchless I will surely burn thee up,
And one day with swords destroying slain and slaughtered shalt thou lie!
Yea, before thee the extremest of affliction hidden lies,
Such as e'en the parting-places shall with white for terror dye.
Wherefore take a friendly warning and from love-liking abstain,
Nor to that which is not seemly evermore thyself apply.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, who carried it to Ardeshir, leaving the princess sore incensed by reason of this affair. The prince read the letter and bowed his head to the earth, making as if he wrote with his fingers and speaking not. Quoth the old woman, 'O my son, what ails thee that thou sayst nought?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'what shall I say, seeing that she doth but threaten me and redoubleth in hard-heartedness and aversion?' 'Write her a letter of what thou wilt,' rejoined the nurse. 'I will protect thee, and let not thy heart be cast down, for needs must I bring you together.' He thanked her for her kindness and kissing her hand, wrote the following verses:

A heart that unto him who loves no prayers may mollify
Yea, and a lover for his love's possession who doth sigh
And lids that ever ulcered are with burning tears, what time
The shrouding blackness of the dark falls on them from the sky!
Be charitable, then; have ruth on one with passion worn,
A lover parted from his love, that may not come her nigh.
Drowned in the sea of tears and burnt with longing, knowing not
Slumber nor peace, the whole night long unresting doth he lie.
Cut thou not off my heart's desire; for 'tis afflicted sore,
Wasted and palpitating aye, for passion like to die.

Then he folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, together with three hundred dinars, saying, 'This is for the washing of thy hands.' She thanked him and kissed his hands, after which she returned to the palace and gave the letter to the princess who read it and throwing it from her hand, sprang to her feet, whilst the vein of anger started out between her eyes. Then she walked, shod as she was with pattens of gold, set with pearls and jewels, till she came to her father's palace, and none dared ask her how it was with her. When she reached the palace, she asked for the King, and the slave-girls said to her, 'O my lady, he is gone forth a-hunting.' So she returned, as she were a raging lioness, and spoke to none for the space of three hours, at the end of which time her wrath subsided and her brow cleared.

When the old woman saw that her anger was past, she went up to her and kissing the earth before her, said to her, 'O my lady, whither went those noble steps?' 'To the palace of the King my father,' answered Heyat en Nufous. 'And could no one do thine errand?' asked the nurse. 'No,' replied the princess; 'for I went to acquaint him with that which hath befallen me with yonder dog of a merchant, that he might lay hands on him and on all the merchants of the bazaar and crucify them over their shops and suffer no foreign merchant to abide in our town.' Quoth the old woman, 'And was this thine only reason for going to thy father?' 'Yes,' answered Heyat en Nufous; 'but I found him absent a-hunting and await his return.' 'I take refuge with God the All-hearing and knowing!' exclaimed the old woman, 'Praised be He! O my lady, thou art the most sensible of women and how couldst thou think of telling the King these wild words, which it behoveth none to publish?' 'And why so?' asked the princess. 'Suppose,' said the nurse, 'thou hadst found the King in his palace and told him all this and he had sent after the merchants and commanded to hang them over their shops, the folk would have seen them hanging and asked the reason and it would have been answered them, "They sought to debauch the King's daughter.' Then would they have spread divers reports concerning thee, some saying, 'She abode with them half a score days, away from her palace, till they had taken their fill of her;" and other some otherguise; for honour, O my lady, is like milk, the least dust spoils it; or like glass, which, if it be cracked, may not be mended. So beware of telling thy father or any other of this matter, lest thy honour be ruined, for it will never profit thee to tell folk aught. Weigh what I say with thy keen wit, and if thou find it not just, do as thou wilt.'

The princess pondered her words and seeing them to be altogether just, said, 'Thou art right, O my nurse: indeed, anger had blinded my judgment.' Quoth the old woman, 'Thy resolve to tell no one is pleasing to God the Most High; but that is not

all: we must not let the insolence of yonder vile dog of a merchant pass without rebuke. Write him a letter and say to him, "O vilest of merchants, but that I found my father absent, I had straightway commanded to hang thee and all thy neighbours. But thou shalt gain nothing by this; for I swear to thee by God the Most High that, if thou return to the like of this talk, I will blot out the trace of thee from the face of the earth!" And deal thou roundly with him in words, so shalt thou discourage him and arouse him from his heedlessness.' 'And wilt these words cause him to abstain from his offending?' asked the princess. 'How should he not abstain?' replied the old woman. 'Besides, I will talk with him and tell him what has passed.' So the princess called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Thy hopes unto the winning our favours still cleave fast,
And still of us thou meekest thy wishes to attain.
It is his self-delusion alone that slays the man
And that which he requireth of us shall be his bane.
No man art thou of prowess thou hast no hosts at call;
Thou'rt neither king nor viceroy, nor kingdom nor domain
Hast; and were this the fashion of one who is our peer,
Hoary for war and terrors he had returned again.
Yet that wherein thou sinnest once more I'll pardon thee,
So thou from this time forward repent thee and refrain.

Then she gave the letter to the old woman, saying, 'O my nurse, do thou admonish the dog, lest we [be forced to] cut of his head and commit sin on his account.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'I will not leave him a side to turn on!' Then she returned to Ardeshir and gave him the letter. He read it and shook his head, saying, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! O my mother, what shall I do? My fortitude fails me and my patience is exhausted.' 'O my son,' answered she, 'take patience: peradventure, after this God shall bring somewhat to pass. Write that which is in thy mind and I will fetch thee an answer, and be of good cheer; for needs must I bring about union between her and thee, so God please.' He blessed her and wrote the following verses:

Since there is none to succour me in love and to assain,
Me who of passion's tyranny am all forgone and slain,
Since flames of fire within my heart by day I do endure
And through the weary night I seek a resting-place in vain,
How should I leave to hope in thee, O term of all desire,
Or rest content with what I dree of passion and its pain?
I beg the Empyrean's Lord to grant me His approof,
Since I with longing for the fair am perished, heart and brain,
Yea, and enjoyment speedily to give me. Oh, consent!
For with the terrors of desire I'm smitten and o'erta'en.

Then he folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, together with a purse of four hundred dinars. She took the whole and returning to the palace, gave the letter to the princess; but she refused to take it and said, 'What is this?' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'this is the answer to the letter thou wrotest to that dog of a merchant."

Quoth Heyat en Nufous, 'Didst thou forbid him, as I told thee?' 'Yes,' answered she; 'and this is his answer.' So the princess took the letter and read it; then turned to the old woman and said to her, 'Where is the result thou didst promise me?' 'O my lady,' replied she, 'saith he not in his letter that he repenteth and will not again offend, excusing himself for the past?' 'Not so, by Allah!' replied the princess. 'On the contrary, he increases [his offending].' 'O my lady,' rejoined the nurse, 'write him a letter and thou shalt see what I will do with him.' Quoth Heyat en Nufous, 'There needs no letter nor answer'. 'I must have a letter,' answered the nurse, 'that I may rebuke him roundly and cut off his hopes.' 'Thou canst do that without a letter,' rejoined the princess: but the old woman said, 'I cannot do it without the letter.' So Heyat en Nufous called for inkhorn and paper and wrote these verses:

Again and again I chide thee; but chiding hinders thee ne'er:
How many a time with my writing in verse have I bid thee forbear!
Conceal thy passion, I rede thee, nor ever reveal it to men;
For, if thou gainsay me, no mercy I'll show thee henceforward nor spare;
Yea, if, in despite of my warning, to this that thou sayst thou return,
The herald of death shall go calling for thee and thy death shall declare;
Ere long, on thy body the breezes shall blow, as the hurricane blows,
And eke on thy flesh in the desert shall batten the fowls of the air.
Return to fair fashion and comely; 'twill profit thee, trust me; but, if
Thou purpose ill-dealing and lewdness, for sure I'll destroy thee, I swear.

When she had made an end of writing this, she cast the scroll angrily from her hand, and the old woman picked it up and carried it to Ardeshir. When he read it, he knew that she relented not to him, but only redoubled in anger against him, and that he would never win to her, and bethought himself to write her an answer, invoking [God's help] against her. So he called for pen and ink and wrote the following verses:

O Lord, by the Five Elders, deliver me, I pray,
From her whose love hath wrought me affliction and dismay.
Thou knowest what I suffer for passion's flames and all
My sickness for a maiden who saith me ever nay.
She hath on that no pity wherewith I smitten am:
How long o'er this my weakness shall she the tyrant play?
I am for her distracted with agonies of death
And find nor friend nor helper, O Lord, to be my stay.
How long, when night its pinions o'er all hath spread, shall I
On wake, alas! bemoan me with heart and tongue till day?
Full fain would I forget her, but how can I forget,
When for desire my patience is wasted clean away?
Tell me, O bird of parting, is she then fenced and free
From fortune's tribulations, that shifts and changes aye?

Then he folded the letter and gave it, together with a purse of five hundred dinars, to the old woman, and she took it and carried it to the princess, who read it and casting it from her hand, said to her, 'O wicked old woman, tell me the cause of all that hath befallen me from thee and from thy cunning and thy favouring of him, so that

thou hast made me write letter after letter and ceasest not to go and come between him and me and carry messages, till thou hast brought about correspondence and connection between us. Thou sayest still, "I will ensure thee against his mischief and cut off from thee his speech;" but thou speakest thus only to the intent that I may continue to write thee letters and thou to fetch and carry between us, till thou ruin my repute. Out on thee! Ho, eunuchs, seize her!' So they laid hands on the nurse and Heyat en Nufous commanded them to beat her, and they did so till her whole body streamed with blood and she fainted away, whereupon the princess caused her waiting-women drag her forth by the feet and cast her without the palace and bade one of them stand by her, till she recovered, and say to her, 'The princess hath taken an oath that thou shalt never re-enter the palace and hath commanded to slay thee without mercy, if thou return hither.'

So, when she came to herself the damsel told her what the princess said and she answered, saying, 'I hear and obey.' Then the slave-girls fetched a basket and a porter and caused carry her to her own house and sent after her a physician, bidding him tend her assiduously till she recovered. He did as he was commanded and as soon as she was whole of her wounds, she mounted and rode to the shop of Ardeshir, who was sore troubled with concern for her absence from him and longing for news of her. As soon as he saw her, he sprang up and coming to meet her, saluted her. Then he noticed that she was weak and ailing; so he asked her how she did and she told him all that had passed. When he heard this, he was sore concerned and smote hand upon hand, saying, 'By Allah, O my mother, this that hath befallen thee is grievous to me! But what is the reason of the princess's aversion to men?' 'Thou must know, O my son,' answered the old woman, 'that she has a beautiful garden, than which there is not a goodlier on the face of the earth and it chanced that she lay there one night. In the delight of sleep, she dreamt that she went down into the garden, where she saw a fowler set up his net and strew corn thereabout, after which he withdrew and sat down afar of to await what game should fall into it. Before long, the birds flocked to pick up the corn and a male pigeon fell into the net and struggled in it, whereat the others took fright and fled from him. His mate flew away with the rest, but presently returned and coming up to the net, sought out the mesh in which his foot was entangled and ceased not to peck at it with her bill, till she severed it and released her mate, with whom she flew away. All this while, the fowler sat dozing, and when he awoke, he looked at the net and found it broken. So he mended it and strewed fresh corn, then withdrew to a distance and sat down again to watch it. The birds soon returned and began to pick up the corny and amongst the rest the pair of pigeons. Presently, the female pigeon fell into the net and struggled to win free; whereupon the other birds all flew away, and her mate fled with the rest and did not return to her. Meantime, slumber had again overcome the fowler and he slept a great while; and when he awoke, he saw the she-pigeon caught in the net; so he went up to her and freeing her feet from the meshes, killed her. The princess awoke, troubled, and said, "Thus do men with women; for women have pity on men and venture their lives for them, when they are in trouble; but if the Lord decree against a woman and she fall into calamity, her mate deserts her and rescues her not, and wasted is that which she did with him of kindness. May God curse her who putteth her trust in men, for they ill requite the kind offices that women do them!" And from that day she conceived an aversion to men.'

'O my mother,' said the prince, 'doth she never go out into the street?' 'No,' answered the old woman; 'but, O my son, I will tell thee somewhat, wherein, God willing, there shall be profit for thee. It is that every year, at the time of the ripening of the fruits, the princess goes forth into her garden, which is of the goodliest of the pleasaunces of the time, and takes her pleasure therein one day, nor lies the night but in her palace. She enters the garden by the private door of the palace which leads thereto, and it wants now but a month to the time of her going forth. So take my advice and go this very day to the keeper of the garden and clap up an acquaintance with him and insinuate thyself into his good graces, for he lets not a soul enter the garden, because of its communication with the princess's palace. I will let thee know two days beforehand of the day fixed for her coming forth, when do thou repair to the garden, as of thy wont, and make shift to pass the night there. When the princess comes, be thou hidden somewhere and presently show thyself to her. When she sees thee, she will infallibly fall in love with thee; for thou art fair to look upon and love covers all things. So take comfort and be of good cheer, O my son, for needs must I bring about union between her and thee.'

The prince kissed her hand and thanked her and gave her three pieces of Alexandrian silk and three of satin of various colours, and with each piece, linen for shifts and stuff for trouser and a kerchief for the turban and fine white cotton cloth of Baalbek for the linings, so as to make her six complete suits, each handsomer than its fellow. Moreover, he gave her a purse containing six hundred dinars and said to her, 'This is for the fashion.' She took the whole and said to him, 'O my son, wilt thou not acquaint me with thine abiding-place and I also will show thee the way to my lodging?' 'Yes,' answered he and sent a servant with her to note her lodging and show her his own.

Then he rose and bidding his slaves shut the shop, went back to the Vizier, to whom he related all that had passed between him and the old woman. 'O my son,' said the Vizier, 'what wilt thou do, should the princess come out and look upon thee and thou find no favour with her?' Quoth Ardeshir, 'There will be nothing left but to pass from words to deeds and venture my life with her; for I will snatch her up from amongst her attendants and set her behind me on a swift horse and make for the uttermost of the desert. If I escape, I shall have gained my desire and if I perish, I shall be at rest from this loathed life.' 'O my son,' rejoined the Vizier, 'dost thou think to do this thing and live? How shall we make our escape, seeing that our country is far distant, and how wilt thou deal thus with a king of the kings of the time, who has under his hand a hundred thousand horse, nor can we be sure but that he will despatch some of his troops to waylay us? Verily, there is no good in this project and no man of sense would attempt it.' 'And how then shall we do, O Vizier of good counsel?' asked Ardeshir. 'For, [except I get her,] I am a dead man without recourse.' 'Wait till to-morrow,' answered the Vizier, 'till we behold this garden and note its ordinance and see what betides us with the keeper.'

So, on the morrow, they took a thousand dinars and repairing to the garden, found it compassed about with high and strong walls, abounding in trees and streams and well furnished with goodly fruits. And indeed its flowers breathed perfume and its birds warbled, as it were a garden of the gardens of Paradise. Within the door sat an old

man on a bench of stone, and they saluted him. When he saw them and noted the goodliness of their favour, he rose to his feet and returned their salute, saying, 'O my lords, peradventure you have a wish, which we may have the honour of satisfying?' 'Know, O elder,' replied the Vizier, 'that we are strangers and the heat hath overcome us. Now our lodging is afar off at the other end of the town; wherefore we desire of thy courtesy that thou take these two dinars and buy us somewhat of victual and open us meanwhile the door of this garden and seat us in some shaded place, where there is cold water, that we may cool ourselves there, against thou return with the victual, when we will eat, and thou with us, and go our ways, rested and refreshed.' So saying, he pulled out a couple of dinars and put them into the keeper's hand.

Now the keeper was a man of seventy years of age and had never in all his life possessed so much money. So, when he saw the two dinars in his hand, he was transported for joy and forthwith opening the garden gate to the prince and the Vizier, made them enter and sit down under the shade of a wide-spreading tree, laden with fruit, saying, 'Sit here and go no further into the garden, for it hath a privy door communicating with the palace of the princess Heyat en Nufous.' 'We will not budge hence,' answered they. Then he went out to buy what they had ordered and returned, after awhile, with a porter bearing on his head a roasted lamb and bread. They ate and drank together and talked awhile, till, presently, the Vizier, looking about him right and left, caught sight of a lofty pavilion in the midst of the garden; but it was old and the plaster was peeled from its walls and its coigns were broken down. So he said to the gardener, 'O elder, is this garden thine own or dost thou hire it?' 'O my lord,' answered the old man, 'I am neither owner nor tenant of the garden, only its keeper.' 'And what is thy wage?' asked the Vizier. 'A dinar a month,' replied the old man, and the Vizier said, 'Verily, they wrong thee, especially if thou hast a family.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered the gardener, 'I have eight children.' 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' exclaimed the Vizier. 'Thou makest my heart bleed for thee, my poor fellow! What wouldst thou say of him who should do thee a good turn, on account of this family of thine?' 'O my lord,' answered the old man, 'whatsoever good thou dost shall be treasured up for thee with God the Most High!'

Then said the Vizier, 'O old man, this garden of thine is a goodly place; but the pavilion yonder is old and ruinous. Now I mean to repair it and plaster it anew and paint it handsomely, so that it will be the finest thing in the garden; and when the owner of the garden comes and finds the pavilion reinstated, he will not fail to question thee concerning it. Then do thou say, "O my lord, I set it in repair, for that I saw it in ruins and none could make use of it nor sit in it." If he says, 'Whence hadst thou the money for this?" say, "I spent of my own money upon it, thinking to whiten my face with thee and hoping for thy bounties.' And he will assuredly recompense thee handsomely. To-morrow, I will bring builders and painters and plasterers to repair the pavilion and will give thee what I promised thee.' Then he pulled out a purse of five hundred dinars and gave it to the gardener, saying, 'Provide thy family with this and let them pray for me and my son here.' When the gardener saw the money, he was transported and fell down at the Vizier's feet, kissing them and calling down blessings on him and his son; and when they went away, he said to them, 'I shall expect you to-morrow: for, by Allah, there must be no parting between us, day or night!' As they

went home, the prince said to the Vizier, 'What is the meaning of all this?' and he answered, 'Thou shalt presently see the issue thereof.'

Next day, the Vizier sent for the syndic of the builders and carried him and his men to the garden, where the gardener rejoiced in their sight. He gave them the price of victual and what was needful to the workmen for the amendment of the pavilion, and they repaired it and plastered it and decorated it. Then said the Vizier to the painters, 'Harkye, my masters, give ear unto my words and apprehend my wish and my intent. Know that I have a garden like unto this, where I was sleeping one night and saw in a dream a fowler spread his nets and sprinkle corn thereabout. The birds flocked to pick up the grain, and a he-bird fell into the net, whereupon the others took fright and flew away, and amongst the rest his mate: but, after awhile, she returned alone and pecked at the mesh that held his feet, till she set him free and they flew away together. Now the fowler had fallen asleep and when he awoke and found the net empty, he mended it and strewing fresh corn, sat down at a distance, waiting for game to fall into the snare. Presently the birds assembled again to pick up the corn, and amongst the rest the two pigeons. By and by, the female fell into the net and the other birds took fright at her and flew away, and her mate flew with them and did not return; whereupon the fowler came up and taking the she-bird, killed her. Now, when her mate flew away with the others, a hawk seized him and slew him and ate his flesh and drank his blood, and I would have you pourtray me in lively colours the presentment of this my dream, even as I have related it to you, laying the scene in this garden, with its walls and trees and streams. If ye do this that I have set forth to you and it please me, I will give you what shall gladden your hearts, over and above your wage.'

So the painters applied themselves with all diligence to do what he required of them and wrought it out in masterly wise. When they had made an end of the work, they showed it to the Vizier, who, seeing his [pretended] dream set forth in lively fashion, was pleased and thanked them and rewarded them munificently. Presently, the prince came in, after his wont, and entered the pavilion, knowing not what the Vizier had done. So, when he saw the portraiture of the fowler and the birds and so forth and saw the male pigeon limned in the clutches of the hawk, which had slain him and was eating his flesh and drinking his blood, his understanding was confounded and he returned to the Vizier and said to him, 'O Vizier of good counsel, I have seen this day a wonder, which, were it graven with needles on the corners of the eyes, would serve as an admonition to whoso will be admonished?' 'And what is that, O my lord?' asked the Vizier. 'Did I not tell thee,' said the prince, 'of the dream the princess had and how it was the cause of her aversion to men?' 'Yes,' answered the Vizier; and Ardeshir rejoined, saying, 'O Vizier, by Allah, I have seen the whole dream pourtrayed in painting, as I had beheld it with mine eyes; but with a circumstance that was hidden from the princess, so that she saw it not, and it is upon this that I rely for the attainment of my desire.' 'And what is that, O my son?' said the Vizier. Quoth the prince, 'I saw that, when the male bird flew away and left his mate entangled in the net, a hawk pounced on him and slaying him, ate his flesh and drank his blood; and this was the cause of his failure to return and liberate her. Would that the princess had seen the whole of the dream and beheld, to the end, the story thereof!' 'By Allah, O august King,' replied the Vizier, 'this is indeed a rare and wonderful thing!' And the prince ceased not to marvel

at the picture and lament that the princess had not seen the whole of the dream, saying in himself, 'Would she had seen it to the end or might see the whole over again, though but in the illusions of sleep!'

Then said the Vizier to him, 'Thou saidst to me, "Why wilt thou repair the pavilion?" And I answered, "Thou shalt presently see the issue thereof." And behold, now thou seest the issue thereof; for it was I did this thing and caused the painters pourtray the princess's dream thus and paint the male bird in the hawk's clutches, so that, when she comes to the pavilion, she will behold her dream depicted and see how the male pigeon was slain and excuse him and turn from her aversion to men.' When the prince heard the Vizier's words, he kissed his hands and thanked him, saying, 'Verily, the like of thee is fit to be Vizier to the most mighty king, and by Allah, if I accomplish my desire and return to my father, rejoicing, I will acquaint him with this, that he may redouble in honouring thee and advance thee in dignity and hearken to thy word.' The Vizier kissed his hand and they both went to the gardener, to whom said the Vizier, 'Look at yonder pavilion and see how fine it is!' And he answered, 'This is all of thy bounty.' Then said they, 'O elder, when the owners of the place question thee concerning the reinstatement of the pavilion, say thou, "It was I did it of my own monies," to the intent that there may betide thee favour and good fortune.' Quoth he, 'I hear and obey.' And the prince continued to pay him frequent visits.

Meanwhile, when Heyat en Nufous ceased to receive the prince's letters and messages and the old woman was absent from her, she rejoiced beyond measure and concluded that the young man had returned to his own country. One day, there came to her a covered tray from her father; so she uncovered it and finding therein fine fruits, said to her waiting-women, 'Is the season of these fruits come?' 'Yes,' answered they, and she said, 'Would we might make ready to take our pleasure in the garden!' 'O my lady,' answered they, 'thou sayst well, and by Allah, we also long for the garden!' And she said, 'How shall we do, seeing that every year it is my nurse who taketh us to walk in the garden and pointeth out to us the various trees and plants and I have beaten her and forbidden her from me? Indeed, I repent me of the affront I offered her, for that, in any case, she is my nurse and hath over me the right of fosterage. But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' When her women heard this, they all rose and kissing the earth before her, said, 'God on thee, O my lady, do thou pardon her and command her to be brought!' 'By Allah,' answered the princess, 'I am resolved upon this; but which of you will go to her, for I have prepared her a splendid dress of honour?

With this two damsels came forwards by name Bulbul and Sewad el Ain, who were comely and graceful and the chief of the princess's women, and said to her, 'We will go to her, O princess!' And she said, 'Do what seemeth good to you.' So they repaired to the house of the nurse, who received them with open arms and welcomed them. When they had sat awhile with her, they said to her, 'O nurse, the princess pardons thee and desires to take thee back into favour.' 'This may never be,' answered she, 'though I drink the cup of perdition! Hast thou forgotten how she put me to shame before those who love me and those who hate me, when my clothes were dyed with my blood and I well-nigh died for excess of beating, and after this they dragged me forth by the feet like a dead dog and cast me without the door? By Allah, I will

never return to her nor fill my eyes with her sight!' Quoth they, 'Disappoint not our pains in coming to thee neither send us away, unsuccessful. Where is thy courtesy to us? Think but who it is that cometh to thee: canst thou wish for any higher of standing than we with the princess?' 'God forbid!' answered she. 'I know well that my station is less than yours, were it not that the princess's favour exalted me above all her women, so that, were I wroth with the greatest of them, she had died of fright.' 'All is as it was,' rejoined they, 'and is in nowise changed. Indeed, it is better than before, for the princess humbles herself to thee and seeks a reconciliation without intermediary.' 'By Allah,' said the old woman, 'were it not for your presence [and intercession] with me, I had never returned to her, no, not though she had commanded to put me to death!' They thanked her for this and she rose and dressing herself, accompanied them to the palace.

When the princess saw her, she rose to her feet and the old woman said, 'Allah! Allah! O King's daughter, whose was the fault, thine or mine?' 'The fault was mine,' answered Heyat en Nufous, 'and it is thine to pardon and forgive. By Allah, O my nurse, thy rank is high with me and thou hast over me the right of fosterage; but thou knowest that God (blessed be He!) hath allotted to His creatures four things, disposition and life and fortune and death, nor is it in man's power to avert that which is decreed. Verily, I was beside myself and could not govern my anger; but I repent, O my nurse, of what I did.' With this, the nurse's anger ceased from her and she rose and kissed the ground before the princess, who called for a splendid dress of honour and threw it over her, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Things being thus happily accorded, in the presence of the princess's slaves and women, Heyat en Nufous said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, how go the fruits of our garden?' 'O my lady,' replied she, 'I see excellent fruits in the town; but I will enquire of the matter and return thee an answer this very day.'

Then she withdrew, attended with all honour and consideration, and betook herself to Ardeshir, who received her with open arms and rejoiced in her coming, for that he had long expected her. She told him all that had passed between herself and the princess and how the latter was minded to go down into the garden on such a day and said to him, 'Hast thou done as I bade thee with the keeper of the garden and made him taste of thy bounties?' 'Yes,' answered the prince; 'and he is become my good friend: my way is his way and he would well I had need of him.' Then he told her all that had happened and of the paintings that the Vizier had caused to be done in the pavilion: whereat she rejoiced greatly and said, 'God upon thee, do thou set thy Vizier midmost thy heart, for this that he hath done points to the keenness of his wit and he hath helped thee to the attaining thy desire. So rise forthright, O my son, and take a bath and don thy richest clothes; then go to the gardener and make shift to pass the night in the garden, for none may win to enter it, [whilst the princess is there], though he should give the earth full of gold. When thou hast entered, hide thyself where none may see thee and stir not till thou hear me say, 'O Thou whose bounties are hidden, vouchsafe us assurance from that we fear!' Then come forth and walk among the trees and show thy beauty and grace, which put the moons to shame, to the intent that Heyat en Nufous may see thee and that her heart and soul may be filled with love of thee; so shalt thou attain to thy desire and thy grief be done away.' 'I hear and obey,'

answered the prince and gave her a purse of a thousand dinars, which she took and went away.

As for Ardeshir, he went straight to the bath and washed; after which he arrayed himself in the richest of clothes of the apparel of the kings of the Chosroes and girt his middle with a sash wherein were assembled all manner precious stones and donned a turban laced with red gold and embroidered with pearls and jewels. His cheeks shone rosy-red and his lips were scarlet; his eyelids wantoned, gazelle-wise, and he swayed in his gait like a drunken man; beauty and grace covered him, as with a garment, and his flexile shape shamed the swaying branches. Then he put in his pocket a purse containing a thousand dinars and repairing to the garden, knocked at the door. The gardener opened to him and received him with joy and honour; then, observing that his face was overcast, he asked him how he did. 'Know, O elder,' answered Ardeshir, 'that I am dear to my father and he never laid his hand on me till this day, when words arose between us and he reviled me and smote me on the face and beat me with the staff and drove me away. Now I have no friend to turn to and I fear the perfidy of fortune, for thou knowest that a father's anger is no light thing. Wherefore I come to thee, O uncle, seeing that thou art known to my father, and desire of thy favour that thou suffer me abide, till the end of the day, in the garden or pass the night there, till God make accord between my father and myself.'

When the old man heard this, he was sore concerned and said, 'O my lord, give me leave to go to thy father and be the means of reconciliation between him and thee.' 'O uncle,' replied Ardeshir, 'thou must know that my father is of a very impatient nature, and if thou proffer him reconciliation in his heat, he will make thee no answer; but when a day or two have passed, his humour will soften. Then go thou in to him and thereupon he will relent.' 'I hear and obey,' said the gardener. 'But, O my lord, do thou go with me to my house, where thou shalt pass the night with my children and family and none shall reproach this to us.' 'O uncle,' replied Ardeshir, 'I must be alone, when I am angry.' Quoth the old man, 'It were grievous to me that thou shouldst lie alone in the garden, when I have a house.' But Ardeshir said, 'O uncle, I have a purpose in this, that the trouble of my mind may be dispelled from me and I know that in this lies the means of regaining his favour and softening his heart to me.' 'If it must be so,' rejoined the gardener, 'I will fetch thee a carpet to sleep on and a coverlet to cover thyself withal.' And the prince said, 'There is no harm in that, O uncle.' So the keeper opened the garden to him and brought him the carpet and coverlet, knowing not that the princess was minded to visit the garden.

Meanwhile, the nurse returned to the princess and told her that the fruits were ripe on the trees of the garden; whereupon she said, 'O my nurse, go down with me to-morrow into the garden, that we may walk about in it and take our pleasure, so God please; and send meanwhile to the gardener, to let him know our purpose.' So she sent to the gardener to tell him that the princess would visit the garden on the morrow, bidding him leave neither tree- tenders nor water-carriers therein nor let one of all the creatures of God enter the place. So when word came to him, he set his trenches and channels in order and going to Ardeshir, said to him, 'O my lord, the place is thy place and I live only in thy favours, besides that my tongue is under thy feet. But do thou excuse me: I must tell thee that the princess Heyat en Nufous, the mistress of this

garden, hath a mind to visit it to-morrow at the first of the day and hath bidden me leave none therein to see her. So I would have thee of thy favour go forth of the garden this day, for the princess will only abide in it till the time of afternoon prayer and after it shall be at thy service for months and years.' 'O elder,' said Ardeshir, 'belike we have caused thee some inconvenience?' And the other answered, saying, 'By Allah, O my lord, there hath betided me from thee nothing but honour!' 'If it be so,' rejoined the prince, 'nothing but all good shall befall thee through me; for I will hide in the garden and none shall see me, till the princess has gone back to her palace.' 'O my lord,' said the gardener, 'if she espy the shadow of a human being in the garden, she will strike off my head.' 'Have no fear,' replied the prince; 'I will let none see me. But doubtless to-day thou lackest of spending money for thy family.' Then he put his hand to his purse and pulled out five hundred dinars, which he gave to him, saying, 'Take this gold and spend it on thy family, that thy heart may be at ease concerning them.' When the gardener saw the gold, his life seemed a light matter to him and he suffered the prince to abide where he was, charging him straitly not to show himself in the garden.

Meanwhile, when the eunuchs went in to the princess at break of day, she bade open the private door leading into the garden and donned a royal robe, embroidered with pearls and jewels, over a shift of fine silk, embroidered with rubies. Under the whole was that which the tongue refuses to describe, whereat the mind was confounded and for love whereof the coward would become brave. On her head she set a crown of red gold, inlaid with pearls and diamonds, and put her feet in slippers of cloth of gold, embroidered with fine pearls and adorned with all manner precious stones. Then she put her hand on the old woman's shoulder and commanded to go forth by the privy door; but the nurse looked out and seeing the garden full of eunuchs and girls, walking about, eating the fruits and troubling the streams and taking their ease of sport and pleasance therein, said to the princess, 'O my lady, is this a garden or a madhouse?' Quoth the princess, 'What meaneth thy speech, O nurse?' And the old woman answered, saying, 'Verily, the garden is full of slave-girls and eunuchs, near five hundred girls and the like number of eunuchs, eating of the fruits and troubling the streams and scaring the birds and hindering [us] from taking [our] ease and sporting and laughing and what not else; and thou hast no need of them. Wert thou going forth of thy palace into the highway, this would be fitting, as an honour and protection to thee; but thou goest forth of the privy door into the garden, where none of the creatures of God the Most High may look on thee.' 'By Allah, O nurse,' rejoined the princess, 'thou sayst sooth! But how shall we do?' And the old woman said, 'Send them all away and keep only two of the slave-girls, that we may make merry with them.' So she dismissed them all, with the exception of two of her women, who were most in favour with her.

Then, when the old woman saw that her heart was light and that the season was pleasant to her, she said to her, 'Now we can enjoy ourselves aright: come, let us take our pleasance in the garden.' So the princess put her hand on her shoulder and went out by the private door. The two waiting-women walked in front and she followed them, laughing at them and swaying gracefully to and fro in her robes; whilst the nurse forewent her, showing her the trees and feeding her with fruits; and so they fared on from place to place, till they came to the pavilion, which when the princess beheld and

saw that it had been newly repaired, she said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, seest thou yonder pavilion? It has been repaired and its walls newly plastered.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered she, 'I heard say that the keeper of the garden had taken stuffs of a company of merchants and sold them and bought bricks and lime and stones and plaster and so forth with the price; so I asked him what he had done with all this, and he said, "I have put the ruined pavilion in repair, and when the merchants sought their due of me, I said to them, 'Wait till the princess visits the garden and sees the repairs and they please her: then will I take of her what she is pleased to bestow on me, and pay you your due.'" Quoth I, "What moved thee to do this thing?" And he said, "I saw the pavilion in ruins, the coigns thrown down and the plaster stripped from the walls, and none had the grace to repair it; so I borrowed the money on my own account and reinstated the place; and I trust in the princess to deal with me as befits her dignity." Quoth I, "The princess is all goodness and generosity and will no doubt requite thee." And he did all this but in hopes of thy bounty.' 'By Allah,' replied the princess, 'he hath dealt nobly in rebuilding it and hath done the deed of a man of worth! Call me my purse-keeper.' The old woman accordingly fetched the purse-keeper, and the princess bade the latter give the gardener two thousand dinars; whereupon the nurse sent a messenger to him, bidding him to the princess's presence.

When the gardener received the summons, he trembled in every limb and said in himself 'Doubtless, the princess has seen the young man, and this day will be the most unlucky of days for me.' So he went home and told his wife and children what had happened and gave them his last injunctions, and they wept for him. Then he took leave of them and returning to the garden, presented himself before the princess, with a face the colour of turmeric and scarce able to stand upright. The old woman remarked his plight and hastened to forestall him, saying, 'O old man, kiss the earth in gratitude to God the Most High and be instant in prayer to Him for the princess; for I told her what thou didst in the matter of repairing the ruined pavilion, and she rejoiceth in this and bestoweth on thee two thousand dinars in requital of thy pains; so take them from the purse-keeper and kiss the earth before the princess and bless her and go thy way.' So he took the money and kissed the earth before Heyat en Nufous, calling down blessings on her. Then he returned to his house, and his family rejoiced in him and blessed him who had been the [prime] cause of all this.

As soon as he was gone, the old woman said to the princess, 'O my lady, this is indeed become a fine place! Never saw I a purer white than its plastering nor goodlier than its painting! I wonder if he have repaired the inside also: else hath he made the outside white and [left] the inside black. Come, let us enter and see.' So they entered and found the interior painted and gilded in the goodliest fashion. The princess looked right and left, till she came to the upper end of the estrade, when she fixed her eyes upon the wall and gazed attentively thereat; whereupon the old woman knew that she had lighted on the presentment of her dream and took the two waiting-women with her, that they might not divert her attention. When the princess had made an end of examining the painting, she turned to the old woman, wondering and beating hand on hand, and said to her, 'O my nurse, come and see a wonderful thing. Were it graven with needles on the corners of the eyes, it would serve as an admonition to him who

will be admonished.' 'And what is that, O my lady?' asked she. 'Go, look at the upper end of the estrade,' replied the princess, 'and tell me what thou seest there.'

So she went up and came down, wondering, and said, 'By Allah, O my lady, here is depicted the garden and the fowler and his net and the birds and all thou sawest in thy dream; and verily, nothing but urgent necessity withheld the male pigeon from returning to free his mate; for I see him in the talons of a hawk, which has slaughtered him and is drinking his blood and rending his flesh and eating it; and this, O my lady, accounts for his tarrying to return and rescue her from the net. But the wonder is how thy dream came to be thus depicted, for, wert thou minded to set it forth in portraiture, thou hadst not availed thereto. By Allah, this is a wonder that should be recorded in history! Surely, O my lady, the angels, to whom are committed the care of the sons of Adam, knew that the male pigeon was wronged of us, whenas we blamed him for deserting his mate; so they embraced his cause and made manifest his excuse.' 'O my nurse,' said the princess, 'verily, fate and fore-ordained fortune had course against this bird, and we wronged him.' 'O my lady,' rejoined the nurse, 'adversaries shall meet before God the Most High: but, O my lady, verily, the truth hath been made manifest and the male pigeon's excuse certified to us; for, except the hawk had seized him and killed him, he had not held aloof from his mate, but had returned to her and set her free; but against death there is no recourse, nor, O my lady, is there aught in the world more tenderly solicitous than the male for the female, among all creatures that God the Most High hath created, and especially is it thus with man; for he starves himself to feed his wife, strips himself to clothe her, angers his family to please her and disobeys and denies his parents to give to her. She knoweth his secrets and concealeth them and cannot endure from him an hour. If he be absent from her one night, her eyes sleep not nor is there a dearer to her than he. She tenders him more than her parents and they lie down to sleep in each other's arms, with his hand under her neck and her hand under his neck, even as saith the poet in the following verses:

I made my wrist her pillow, yea, and lay with her the night,
Saying to it, "Be long," what while the full moon glittered white.
Ah me, that night! God never did the like thereof create;
Its first was sweetness and its last was bitter to my spright.

Then he kisses her and she kisses him; and I have heard that a certain king, when his wife fell sick and died, buried himself alive with her, submitting of his own accord to death, for the love of her and the strait companionship that was between them. Moreover, a certain king sickened and died, and when they were about to bury him, his wife said to her people, "Let me bury myself alive with him: else will I slay myself and my blood will be on your heads." So, when they saw she would not be turned from this thing, they left her, and she cast herself into the grave with her dead husband, of the greatness of her love and tenderness over him.' And she ceased not to ply the princess with anecdotes of [mutual fidelity] between men and women, till there ceased that which was in her heart of aversion to the male sex; and when she saw that she had succeeded in renewing in her [the natural] inclination [of women] to men, she said to her, 'It is time to go and walk in the garden.' So they went out and walked among the trees.

Presently the prince chanced to turn and his eyes fell on Heyat en Nufous; and when he saw the justness of her shape and her rosy cheeks and the blackness of her eyes and her exceeding grace and loveliness and her excelling beauty and elegance and her abounding perfection, his reason was confounded and he could not take his eyes off her. His judgement failed him for passion and love overpassed all limits in him; his entrails were occupied with her service and his heart was aflame with the fire of love-longing, so that he swooned away and fell to the ground senseless. When he came to himself, she had passed from his sight and was hidden from him among the trees; so he sighed from his inmost heart and repeated the following verses:

Whenas mine eyes her charms beheld, do wonder-excellent,
With passion and with love-longing my heart in twain was rent
And I became forthright o'erthrown, cast down upon the ground,
Nor knows the princess that which is with me of languishment.
She turned and ravished in the act the slave of passion's heart:
By God, have pity on my pain; have pity and relent!
O Lord, make access near to me, vouchsafe me her I love,
Ere to the graveyard I descend and all my life is spent.
I'll kiss her half a score of times and ten, and other ten
Be on his wasted cheek who's pined for longing and lament!

The old woman ceased not to carry the princess about the garden, till she brought her to the place where the prince lay in wait, when she said, 'O thou whose bounties are hidden, vouchsafe us assurance from that we fear!' The prince, hearing the signal, left his hiding-place and walked among the trees, swaying to and fro with a proud and graceful gait and a shape that shamed the branches. His brow was pearled with sweat and his cheeks red as the afterglow, extolled be the perfection of God the Supreme in that He hath created! When the princess caught sight of him, she gazed a long while on him and saw his beauty and grace and symmetry and his eyes that wantoned, gazelle-wise, and his shape that outvied the branches of the myrobalan; wherefore her reason was confounded and her soul captivated and her heart transfixed with the arrows of his glances. Then she said to the old woman, 'O my nurse, whence came yonder handsome youth?' 'Where is he, O my lady?' enquired the nurse. 'There he is,' answered Heyat en Nufous; 'close at hand, among the trees.' The old woman turned right and left, as if she knew not of his presence, and said, 'Who can have taught this youth the way into the garden?' Quoth Heyat en Nufous, 'Who shall give us news of him? Glory be to Him who created men! Dost thou know him, O my nurse?' 'O my lady,' answered the old woman, 'he is the young merchant who wrote to thee by me.' Quoth the princess (and indeed she was drowned in the sea of her desire and the fire of her passion and love-longing), 'O my nurse, how goodly is this youth! Indeed he is fair of favour. Methinks, there is not on the face of the earth a goodlier than he!'

When the old woman was assured that the love of him had gotten possession of the princess, she said to her, 'O my lady, did I not tell thee that he was a comely youth of a bright visage?' 'O my nurse,' replied Heyat en Nufous, 'kings' daughters know not the ways of the world nor the manners of those that be therein, for that they company with none, neither give nor take. But how shall I do to present myself to him, and what shall I say to him and what will he say to me?' 'What device is left me?' said the old

woman. 'Indeed, we were confounded in this matter by thy behaviour.' And the princess said, 'Know, O my nurse, that if any ever died of passion, I shall do so, and behold, I look for nothing but instant death, by reason of the fire of my love-longing.' When the old woman heard her words and saw the transport of her passion for him, she answered, saying, 'O my lady, as for his coming to thee, there is no way thereto; and indeed thou art excused from going to him, because of thy tender age; but follow me and I will accost him. So shalt thou not be put to shame, and in the twinkling of an eye there shall betide familiarity between you.' 'Go before me,' said the princess; 'for the decree of God may not be averted.'

So they went up to the place where Ardeshir sat, as he were the moon at its full, and the old woman said to him, 'See, O youth, who is present before thee! It is the King's daughter of the age, Heyat en Nufous: bethink thee of her rank and the honour she doth thee in coming to thee and rise and stand before her, out of respect for her.' The prince sprang to his feet forthright and his eyes met hers, whereupon they both became as they were drunken without wine. Then the love of him and desire redoubled upon the princess and she opened her arms and he his, and they embraced; but love-longing and passion overcame them and they swooned away and lay a great while without sense. The old woman, fearing scandal, carried them b0th into the pavilion and sitting down at the door, said to the two waiting-women, 'Seize the occasion to take your pleasure in the gardens for the princess sleeps.' So they returned to their diversion.

Presently, the lovers recovered from their swoon and found themselves in the pavilion, whereupon quoth the prince, 'God on thee, O princess of fair ones, is this a dream or an illusion of sleep?' Then they embraced and intoxicated themselves without wine, complaining each to each of the anguish of passion; and the prince recited the following verses:

The sun of the day shines out from her forehead's lambent snow
And eke from her cheeks flames forth the red of the afterglow;
And whenas athwart the veil her charms to the sight appear,
The star of the skyline sets for shame and away doth go.
If lightnings flash from her teeth, in the break of her smiling lips,
The veils of the dark are drawn and day through the dusk doth show
And when with her graceful shape she sways in her swimming gait,
The cassia-boughs in the leaf are jealous of her, I trow.
Her sight is enough for me; I care for no other bliss;
To God I commend her, the Lord of the heavens and the earth below!
The full moon borrows a part of her beauties, and eke the sun
To imitate her were fain, but needs must the strife forego.
For whence should it get her shape and the flexile grace of her gait,
And whence should the moon the charms of her mind and her body know?
So shall reproach it to me, if I'm all in her love absorbed,
'Twixt discord in her and accord divided, 'twixt gladness and woe?
'Tis she who hath captived my heart with the amorous grace of her port;
And what shall the true lover's heart protect from so charming a foe?

When he had made an end of these verses, the princess strained him to her bosom and kissed him on the mouth and between the eyes; whereupon life returned to him and he fell to complaining to her of that which he suffered for stress of love and tyranny of passion and excess of transport and distraction and all he had endured for the hardness of her heart. She kissed his hands and feet and unveiled her head, whereupon the darkness gathered and the full moons arose and shone therein. Then said she to him, 'O my beloved and the term of my wishes, would the day of estrangement had never been and God grant it may never return between us!' And they embraced and wept together, whilst she recited the following verses:

Thou that the full moon sham'st and eke the sun of day,
Thou hast unto thy face committed me to slay;
So with a glance's sword, that shore the heart, on me
It fell; and where shall one from glances flee away?
Thine eyebrows are a bow, whence at my heart a hunched
Arrows of flaming fire and passion and dismay.
The gathering of thy cheeks is paradise to me:
How shall my heart endure from gathering them, I pray?
Thy graceful-swaying shape is as a flowered branch,
From which are gathered fruits, the burden of the spray.
In love of thee, indeed, I've put away restraint:
Thou drawest me perforce and mak'st me waken aye.
God aid thee with the light of splendour and contract
The distance and make near the visitation-day!
Have pity on a heart that's seared for love of thee
And entrails that appeal to thee to be their stay!

Then passion overcame her and she was distraught for love and wept copious tears, streaming down like rain. This inflamed the prince's heart and he in turn became troubled and distracted for love of her. So he kissed her hands and wept sore, and they ceased not from tender reproaches and converse and reciting verses, nor was there aught between them other than this, until the call to afternoon prayer, when they bethought them of parting and she said to him, 'O light of mine eyes and kernel of my heart, the time of parting is come: when shall we meet again?' 'By Allah,' replied he (and indeed her words pierced him as with arrows), 'I love not the mention of parting!' Then she went forth of the pavilion, and he turned and saw her sighing sighs that would melt the rock and weeping tears like rain; whereupon he for love was sunken in the sea of desolations and recited the following verses:

Distraction, O wish of the heart, are anew
For love of thee irketh me: how shall I do?
By thy face, like the dawn when it breaks through the dark,
And thy locks, that resemble the night in their hue,
And thy shape like the branch, when it bends in the breeze
And the North wind shakes from it the pearls of the dew,
And the glance of thine eyes like the antelope's gaze,
That the eyes of the noble and generous ensue,

And thy waist worn to nought by the weight of thy hips,
These so heavy, so slender the other to view;
By the wine of thy spittle, the sweetest of drink,
Pure musk and fresh water, to thee do I sue;
O gazelle of the tribe, let thine image in sleep
Ease my soul of the grief that enforceth it rue!

When she heard his verses in praise of her, she turned back and embracing him, with a heart on fire for the anguish of parting, fire which nought might assuage save kisses and embraces, said, 'Quoth the byword, Patience behoves a lover and not the lack of it. And I will surely contrive a means for our reunion.' Then she bade him adieu and went away, knowing not where she set her feet, for stress of love; nor did she stay her steps till she found herself in her own chamber. When she was gone, passion and love-longing redoubled upon the prince and the delight of sleep was forbidden to him, whilst she in her turn tasted not food and her patience failed and her heart sickened for desire.

As soon as it was day, she sent for her nurse, who came and found her in sorry plight. Quoth the princess, 'Question me not of my case; for all I suffer is due to thee. Where is the beloved of my heart?' 'O my lady,' answered the old woman, 'when did he leave thee? Hath he been absent from thee more than this night?' 'Can I endure from him an hour?' rejoined Heyat en Nufous. 'Come, find some means to bring us together speedily, for my soul is like to depart [my body].' 'O my lady,' said the old woman, 'have patience till I contrive thee some subtle device, whereof none shall be ware.' 'By the Great God,' cried the princess, 'except thou bring him to me this very day, I will tell the King that thou hast corrupted me, and he will cut of thy head!' Quoth the nurse, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, have patience with me, for this is a dangerous matter!' And she humbled herself to her, till she granted her three days' delay, saying, 'O my nurse, the three days will be as three years to me; and if the fourth day pass and thou bring him not, I will go about to slay thee.'

The old woman left her and returned to her lodging, where she abode till the morning of the fourth day, when she summoned the tirewomen of the town and sought of them fine paint and dyes for the painting and adorning of a virgin girl, and they brought her cosmetics of the best. Then she sent for the prince and bringing forth of her chest a suit of woman's apparel, worth five thousand dinars, and a kerchief fringed with all manner jewels, said to him 'O my son, hast thou a mind to foregather with Heyat en Nufous?' 'Yes,' answered he. So she took a pair of tweezers and pulled out the hairs of his face and anointed his eyes with kohl. Then she stripped him and painted him with henna from his nails to his shoulders and from his insteps to his thighs and tattooed him about the body, till he was like red roses on tables of alabaster. After a little, she washed him and dried him and bringing out a shift and a pair of trousers, made him put them on. Then she clad him in the dress aforesaid and binding the kerchief about his head, veiled him and taught him how to walk, saying, 'Advance thy left and draw back thy right.' He did as she bade him and walked before her, as he were a houri escaped from Paradise. Then said she to him, 'Fortify thy heart, for we are going to the King's palace, where there will without fail be guards and eunuchs at the gate; and if thou take fright at them and show hesitation or fear, they will suspect thee

and examine thee, and we shall both lose our lives: wherefore an thou feel thyself unable to do this, tell me.' 'This thing hath no terrors for me,' answered he; 'so take courage and be of good cheer.'

Then she went out and he followed her, till they came to the gate of the palace which was full of eunuchs. She turned and looked at him, to see if he were troubled or no, and finding him unchanged, went on. The chief eunuch looked at the nurse and knew her, but seeing a damsel following her, whose charms confounded the reason, he said in himself, 'As for the old woman, she is the nurse; but who is the girl with her? There is none in our land resembleth her in favour or approacheth her in beauty save the princess Heyat en Nufous, who is cloistered and never goeth out. Would I knew how she came into the street and whether or no it was by leave of the King!' Then he rose to discover the matter and nigh thirty eunuchs followed him; which when the old woman saw, her reason fled for fear and she said, 'There is no power and no virtue, save in God! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! Without doubt we are dead folk this time.' When the chief eunuch heard her say this, fear gat hold upon him, by reason of that which he knew of the princess's violence and that her father was ruled by her, and he said in himself, 'Belike the King hath commanded the nurse to carry his daughter forth upon some occasion of hers, whereof she would have none know; and if I stop her, she will be wroth with me and will say, "This fellow stopped me, that he might pry into my affairs.' So she will go about to kill me, and I have no call to meddle in this matter.'

So saying, he turned back, and the thirty eunuchs with him, and drove the people from the door of the palace; whereupon the nurse entered and saluted the eunuchs with her head, whilst they stood to do her honour and returned her salutation. The prince followed her from door to door, and [God] the Protector protected them, so that they passed all the guards, till they came to the seventh door, which was that of the great pavilion, wherein was the King's throne, and communicated with the apartments of his women and the saloons of the harem, as well as with his daughter's palace. Here the old woman halted and said, 'Glory be to God, O my son, who hath brought us thus far in safety! We cannot foregather with the princess except by night; for night covers the fearful.' 'True,' answered he; 'but what is to be done?' Quoth she, 'Behind the door is a dark and deep cistern, with a cover thereto, wherein thou must hide thyself till nightfall.' So he entered the cistern, and she went away and left him there till ended day, when she returned and carried him into the palace, till they came to the door of Heyat en Nufous's apartment. The old woman knocked at the door and a little maid came out and said, 'Who is there?' 'It is I,' answered the nurse; whereupon the maid returned and told the princess, who said, 'Let her enter, with her companion.'

So they entered and found that the princess had made ready the sitting-chamber and ranged the lamps and lighted candles of wax in chandeliers of gold and silver and spread the divans and estrades with carpets and cushions. Moreover, she had set on food and fruits and confections and perfumed the place with musk and aloes-wood and ambergris. She was seated among the candles and the lamps, and the light of her face outshone the lustre of them all. When she saw the old woman, she said to her, 'O nurse, where is the beloved of my heart?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I cannot find him ; but I have brought thee his own sister; and here she is.' 'Art thou mad?' exclaimed the

princess. 'What need have I of his sister? If a man's head irk him, doth he bind up his hand?' 'No, by Allah, O my lady!' replied the old woman. 'But look on her, and if she please thee, let her be with thee.' So saying, she uncovered the prince's face, whereupon Heyat en Nufous knew him and running to him) pressed him to her bosom, and he pressed her to his. Then they both fell down in a swoon and lay without sense a long while. The old woman sprinkled rose-water upon them, till they came to themselves, when she kissed him on the mouth more than a thousand times and recited these verses:

My heart's belov'd in the darkness visited me;
I rose in honour of him, till down sat he.
"O thou my only desire," quoth I, "by night
Thou dost me visit nor fearest the guards should see!"
"I feared," he answered, "but love hath captive ta'en
My soul and spirit and will not set me free."
We clipped with kisses and clung together awhile;
For here was safety; nor guards nor spies feared we;
Then rose, undoubting, and shook out skirts, wherein
Nowise uncleanness nor aught impure might be.

Quoth she, 'Is it indeed true that I see thee in my abode and that thou art my house-mate and my cup- companion?' Then passion redoubled on her and love was heavy upon her, so that her reason well-nigh fled for joy and she recited the following verses:

With all my soul I'll ransom him who came to me by night
In darkness, whilst I waited for the tryst between us plight;
And nought aroused me but his voice lamenting soft and low;
And I, "Fair welcome, O my love, to joyance and delight!"
A thousand times his cheek I kissed and yet a thousand times
I clipped him close in my embrace, where he was veiled from sight.
Quoth I, "At last have I attained to that I wearied for;
So to praise God for this His grace is only due and right."
And then the goodliest of nights we passed, even as we would,
Until the curtains of the dark were drawn by morning light.

When it was day, she made him enter a place of concealment in her apartment and he abode there till night- fall, when she brought him out and they sat carousing. Presently, he said to her, "I wish to return to my own country and tell my father what has passed between us, that he may send his Vizier to demand thee in marriage of thy father.' 'O my love,' answered she, 'I fear, if thou return to thy country and kingdom, thou wilt be distracted from me and forget the love of me or that thy father will not fall in with thy wishes, and I shall die. Meseems the better counsel were that thou abide with me and in my hand, I looking on thy face and thou on mine, till I devise some plan, whereby we may escape together some night and flee to thy country; for my hopes are cut off from my people and I despair of them.' 'I hear and obey' replied he, and they fell again to their carousal.

He abode with her thus for some time, till, one night, the wine was pleasant to them and they lay not down to sleep till break of day. Now it chanced that one of the Kings sent her father a present, and amongst other things, a necklace of unique jewels, nine-and-twenty in number, to whose price a king's treasures might not suffice. Quoth Abdulcadir, 'This beseemeth none but my daughter Heyat en Nufous,' and calling an eunuch whose jaw-teeth the princess had knocked out, bade him carry the necklace to her and say to her, 'One of the kings hath sent thy father this as a presents and its price may not be paid with money; put it on thy neck.' The slave took the necklace, saying in himself, 'God make it the last thing she shall put on in this world, for that she deprived me of the use of my teeth!' and repairing to the princess's apartment found the door locked and the old woman asleep before it. He shook her, and she awoke in affright and said, 'What dost thou want?' Quoth he, 'The King hath sent me on an errand to his daughter.' 'The key is not here,' answered the old woman. 'Go away, whilst I fetch it.' But he said, 'I cannot go back to the King, without having done his commandment.' So she went away, as if to fetch the key; but fear overtook her and she sought safety in flight.

The eunuch awaited her awhile; then, finding she did not return, he feared that the King would be angry at his delay; so he shook the door, whereupon the bolt gave way and the door opened. He entered and passed on, till he came to the seventh door, [which was that of the princess's chamber], and going in, found the place splendidly furnished and saw candles and flagons there. At this he marvelled and going up to the bed, which was enclosed with a curtain of silk, embroidered with a network of jewels, drew back the curtain and saw the princess asleep in the arms of a young man handsomer than herself; whereat he magnified God the Most High, who had created him of vile water, and said, 'This is a goodly fashion for one who hath an aversion to men! How came she by this fellow? Methinks it was on his account that she knocked out my teeth!' Then he dropped the curtain and made for the door; but the princess awoke in affright and seeing the eunuch, whose name was Kafour, called to him. He made her no answer: so she came down from the bed and catching hold of his skirt, laid it on her head and kissed his feet, saying, 'Cover what God covers!' Quoth he, 'May Allah not cover thee nor him who would cover thee! Thou didst knock out my teeth and saidst to me, "Let none make mention to me of men and their ways!"' So saying, he disengaged himself from her grasp and running out, locked the door on them and set another eunuch to guard it.

Then he went in to the King, who said to him, 'Hast thou given the necklace to Heyat en Nufous?' 'By Allah,' replied the eunuch, 'she deserves more than that!' And the King said, 'What hath happened? Tell me quickly.' 'I will not tell thee, save in private,' answered Kafour; but the King rejoined, saying, 'Tell me at once and in public.' 'Then grant me immunity,' said the eunuch. So the King threw him the handkerchief of immunity and he said, 'O King, I went in to the princess Heyat en Nufous and found her asleep in a carpeted chamber, in the arms of a young man. So I locked the door on them and came back to thee.' When the King heard this, he started up and taking a sword in his hand, cried out to the chief of the eunuchs, saying, 'Take thy lads and go the princess's chamber and bring me her and him who if with her, as they lie on the bed, coverings and all.' So the chief eunuch and his men repaired to the

princess's apartment, where he found her and the prince standing up, dissolved in tears, and said to them, 'Lie down on the bed, as you were.' The princess feared for her lover and said to him, 'This is no time for resistance.' So they both lay down and the eunuchs covered them up and carried them into the King's presence.

Abdulcadir pulled off the coverings and the princess sprang to her feet; whereupon he looked at her and would have struck off her head; but the prince threw himself between them, saying, 'The fault was mine, not hers: kill me before her.' The King made at him, to kill him, but Heyat en Nufous threw herself on her father and said, 'Kill me and not him; for he is the son of a great King, lord of all the land in its length and breadth.' When the King heard this, he turned to his chief Vizier, who was a compend of all that is evil, and said to him, 'What sayst thou of this matter, O Vizier?' Quoth the Vizier, 'What I say is that all who find themselves in such case as this have need of lying, and there is nothing for it but to cut off both their heads, after torturing them with all manner of tortures.' With this the King called the swordsman of his vengeance, who came with his lads, and said to him, 'Take this gallows-bird and strike off his head and after do the like with this harlot and burn their bodies, and consult me not again about them.' So the headsman put his hand to her back, to take her; but the King cried out at him and cast at him somewhat he had in his hand, which had well-nigh killed him, saying, 'O dog, wilt thou show clemency to those with whom I am wroth? Put thy hand to her hair and drag her along by it, so that she may fall on her face.' So he haled the two lovers by their hair to the place of blood, where he tore off a piece of his skirt and bound the prince's eyes therewith, putting the princess last, in the hope that some one would intercede for her. Then he swung his sword three times, whilst all the troops wept and prayed God to send them deliverance and raised his hand to cut off Ardeshir's head, when, behold, there arose a cloud of dust, that spread till it covered the landscape.

When King Abdulcadir saw this, he said, 'O folk, what is the meaning of yonder dust that obscures the sight?' The Grand Vizier went out to reconnoitre and found behind the cloud men like locusts, beyond count or limit, tilling the hills and plains and valleys. So he returned and told the King, who said to him, 'Go down and learn who they are and who is their commander and salute him for me and ask him the reason of his coming. If he come in quest of aught we will aid him to his desire, and if he have a feud with one of the kings, we will ride with him; or, if he desire a gift, we will handsel him; for this is indeed a mighty host and a vast power and we fear for our land from its mischief.' Accordingly, the Vizier went forth and walked among the tents and guards and troopers and fared on from the first of the day till near sundown, when he came to tents studded with stars and guards with gilded swords. Passing these, he made his way, through Amirs and Viziers and captains and chamberlains, to the pavilion of the Sultan and found him a mighty King. When the King's officers saw him, they cried out to him, saying, 'Kiss the earth! Kiss the earth!' He did so and would have risen, but they cried out at him a second and a third time. So he kissed the earth again and again and raised his head and would have stood up but fell down for excess of awe. When at last he stood before the King, he said to him, 'O august King, may God prolong thy days and increase thy sovranty and exalt thy rank! King Abdulcadir salutes thee and kisses the earth before thee and asks on what weighty

business thou art come. If thou seek to avenge thee on any king, he will take horse in thy service; or, if thou come in quest of aught wherein it is in his power to help thee, he is at thy service on account thereof.' Now this was Ardeshir's father, who, hearing no news of his son, had levied a mighty army and himself set out in quest of him. So he replied to the Vizier, saying, 'O messenger, return to thy lord and tell him that the most mighty King [Seif el Aazem Shah, King of Shiraz] had a son, who has been long absent from him and news of him have been cut off from him, nor knoweth he what is become of him. If he be in this city, he will take him and depart from you; but, if any mischief have befallen him among you, his father will lay waste your land and slay your men and make spoil of your goods and your women. Return, therefore, in haste, to thy lord and tell him this, ere evil befall him.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier and turned to go away, when the chamberlain cried out to him, saying, 'Kiss the earth! Kiss the earth!' So he kissed the earth a score of times and rose not till his heart was in his mouth.

Then he returned to the city, full of anxious thought concerning the affair of this King and the multitude of his troops, and going in to King Abdulcadir, pale with fear and trembling in every limb, acquainted him with that which he had seen and heard; whereat disquietude and fear for his people laid hold upon him and he said to the Vizier, 'O Vizier, and who is this King's son?' 'It is even he whom thou badest put to death,' answered the Vizier; 'but praised be God who hastened not his slaughter! Else had his father laid waste our lands and spoiled our goods.' 'See now,' quoth the King, 'thy corrupt judgment, in that thou didst counsel us to kill him! Where is the young man, the son of yonder magnanimous king?' 'O mighty King,' answered the Vizier, 'thou didst command him to be put to death.' When the King heard this, he was distracted and cried out in a terrible voice, saying, 'Out on you! Fetch me the headsman forthright, lest death fall on him!' So they fetched the headsman and he said, 'O King of the age, I have smitten off his head even as thou badest me.' 'O dog,' cried Abdulcadir, 'if this be true, I will assuredly send thee after him.' Quoth the headsman, 'O King, thou didst command me to slay him without again consulting thee.' 'I was in my anger,' replied the King; 'but speak the truth, ere thou lose thy life.' And he said, 'O King, he is yet in the chains of life.'

At this Abdulcadir rejoiced and his heart was set at ease; then he called for Ardeshir, and when he came, he stood up to receive him and kissed his mouth, saying, 'O my son, I ask pardon of God for the wrong I have done thee, and say thou not aught that may lower my credit with thy father, the Supreme King.' 'O King of the age,' said the prince, 'and where is my father?' 'He is come hither on thine account,' replied Abdulcadir; and Ardeshir said, 'By thy worship, I will not stir from before thee till I have cleared my honour and that of thy daughter from that which thou laidst to our charge; for she is a clean maid. Send for the midwives and let them examine her before thee. If they find her maidenhead gone, I give thee leave to shed my blood; and if they find her a pure virgin, her innocence and mine will be made manifest.' So he summoned the midwives, who examined the princess and found her a clean maid and told the King, seeking largesse of him. He gave them what they sought, putting off his royal robes to bestow on them, and in like manner he made presents to all who were in

the harem. And they brought forth the casting-bottles and perfumed all the officers of state and grandees; and they all rejoiced with an exceeding joy.

Then the King embraced Ardeshir and entreated him with all honour and consideration, bidding his chief eunuchs carry him to the bath. When he came out, he cast over his shoulders a costly robe and set on his head a diadem of jewels. Moreover, he girt him with a sash of silk embroidered with red gold and set with pearls and jewels, and mounted him on one of his finest horses, with trappings of gold inlaid with pearls and jewels. Then he bade his grandees and captains mount and escort him to his father's presence and charged him tell the latter that King Abdulcadir was at his disposal, hearkening to his word and obeying him in whatsoever he should command or forbid. 'I will not fail of this,' answered Ardeshir and repaired to his father, who was transported for joy at sight of him and springing up, advanced to meet him and embraced him, whilst joy and gladness spread among his troops. Then came the viziers and chamberlains and captains and kissed the earth before the prince and rejoiced in his coming: and it was a great day with them for joy. Moreover, the prince gave leave to those of King Abdulcadir's officers who had accompanied him and others of the townsfolk, to view the ordinance of his father's host, without let or hindrance, so they might know the multitude of the Great King's troops and the might of his empire. And all who had seen him selling stuffs in the bazaar marvelled how his soul could have consented thereto, considering the nobility of his rank and the loftiness of his dignity; but it was his love and inclination to the princess that constrained him to this.

Meanwhile, news of the multitude of his troops came to Heyat en Nufous, who was still a prisoner under commandment, till they knew what her father should order respecting her, whether pardon and release or death and burning; and she looked down from the top of the palace and turning towards the mountains, saw the whole plain filled with armed men. When she beheld all these troops and knew that they were the army of Ardeshir's father, she feared lest he should be diverted from her by his father and forget her and depart from her, whereupon her father would put her to death. So she called a maid that was with her in her apartment, by way of service, and said to her, 'Go to Ardeshir, son of the Great King, and fear not. When thou comest into his presence, kiss the earth before him and tell him who thou art and say to him, "My lady salutes thee and would have thee to know that she is a prisoner in her father's palace, awaiting his sentence, whether he be minded to pardon her or kill her, and she beseecheth thee not to forget her or forsake her; for to-day thou art all-powerful; and whatsoever thou commandest none dare cross thee therein. Wherefore, if it seem good to thee to rescue her from her father and take her with thee, it were of thy bounty, for indeed she suffereth all these tribulations on thine account. But if this seem not good to thee, for that thy desire of her is at an end, speak to thy father, so haply he may intercede for her with her father and depart not, till he have made him set her at liberty and taken surety from him that he will not go about to put her to death nor do her any hurt. This is her last word to thee, may God not bereave [her] of thee, and peace be on thee!"'

The maid made her way to Ardeshir and delivered him her mistress's message, which when he heard, he wept sore and said to her, 'Know that Heyat en Nufous is my mistress and that I am her slave and the captive of her love. I have not forgotten what

was between us nor the bitterness of the day of separation; so do thou say to her, after thou hast kissed her feet, that I will speak with my father of her, and he will send his Vizier, who sought her aforetime in marriage for me, to demand her hand once more of her father, for he dare not refuse. So, if he send to her to consult her, let her make no opposition; for I will not return to my country without her.' So the maid returned to Heyat en Nufous and kissing her hands, delivered to her the prince's message, which when she heard, she wept for very joy and returned thanks to God the Most High.

Meanwhile, Ardeshir being alone with his father by night, the latter questioned him of his case and he told him all that had befallen him, first and last; whereupon quoth the King, 'What wilt thou have me do for thee, O my son? If thou desire Abdulcadir's ruin, I will lay waste his lands and spoil his treasures and dishonour his family.' 'O my father,' replied Ardeshir, 'I do not desire that, for he hath done nothing deserving thereof; but I wish for union with the princess; wherefore I beseech thee of thy favour to make ready a present for her father, (but let it be a magnificent one,) and send it to him by thy Vizier, the man of just judgment.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the King and sending for the treasures he had laid up from time past, chose out all manner of precious things and showed them to his son, who was pleased with them. Then he called his Vizier and bade him carry the present to King Abdulcadir and demand his daughter in marriage for Ardeshir, saying, 'Accept the present and return him an answer.'

Now from the time of Ardeshir's departure, King Abdulcadir had been troubled and heavy at heart, fearing the laying waste of his kingdom and the spoiling of his realm; so, when the Vizier came in to him and saluting him, kissed the earth before him, he rose to his feet and received him with honour; but the Vizier made haste to fall at his feet and kiss them, saying, 'Pardon, O King of the age! The like of thee should not rise to the like of me, for I am the least of slaves' servants. Know, O King, that Prince Ardeshir hath acquainted his father with some of the favours and kindnesses thou hast done him, wherefore he thanks thee and sends thee, by thy servant who stands before thee, a present, saluting thee and wishing thee all manner of prosperities.' Abdulcadir, of the excess of his fear, could not believe what he heard, till the Vizier laid the present before him, when he saw it to be such as no money could purchase nor could one of the kings of the earth avail to the like thereof; wherefore he was belittled in his own eyes and springing to his feet, praised God the Most High and glorified Him and thanked the prince.

Then said the Vizier to him, 'O noble King, hearken to me and know that the Great King sendeth to thee, desiring thine alliance, and I come to thee, seeking and craving the hand of thy daughter, the chaste lady and treasured jewel Heyat en Nufous, in marriage for his son Ardeshir: wherefore, if thou consent to this, accepting of him, do thou agree with me for her marriage-portion.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Abdulcadir. 'For my part, I make no objection, and nothing can be more agreeable to me; but the girl is of full age and reason and her affair is in her own hand. So I will refer it to her and she shall choose for herself.' Then he turned to the chief eunuch and bade him go and acquaint the princess with this. So he repaired to the harem and kissing the princess's hands, acquainted her with the Great King's proposal, saying, 'What sayst thou in answer?' 'I hear and obey,' replied she. So the eunuch returned to

the King and gave him her answer, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and calling for a sumptuous robe of honour, threw it over the Vizier's shoulders. Moreover, he ordered him ten thousand dinars and bade him carry the answer to the Great King and crave leave for him to pay him a visit. 'I hear and obey,' answered the Vizier, and returning to his master, delivered him the reply and Abdulcadir's message, whereat he rejoiced greatly and Ardeshir was transported for joy and his breast expanded and he was glad.

Moreover, King Seif el Aazem gave King Abdulcadir leave to come forth to visit him; so, on the morrow, he took horse and rode to the camp of the Great King, who came to meet him and saluting him, seated him in the place of honour, and they two sat, whilst Ardeshir stood before them. Then arose an orator of the Great King's court and pronounced an eloquent discourse giving Ardeshir joy of the attainment of his desire and of his marriage with the princess, queen of kings' daughters. When he sat down, King Seif el Aazem caused bring a chest full of pearls and jewels, together with fifty thousand dinars, and said to King Abdulcadir, 'I am my son's deputy in all that concerns this matter.' So Abdulcadir acknowledged to have received the marriage-portion and amongst the rest, fifty-thousand dinars for the expenses of the nuptial festivities; after which they fetched the Cadis and the witnesses, who drew up the contact of marriage between the prince and princess, and it was a notable day, wherein all lovers rejoiced and all haters and enviers were mortified. They made the marriage feasts and banquet and Ardeshir went in to the princess and found her an unpierced and unique pearl, a treasured jewel and a filly that none but he had ridden and notified this to her father. Then said King Seif el Aazem to his son, 'Hast thou any wish thou wouldst have fulfilled ere we depart?' 'Yes, O King,' answered he; 'I would fain take my wreak of the Vizier who entreated us evil and the eunuch who forged a lie against us.' So the King sent forthright to Abdulcadir, demanding of him the vizier and the eunuch, whereupon he despatched them to him and he commanded to hang them over the gate of the city.

After this, they abode a little while and then sought of Abdulcadir leave for his daughter to make ready for departure. So he equipped her and mounted her in a travelling- litter of red gold, inlaid with pearls and diamonds and drawn by thoroughbred horses. She carried with her all her waiting-women and eunuchs, as well as the nurse, who had returned, after her flight, and resumed her office. Then King Seif el Aazem and his son mounted and Abdulcadir mounted also with all the officers of his realm, to take leave of his daughter and his son-in-law; and it was a day to be reckoned of the goodliest of days. After they had gone some distance, Seif el Aazem conjured King Abdulcadir to turn back; so he took leave of him [and his son], after he had strained him to his breast and kissed him between the eyes and thanked him for his favours and commended his daughter to his care. Then he went in to the princess and embraced her; and she kissed his hands and they wept in the stead of parting. Then he returned to his capital and Ardeshir and his company fared on, till they reached Shiraz, where they celebrated the marriage festivities anew. And they abode in all delight and solace and comfort of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, He who layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs.

VOLUME VII.

Julnar of the Sea and Her Son King Bedr Basim Of Persia.

THERE was once of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the land of the Persians, a king called Shehriman, whose abiding-place was Khorassan. He had a hundred concubines, but by none of them had he been vouchsafed a child, male or female, all the days of his life. One day, he bethought him of this and fell a-lamenting for that the most part of his life was past and he had not been blessed with a son, to inherit the kingdom after him, even as he had inherited it from his fathers and forefathers; by reason whereof there betided him sore chagrin and the extreme of care and despite. As he sat thus [absorbed in melancholy thought], one of his officers came in to him and said, 'O my lord, at the door is a merchant, with a slave-girl, than whom a fairer was never seen' 'Bring them to me,' answered the king, and the merchant and the damsel came in to him.

When Shehriman beheld the latter, he saw that she was like a Rudeini lance, and she was wrapped in a veil of gold-embroidered silk. The merchant uncovered her face, whereupon the place was illumined by her beauty and her hair hung down to her anklets, in seven tresses, like horse's tails. She had liquid black eyes, heavy buttocks and slender waist; [the sight of her] healed the sickness of the ailing and quenched the fire of the thirsting, for she was even as saith the poet:

I dote on her ; for, lo, in beauty she's complete,
Yea, staidness crowns her charms and gravity sedate.
Nor tall nor short is she, but of the hinder parts
So big, her trousers still therefor are all too strait.
Nor tallness to be blamed nor shortness is in her;
Her shape's the golden mean betwixten small and great.
Her tresses overfall her anklets, [black as night,]
But still her face is day no darkness may abate.

The king marvelled at her beauty and grace and symmetry and said to the merchant, 'O elder, what is the price of this damsel?' 'O my lord,' answered the merchant, 'I bought her for two thousand diners of the merchant who owned her before myself, since when I have travelled with her three years and she hath cost me, up to the time of my coming hither, [other] three thousand diners: but she is a gift from me to thee.' The king bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour and ordered him ten thousand diners, whereupon he kissed his hands, thanking him for his bounty and beneficence, and departed. Then the king committed the damsel to the tire-women, saying, 'Amend ye the case of this damsel and adorn her and furnish her an apartment and set her therein.' And he bade his chamberlains carry her all that she needed and shut all the doors upon her.

Now his capital city, wherein he dwelt, was called the White City and was seated on the sea-shore. So they lodged her in an apartment, whose windows overlooked the sea, and Shehriman went in to her; but she rose not to him neither took any note of him. Quoth he, 'It would seem she hath been with folk who have not taught her manners.' Then he looked at her and saw her surpassing in grace and beauty and

symmetry, with a face like the round of the moon at its full or the sun shining in the cloudless sky. So he marvelled at her beauty and symmetry and extolled the perfection of God the Creator (magnified be His power!), after which he pressed her to his bosom and seating her on his knees, sucked the dew of her lips, which he found sweeter than honey. Then he called for trays of all kinds of the richest meats and ate and fed her by mouthfuls, till she had enough; but she spoke not one word. The king began to talk to her and asked her of her name; but she abode still silent and spoke not a word nor made him any answer, neither ceased to hang down her head towards the ground; and it was but the excess of her beauty and loveliness and the amorous grace that distinguished her that saved her from his wrath. Quoth he, 'Glory be to God, the Creator of this damsel! How charming she is, save that she speaks not! But perfection belongs [only] to God the Most High.' And he asked the slave-girls whether she had spoken, and they said, 'From the time of her coming till now, we have not heard her say a word.'

Then he summoned some of his women and bade them sing to her and make merry with her, so haply she might speak. So they played before her all manner of instruments of music and sports and what not and sang, till all who were present were moved to mirth, except the damsel who looked at them in silence, but neither laughed nor spoke, and the king's breast was straitened. Then he dismissed the women and abode alone with the damsel: after which he put off his clothes and disrobing her with his own hand,looked upon her body and saw it as it were an ingot of silver. So he loved her with an exceeding love and falling upon her, took her maidenhead and found her a clean maid; whereat he rejoiced exceedingly and said, 'By Allah, it is a wonder that the merchants should have suffered a girl so fair of form and face to abide a maid!'

Then he devoted himself altogether to her, heeding none other and forsaking all his [other] concubines and favourites, and abode with her a whole year, as it were one day. Still she spoke not, till, one day, he said to her [and indeed the love of her and passion waxed upon him], 'O desire of souls, verily the love of thee is great with me, and for thy sake I have forsaken all my slave girls and concubines and women and favourites and have made thee my portion of the world and had patience with thee a whole year; and now I beseech God the Most High, of His favour, to soften thy heart to me, so thou mayst speak to me. Or, if thou be dumb, tell me by a sign, that I may give up hope of thy speech. I pray God (extolled be His perfection!) to vouchsafe me by thee a male child, who shall inherit the kingdom after me; for I am old and lonely and have none to be my heir. Wherefore, I conjure thee, by Allah, if thou love me, return me an answer.'

She bowed her head awhile, [as if] in thought, and presently raising it, smiled in his face; whereat it seemed to him as if lightning filled the room. Then she said, 'O magnanimous king and valorous lion, God hath answered thy prayer, for I am with child by thee and the time of my delivery is at hand, though I know not if the child be male or female. But, had I not conceived by thee, I had not spoken one word to thee.' When the ring heard her speech, his face shone with joy and happiness and he kissed her head and hands for excess of gladness, saying, 'Praised be God who hath vouchsafed me the things I desire! First, thy speech, and secondly, thy tidings that thou art with child by me.'

Then he went forth from her and seating himself on the throne of his kingship, in an ecstacy of happiness, bade his vizier distribute to the poor and needy and widows and others a hundred thousand diners, by way of alms on his account and thank-offering to God the Most High. The vizier did as the king bade him, and the latter, returning to the damsel, sat with her and pressed her to his bosom, saying, 'O my lady, O thou whose slave I am, thou hast been with me a whole year, night and day, waking and sleeping, yet hast not spoken to me till this day. What was the cause of this thy silence?' 'Hearken, O king of the age,' answered she, 'and know that I am a wretched exile, broken-hearted and parted from my mother and my family and my brother.' When the king heard her words, he knew her desire and said, 'As for thy saying that thou art wretched, there is no ground for such a speech, for my kingdom and all that I possess are at thy service and I also am become thy bondman; but, as for thy saying, "I am parted from my mother and brother and family," tell me where they are and I will send and fetch them to thee.'

'Know then, O august king,' answered she, 'that I am called Julnar of the Sea and that my father was of the kings of the sea. He died and left us his kingdom, but one of the other kings arose against us and took it from our hands. My mother also is a woman of the sea and I have a brother called Salih, with whom I fell out and swore that I would throw myself into the hands of a man of the folk of the land. So I came forth of the sea and eat down on the shore of an island in the moon, where a passer-by found me and carrying me to his house, besought me of love; but I smote him on the head, that he all but died; whereupon he carried me forth and sold me to the merchant from whom thou hadst me, and he was a good and virtuous man, pious and loyal and generous. Were it not that thy heart loved me and that thou preferredst me over all thy concubines, I had not remained with thee an hour, but had cast myself from the window into the sea and gone to my mother and kindred; but I was ashamed to go to them, being with child by thee; for they would have deemed ill of me and would not have credited me, though I swore to them, if I told them that a king had bought me with his monies and made me his portion of the world and preferred me over all his wives and all that his right hand possessed. This then is my story and peace be on thee.'

The king thanked her and kissed her between the eyes, saying, 'By Allah, O my lady and light of mine eyes, I cannot endure to be parted from thee one hour; and if thou leave me, I shall die forthright. What then is to be done?' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'the time of my delivery is at hand and my family must be present, that they may tend me; for the daughters of the land know not the fashion of child-bearing of the daughters of the sea, nor do the daughters of the sea know the fashion of the daughters of the land; and when my people come, I shall be reconciled to them and they to me and I will tell them that thou boughtest me with thy money and hast used me with kindness and beneficence. And it behoves that thou confirm my speech to them and that they see shine estate with their own eyes and know that thou art a king, the son of a king.'

'O my lady,' rejoined the king, 'do what seemeth good to thee and that which liketh thee, for I consent to thee in all thou wouldst do. But how do the people of the sea walk therein, without being wetted?' 'O king of the age,' answered Julnar, 'we walk

in the sea with our eyes open, as do ye on the land, by the blessing of the names engraved upon the seal of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace) and see what is therein and behold the sun and moon and stars and sky, as it were on the face of the earth; and this irketh us nought. Know, also, that in the sea are many peoples and various forms and creatures of all the kinds that be in the land, and that all that is on the land is but a very small matter, compared with that which is in the sea.' And the king marvelled at her words.

Then she pulled out from her bosom two pieces of Comorin aloes-wood and kindling fire in a chafing dish, threw in somewhat thereof, then gave a loud whistle and spoke words which none understood; whereupon there arose a great smoke and she said to the king, who was looking on, 'O my lord, arise and hide thyself in a closet, that I may show thee my mother and brother and family, whilst they see thee not; for I design to bring them hither, and thou shalt presently see a wonderful thing and marvel at the various creatures and strange shapes that God the Most High hath created.' So he arose straightway and entering a closet, fell a-watching what she should do. She continued her fumigations and conjurations till the sea foamed and became troubled and there rose from it a handsome young man of a bright countenance, as he were the moon at its full, with flower white forehead, red cheeks and teeth like pearls and jewels. He was the likest of all creatures to his sister [the damsel Julnar], and the tongue of the case spoke these verses in his praise:

The full moon groweth perfect once monthly; but thy face
Each day anew's perfected in loveliness and grace.
Yea, and the full moon's dwelling is but in one sign's heart:
To thee all hearts, O fair one, are as a dwelling-place.

After him there came forth of the sea a gray-haired old woman and five damsels, as they were moons, bearing a likeness to the damsel Julnar. They all walked upon the surface of the water, till they drew near the window and saw Julnar, whereupon they knew her and went in to her. She rose to them and received them with joy and gladness, and they embraced her and wept sore. Then said they to her, 'O Julnar, how couldst thou leave us four years, and we unknowing of thine abiding-place? By AIlah, the world has been straitened upon us, for stress of severance from thee, and we have had no delight of food or drink, no, not for one day, but have wept day and night for the excess of our longing after thee!' Then she fell to kissing the hands of her brother and mother and cousins, and they sat with her awhile, questioning her of her case, and of what had befallen her, as well as of her present estate. 'Know,' replied she, 'that, when I left you, I issued from the sea and sat down on the shore of an island, where a man found me and sold me to a merchant, who brought me to this city and sold me to the king of the country for ten thousand dinars. The latter entreated me with honour and left all his concubines and women and favourites on my account and was distracted by me from all he had and all that was in his city.' 'Praised be God,' said her brother, 'who hath reunited us with thee! But now, O my sister, it is my purpose that thou arise and go with us to our country and people.'

When the king heard this, he was transported for fear lest she should accept her brother's words and he himself avail not to stay her, passionately as he loved her, and

he became distracted with fear of losing her. But Julnar answered her brother, saying, 'By Allah, O my brother, he who bought me is lord of this city and he is a mighty king and a wise, good and generous in the extreme. Moreover, he is a man of great worth and wealth and hath neither son nor daughter. He hath entreated me with honour and done me all manner of favour and kindness; nor, from the day of his buying me, have I heard from him an ill word, to grieve my heart; but he hath never ceased to use me courteously, doing nothing without my counsel, and I am in the best of case with him and the perfection of fair fortune. Were I to leave him, he would perish; for he cannot endure to be parted from me an hour; and I, also, if I left him, I should die, for the excess of the love I bear him, by reason of his great goodness to me during the time of my sojourn with him; for, were my father alive, my estate with him would not be like that I enjoy with this great and glorious and puissant king. Moreover, ye see me with child by him and I pray God the Most High to vouchsafe me a son who may inherit of this mighty king that which He hath bestowed upon him of lands and palaces and possessions. Verily, God hath not cut me off, but hath abundantly compensated me [that which I lost], and praised be He for that He hath made me daughter of a king of the sea and my husband the greatest of the kings of the land!'

When her brother and cousins heard this her speech, their eyes were solaced thereby and they said, 'O Julnar, thou knowest thy value in our eyes and the affection we bear thee and art certified that thou art to us the dearest of all creatures and that we seek but ease for thee, without travail or weariness. Wherefore, if thou be in unease, arise and go with us to our land and people; but, if thou be at shine ease here, in honour and happiness, this is our wish and our aim; for we desire only thy happiness in any case.' Quoth she, 'By Allah, I am here in the utmost ease and comfort and honour and have all that I desire!' When the king heard what she said, his heart was set at rest and he rejoiced and thanked her [inwardly] for this [her speech]. Moreover, the love of her redoubled on him and entered his inmost heart, and he knew that she loved him as he loved her and desired to abide with him, that she might see his child by her.

Then Julnar called for food and the waiting women laid the tables and set on all kinds of viands, which had been dressed in the kitchen under her own eyes, and fruits and sweetmeats, of which she ate, she and her kinsfolk. But, presently, they said to her, 'O Julnar, thy lord is a stranger to us, and we have entered his house, without his leave or knowledge. Thou hast extolled to us his excellence and hast set before us of his victual and we have eaten; yet have we not companied with him nor seen him, neither hath he seen us nor come to our presence and eaten with us, so bread and salt might be between us.' And they all left eating and were wroth with her, and fire issued from their mouths, as from cressets; which when the king saw, he was transported for excess of fear of them. But Julnar soothed them and going to the closet where was the king her lord, said to him, 'O my lord, hast thou seen and heard how I praised thee and extolled thee to my people and what they said to me of their desire to carry me away with them?' 'I both heard and saw,' answered he. 'May God abundantly requite thee for me! By Allah, I knew not the measure of shine affection for me until this blessed hour and I doubted not of thy love of me!'

'O my lord,' rejoined she, 'is the reward of kindness aught but kindness? Verily, thou hast dealt generously with me and hast entreated me with worship and done me

all manner of honour and kindness and preferred me above all thou lovest and desires, and I have seen that thou lovest me with the utmost love. So how should my heart be content to leave thee and depart from thee, after all thy goodness to me? But now I desire of thy courtesy that thou come and salute my family, so thou mayst see them and they thee and love and friendship may be between you; for know, O king of the age, that my mother and brother and cousins love thee with an exceeding love, by reason of my praises of thee to them, and say, "By Allah, we will not depart from thee nor go to our country till we have foregathered with the king and saluted him." For they desire to see thee and make acquaintance with thee.' 'I hear and obey,' said the king; 'for this is my own wish.' So saying, he rose and went in to them and saluted them after the goodliest fashion; and they sprang up to him and received him with the utmost honour, after which he sat down and ate with them; and he entertained them thus for the space of thirty days. Then they took leave of the king and queen and departed to their own land, after he had done them all possible honour.

Awhile after this, Julnar accomplished the days of her pregnancy and the time of her delivery being come, she bore a boy, as he were the moon at its full, whereat the utmost joy betided the king, for that he had never in his life [till then] been vouchsafed son or daughter. So they held high festival and decorated the city seven days, in the extreme of joy and happiness; and on the seventh day came Julnar's mother and brother and cousins, whenas they knew of her delivery. The king received them with l joy and said to them, 'I said that I would not give my son a name till you should come and name him of your knowledge.' So they named him Bedr Basim, and all agreed upon this name. Then they showed the child to his uncle Salih, who took him in his arms and began to walk about the chamber with him. Presently he carried him forth of the palace and going down to the salt sea, fared on with him, till he was hidden from the king's sight.

When Shehriman saw him take his son and disappear with him in the abysses of the sea, he gave the child up for lost and fell to weeping and wailing; but Julnar said to him, 'O king of the age, fear not neither grieve for thy son, for I love my child more than thou and he is with my brother; so reck thou not of the sea neither fear drowning for him. Except my brother knew that no harm would betide the little one, he had not done this; and he will presently bring thee thy son safe, if it please God the Most High.' Nor was an hour past before the sea became

troubled and King Salih came forth, with the little one safe in his arms, quiet and with a face like the moon on the night of her full, and [rising into the air] flew till he reached the palace and came in to them. Then said he to the king, 'Belike thou fearedst harm for thy son, whenas I plunged into the sea with him?' 'Yes, O my lord,' replied the king; 'I did indeed fear for him and thought he would never be saved therefrom.' 'O king of the land,' rejoined Salih, 'we pencilled his eyes with an eye-powder we know of and recited over him the names engraver upon the seal of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), for this is what we use to do with children born among us; and now thou needst not fear for him drowning or suffocation in all the waters of the world, if he should go down into them; for, even as ye walk on the land, so walk we in the sea.'

Then he pulled out of his pocket a casket, graven and sealed, and breaking open the seals, emptied it; whereupon there fell from it strings of all manner jacinths and

other jewels, besides three hundred bugles of emerald and other three hundred hollow jewels, as big as ostrich eggs, whose light outshone that of sun and moon. Quoth Salih, 'O king of the age, these jewels and jacinths are a present from rne to thee. We never yet brought thee a present, for that we knew not Julnar's abiding-place neither had we any tidings of her; but now that we see thee to be united with her and we are all become as one thing, we have brought thee this present; and every little while, God willing, we will bring thee the like thereof for that these jewels and jacinths are more plentiful with us than pebbles on the earth and we know the good and bad of them and their whereabouts and the way to them and they are easy to us.'

When the king saw the jewels, his reason was confounded and his mind bewildered and he said, 'By Allah, one of these jewels is worth my kingdom!' Then he thanked Salih for his bounty and said to Julnar, 'I am abashed before thy brother, for that he hath dealt munificently by me and bestowed on me this splendid present, whereto the folk of the land may not avail.' So she thanked her brother for his deed and he said, 'O king of the age, thou hast the prior claim on us and it behoves us to thank thee, for thou hast entreated our sister with kindness and we have entered thy dwelling and eaten of thy victual; and the poet says:

Had I, or ever Suada did, to weep for love been fain,
I should, before repentance came, have solaced heart and brain.
But she before my vveeping wept; her tears drew mine, and so
Quoth I, "Unto the precedent the merit cloth pertain."

And if we stood in thy service, O king of the age, a thousand years, yet might we not avail to requite thee, and this were but a scantling of thy due.'

The king thanked him with effusion and they all abode with him forty days' space, at the end of which time Salih arose and kissed the earth before his brother-in-law. Quoth the latter, 'What wantest thou, O Salih?' And he answered, saying, 'O king of the age, indeed thou hast done us [many] favours, and we crave of thy bounties that thou deal charitably with us and give us leave [to depart]; or we yearn after our people and country and kiusfoll and our homes; so will we never forsake thy service nor that of my sister and her son; and by Allah, O king of the age, it is not pleasant to my heart to part from thee; but how shall we do, seeing that we have been reared in the sea and that [the sojourn of] the land liketh us not?' When the king heard this, he rose to his feet and took leave of Salih of the sea and his mother and cousins, and they all wept, because of parting, and said to him, 'We will be with thee again anon, nor will we forsake thee, but will visit thee every few days.' Then they flew off and descending into the sea, disappeared from sight.

After this, King Shehriman redoubled in honour and kindness to Julnar, and the little one grew up and flourished, whilst his uncle and grandmother and cousins visited the king every few days and abode with him a month or two months [at a time]. The boy ceased not to increase in beauty and grace, with increase of years, till he attained the age of fifteen and was unique in his perfection and symmetry. He learnt reading and writing and history and syntax and lexicography and archery and spearplay and horsemanship and what not else behoveth the sons of kings; nor was there one of the children of the folk of the city, men or women, but would talk of the youth's

charms, for he was of surpassing beauty and perfection, even such an one as as described in the saying of the poet:

The whiskers write upon his cheek, with ambergris on pearl,
Two lines, as 'twere with jet upon an apple, line for line.
Death harbours in his languid eye and slays with every glance;
And in his cheeks is drunkenness, and not in any wine.

And in that of another:

Upon the table of his cheek, a fringe of jet, I wis,
The whiskers grow, and sore threat my soul's amazement is;
As if his visage were a lamp that burns all night, hung up,
Beneath the darkness of his hair, with chains of ambergris.

And indeed the king loved him with an exceeding great love and summoning his vizier and emirs and the chief officers of state and grandees of his reahn, required of them a binding oath that they would make Bedr Basim king over them after himself; and they took the oath gladly, for the king was beneficent to the people, pleasant in speech and saying nought but that wherein was advantage for them, brief, a very compend of goodness.

On the morrow Shehriman mounted, with all his troops and emirs and grandees, and went forth into the city and returned. When they drew near the palace, the king dismounted, to wait upon his son, whilst the latter abode on horseback, and he and all the emirs and grandees bore the saddle-cloth of honour before him, each in his turn till they came to the vestibule of the palace, where the prince alighted and his father and the emirs embraced him and seated him on the throne of kingship, whilst they all stood before him. Then Bedr judged the people deposing the unjust and appointing the just, till near upon midday, when he descended from the throne and went in to his mother, Julnar of the Sea, with the crown on his head, as he were the moon. When she saw him with the king before him, she rose and kissing him, gave him joy of the sultanate and wished him and his father length of life and victory over their enemies. He sat with her and rested till the hour of afternoon-prayer, when he took horse and repaired, with the emirs before him, to the tilting-ground, where he played at arms with his father and his grandees, till night-fall, when he returned to the palace, preceded by all the folk.

He rode forth thus every day to the tilting-ground, returning to sit and judge the people and do justice between amir and poor man; and thus he did a whole year, at the end of which time he began to ride out a-hunting and to go round about in the cities and countries under his rule, proclaiming peace and security and doing after the fashion of kings; and he was unique among the people of his day for glory and velour and just dealing among the folk.

One day, the old king fell sick and his heart forebode him of translation to the mansion of eternity. His sickness increased on him till he was nigh upon death, when he called his son and commended his mother and subjects to his care and caused all the emirs and grandees once more swear allegiance to the prince and assured himself of them by oaths; after which he lingered a few days and was admitted to the mercy of

God the Most High. His son and widow and all the grandees and emirs and viziers mourned over him, and they built him a tomb and buried him therein.

They ceased not to mourn for him a whole month, till Salih and his mother and cousins arrived and condoled with them for the king and said, 'O Julnar, though the king is dead, yet hath he left this noble and peerless youth, the fierce lion and the shining moon; and whoso leaveth the like of him is not dead.' Moreover, the grandees and notables of the empire went in to Bedr

and said to him, 'O king, there is no harm in mourning for the king: but [continuance of] mourning beseemeth none save women; wherefore occupy thou not thy heart and ours with mourning for thy father; for he hath left thee behind him, and whoso leaveth the like of thee is not dead.' Then they comforted him and diverted him and carried him to the bath. When he came out thence, he donned a rich robe, wroughten with gold and embroidered with jewels and jacinths, and setting the royal crown on his head, sat down on his throne of kingship and ordered the affairs of the folk, doing equal justice between the weak and the strong and exacting from the amir the poor man's due; wherefore the people loved him with an exceeding love. Thus he abode a great while, whilst, every now and then, his kinsfolk of the sea visited him, and his life was pleasant and his eye unheated [by tears].

It chanced that his uncle Salih went in one night to Julnar and saluted her; whereupon she rose and embracing him, made him sit by her side and asked him how he did, he and his mother and cousins. 'O my sister,' answered he, 'they are well and in great good case, lacking nought save the sight of thy face.' Then she set food before him and he ate, after which talk ensued between them and they spoke of Bedr Basim and his beauty and grace and symmetry and skill in horsemanship and his wit and good breeding. Now Bedr was reclining [upon a day-bed within ear-shot], and hearing his mother and uncle speak of him, he feigned sleep and listened to their talk. Presently Salih said to his sister, 'Thy son is now seventeen years old and is unmarried, and I fear lest aught befall him and he have no son; wherefore it is my wish to marry him to a princess of the princesses of the sea, who shall be a match for him in beauty and grace.' Quoth Julnar, 'Name them to me, for I know them all.'

So Salih proceeded to name them to her, one by one, but to each she said, 'This one liketh me not for my son; I will not marry him but to one who is his like in beauty and grace and wit and piety and good breeding and worth and dominion and rank and lineage.' Quoth Salih, 'I know none other of the daughters of the kings of the Gear for I have enumerated to thee more than an hundred girls and none of them pleaseth thee: but see, O my sister, whether thy son be asleep or no,' So she felt Bedr and finding on him the signs of sleep, said to Salih, 'He is asleep; what hast thou to say and what is shine object in [assuring thyself of] his sleeping?' 'O my sister,' replied Salih, 'know that I have bethought me of a girl of the girls of the sea who befitteth thy son; but I fear to name her, lest he be awake and his heart be taken with her love and maybe we shall not avail to win to her; so should he and we and the grandees of the realm be wearied [in vain] and trouble betide us through this; for, as saith the poet:

Love, at the first, is as a drip of water, verily; But, when the mastery it gains, 'tis as a spreading sea.

'Tell me the name and condition of this girl,' rejoined Julnar; 'for I know all the damsels of the sea, kings' daughters and others; and if I judge her worthy of him, I will demand her in marriage for him of her father, though I spend on her all that my hand possesseth. So tell me who and what she is and fear nought, for my son is asleep.' Quoth Salih, 'I fear lest he be awake; and the poet says:

I fell in love with him, what time his charms described heard I; For while it chances that the ear doth love before the eye.'

But Julnar said, 'Speak and be brief and fear nothing, O my brother.' So he said, 'O my sister, none is worthy of thy son save the princess Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel, for that she is like unto him in beauty and grace and brightness and perfection; nor is there, in the sea or on the land, a sweeter or pleasanter of parts than she; for she is fair and graceful and shapely, with red cheeks and flower-white brows, teeth like jewels and great black eyes, heavy buttocks and slender waist and a lovely face. When she turns, she shames the wild cattle and the gazelles, and when she walks, the willow branch is jealous of her. When she unveils, her face outshines the sun and the moon and she enslaves all that look on her; and she is sweet-lipped and soft-sided.'

When Julnar heard what Salih said, she answered, 'Thou sayst sooth, O my brother! By Allah, I have seen her many a time and she was my companion, when we were little; but now I have not set eyes on her for eighteen years and we have no knowledge of each other, for constraint of distance. By Allah, none but she is worthy of my son!' Now Bedr heard all they said and fell in love with the princess on report, wherefore fire was kindled in his heart on her account and he was drowned in a sea without shore or bottom. Then said Salih, 'By Allah, O my sister, there is no greater fool among the kings of the sea than her father nor one more violent of temper! So name not thou the girl to thy son, till we demand her in marriage of her father. If he favour us with his assent we will praise God the Most High; and if he refuse to give her to thy son to wife, we will say no more about it and seek another in marriage.' 'It is well judged of thee,' answered Julnar, and they said no more; but Bedr passed the night with a heart on fire with passion for the princess Jauhereh. However, he concealed his case and spoke not of her to his mother or his uncle, albeit he was on coals of fire for love of her.

Next morning, the king and his uncle went to the bath and washed, after which they came forth and drank wine and the servants set food before them, of which they and Julnar ate, till they were satisfied, and washed their hands Then Salih rose and said to his nephew and sister, 'With your leave, I would fain go to my mother [and kindred], for I have been with you some days and they await me and their hearts are troubled concerning me.' But Bedr said to him, 'Abide with us this day;' and he consented. Then said the king, 'Come, O my uncle, let us go forth to the garden.' So they sallied forth to the garden and walked about and took their pleasure awhile, after which Bedr lay down under a shady tree, thinking to rest and sleep; but he called to mind his uncle's description of the princess and her beauty and grace and shed copious tears, reciting the following verses:

If, whilst within mine entrails the fires of hell did stir
And flames raged high about me, 'twere spoken in mine ear,

"Which wilt thou have the rather, a draught of water cold
Or sight of her thou lovest?" I'd say, "The sight of her."

Then he sighed and wept and lamented, reciting these verses also:

Ah, who shall be my helper in love of a gazelle,
Even as the sun in visage, but fairer, sooth to tell?
My heart was free and careless; but now 'tis all on fire
With passion for the daughter of King Es Semendel.

When Salih heard what his nephew said, he smote hand upon hand and said, 'There is no god but God! Mohammed is the apostle of God and there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! O my son, didst thou hear what passed between thy mother and myself respecting the princess Jauhereh?' 'Yes, O my uncle,' answered Bedr. 'And I fell in love with her by report, through what I heard you say. Indeed, my heart cleaves to her and I cannot live without her.' 'O king,' rejoined his uncle, let us return to thy mother and tell her how the case stands and ask her leave that I may take thee with me and seek the princess in marriage of her father; for I fear to take thee without her leave, lest she be wroth with me; and indeed the right would be on her side, for I should be the cause of her separation from thee, even as I was that of her separation from us. Moreover, the [people of the] city would be left without a king and there would be none to govern them and look to their affairs; so should the realm be disordered against thee and the kingship depart from thy hands.' But Bedr said, 'O my uncle, if I return to my mother and consult her, she will not suffer me to do this; wherefore I will not return to her nor consult her, but will go with thee and tell her not and after return.' And he wept before him.

When Salih heard what his nephew said, he was bewildered concerning his case and said, 'I crave help of God the most High in any event.' Then, seeing that Bedr was resolved to go with him, without consulting his mother, he drew from his finger a seal-ring, whereon were graven certain of the names of God the Most High, and gave it to him, saying, 'Put this on thy finger, and thou wilt be safe from drowning and other [the perils of the sea] and from the mischief of its beasts and its great fishes.' So Bedr took the ring and put it on his finger. Then they plunged into the sea and fared on till they came to Salih's palace, where they found Bedr's grandmother, the mother of his mother, seated with her kinsfolk, and going in to them, kissed their hands. When the old queen saw Bedr, she rose to him and embracing him, kissed him between the eyes and said to him, 'A blessed coming, O my son! How didst thou leave thy mother Julnar?' 'She is well in health and fortune,' answered he, 'and salutes thee and her cousins.'

Then Salih told his mother how Bedr had fallen in love with the princess Jauhereh by report and was come, purposing to demand her in marriage of her father; which when the old queen heard, she was exceeding wroth with her son and sore troubled and concerned and said to Salih, 'O my son, of a truth thou didst wrong to name the princess Jauhereh before thy nephew, knowing, as thou dost, that her father is stupid and arrogant, little of wit and exceeding violent of temper, grudging his daughter to these who demand her in marriage; for all the kings of the sea have sought her hand, but he would none of them and rejected them all, saying, "Ye are no match

for her in beauty nor grace nor aught else." Wherefore we fear to demand her in marriage of him, lest he reject us, even as he hath rejected others; and we are people of spirit and should return broken-hearted.'

'O my mother,' answered Salih, 'What is to do? For King Bedr says, "Needs must I seek her in marriage of her father, though it cost me my whole kingdom," and avouches that he will die of love and longing for her, if he have her not to wife. Moreover, he is handsomer and goodlier than she; his father was king of all the Persians, whose king he now is, and none but he is worthy of Jauhereh. Wherefore I purpose to carry her father a present of jacinths and jewels, befitting his dignity, and demand her of him in marriage. If he object that he is a king, behold, Bedr also is a king and the son of a king; or, if he object her beauty, behold, Bedr is handsomer than she; or, again, if he object the extent of his dominion, behold, Bedr's dominion is vaster than hers and her father's and he hath greater plenty of troops and guards, for that his kingdom is greater than that of Es Semendel. Needs must I do my endeavour to further the desire of my sister's son, though it cost me my life; because I was the cause of what has happened; and even as I plunged him into the ocean of her love, so will I go about to marry him to her, and may God the Most High help me thereto!' 'Do as thou wilt,' rejoined his mother; 'but beware of giving her father rough words, whenas thou speakest with him; for thou knowest his folly and violence and I fear lest he do thee a mischief, for he knoweth not respect for any.' And Salih answered, 'I hear and obey.'

Then he took two bags full of emeralds and rubies and other jewels and giving them to his servants to carry, set out with Bedr for the palace of Es Semendel. When they came thither, he sought an audience of the king and being admitted to his presence, kissed the earth before him and saluted him after the goodliest fashion. The king rose to him and receiving him witn the utmost honour, bade him be seated. So he sat down and presently the king said to him, 'A blessed coming, O Salih! Indeed, thou hast desolated us [by shine absence]. But what brings thee to us? Tell me thine errand, that we may fulfil it to thee.' Whereupon Salih arose and kissing the earth a second time, said, 'O king of the age, my errand is to God and the magnanimous king and the valiant lion, the report of whose good qualities the caravans have spread far and near and whose renown for goodness and beneficence and clemency and graciousness and liberality is bruited abroad in all climes and countries.'

Then he opened the two bags and displaying their contents before the king, said to him, 'O king of the age, belike thou wilt show favour to me and heal my heart by accepting my present.' Quoth the king, 'With what intent dost thou make me this gift? Tell me thy case and acquaint me with thy need. If it be in my power, I will straightway accomplish it to thee and spare thee toil and trouble; and if I be unable "hereunto, God imposeth not upon a souI aught but that whereto it may avail.' So Salih rose and kissing the earth three times, said, 'O king of the age, thou art indeed able to that which I desire; it is in thy power and thou art master thereof; and I impose not on the king a dilemma, nor am I mad, that I should ask of the king a thing whereto he availeth not; for the sage saith, "If thou wouldst be obeyed, ask that which is possible." Wherefore, that of which I am come in quest, the king (whom God preserve!) is able to grant.' 'Ask what thou wouldst have,' replied the king, 'and expound thy case and seek

thy desire.' Then said Salih, 'O king of the age, know that I come as a suitor, seeking the unique pearl and the treasured jewel, the princess Jauhereh, daughter of our lord the king; wherefore, O king", disappoint thou not thy suitor.'

When the king heard this, he laughed till he fell backward, in derision of him, and said, 'O Salih, I had thought thee a man of worth and sense, seeking nought but what was reasonable and speaking not but advisedly. What then hath befallen thy reason and urged thee to this monstrous matter and mighty hazard, that thou seekest in marriage the daughters of kings, lords of cities and countries? Art thou of a rank to aspire to this great eminence and hath thy wit failed thee to this pass that thou affrontest me with this demand?'

'God amend the king!' replied Salih. 'I seek her not for myself (albeit, an I did, I am her match and more than her match, for thou knowest that my father was king of the kings of the sea, for all thou art now our king), but for King Bedr Basim, lord of the lands of the Persians and son of King Shehriman, whose puissance thou knowest. If thou object that thou art a great king, King Bedr is a greater; and if thou object thy daughter's beauty, he is handsomer than she and fairer of form and more excellent of rank and lineage; and he is the champion of the people of his day. Wherefore, O king of the age, if thou grant my request, thou wilt have set the thing in its place; but, if thou deal arrogantly with us, thou wilt not use us justly nor travel the right road with us Moreover, O king, thou knowest that the princess Jauhereh, the daughter of our lord the king, must needs be married, for the sage saith, "Needs must for a girl marriage or the grave." So, if thou mean to marry her, my sister's son is worthier of her than any other man.'

When King Es Semendel heard Salih's words, he was exceeding wroth; his reason fled and his soul was like to depart his body for rage, and he said, 'O dog, shall the like of thee dare to bespeak me thus and name my daughter in the assemblies, saying that the son of thy sister Julnar is a match for her? Who art thou and who are thy sister and her son and who was his father, that thou shouldst dare to say these things to me? What are ye all, in comparison with my daughter, but dogs?' And he cried out to his servants, saying, 'Take yonder good-for-nought's head!' So they drew their swords and fell upon Salih, but he fled and made for the palace gate, where he found more than a thousand horse of his cousins and kinsfolk and servants, armed cap-a-pie in iron and strait-knit coats of mail, with spears and naked swords in their hands, whom his mother had despatched to his succour.

When they saw Salih come running out of the palace, they questioned him and he told them what was to do; whereupon they knew that the king was a violent-tempered fool. So they alighted and drawing their swords, went in to King Es Semendel, whom they found seated upon the throne of his kingship, unaware of their coming and violently enraged against Salih; and they saw his guards and servants and officers unprepared. When the king saw them enter, sword in hand, he cried out to his people, saying, 'Out on you! Take me these dogs' heads!' But, before long, Es Semendel's party were put to the rout and addressed themselves to flight, and Salih and his kinsfolk seized upon the king and bound his hands behind him. When Jauhereh awoke and knew that her father was a captive and his guards slain, she fled forth the palace to a certain island and climbing up into a high tree, hid herself therein.

Now, when the two parties came to blows, some of King Es Semendel's servants fled and Bedr, meeting them, questioned them and they told him what had happened, adding that the king was a prisoner, whereupon Bedr feared for himself and said in his heart, 'Verily, all this turmoil is on my account and none is sought for but I.' So he sought safety in flight, knowing not whither he went; but fate fore-ordained from all eternity drove him to the island where the princess had taken refuge, and he came to the very tree on which she sat and cast himself down, like a dead man, thinking to lie and rest and knowing not that there is no rest for the pursued, for none knoweth what destiny hides for him in the future. As he lay down, he raised his eyes to the tree and they met those of the princess. So he looked at her and seeing her to be like the shining moon, said, 'Glory to Him who created yonder perfect form, Him who is the Creator of all things and Almighty! Glory to the Great God, the Creator, the Shaper and Fashioner! By Allah, except my presentiments deceive me, this is Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel! Methinks that, when she heard of our coming to blows with her father, she fled to this island and hid herself in this tree; but, if this be not the princess herself, it is one yet goodlier than she.'

Then he bethought himself and said, 'I will arise and lay hands on her and question her of her case; and if she be indeed Jauhereh, I will demand her in marriage of herself and so accomplish my desire.' So he stood up and said to her, 'O end of all desire, who art thou and who brought thee hither?' She looked at him and seeing him to be as the full moon, when it breaks from under the black clouds, slender of shape and sweet of smile, answered, saying, 'O fair of fashion, I am the princess Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel, and I took refuge in this place, becanse Salih and his men made war on my father and slew his troops and took him prisoner, with some of his men; wherefore I fled, fearing for m' life, and know not what fortune hath done with my father.'

When Bedr heard this, he marvelled exceedingly at the strange chance and said in himself, 'Doubtless I have come to my desire by the taking of her father.' Then he looked at Jauhereh and said to her, 'Come down, O my lady; for I am one slain for love of thee and thine eyes have captived me. Know that all these broils and troubles are on thine account and mine; for I am Bedr Basim, King of the Persians, and Salih is my uncle, and he it is who came to thy father to demand thee in marriage. As for me, I have left my kingdom for thy sake, and our meeting here is a rare coincidence. So come down to me and let us go to thy father's palace, that I may beseech my uncle Salih to release him and take thee to wife according to the law.' When Jauhereh heard his words, she said in herself, 'It was on this vile wretch's account, then, that all this hath befallen and that my father hath been made a prisoner and his guards and chamberlains slain and I constrained to flee far away from my palace and seek refuge in this island, a miserable exile. But, an I go not about with him, to defend myself against him, he will possess himself of me and take his will of me; for he is in love and a lover is not blamed for aught that he cloth.'

Then she beguiled him with [fair] words and soft speeches, whilst he knew not the perfidy she purposed against him, and said to him, 'O my lord and light of my eyes, art thou indeed King Bedr Basim, son of Queen Julnar?' And he answered, 'Yes, O my lady.' 'May God cut off my father,' rejoined she, 'and make his kingdom to cease from

him and heal not his heart neither avert from him strangerhood, if he could desire a comelier than thou or aught goodlier than these fair fashions of shine! By Allah, he is little of wit and judgment! But, O king of the age, be thou not wroth with him for that which he hath done; for, if thou love me a span, verily I love thee a cubit. Indeed, I have fallen into the snare of thy love and am become of the number of those thou hast slain. The love that was with thee hath transferred itself to me and there is left thereof with thee but a tithe of that which is with me.'

So saying, she came down from the tree and strained him to her bosom and fell to kissing him; whereat passion and desire for her waxed on him and he doubted not but she loved him and trusted in her. So he returned her caresses and said to her, 'By Allah, O princess, my uncle Salih set forth to me not a fortieth part of thy charms, no, nor a quarter of a carat thereof!' Jauhereh pressed him to her bosom and pronounced some unintelligible words then spat in his face, saying, 'Quit this shape of a man and take that of a bird, the handsomest of birds, white of plumage, with red bill and feet' Hardly had she spoken, when Bedr found himself transformed into a bird, the handsomest of birds, which shook itself and stood, looking at her.

Now Jauhereh had with her one of her slave-girls, by name Mersineh; so she called her and said to her, 'By Allah, but that I fear for my father, who is his uncle's prisoner, I would kill him! May God not requite him with good! How unlucky was his coming to us; for all this trouble is due to him! But do thou carry him to the Thirsty Island and leave him there to die of thirst.' So Mersineh carried him to the island in question and would have returned and left him there; but she said in herself, 'By Allah, one of such beauty and grace deserveth not to die of thirst!' So she brought him to another island, abounding in trees and fruits and streams, and leaving him there, returned to her mistress and told her that she had set him on the Thirsty Island.

Meanwhile, King Salih sought for Jauhereh, but, finding her not, returned to his palace and said to his mother 'Where is my sister's son, King Bedr?' 'By Allah, O my son,' replied she, 'I know nothing of him! For, when he heard that you and King Es Semendel had come to blows and that strife and slaughter had betided between you, he took fright and fled.' When Salih heard this, he grieved for his nephew and said, 'By Allah, O my mother, we have dealt negligently by King Bedr and I fear lest he perish or lest one of King Es Semendel's soldiers or his daughter Jauhereh fall in with him. So should we come to shame with his mother and no good betide us from her, for that I took him without her leave.' Then he despatched guards and scouts throughout the sea and elsewhere to seek for Bedr; but they could learn nothing of him: so they returned and told King Salih, wherefore grief and concern redoubled on him and his breast was straitened for King Bedr.

Meanwhile, Julnar abode many days in expectation of her son's return; but he came not and she heard no news of him. So, when she was weary of waiting, she arose and going down into the sea, repaired to her mother, who rose to her and embraced her and kissed her, as did her cousins. Then she questioned her mother of King Bedr and she answered, saying, 'O my daughter, he came hither with his uncle, who took jacinths and jewels and carrying them to King Es Semendel, demanded his daughter in marriage for thy son; but he consented not and offended against thy brother in words. Now I had sent Salih nigh upon a thousand horse and there befell strife between him and

King Es Semendel; but God aided thy brother against him, and he slew his troops and took himself prisoner. Meanwhile, tidings of this reached thy son, and it would seem as if he feared for himself; wherefore he fled forth from us, without our will, and returned not, nor have we heard any news of him.' Then Julnar enquired for King Salih and his mother said, 'He is seated on the throne of kingship, in the stead of King Es Semendel, and hath sent in all directions to seek thy son and the princess Jauhereh.'

When Julnar heard this, she mourned sore for her son and was sore incensed against her brother Salih for that he had taken him and gone down with him into the sea, without her leave; and she said, 'O my mother, I fear to tarry with thee, lest the state fall into disorder and the kingdom pass from our hands; for I came to thee without letting any know. Wherefore I deem well to return and govern the realm, till it please God to order our son's affair for us. But look ye forget him not neither neglect his case; for, should he come to any harm, it would infallibly be the death of me, since I see the world only in him and delight but in his life.' 'With all my heart, O my daughter,' replied the old queen. 'Ask not what we suffer by reason of his loss and absence.' Then she sent to seek for Bedr, whilst Julnar returned to her kingdom, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted, and indeed the world was straitened upon her and she was in evil case.

To return to King Bedr. He abode days and nights in the semblance of a bird, in the island where Mersineh had left him, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and knowing not whither to go nor how to fly; till, one day, there came a fowler to the island to catch somewhat wherewithal to get his living. He espied King Bedr in his form of a white bird, with red bill and feet, captivating the sight and bewildering the thought [with his beauty], and said in himself, 'Verily, yonder is a handsome bird: never saw I its like in make or beauty.' So he cast his net over Bedr and taking him, carried him to the town to sell him. On his way, one of the townsfolk accosted him and asked the price of the bird. Quoth the fowler 'What wilt thou do with him?' 'I will kill him and eat him, answered the other; whereupon said the fowler 'Who could have the heart to kill this bird and eat him? I mean to present him to the king, who will give me more than thou and will not kill him, but will divert himself by gazing on his beauty and grace, for in all my life, since I have been a fowler, I never saw his like among land or water fowl. The utmost thou wouldst give me for him would be a dirhem, and by the Great God, I will not sell him!'

Then he carried the bird up to the king's palace, and when the latter saw it, its beauty pleased him and the red colour of its feet and beak. So he sent an eunuch to buy it, who accosted the fowler and said to him, 'Wilt thou sell this bird?' 'No,' answered he; 'it is a gift from me to the king.' So the eunuch carried the bird to the king and told him what the man had said, and he took it and gave the fowler ten dinars, whereupon he kissed the earth and went away. Then the eunuch carried the bird to the king's palace and placing him ih a handsome cage, set meat and drink by him and hung him up.

When the king came down [from the throne], he said to the eunuch, 'Where is the bird? Bring it to me, that I may look upon it, for, by Allah, it is handsome!' So the eunuch brought the cage and set it before the king, who looked and seeing the food untouched, said, 'By Allah, I know not what it will eat, that I may feed it!' Then he

called for food and they laid the tables and the king ate. When the bird saw the meat and froits and sweetmeats and what not, he ate of all that was before the king, whereat the latter and all the bystanders marvelled and the king said to his attendants, 'In all my life I never saw a bird eat as doth this!' Then he sent an eunuch to fetch his wife, that she might look upon the bird, and he went in to her and said, 'O my lady, the king desireth thy presence, that thou mayst divert thyself with the sight of a bird he hath bought. It is goodly of aspect and is a wonder of the wonders of the age; for, when we set on the food, it flew down from its cage and perching on the table, ate of all that was thereon.'

So she came in haste; but, when she saw the bird, she veiled her face and turned to go away. The king followed her and said to her, 'Why cost thou veil thy face, when there is none in presence save the eunuchs and women that wait on thee and thy husband?' 'O king,' answered she, 'this is no bird, but a man like thyself.' 'Thou liest,' rejoined he. 'This is too much of a jest. How should he be other than a bird?' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'I do not jest with thee nor do I tell thee aught but the truth; for this bird is King Bedr Basim, son of King Shehriman,

lord of the land of the Persians, and his mother is Julnar of the Sea.' And how came he in this shape?' asked the king; and she said, 'The princess Jauhereh, daughter of King Es Semendel, hath enchanted him:' and told him all that had befallen King Bedr from first to last; for this queen was the greatest enchantress of her day.

The king marvelled exceedingly at his wife's words and conjured her, on his life, to free Bedr from his enchantment and not leave him in torment, saying, 'May God the Most High cut off Jauhereh's hand, for a foul witch as she is! How little is her piety and how great her craft and perfidy!' Quoth the queen, 'Do thou say to him, "O Bedr Basim, enter yonder closet!"' So the king bade him enter the closet and he did so.

Then the queen veiled her face and taking in her hand a bowl of water, entered the closet, where she pronounced over the water certain words, that might not be uunderstood, and sprinkling the bird therewith, said to him, 'By the virtue of these mighty names and holy verses and of the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth, the Quickener of the dead and Appointer of the means of livelihood and the terms of existence, quit this thy present form and return to that in which God created thee!' Hardly had she made an end of these words, when the bird trembled and became a man; and the king saw before him a handsome youth, than whom there was none goodlier on the face of the earth.

When Bedr found himself thus restored to his own shape, he said, 'There is no god but God and Mohammed is the apostle of God! Glory be to the Creator and Provider of all creatures and the Ordainer of their terms of life!' Then he kissed the king's hand and wished him long life, and the king kissed his hand and said to him, 'O Bedr, tell me thy history from beginning to end.' So he told him his whole story, concealing nought: and the king marvelled thereat and said to him, 'O Bedr, God hath delivered thee from the enchantment: but what hath thy judgment decided and what thinkest thou to do?' 'O king of the age,' answered Bedr, 'I desire of thy bounty that thou equip me a ship with a company of thy servants and all that is needful; for I have been long absent and fear lest the kingdom depart from me. And I misdoubt me my

mother is dead of grief for my loss; for she knows not what is come of me nor whether I am alive or dead. Wherefore, I beseech thee, O king, to crown thy favours to me by granting me what I seek.'

The king was moved by Bedr's beauty and sweet speech and said, 'I hear and obey.' So he fitted him out a ship, which he furnished with all that was needful and mamled with a company of his servants; and Bedr set sail in it, after having taken leave of the king". They sailed ten days with a favouring wind; but, on the eleventh day, the sea became exceeding troubled, the ship rose and fell and the sailors availed not to govern her. So they drifted at the mercy of the waves, till the ship drove upon a rock and broke up and all on board were drowned, except Bedr, who got astride one of the planks of the vessel, after having been nigh upon death. The sea and the wind carried the plank along for three days, whilst he knew not whither he went and had no means of directing its motion; till, on the fourth day, the plank grounded with him on the sea-shore in sight of a white city, as it were a passing white dove, goodly of ordinance, with high towers and lofty walls, builded upon a tongue of land that jutted out into the sea and the waves beating against its walls.

When Bedr saw this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, for he was well-nigh dead with hunger and thirst, and dismounting from the plank, would have gone up the beach to the city; but there came down to him mules and asses and horses, in number as the sands [of the sea] and fell a-striking at him and hindering him from landing. So he swam round to the back of the city, where he landed and entering the place, found none therein and marvelled at this, saying, 'I wonder to whom does this city belong, wherein is no king nor any inhabitant, and whence came the mules and asses and horses that hindered me from landing?'

Then he fared on at hazard, musing on his case, till he espied an old man, a grocer, [sitting at the door of his shop]. So he saluted him and the other returned his greeting and seeing him to be a handsome young man, said to him, 'O youth, whence comest thou and what brings thee to this city?' Bedr told him his story; at which the old man marvelled and said, 'O my son, didst thou see any in thy way?' 'Indeed, O my father,' answered Bedr, 'I wondered to see the city void of people' Quoth the grocer, 'O my son, come up into the shop, lest thou perish.' So Bedr went up into the shop and sat down; whereupon the old man set food before him, saying, 'O my son, come within the shop; glory be to Him who hath preserved thee from yonder she-devil!'

Bedr was sore affrighted at the grocer's words; but he ate his fill and washed his hands; then turned to his host and said to him, 'O my lord, what is the meaning of thy words? Verily, thou hast made me fearful of this city and its people.' 'Know, O my son,' replied the old man, 'that this is the City of the Magicians and its queen is a sorceress and a mighty enchantress, as she were a she-devil, crafty and perfidious exceedingly. All the horses and mules and asses thou sawest were once men and strangers, like unto thee; for whoever enters the city, being a young man like thyself, this misbelieving witch takes him and abides with him forty days, after which she enchants him, and he becomes a horse or a mule or an ass, of those thou sawest on the sea-shore. So, when they saw thee about to land, they feared lest she should enchant thee, even as she had enchanted them, and signed to thee, as who should say, "Do not land,—" of their solicitude for thee, lest she should do with thee like as she had done

with them. She possessed herself of this city [and took it] from its people by sorcery and her name is Queen Lab, which, being interpreted, meaneth in Arabic, "The Sun."'

When Bedr heard what the old man said, he was sore affrighted and trembled like a wind-shaken reed, saying in himself, 'Hardly am I delivered from the affliction wherein I was by reason of sorcery, when fate casts me into yet sorrier case!' And he fell a-musing over his case and that which had betided him. When the grocer saw the violence of his fear, he said to him, 'O my son, come, sit at the threshold of the shop and look upon yonder creatures and upon their dress and favour and that wherein they are by reason of enchantment, and fear not; for the queen and all in the city love and tender me and will not [do aught to] vex my heart or trouble my mind.' So Bedr came out and sat at the shop-door, looking out upon the folk; and there passed by him creatures without number.

When the people saw him, they accosted the grocer and said to him, 'O elder, is this thy captive and thy prey that [thou hast gotten] in these [latter] days?' 'He is my brother's son,' answered the old man. 'I heard that his father was dead; so I sent for him, that I might quench with him the fire of my longing.' Quoth they, 'Indeed he is a comely youth; but we fear for him from Queen Lab, lest she turn on thee with treachery and take him from thee, for she loves handsome young men.' 'The queen will not gainsay my commandment,' answered the grocer, 'for she loves and tenders me; and when she knows that he is my brother's son, she will not molest him nor afflict me in him, neither trouble my heart on his account.' Then Bedr abode some months with the grocer, eating and drinking, and the old man loved him with an exceeding love.

One day, as he sat in the shop, as of his wont, there came up a thousand eunuchs, with drawn swords, mounted upon Arabian horses and clad in various kinds of raiment and girt with jewelled girdles and Indian swords. They saluted the grocer, as they passed, and were followed by a thousand damsels like moons, clad in various raiment of silks and satin, laced with gold and embroidered with jewels, and armed with spears. In their midst rode a young lady, mounted on an Arabian mare, saddled with a saddle of gold, set with various kinds of jewels and jacinths. The damsels saluted the grocer and passed OD, till up came Queen Lab, in great state, and seeing Bedr sitting in the shop, as he were the moon at its full, was amazed at his beauty and grace and became passionately enamoured of him.

So she alighted and sitting down by King Bedr, said to the old man, 'Whence hadst thou this fair one?' 'He is my brother's son,' answered the grocer, 'and is [but] lately come to me.' Quoth Lab, 'Let him be with me this night, that I may talk with him.' And the old man said, 'Wilt thou take him from me and not enchant him?' 'Yes,' answered she, and he said, 'Swear to me.' So she swore to him that she would not enchant Bedr nor do him any hurt, and bidding bring him a handsome horse, saddled and bridled with a bridle of gold and decked with trappings all of gold, set with jewels, gave the old man a thousand dinars, saying, 'Use this for shine occasions.' Then she took Bedr and carried him off, as he were the full moon on its fourteenth night, whilst all the folk, seeing his beauty, were grieved for him and said, 'By Allah, this youth deserves better than to be bewitched by yonder accursed sorceress!'

Bedr heard all they said, but was silent, committing his case to God the Most High, till they came to the gate of Queen Lab's palace, where the emirs and eunuchs and notables of the realm dismounted and she bade the chamberlains dismiss her officers and grandees, who kissed the earth and went away, while she entered the palace with Bedr and her eunuchs and women. Here he found a palace, whose like he had never seen, for in its midst was a great basin full of water, amiddleward a vast garden. He looked at the garden and saw it full of birds of various kinds and colours, warbling in all manner tongues and voices, joyous and plaintive. Brief, [everywhere] he beheld great state and dominion and said, 'Glory be to God, who of His bounty and clemency provided those who worship other than Himself!'

The queen sat down at a lattice-window overlooking the garden, on a couch of ivory, whereon was a high bed, and Bedr seated himself by her side. She kissed him and pressing him to her bosom, bade her women bring a table of food. So they brought a table of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels and spread with all manner meats, and the queen and Bedr ate, till they were satisfied, and washed their hands; after which the waiting-women set on flagons of gold and silver and crystal, together with all kinds of cowers and dishes of fruits and confections. Then the queen called for the singing-women, and there came ten damsels, as they were moons, with all manner of musical instruments in their hands. The queen filled a cup and drinking it off, filled another and gave it to Bedr, who took it and drank; and they ceased not to drink till they had enough. Then she bade the damsels sing, and they sang all manner airs, till it seemed to Bedr as if the palace danced with him for delight. His sense was ravished [with the music] and his breast expanded, and he forgot his strangerhood and said in himself, 'Verily, this queen is a handsome young woman, and I will never leave her; for her kingdom is vaster than mine and she is fairer than the princess Jauhereh.'

He ceased not to drink with her till nightfall, when they lighted the lamps and candles and diffused perfumes |from the censers]; nor did they leave drinking, till they were both drunken, and the singing-women sang the while. Then the queen lay down on a bed and dismissing her women, called to Bedr to come and lie with her. So he lay with her, in all delight of life, till the morning, when they entered the bath, that was in the palace, and washed; after which she clad him in the finest of raiment and called for wine. So the waiting-women brought the drinking-vessels and they drank. Presently, the queen arose and taking Bedr by the hand, sat down with him on chairs and commanded to bring food, of which they ate and washed their hands. Then the damsels brought the drinking-vessels and fruits and flowers and confections, and they ceased not to eat and drink, whilst the singing-girls sang various airs, till the evening.

They gave not over eating and drinking and merry-making forty days, at the end of which time the queen said to him, 'O Bedr, whether is the pleasanter, this place or the shop of shine uncle the grocer?' 'By Allah, O queen,' answered he, 'this is the pleasanter, for my uncle is but a poor man, who sells pot-herbs.' She laughed at his words, and they lay together in the pleasantest of case till the morning, when Bedr awoke and not finding Queen Lab by his side, was troubled at her absence and perplexed and said, 'Where can she have gone?' And indeed she was absent from him a great while and did not return; so he donned his clothes and went in search of her, but found her not and said in himself, 'Haply, she is gone to the garden.'

So he went out into the garden and came to a running stream, beside which he saw a white she-bird and on the bank a tree full of birds of various colours, and stood and watched the birds, without their seeing him. Presently, a black bird flew down upon the white bird and fell to billing her, after the manner of doves; then he leapt on her and trod her three times, after which she changed and became a woman. Bedr looked at her and behold, it was Queen Lab. So he knew that the black bird was a man enchanted and that she was enamoured of him and had transformed herself into a bird, that he might lie with her; wherefore jealousy got hold upon him and he was wroth with the queen because of the black bird.

Then he returned to his place and lay down on the bed, and presently she came back and fell to kissing him and jesting with him; but he answered her not a word, being sore incensed against her. She saw what was to do with him and was assured that he had seen what befell between her and the black bird; yet she discovered to him nothing, but concealed that which ailed her. When he had done her occasion, he said to her, 'O queen, give me leave to go to my uncle's shop, for I long after him and have not seen him these forty days.' 'Go,' answered she, 'but do not tarry from me, for I cannot brook to be parted from thee, nor can I endure without thee an hour.' 'I hear and obey,' said he and mounting, rode to the shop of the grocer, who received him with open arms and said to him, 'How hast thou fared with yonder idolatress?' 'I was well, in health and prosperity,' answered Bedr, 'till this last night,' — and told him what had passed in the garden.

When the old man heard this, he said, 'Beware of her, for know that the birds upon the tree were all young men and strangers, whom she loved and enchanted and turned into birds. The black bird thou sawest was one of her officers, whom she loved with an exceeding love, till he cast his eyes upon one of her women, wherefore she changed him into a black bird; and whenas she longs after him, she transforms herself into a she-bird, that he may swive her, for she still loves him passionately. When she found that thou knewest of her case, she plotted evil against thee, for she loves thee not truly. But no harm shall betide thee from her, whilst I protect thee; so fear nothing; for I am a Muslim, by name Abdallah, and there is none in my day better skilled in magic than I; yet do I not make use of the art except upon constraint. Many a time have I put to nought the sorceries of yonder accursed witch and delivered folk from her, and I care not for her, for she can do me no hurt: nay, she fears me with an exceeding fear, as do all in the city who, like her, are magicians and serve the fire, not the Omnipotent King. So, to-morrow, come thou to me and tell me what she doth with thee; for this very night she will cast about to destroy thee, and l will tell thee how thou shalt do with her, that thou mayst save thyself from her malice.'

Then Bedr took leave of the old man and resumed to the palace, where he found the queen seated, awaiting him. When she saw him, she rose to welcome him and making him sit down, brought him meat and drink, and they ate till they had enough and washed their hands. after which she called for wine and they drank till the night was half spent, when she plied him with wine, till he was drunken and lost sense and wit. When she saw him thus, she said to him, 'I conjure thee by Allah and by that thou worshippest, if I ask thee a question, wilt thou answer me truly?' And he, being drunken, answered, 'Yes, O my lady.' 'O my lord and light of mine eyes,' said she,

'when thou awokest last night and foundest me not, thou soughtest me, till thou foundest me in the garden, in the guise of a white she-bird, and sawest a black bird leap on me and tread me. Now I will tell the truth of this matter. That black bird was one of my servants and I loved him with an exceeding love; but one day he cast his eyes on one of my women, wherefore jealousy get hold upon me and I transformed him by my spells into a black bird and the woman I put to death. Now I cannot endure without him an hour; so, whenever I lust after him, I change myself into a bird and go to him, that he may leap me and possess me, even as thou hast seen. Art thou not therefore incensed against me, because of this, albeit, by the virtue of the fire and the light and the shade and the heat, I love thee more than ever and have made thee my portion of the world?' He answered, being drunken, 'Thy conjecture of the cause of my anger is correct, and it had no cause other than this.'

With this, she embraced him and kissed him and made a show of love to him; then she lay down to sleep and he by her side. Presently she rose from the bed, and Bedr was awake; but he feigned sleep and watched stealthily, to see what she would do. She took out of a red bag somewhat red, which she planted in the midst of the chamber, and it became a stream, running like the sea; after which she took a handful of barley and strewing it on the ground, watered it with water from the stream, whereupon it became corn in the ear, and she gathered it and ground it into meal. Then she laid it by and returning to bed, lay down by Bedr till morning, when he arose and washed his face and asked her leave to visit his uncle. She gave him leave and he repaired to Abdallah and told him what had passed. The old man laughed and said, 'By Allah, the misbelieving witch plotteth mischief against thee; but reck thou never of her.'

Then he gave him a pound of parched barley and said to him, 'Take this with thee and know that, when she sees it, she will say to thee, "What is this and what wilt thou do with it?" Do thou answer, "Abundance of good things is good;" and eat of it. Then will she bring forth to thee parched grain of her own and bid thee eat of it; and do thou feign to her that thou eatest thereof, but eat of this instead and have a care lest thou eat of hers; for, if thou eat so much as a grain thereof, her spells will have power over thee and she will enchant thee and say to thee, "Leave this form of a man." Whereupon thou wilt quit shine own shape for what shape she will. But, if thou eat not thereof, her enchantments will be avoided and no harm will betide thee therefrom; whereat she will be abashed to the utmost and say to thee, "I did but jest with thee." Then will she make a show of love and affection to thee; but this will all be but hypocrisy and craft in her. And do thou also make a show of love to her and say to her, "O my lady and light of mine eyes, eat of this parched barley and see how delicious it is." And if she eat thereof, though it be but a grain, take water in thy hand and cast it in her face, saying, "Quit this human form for—" what form soever thou wilt have her take. Then leave her and come to me and I will counsel thee what to do.'

Bedr took leave of him and returning to the palace, went in to the queen, who said to him, 'Welcome and fair welcome to thee!' And she rose and kissed him, saying, 'Thou hast tarried long from me, O my lord.' 'I have been with my uncle,' answered he, 'and he gave me to eat of this parched barley.' Quoth she, 'We have better than that.' Then she laid his parched grain in one dish and hers in another and said to him,

'Eat of this, for it is better than thine.' So he feigned to eat of it, and when she thought he had done so, she took water in her hand and sprinkled him therewith, saying, 'Quit this form, vile wretch that thou art, and take that of a one-eyed mule, foul of favour!' But he changed not; which when she saw, she went up to him and kissed him between the eyes, saying, 'O my beloved, I did but jest with thee; bear me no malice because of this.'

'O my lady,' answered he, 'I bear thee no whit of malice; nay, I am assured that thou lovest me: but eat of this my parched barley.' So she took a mouthful of Abdallah's barley and ate it; but no sooner had she swallowed it than she was convulsed; and Bedr took water in his hand and cast it in her face, saying, 'Quit this human form and take that of a dapple mule.' No sooner had he spoken than she found herself changed into a mule, whereupon the tears rolled down her cheeks and she fell to rubbing her muzzle against his feet. Then he would have bridled her, but she would not take the bit; so he left her and going to the grocer, told him what had passed. Abdallah gave him a bridle and bade him bridle her therewith. So he returned to the palace, and when she saw him, she came up to him and he set the bit in her mouth and mounting her, rode to the grocer's shop.

When the old man saw her, he rose and said to her, 'God the Most High confound thee, O accursed woman!' Then said he to Bedr, 'O my son, there is no more abiding for thee in this city; so ride her and fare with her whither thou wilt and beware lest thou commit the bridle to any.' Bedr thanked him and taking leave of him, fared on three days, without ceasing, till he drew near another city and there met him an old man, gray-headed and comely, who said to him, 'Whence comest thou, O my son?' 'From the city of yonder enchantress,' answered Bedr; and the old man said, 'Thou art my guest this night.'

Bedr consented and went with him; but by the way they met an old woman, who wept, when she saw the mule, and said, 'There is no god but God! Verily, this mule resembles my son's mule, which is dead, and my heart aches for her; so, God upon thee, O my lord, do thou sell her to me!' 'By Allah, O my mother,' answered he, 'I cannot sell her.' But she said, 'God on thee, do not refuse me, for my son will surely die, except I buy him this mule.' And she importuned him, till he said, 'I will not sell her save for a thousand dinars,' saying in himself, 'Whence should this old woman get a thousand diners?' Thereupon she brought out from her girdle a purse, containing a thousand diners, which when Bedr saw, he said, 'O my mother, I did but jest with thee; I cannot sell her.' But the old man looked at him hard said, 'O my son, none may lie in this city, for whoso lieth they put to death'

So Bedr lighted down from the mute and delivered her to the old woman, who drew the bit from her mouth and taking water in her hand, sprinkled the mule therewith, saying, 'O my daughter, quit this form and return to that wherein thou wast aforetime!' Whereupon she was straightway restored to her original shape and the two women embraced and kissed each other. So Bedr knew that the old woman was Queen Lab's mother and that he had been tricked and would have fled; but the old woman gave a loud whistle and there appeared before her an Afrit, as he were a great mountain, whereat Bedr was affrighted and stood still. Then the old woman mounted on the Afrit's back, taking her daughter behind her and Bedr before her, and the Afrit

flew off with them; nor was it long before they were in the palace of Queen Lab, who sat down on the throne of kingship and said to Bedr, 'Knave that thou art, now am I come hither and have attained to that I desired, and I will show thee how I will do with thee and with yonder old man the grocer! How many favours have I done him! Yet he cloth me ill; for thou hadst not attained thine end but by his intervention.' Then she took water and sprinkled him therewith, saying, 'Quit the form wherein thou art for that of a foul-favoured bird, the foulest of all birds!' And immediately he became a foul-favoured bird; and she set him in a cage and cut off from him meat and drink; but one of her women took compassion on him and gave him to eat and drink, without her knowledge.

One day, the damsel took her mistress at unawares and going forth the palace, repaired to the old grocer, to whom she told the whole case, saying, 'The queen is purposed to make an end of thy brother's son.' He thanked her and said, 'Needs must I take the city from her and make thee queen thereof in her stead.' Then he gave a loud whistle and there came forth to him an Afrit with four wings, to whom said he, Carry this damsel to the city of Julnar of the Sea and her mother Ferasheh, for they two are the most powerful magicians on the face of the earth.' And he said to the damsel, 'When thou comest thither, tell them that King Bedr Basim is Queen Lab's captive.'

Then the Afrit took her up and flying off with her, set her down, in a little while, upon the roof of Queen Julnar's palace. So she descended and going in to the queen, kissed the earth and told her what had befallen her son, whereupon Julnar rose to her and thanked her and entreated her with honour Then she let beat the drums in the city and acquainted her people and the grandees of her realm with the good news that King Bedr was found; after which she and her mother Ferasheh and her brother Salih assembled the tribes of the Jinn and the warriors of the sea; for the kings of the Jinn obeyed them, since the taking of King Es Semendel. Then they all Hew up into the air and lighting down on the city of the sorceress, sacked the town and the palace and slew all the misbelievers therein in the twinkling of an eye.

Then said Julnar to the damsel, 'Where is my son?' And the girl brought her the cage and showing her the bird within, said, 'This is thy son.' So Julnar took him forth of the cage and sprinkled him with water, saying, 'Quit this form for that wherein thou west aforetime.' Nor had she made an end of her speech ere he shook and became a man as before; whereupon his mother embraced him and he wept sore. On like wise did his uncle Salih and his grandmother and the daughters of his uncle and fell to kissing his hands and feet. Then Julnar sent for Abdallah and thanking him for his kind dealing with her son, married him to the damsel, whom he had despatched to her with news of him, and made him king of the city. Moreover, she summoned those

who survived of the inhabitants of the city, (and they were Muslims), and made them swear fealty to him; after which she and her company took leave of him and returned to their own city. The townsfolk came out to meet them with drums beating, and decorated the city three days and held high festival, of the greatness of their joy for the return of their king.

After this Bedr said to his mother, 'O my mother, there remains but that I marry and we be all united.' 'Thou sayst well, O my son,' answered she; 'but wait till we

enquire who befitteth thee among the daughters of the kings.' And his grandmother and the daughters of his uncle all said, 'O Bedr, we will help thee to thy wish forthright.' Then each of them arose and went forth a-questing in the lands, whilst Julnar sent out her waiting-women on the backs of Afrits, bidding them leave not a city nor a king's palace, without noting all the handsome girls that were therein. But, when Bedr saw their endeavour in the matter, he said to Juloar, 'O my mother leave this thing, for none will content me but Jauhereh daughter of King Es Semendel; for that she is indeed a jewel, according to her name.' 'I know that which thou seekest,' replied Julnar and sent forthright to fetch King Es Semendel. As soon as he was present, she sent for Bedr and acquainted him with the king's coming, whereupon he went in to him.

When Es Semenael was aware of his presence, he rose to him and saluted him and bade him welcome; and Bedr demanded of him his daughter in marriage. She is shine handmaid and at thy service and disposition,' replied the king and despatched some of his officers to fetch her. So they flew up into the air and returned, after awhile, with the princess, who, as soon as she saw her father, went up to him and embraced him. Then said he to her, 'Know, O my daughter, that I have given thee in marriage to this magnanimous king and valiant lion, Bedr Basim, son of Queen Julnar, for that he is the goodliest and most power-ful of the folk of his day and the most exalted of them in degree and the noblest in rank; he befitteth none but thee and thou none but him.' 'O my father,' answered she, 'I may not gainsay thee; do as thou wilt, for indeed chagrin and despite are at an end and I am one of his handmaids.'

So they summoned the Cadis and the witnesses, who drew up the marriage contract between King Bedr and the princess Jauhereh, and the townsfolk decorated the city and beat the drums in token of rejoicing. Moreover, they released all who were in the prisons, whilst the king clothed the widows and the orphans and bestowed dresses of honour upon the grandees and emirs and notables; and they made bride-feasts and held high festival night and morn ten days, at the end of which time they unveiled the bride, in nine different dresses, before Bedr, who bestowed a dress of honour upon King Es Semendel and sent him back to his country and people and kinsfolk. And they ceased not from the most delightsome of life and the most solaceful of days till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and this is the end of their story, may God have mercy on them all!

King Mohammed Ben Sebaïk and the Merchant Hassan.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a king of the kings of the Persians, by name Mohammed ben Sebaïk, who ruled over the land of Khorassan and used every year to go a-raiding into the countries of the unbelievers in Hind and Sind and China and the lands beyond the river [Oxus] and other the lands of the barbarians and others. He was a just, valiant and generous king and loved table-talk and recitals and verses and anecdotes and tales and entertaining stories and traditions of the ancients. Whoso knew a rare story and related it to him, he would bestow on him a sumptuous dress of honour and clothe him from head to foot and mount him on a horse saddled and bridled and give him a thousand dinars, besides other great gifts; and the man would take all this and go his way.

One day there came an old man before him and related to him a rare story, which pleased the king and he ordered him a magnificent present, amongst other things a thousand dinars of Khorassan and a horse with all its trappings. After this, the report of the king's munificence was blazed abroad in all countries and there heard of him a man by name Hassan the Merchant, who was generous, open-handed and learned and an accomplished poet and scholar. Now the king had an envious vizier, a compend of ill, loving none, rich nor poor, and whoso came before the king and he gave him aught, he envied him and said, 'This fashion wasteth wealth and ruineth the country; and this is the king's wont.' But this was nought but envy and despite in this vizier.

Presently, the king heard of Hassan and sending for him, said to him, 'O Hassan, this vizier of mine vexeth and thwarteth me concerning the money I give to poets and story-tellers and glee-men, and I would have thee tell me a goodly history and a rare story, such as I have never heard. If it please me, I will give thee lands galore, with their strong places, in free tenure, in addition to thy fiefs; besides which I will make thee my chief vizier and put my whole kingdom in thy hands; so shalt thou sit on my right hand and rule my people. But, if thou bring me not that which I desire, I will take all that is in thy hand and banish thee my kingdom.' 'Hearkening and obedience [are due] to our lord the king,' replied Hassan. 'But thy slave beseecheth thee to have patience with him a year; then will he tell thee a story, such as thou hast never in thy life heard, neither hath other than thou heard its like nor a better than it.' Quoth the king, 'I grant thee a whole year's delay.' And he called for a splendid dress of honour, in which he clad Hassan, saying, 'Keep thy house and mount not to horse, neither go nor come for a year's time, till thou bring me that I seek of thee. If thou bring it, thou shalt have especial favour and mayst count on that which I have promised thee; but, an thou bring it not, thou art not of us nor we of thee.' And Hassan kissed the ground before the king and went out from the presence.

Then he chose out five of the best of his servants, who could all write and read and were learned, intelligent and accomplished, and gave each of them five thousand dinars, saying, 'I reared you but against the like of this day: so do ye help me to accomplish the king's desire and deliver me from his hand.' 'What wilt thou [have us] do?' said they. 'Our lives be thy ransom!' Quoth he, 'I wish you to go each to a different country and seek out diligently the learned and erudite and accomplished and

the tellers of rare stories and marvellous histories and do your endeavour to procure me the story of Seif el Mulouk. If ye find it with any one, pay him what price soever he asks for it, though he seek a thousand dinars: give him what ye may and promise him the rest and bring me the story; for whoso happens on it and brings it to me, I will bestow on him a sumptuous dress of honour and largesse galore, and there shall be to me none dearer than he.'

Then said he to one of them, 'Go thou to Hind and Sind and all their provinces and dependencies.' To another, 'Go thou to the land of the Persians and to China.' To the third, 'Go thou to the land of Khorassan.' To the fourth, 'Go thou to Northern Africa and all its coasts and districts.' And to the fifth, 'Go thou to Egypt and Syria.' Moreover, he chose them out an auspicious day and said to them, 'Set forth this day and be diligent in the accomplishment of my errand and be not slothful, though the quest cost you your lives.' So they took leave of him and departed, each taking the direction prescribed to him. At the end of four months, four of them returned and told their master that they had searched towns and cities and countries for the thing he sought, but had found nought thereof, wherefore his breast was straitened.

Meanwhile, the fifth servant journeyed till he came to the land of Syria and entered Damascus, which he found a pleasant and safe city, abounding in trees and streams and fruits and birds chanting the praises of God the One, the All-powerful, Creator of Night and Day. Here he abode some days, enquiring for his master's desire, but none answered him and he was on the point of departing thence to another place, when he met a young man running and stumbling in his skirts. So he said to him, 'Whither runnest thou in such haste?' And he answered, saying, 'There is an elder here, a man of learning, who every day at this time takes his seat on a stool and relates tales and anecdotes and entertaining stories, whereof never heard any the like; and I am running to get a place near him and fear I shall find no room, because of the much people.' Quoth the stranger, 'Take me with thee.' And the young man said, 'Make haste.'

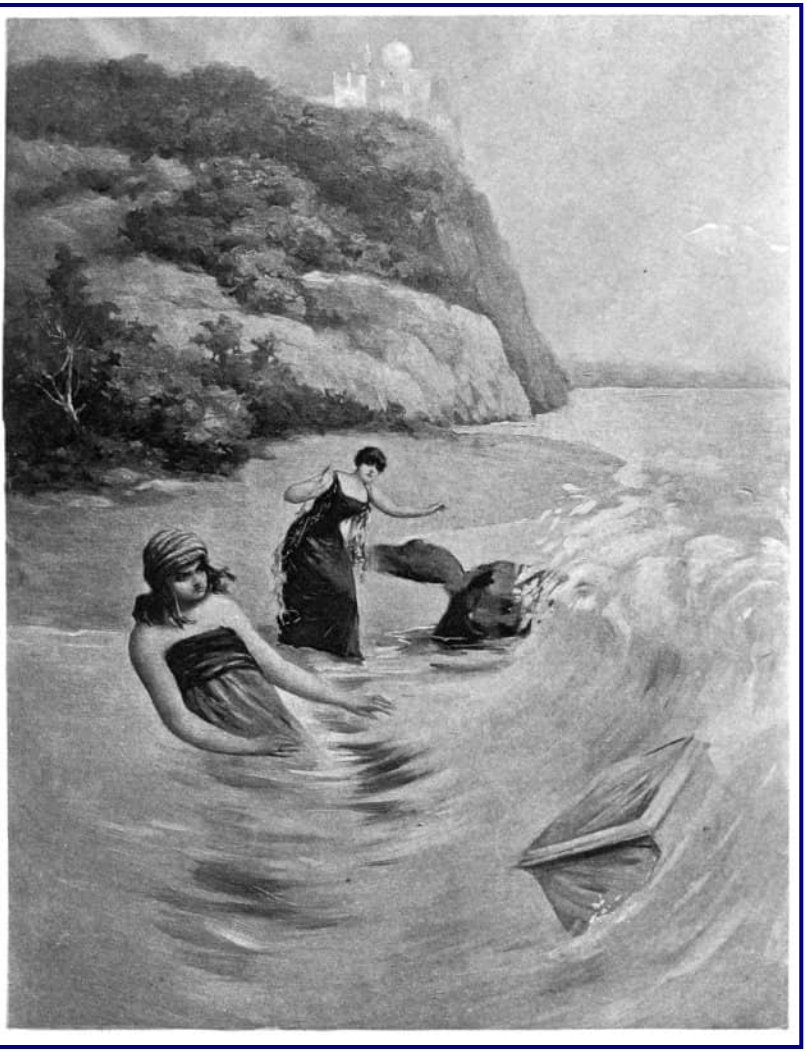
So he shut his door and hastened with him to the place of recitation, where he saw an old man of a bright countenance seated on a stool, holding forth to the people. He sat down near him and addressed himself to listen to his story, till the going down of the sun, when the old man made an end of his tale and the people dispersed from about him; whereupon the messenger accosted him and saluted him, and he returned his salutation and greeted him with the utmost honour and courtesy. Then said the messenger to him, 'O my lord sheikh, thou art a comely and reverend man, and thy discourse is goodly; but I would fain ask thee of somewhat.' 'Ask of what thou wilt,' replied the old man. Then said the other, 'Hast thou the story of Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal?' 'And who told thee of this story?' asked the old man. 'None told me of it,' answered the messenger; 'but I am come from a far country, in quest of this story, and if thou have it and wilt, of thy bounty and charity, impart it to me and make it an alms to me, of the generosity of thy nature, I will pay thee whatever thou askest for its price; for, had I my life in my hand and sacrificed it to thee for this thing, yet were it pleasing to my heart.' 'Be of good cheer,' replied the old man; 'thou shalt have it; but this is no story that one telleth in the beaten way, nor do I give it to every one.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' cried the other, 'do not grudge it me, but ask of me what price thou

wilt.' 'If thou wish for the story,' replied the old man, 'give me a hundred dinars and thou shalt have it; but upon five conditions.'

When the messenger knew that the old man had the story and was willing to sell it to him, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, 'I will give thee the hundred dinars and ten to boot and take it on the conditions of which thou speakest.' 'Then go and fetch the money,' said the old man, 'and take that thou seekest.' So the messenger kissed his hands and returned, joyful and happy, to his lodging, where he laid a hundred and ten dinars in a purse he had by him. As soon as it was morning, he put on his clothes and taking the dinars, repaired to the story-teller, whom he found seated at the door of his house. So he saluted him and the other returned his salute. Then he gave him the money and the old man took it and carrying the messenger into his house, made him sit down. Then he set before him inkhorn and pen and paper and giving him a book, said to him, 'Write out what thou seekest of the story of Seif el Mulouk from this book.' So the man fell to work and wrote till he had made an end of his copy, when he read it to the old man, and he corrected it and said to him, 'Know, O my son, that my conditions are that thou tell not this story in the beaten road nor before women and girls nor to black slaves nor feather-heads nor boys; but read it only before kings and amirs and viziers and men of learning, such as expounders [of the Koran] and others.' The messenger accepted the conditions and kissing the old man's hand, took leave of him.

Then he set out the same day, glad and joyful, and fared on diligently, of the excess of his contentment, for that he had gotten the story of Seif el Mulouk, till he came to his own country, when he despatched his servant to carry the good news to his master and say to him, 'Thy servant is come back in safety and hath attained his desire and his aim.' (Now there wanted but ten days of the term appointed between Hassan and the king.) Then he himself went in to him and told him all that had befallen him and gave him the book containing the story of Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal, whereat Hassan rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bestowed on him all the clothes he had on and gave him ten thoroughbred horses and the like number of camels and mules and three black and ten white slaves.

Then the messenger rested in his privy chamber, whilst Hassan took the book and copied out the story plainly in his own hand; after which he presented himself before the king and said to him, 'O king, I have brought thee a story and a rare and pleasant relation, whose like none ever heard.' When the king heard this, he sent forthright for all the amirs, who were men of understanding, and all the learned doctors and folk of erudition and culture and poets and wits, and Hassan sat down and read the story before the king, who marvelled thereat and approved it, as did all who were present, and they showered gold and silver and jewels upon Hassan. Moreover, the king bestowed on him a sumptuous dress of honour of the richest of his raiment and gave him a great city with its castles and suburbs; and he appointed him one of his chief viziers and seated him on his right hand. Then he caused the scribes write the story in letters of gold and lay it up in his privy treasuries; and whenever, there-afterward, his breast was straitened, he would summon Hassan and he would read him the story, which was as follows:



Story of Prince Seif el Mulouk and the Princess Bediya el Jemal.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a king in Egypt called Aasim ben Sefwan, a liberal and beneficent prince, venerable and majestic. He owned many cities and strengths and fortresses and troops and warriors and had a vizier named Faris ben Salih, and he and all his subjects worshipped the sun and the fire, instead of the All-powerful King, the Glorious, the Victorious. Now this king was become a very old man, wasted with age and sickness and decrepitude; for he had lived a hundred and fourscore years and had no child, male or female, by reason whereof he was ever in care and concern night and day.

One day, he was sitting on the throne of his kingship with his amirs and viziers and captains and grandees in attendance on him, according to their wont, in their several stations, and whenever there came in an amir, who had with him a son or two sons, the king envied him and said in himself, 'Every one of these is happy and rejoiceth in his children, whilst I, I have no child, and to-morrow I shall die and leave my kingdom and throne and lands and treasures, and strangers will take them and none will bear me in memory nor will there abide any remembrance of me in the world.' Then he became drowned in the sea of melancholy thought and for the much thronging of sorrows and anxieties upon his heart, he shed tears and descending from his throne, sat down upon the ground, weeping and humbling himself [in supplication to God].

When the vizier saw him do thus, he cried out to the notables of the realm and others who were present in the assembly, saying, 'Go to your houses and rest till the king recover from that which aileth him.' So they went away, leaving none in the presence save the vizier, who, as soon as the king came to himself, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O king of the age, what meaneth this weeping? Tell me who hath transgressed against thee or thwarted thee of the kings or castellans or amirs or grandees, that we may all fall on him and tear his soul from his body.' But he spoke not neither raised his head; whereupon the vizier kissed the earth before him a second time and said to him, 'O king of the age, I am even as thy son and thy slave, and indeed I have reared thee on my shoulders; yet know I not the cause of thy grief and chagrin and distress and of this thy case; and who should know but I or who should stand in my stead before thee? Tell me therefore the cause of this thy weeping and affliction.' Nevertheless, the king spoke not neither opened his mouth nor raised his head, but ceased not to weep and cry aloud and lament with an exceeding lamentation and say, 'Alas!'

The vizier took patience with him awhile, after which he said to him, 'Except thou tell me the cause of this thine affliction, I will slay myself before thine eyes, rather than see thee thus distressed.' Then King Aasim raised his head and wiping away his tears, said, 'O vizier of good counsel, leave me to my grief and my affliction, for that which is in my heart of sorrow sufficeth me.' But Faris said, 'O king, tell me the cause of thy weeping. It may be God will appoint thee relief at thy hands.' 'O vizier,' replied the king, 'I weep not for treasure nor horses nor aught else, but that I am become an old man, nigh upon a hundred and fourscore years of age, and have not been blessed

with a child, male or female: so, when I die, they will bury me and my trace will be blotted out and my name cut off and strangers will take my throne and kingship and none will have me in remembrance.'

'O king of the age,' rejoined the vizier, 'I am older than thou by a hundred years, yet have I never been blest with a child and cease not day and night from care and concern; so how shall we do, I and thou?' And Aasim said, 'O vizier, hast thou no device or shift in this matter?' Quoth the vizier, 'Know, O king, that I have heard of a king in the land of Seba by name Solomon son of David, who pretendeth to prophetship and [avoucheth that he] hath a mighty Lord who can do all things and whose kingdom is in the heavens and [who hath dominion] over all mankind and birds and beasts and over the wind and the Jinn. Moreover, he knoweth the language of all birds and of all [other] created things; and withal, he calleth all creatures to the worship of his Lord and discourseth to them of their service. So let us send him a messenger in the king's name and seek of him our desire, beseeching him to make petition to his Lord, that He vouchsafe each of us a child. If his faith be true and his Lord avail to do all things, He will assuredly bless each of us with a child, male or female, and if the thing betide thus, we will enter his faith and worship his Lord; else will we take patience and devise us another shift.'

Quoth the king, 'This is well seen, and my heart is lightened by this thy speech; but where shall we find a messenger befitting this grave matter, for that this Solomon is no little king and the approaching him is no light matter? Indeed, I will send him none, on the like of this affair, but thyself, for thou art old and versed in all manner of affairs and the like of thee is the like of myself; wherefore I desire that thou weary thyself and journey to him and occupy thyself diligently with [the accomplishment of] this matter, so haply solace may be at thy hand.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the vizier; 'but rise thou forthright and seat thyself upon the throne, so the amirs and grandees of the realm and officers and [other] the folk may enter [and apply themselves] to thy service, as of their wont; for they all went forth from thee, troubled at heart on thine account. Then will I go out and set forth on the king's errand.'

So the king arose forthright and sat down on the throne of his kingship, whilst the vizier went forth and said to the chief chamberlain, 'Bid the folk proceed to their service, as of their wont.' So the troops and captains and notables of the kingdom entered, after they had spread the tables, and ate and drank and withdrew, according to their wont, after which the vizier went out from King Aasim and repairing to his own house, equipped himself for travel and returned to the king, who opened to him the treasuries and provided him with rarities and things of price and rich stuffs and gear without a match, such as nor amir nor vizier could avail to possess. Moreover, he charged him to accost Solomon with reverence, foregoing him with the salutation; 'then,' continued he, 'do thou ask of him thy need, and if he assent, return to us in haste, for I shall be awaiting thee.' Accordingly, the vizier took the presents and setting out, fared on night and day, till he came within fifteen days' journey of Seba.

Meanwhile God (blessed and exalted be He!) spoke unto Solomon and said to him, 'O Solomon, the King of Egypt sendeth unto thee his chief vizier, with a present of such and such rarities and things of price; so do thou despatch thy vizier Asef ben Berkhiya to him, to receive him with honour and meet him at the halting-places with

victual; and when he cometh to thy presence, say to him, "The king [thy master] hath sent thee in quest of this and that and thy business is thus and thus." Then do thou propound to him the faith.' Whereupon Solomon bade his vizier take a company of his retainers [and go forth] to meet the Vizier of Egypt with honour and sumptuous provision at the halting-places. So Asef made ready all that was needed for their entertainment and setting out, fared on till he fell in with Faris and saluted him, entreating him and his company with exceeding honour. Moreover, he brought them victual and provender at the halting-places and said to them, 'Welcome and fair welcome to the coming guests! Rejoice in the certain accomplishment of your desire! Be your souls glad and your eyes solaced and your breasts expanded!'

Quoth Faris in himself, 'Who acquainted him with this?' And he said to Asef, 'O my lord, and who gave thee to know of us and our errand?' 'It was Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), told us of this,' answered Asef. 'And who,' asked Faris, 'told our lord Solomon?' 'The Lord of the heaven and the earth told him, the God of all creatures,' replied Asef. Quoth Faris, 'This is none other than a mighty God;' and Asef said, 'And do ye not worship Him?' 'We worship the sun,' answered Faris, 'and prostrate ourselves thereto.' 'O Vizier Faris,' said Asef, 'the sun is but a star of the stars created by God (blessed and exalted be He!). And God forbid that it should be a Lord! For that whiles it appeareth and whiles is absent, but our Lord is [ever] present and never absent and He can do all things.'

Then they journeyed on awhile till they came to the land of Seba and drew near the throne of Solomon son of David, who commanded his hosts of men and Jinn and beasts to rank themselves in their road. So the beasts of the sea and the elephants and leopards and lynxes [and other beasts of the land] ranged themselves on either side of the way, after their several kinds, whilst the Jinn drew out in two ranks in like manner, appearing all to [mortal] sight, without concealment, in divers gruesome forms. So they lined the road on either hand, and the birds spread out their wings over them, to shade them, warbling one to the other in all manner voices and notes.

When the people of Egypt came to this terrible array, they were adread of them and dared not proceed; but Asef said to them, 'Pass on amidst them and fear them not: for they are subjects of Solomon son of David, and none of them will harm you.' So saying, he entered between the ranks, followed by all the folk and amongst them the Vizier of Egypt and his company, fearful: and they ceased not to fare on till they reached the city, where they lodged the embassy in the guest-house and entertained them sumptuously, entreating them with the utmost honour, for the space of three days.

Then they carried them before Solomon, prophet of God (on whom be peace!), and they would have kissed the earth before him; but he forbade them, saying, 'It befits not that a man prostrate himself save to God (to whom belong might and majesty!), Creator of heaven and earth and all other things; wherefore, whosoever of you hath a mind to stand, let him stand, but let none stand to do me worship.' So they obeyed him and the Vizier Faris and some of his servants sat down, whilst certain of the lesser sort stood to wait on him. When they had sat awhile, the servants spread the tables and they all, men and beasts, ate till they had enough.

Then Solomon bade Faris expound his errand, that it might be accomplished, saying, 'Speak and conceal nothing of that on account whereof thou art come; for I know wherefore ye come and what is your errand. It is thus and thus.' And he told him that which had passed between himself and his master, King Aasim; after which he said to him, 'Is this that I have told thee the truth, O vizier?' 'O prophet of God,' replied Faris, 'this thou hast said is indeed truth and verity; but none was with the king and myself, when we discoursed of this matter nor was any ware of our case; who then told thee of all these things?' 'My Lord told me,' answered Solomon, 'He who knoweth the perfidy of the eye and what is hidden in the breasts.' Quoth Faris, 'O prophet of God, verily this is none other than a noble and mighty Lord, able unto all things.' And he and his company embraced the faith of Islam.

Then said Solomon to him, 'Thou hast with thee such and such presents and rarities.' And Faris answered. 'Yes.' Quoth the prophet, 'I accept them all and give them unto thee. So do ye rest thou and thy company, in the place where you have been lodging, so the fatigue of the journey may cease from you; and to-morrow, thine errand shall be accomplished to the uttermost, if it be the will of God the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth and Creator of all creatures.'

So Faris returned to his lodging and on the morrow presented himself before the lord Solomon, who said to him, 'When thou returnest to King Aasim, do ye both go forth to such a place, where ye will find a tree. Mount upon it and sit silent until the mid-hour between the prayer of noon and that of the afternoon, when the mid-day heat hath subsided; then descend and look at the foot of the tree, whence ye will see two serpents issue, one with an ape's head and the other with a head like that of an Afrit. Shoot them with arrows and kill them; then cut off a span's length from their heads and the like from their tails and throw it away. The rest of the flesh cook and cook well and give it to your wives to eat: then lie with them that night and by God's leave, they will conceive and bear male children.' Moreover, he gave him a ring and a signet and a sword and a wrapper containing a tunic embroidered with gold and jewels, saying, 'O Vizier Faris, when your sons grow up to man's estate, give them each two of these things.' Then said he, 'In the name of God! May the Most High accomplish your desire! And now nothing remaineth for you but to depart, [relying] on the blessing of God the Most High, for the king looketh for thy return night and day and his eye is ever on the road.'

So Faris took leave of the prophet and kissing his hands, set forth at once on his homeward journey, rejoicing in the accomplishment of his errand. He travelled on with all diligence till he drew near to Cairo, when he despatched one of his servants to acquaint King Aasim with his return and the successful issue of his journey; which when the king heard, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, he and his grandees and officers, especially in the vizier's safe return. When they met, the vizier dismounted and kissing the earth before the king, gave him the glad news of the complete achievement of his wish; after which he expounded the true faith to him, and the king and all his people embraced Islam.

Then said Aasim to his vizier, 'Go home and rest this night and a week to boot; then go to the bath and come to me, that I may take counsel with thee of what we shall do.' So Faris kissed the earth and withdrew, with his servants and attendants, to his

house, where he rested eight days; after which he repaired to the king and related to him all that had passed between Solomon and himself, adding, 'Do thou rise and go forth with me alone.' So the king and the vizier took two bows and two arrows and repairing to the tree indicated by Solomon, climbed up into it and sat there, without speaking, till near upon the hour of afternoon prayer, when they descended and looking upon the roots of the tree saw two serpents issue thence. The king looked at them and admired them, marvelling to see them ringed with collars of gold about their necks, and said to Faris, 'O vizier, these snakes have golden collars! By Allah, this is a rare thing! Let us take them and set them in a cage and keep them to look upon.' But the vizier said, 'These hath God created for their use; so do thou shoot one and I will shoot the other.'

Accordingly, they shot at them with arrows and killed them; after which they cut off a span's length of their heads and tails and threw it away. Then they carried the rest to the king's palace, where they called the cook and said to him, 'Dress this meat daintily, with onion-sauce and spices, and ladle it out into two platters and bring them hither at such an hour, without fail.' So the cook took the meat and went with it to the kitchen, where he cooked it and dressed it in skilful fashion with fine onion-sauce; after which he ladled it out into two platters and set them before the king and the vizier, who took each a dish and gave their wives to eat of the meat. Then they lay that night with them, and by the good pleasure of God (blessed and exalted be He!) and His will and ordinance, they both conceived forth right.

The king abode three months, troubled in mind and saying in himself, 'I wonder whether this thing will prove true or not;' till one day, as the queen was sitting, the child stirred in her belly and she felt a pain and her colour changed. So she knew that she was with child and calling the chief of her eunuchs, bade him 'Go to the king, wherever he may be, and say to him, "O king of the age, I bring thee the glad tidings that our lady's pregnancy is become manifest, for the child stirs in her belly."' So the eunuch went out in haste, rejoicing, and finding the king alone, with his head on his hand, pondering this thing, kissed the earth before him and acquainted him with his wife's pregnancy. When the king heard this, he sprang to his feet and in the excess of his joy, he kissed the eunuch's head and hands and pulling off the clothes he had on, gave them to him. Moreover, he said to those who were present in his assembly, 'Whoso loveth me, let him bestow largesse upon this man.' And they gave him of money and jewels and jacinths and horses and mules and gardens what was beyond count or reckoning.

At that moment, in came the Vizier Faris and said to Aasim, 'O king of the age, I was sitting at home alone but now, absorbed in thought, pondering the matter of the pregnancy and saying in myself, "I wonder if this thing be true and whether Khatoun have conceived or not!" when, behold, an eunuch came in to me and brought me the glad news that my wife was indeed pregnant, for that her colour was changed and the child stirred in her belly: whereupon, in my joy, I pulled off all my clothes and gave them to him, together with a thousand dinars, and made him chief of the eunuchs.' 'O vizier,' rejoined the king, 'God (blessed and exalted be He!) hath, of His grace and bounty and goodness, made gift to us of the true faith and brought us out of darkness

into light and hath been bountiful to us, of His favour and beneficence; wherefore I am minded to solace the folk and cause them to rejoice.' Quoth Faris, 'Do what thou wilt.'

Then said the king, 'O vizier, go down forthright and set free all who are in the prisons, both debtors and criminals, and whoso transgresseth after this, we will requite according to his desert. Moreover, we forgive the people three years' taxes, and do thou set up kitchens all round about the city walls and bid the cooks hang over the fire all kinds of cooking pots and cook all manner meats nor leave cooking night or day, and let all comers, both of the people of the city and of the neighbouring countries, far and near, eat and drink and carry to their houses. And do thou command the people to hold holiday and decorate the city seven days and shut not the taverns night nor day.'

The vizier did as the king bade him and the folk donned their richest apparel and decorated the city and citadel and fortifications, after the goodliest fashion, and passed their time in feasting and sporting and making merry, till the days of the queen's pregnancy were accomplished and she was taken, one night, with the pains of labour hard before dawn. Then the king bade summon all the astrologers and mathematicians and men of learning in the town, and they assembled and sat awaiting the throwing of a bead in at the window, which was to be a signal to them, as well as to the nurses and attendants, that the child was born. Presently, the queen gave birth to a boy like a piece of the full moon, and the astrologers took his altitude and made their calculations and drew his horoscope.

Then they rose and kissing the earth before the king, gave him the joyful tidings that the new-born child was of happy augury and born under a fortunate aspect, 'but,' added they, 'in the first of his life there will befall him a thing that we fear to name to the king.' Quoth Aasim, 'Speak and fear not;' so they said, 'O king, this boy will leave this [his native] land and journey in strange countries and suffer shipwreck and hardship and captivity and distress, and indeed he hath before him many perils and stresses; but, in the end, he shall win free of them and attain to his desire and live the happiest of lives the rest of his days, ruling over subjects and countries and having dominion in the land, in despite of enemies and enviers.'

When the king heard the astrologers' words, he said, 'The matter is obscure; but all that God the Most High decreeth unto the creature of good and bad cometh to pass and needs must a thousand solaces betide him from this day to that.' So he paid no heed to their words, but bestowed on them dresses of honour, as well upon all who were present, and dismissed them; when, behold, in came the vizier, rejoicing, and kissed the earth before the king, saying, 'Good tidings, O king! My wife hath but now given birth to a son, as he were a piece of the moon.' 'O vizier,' replied Aasim, 'go, bring thy wife and child hither, that she may abide with my wife, and they shall bring up the two boys together in my palace.' So Faris fetched his wife and son and they committed the two children to the nurses.

After seven days had passed over them, they brought them before the king and said to him, 'What wilt thou name them?' Quoth he, 'Do ye name them.' But they replied, 'None nameth a boy but his father.' So he said, 'Name my son Seif el Mulouk, after my grandfather, and the vizier's son Saïd.' Then he bestowed dresses of honour on the nurses and said to them, 'Be ye tender over them and rear them after the goodliest

fashion.' So they reared the two boys diligently till they reached the age of five, when the king committed them to a schoolmaster, who taught them to read the Koran and write. When they were ten years old, King Aasim gave them in charge to masters, who taught them horsemanship and archery and spear and ball play and the like, till, by the time they were fifteen years old, they were proficient in all manner of martial exercises, nor was there one to vie with them in horsemanship, for each of them would do battle with a thousand men and make head against them alone.

So, when they came to years of discretion, whenever King Aasim looked on them, he rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy; and when they had attained their twentieth year, he took his vizier apart one day and said to him, 'O vizier, I wish to take counsel with thee concerning a thing I have a mind to do.' 'Whatever thou hast a mind to do,' replied Faris, 'do it; for thy judgment is blessed.' So the king said, 'O vizier, I am become a very old and decrepit man, sore stricken in years, and I am minded to take up my abode in an oratory, that I may worship God the Most High, and give my kingdom and sultanate to my son Seif el Mulouk, for that he is grown a goodly youth, accomplished in martial exercises and polite letters and the art of government and full of wit and dignity. What sayst thou of this project?'

'It is well seen of thee,' answered the vizier. 'The idea is a blessed and fortunate one, and if thou do this, I will do the like and my son Saïd shall be the prince's vizier, for he is a comely young man and full of knowledge and judgment. Thus will the two be together, and we will order their affair and neglect not their case, but guide them in the way of righteousness.' Quoth the king 'Write letters and send them by runners to all the cities and provinces and strengths and fortresses, that be under our hands, bidding their chiefs be present on such a day at the Horse-course of the Elephant.' So the vizier went out forthright and despatched letters to this purport to all the deputies and governors of fortresses and others [in authority] under King Aasim; and he commanded also that all in the city should be present, great and small.

When the appointed time drew near, King Aasim let pitch pavilions in the midst of the Horse-course and decorate them after the most sumptuous fashion and set up [therein] the great throne whereon he sat not but on festivals. Then he and all his deputies and chamberlains and amirs sallied forth, and he commanded proclamation to be made to the people, saying, 'In the name of God, come forth to the Horse-course!' So all the amirs and viziers and governors of provinces and feudatories came forth to the place of assembly and entering the royal pavilion, addressed themselves to the service of the king, according to their wont, and abode in their several stations, some standing and others sitting, till all the people were gathered together, when the king commanded to spread the tables and they ate and drank and prayed for him.

Then he commanded the chamberlains to proclaim to the people that they should not depart: so they made proclamation to them, saying, 'Let none of you depart hence till he have heard the king's words!' So they drew the curtains [of the royal pavilion] and the king said, 'Whoso loveth me, let him remain till he have heard my words!' Whereupon the folk all sat down, reassured, after they had been fearful. Then the king rose to his feet and conjuring them all to remain seated, said to them, 'O amirs and viziers and grandees, great and small, and all ye who are present of the people, know ye not that this kingdom was an inheritance to me from my fathers and

forefathers?' 'Yes, O king,' answered they, 'we all know that.' And he continued, saying, 'I and you, we all worshipped the sun and moon, till God (blessed and exalted be He!) vouchsafed us the knowledge of the true faith and brought us out of darkness into light, guiding us to the religion of Islam. Know that I am become a very old man, decrepit and feeble, and I desire to take up my abode in an oratory, there to worship God the Most High and crave His pardon for past offences and make this my son Seif el Mulouk ruler. Ye know that he is a goodly youth, eloquent, just and intelligent, learned and versed in affairs; wherefore I am minded presently to resign my kingdom to him and to make him king and sultan over you in my stead, whilst I give myself to the worship of God in an oratory. What say ye then, all of you?'

Thereupon they all rose and kissing the ground before him, made answer with 'Hearing and obedience,' saying, 'O our king and our protector, if thou shouldst set over us one of thy slaves, we would hearken to thy word and obey him: how much more then with thy son Seif el Mulouk? Indeed, we accept of him and approve him, on our heads and eyes!' So the king came down from his seat and seating his son on the great throne, took the crown from his own head and set it on that of Seif el Mulouk and girt his middle with the royal girdle. Then he sat down beside him on the throne of his kingship, whilst the amirs and viziers and notables and all the rest of the folk rose and kissed the earth before him, saying, 'Indeed, he is worthy of the kingship and hath better right to it than another.' Then the ushers made proclamation of safety and offered up prayers for his victory and prosperity. And Seif el Mulouk scattered gold and silver on the heads of the people and conferred dresses of honour and gave gifts and largesse.

Then, after a moment, the Vizier Faris arose and kissing the earth, said, 'O amirs and grandees, ye know that I am vizier and that my vizierate dated from of old, before the accession of King Aasim ben Sefwan, who hath now divested himself of the sovereignty and made his son king in his stead?' 'Yes,' answered they, 'we know that thy vizierate is from father after grandfather.' 'And now,' continued he, 'I put off my office, in favour of this my son Saïd, for he is intelligent, quick-witted and sagacious. What say ye all?' And they answered, saying, 'None is worthy to be vizier to King Seif el Mulouk but thy son Saïd, and they befit one another.' With this Faris arose and taking off his vizier's turban, set it on his son's head and laid his inkhorn of office before him, whilst the amirs and chamberlains said, 'Indeed, he is deserving of the viziership.' After this, King Aasim and Faris the vizier arose and opening the royal treasuries, conferred magnificent dresses of honour on all the viceroys and amirs and viziers and grandees and other the folk and wrote them new mandates and patents of office in the name of King Seif el Mulouk and his Vizier Saïd. Moreover, he made distribution of money [to the troops] and gave guerdons, and they abode in the city a week and departed each to his own country and place.

Then King Aasim carried his son and his Vizier Saïd back to the palace and commanded the treasurer to bring the ring and signet and sword and wrapper; which being done, he said to the two young men, 'O my sons, let each of you choose two of these things and take them.' The first to make choice was Seif el Mulouk, who put out his hand and took the ring and the wrapper, whilst Saïd took the sword and the signet; after which they both kissed the king's hands and went away to their lodging. Seif

opened not the wrapper, but threw it on the couch where he and Saïd slept by night, for it was their wont to lie together.

Presently they spread them the bed and the two lay down, with candles burning over them, and slept till midnight, when Seif awoke and seeing the wrapper at his head, said in himself, 'I wonder what thing of price is in this wrapper that my father gave me!' So he rose and leaving Saïd sleeping, took a candle and carried the wrapper into a closet, where he opened it and found within a tunic of the fashion of the Jinn. He spread it open and saw, wroughten in gold on the lining of the back, the portraiture of a girl of marvellous loveliness, whereon no sooner had he set eyes than his reason fled from his head and he became mad for love thereof, so that he fell down in a swoon and [presently coming to himself], began to weep and lament, beating his face and breast and kissing the portrait. And he recited the following verses:

Love, at the first, a dribble is of water, that the
Fates Bring and impel 'gainst him on whom it falleth to his share;
Till, when the youth into the sea of passion plungeth full,
Come great and grievous things, indeed, impossible to bear.

And also these:

Had I but known how love men's heart doth take and rack,
I'd been upon my guard against its first attack;
But I myself undid, of purpose, knowing not
The things of love nor what its issues are, alack!

And he ceased not to weep and lament and buffet his face and breast, till Saïd awoke and missing him from the bed and seeing [but] one candle, said in himself, 'Where is Seif el Mulouk gone?' Then he took the candle and went round about the palace, till he came upon the closet in question, where he saw the prince lying, weeping and lamenting passing sore. So he said to him, 'O my brother, what ails thee to weep? Speak to me and tell me what hath befallen thee.' But Seif spoke not neither raised his head and continued to weep and smite upon his breast. Quoth Saïd, 'I am thy vizier and thy brother, and we were reared together, thou and I; so to whom wilt thou unburden thy breast and discover thy secret, if not to me?' And he went on to humble himself and kiss the earth before him a great while, whilst Seif el Mulouk paid no heed to him nor answered him a word, but gave not over weeping.

At last, being affrighted at his case and weary of striving with him, he went out and fetched a sword, with which he returned to the closet, and setting the point to his own breast, said to the prince, 'Awake, O my brother! An thou tell me not what ails thee, I will slay myself and see thee no longer in this plight.' Whereupon Seif raised his head and answered him, saying, 'O my brother, I am ashamed to tell thee what ails me;' but Saïd said, 'I conjure thee by Allah, the Lord of Lords, the Liberator of those that are in bondage, the Causer of causes, the One, the Clement, the Bountiful, the Giver of gifts, that thou tell me what ails thee and be not abashed at me, for I am thy slave and thy vizier and counsellor in all things!' Quoth Seif, 'Come and look at this portrait.' So Saïd looked at it awhile and considering it straitly, saw written, at its head, in letters of pearl, these words, 'This is the presentment of Bediya el Jemal, daughter of

Shehyal ben Sharoukh, a king of the kings of the true-believing Jinn who have taken up their abode in the city of Babel and sojourn in the garden of Irem.'

So he said to the king, 'O my brother, knowest thou of what woman this is the portraiture, that we may seek for her?' 'Not I, by Allah, O my brother,' answered Seif: and Saïd said, 'Come and read this writing.' So Seif read it and cried out from his inmost heart, saying, 'Alas! Alas! Alas!' Quoth Saïd, 'O my brother, if the original of the portrait exist and her name be Bediya el Jemal and she be in the world, I will make haste to seek her, that thou mayst without delay attain thy desire. But, God on thee, O my brother, leave this weeping, that the officers of the state may come in, to do their service to thee, and in the forenoon, do thou summon the merchants and fakirs and travellers and pilgrims and enquire of them concerning this city and the garden of Irem; it may be, by the help and blessing of God (extolled and exalted be He!), some one of them will direct us thither.'

So, when it was day, Seif el Mulouk went forth and mounted the throne, hugging the tunic in his arms, for he could neither stand nor sit without it, nor would sleep visit him, except it were with him; and the amirs and viziers and grandees and officers came in to him. When they were all assembled in their places and the Divan was complete, he said to his vizier, 'Go to them and tell them that the king is sick and hath passed the night in ill case.' So Saïd went forth and told the folk what he said; which when the old king heard, he was concerned for his son and summoning the physicians and astrologers, carried them in to Seif el Mulouk.

They looked at him and prescribed him draughts and simples and medicinal waters and wrote him charms and incensed him with aloes-wood and ambergris three days' space; but his malady persisted three months, till King Aasim was wroth with the physicians and said to them, 'Out on you, O dogs! Can none of you cure my son? Except ye heal him forthright, I will put you all to death.' 'O king of the age,' replied the chief physician, 'we know that this is thy son and thou knowest that we fail not of diligence in tending a stranger; so how much more with thy son? But thy son is afflicted with a grievous malady, which if thou desire to know, we will discover it to thee.' Quoth Aasim, 'What find ye then to be my son's malady?' 'O king of the age,' answered the physician, 'thy son is in love and with one to whose enjoyment he hath no way of access.' At this the king was wroth and said, 'How know ye that my son is in love and how came love to him?' 'Ask his vizier and brother Saïd,' answered they; 'for he knoweth his case.'

So the king called Saïd into his privy closet and said to him, 'Tell me the truth of my son's malady.' But Saïd replied, 'I know it not.' Then King Aasim said to the headsman, 'Take Saïd and bind his eyes and strike off his head.' Whereupon Saïd feared for himself and said, 'O king of the age, grant me immunity.' 'Speak,' answered the king; 'and thou shalt have it.' Then said Saïd, 'Thy son is in love.' 'With whom is he in love?' asked the old king: and Saïd replied, 'With a king's daughter of the Jinn, whose portait he saw wroughten on the tunic that was in the wrapper given thee by Solomon, prophet of God.'

When the king heard this, he rose, and going in to his son, said to him, 'O my son, what is this portrait whereof thou art enamoured and why didst thou not tell me?'

'O my father,' answered Seif el Mulouk, 'I was ashamed to name this to thee and could not bring myself to discover aught thereof to any; but now thou knowest my case, look how thou mayest do to cure me.' 'What is to be done?' rejoined his father. 'Were she of the daughters of men, we might find a means of coming at her; but she is a king's daughter of the Jinn and who can avail to her, except it be Solomon son of David, and hardly he? Wherefore, O my son, do thou arise forthright and take heart and mount and ride out a-hunting or to the games in the tilting-ground. Divert thyself with eating and drinking and put away grief and concern from thy heart, and I will bring thee a hundred kings' daughters; for thou hast no call to the daughters of the Jinn, over whom we have no power and who are not of our kind.' But Seif said, 'I cannot renounce her nor will I seek another than her.' 'How then shall we do, O my son?' asked King Aasim; and Seif said, 'Bring us all the merchants and travellers and pilgrims in the city, that we may question them of the city of Babel and the garden of Irem. Peradventure, God will guide us thereto.'

So King Aasim summoned all the merchants and strangers and sea-captains in the city and enquired of them for the city of Babel and its peninsula and the garden of Irem; but none of them knew these places nor could any give him tidings thereof. However, when the session broke up, one of them said to the king, 'O king of the age, if thou hast a mind to know this thing, get thee to the land of China; for it is a vast and safe country, wherein are store of rarities and things of price and folk of all kinds [and nations] and thou shalt not come to the knowledge of this city and garden but from its people; it may be one of them will direct thee to that thou seekest.' Whereupon quoth Seif el Mulouk, 'O my father, equip me a ship, that I may journey to the land of China.'

'O my son,' replied the old king, 'abide thou on the throne of thy kingship and rule thy subjects, and I myself will make the voyage to China and enquire for thee of the city of Babel and the garden of Irem.' But Seif rejoined, saying, 'O my father, this affair concerneth me and none can prosecute the search after it like myself: so, come what will, if thou give me leave to make the voyage, I will depart and travel in foreign countries awhile. If I find tidings of her, my desire will be attained, and if not, belike the voyage will dilate my breast and recruit my spirits; and peradventure by foreign travel my case will be made easy to me, and if I live, I shall return to thee whole and sound.'

The old king looked at his son and saw nothing for it but to do what he wished; so he fitted him out forty ships, manned with twenty thousand men, besides servants, and gave him great plenty of treasures and necessaries and warlike gear, as much as he required. When the ships were laden with water and victual and arms and troops, Seif's father and mother bade him farewell and the former said, 'Depart, O my son, and travel in health and weal and safety. I commend thee to Him who disappointeth not those that put their trust in Him.' So the prince embarked, with his brother Saïd, and they weighed anchor and sailed till they came to the City of China.

When the people heard of the coming of forty ships, full of armed men and stores, they doubted not but they were enemies come to make war on them and beleaguer them; so they shut the gates of the town and made ready the mangonels. But Seif, hearing of this, despatched two of his chief officers to the King of China, bidding

them say to him, 'This is Seif el Mulouk, son of King Aasim of Egypt, who is come to thy city as a guest, to divert himself by viewing thy country awhile, and not for battle or contention; so, an thou wilt receive him, he will come ashore to thee: else he will return and will not disquiet thee nor the people of thy city.' So they presented themselves at the gates of the city and said, 'We bear a message from King Seif el Mulouk.' Whereupon the townsfolk opened the gates and carried them to their king, whose name was Feghfour Shah and between whom and King Aasim there had been acquaintance erewhen. So, when he heard that the new-comer was the son of King Aasim, he bestowed dresses of honour on the messengers and bidding open the gates, made ready guest-gifts and went forth, with the chief officers of his realm, to meet Seif el Mulouk.

The two kings embraced and Feghfour said to Seif, 'Welcome and fair welcome to him who cometh to us! I am thy servant and thy father's servant: my city is at thy disposal and whatsoever thou seekest shall be brought to thee.' Then he presented him with the guest-gifts and victual, and they took horse, with the Vizier Saïd and the chiefs of their officers and the rest of their troops, and rode from the sea-shore to the city, which they entered with drums beating and cymbals clashing, in token of rejoicing. There they abode forty days, in the enjoyment of fair hospitality, at the end of which time the King of China said to Seif el Mulouk, 'O son of my brother, how is it with thee? Doth my country please thee?' Quoth Seif, 'May God the Most High long honour it with thee, O King!' And Feghfour said, 'Nought hath brought thee hither save some need that hath betided thee; [so tell me] what thou desirest of my country, and I will accomplish it to thee.' 'O king,' answered Seif, 'my case is a rare one,' and told him how he had fallen in love with the portrait of Bediya el Jemal.

When the King of China heard his story, he wept for pity and solicitude for him and said, 'And what wouldst thou have now, O Seif el Mulouk?' Quoth Seif, 'I would have thee bring me all the pilgrims and travellers and seafarers in the country, that I may question them of the original of this portrait; belike one of them may give me tidings of her.' So Feghfour Shah sent out his lieutenants and officers and chamberlains, to fetch all the pilgrims and travellers in the land, and they brought them before the two kings, and they were a numerous company. Then Seif el Mulouk questioned them of the City of Babel and the Garden of Irem, but none of them returned him an answer, wherefore he was confounded and knew not what to do; but one of the sea-captains said to him, 'O king, if thou wouldst know of this city and garden, get thee to the Islands of the Indian Sea.'

So Seif bade repair the ships; which being done, they launched them on the sea and freighted them with victual and water and all that they needed, and Seif el Mulouk and his Vizier Saïd re-embarked, with all their men, after they had taken leave of King Feghfour Shah. They sailed the seas with a fair wind, in safety and security, four months, till, one day, there came out upon them a wind and the waves smote on them from all sides. The rain and hail descended on them and the sea was troubled for the violence of the wind; by reason whereof the ships drove one against another and broke up, as did the boats, and all on board were drowned, except Seif el Mulouk and some of his servants, who saved themselves in a little boat. Then, by the decree of God the Most High, the wind fell and the sun shone out; whereupon Seif opened his eyes and

seeing no sign of the ships nor aught but sky and water, said to those who were with him in the boat, 'Where are the ships and boats and where is my brother Saïd?' 'O king of the age,' answered they, 'there remain nor ships nor boats nor those who were therein; for they are all drowned and become food for fishes.'

When he heard this, he cried aloud and repeated the words which whoso saith shall not be confounded, and they are, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he fell to buffeting his face and would have cast himself into the sea, but his men withheld him, saying, 'O king, what will this profit thee? Thou hast brought all this on thyself; for, hadst thou hearkened to thy father's words, nought thereof had befallen thee. But this was fore-ordained from all eternity by the will of the Creator of Souls, that the creature might accomplish that which God hath decreed unto him. And indeed, at the time of thy birth, the astrologers predicted to thy father that all manner of troubles should befall thee. So there is nothing for it but patience till God the Most High deliver us from this our strait.' 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' replied the prince. 'Neither is there refuge nor fleeing from that which He decreeth!' And he sighed and recited the following verses:

By the Compassionate, I'm dazed about my case, for lo!
Troubles and grief beset me sore; I know not whence they grow.
I will be patient, so the folk, that I against a thing,
Bitt'rer than very aloes' self, enduréd have, may know.
Less bitter than my patience is the taste of aloes-juice;
I've borne with patience what's more hot than coals with fire aglow.
In this my trouble what resource have I, save to commit
My case to Him who orders all that is, for weal or woe?

Then he became drowned in the sea of melancholy thought and his tears ran down upon his cheeks, like a great rain. He slept awhile of the day, after which he awoke and sought food. So they set food before him and he ate till he had enough whilst the boat drove on with them they knew not whither. It drifted with them night and day, at the winds' and waves' will, a great while, till their victual was spent and they knew not what to do and were reduced to the last extremity for hunger and thirst and weariness. At last they sighted an island afar off and the breezes drove them on, till they came thither and making the boat fast to the shore, landed. They left one in the boat, to guard it, and fared on into the island, where they found abundance of fruits of all kinds and ate of them, till they were satisfied.

Presently, they saw a man sitting among the trees, and he was of strange aspect, long-faced and white of beard and body. He called to one of the servants by his name, saying, 'Eat not of those fruits, for they are not ripe; but come hither to me, that I may give thee to eat of these that are ripe.' The man looked at him and thought that he was one of the shipwrecked folk, who had made his way to the island; so he rejoiced greatly at sight of him and went up to him, knowing not what was decreed to him in the secret purpose of God nor what was written on his forehead. But, when he drew near the stranger, he leapt upon his shoulders and twisting one of his legs about his neck, let the other hang down upon his back, saying, 'Go on; for there is no escape for thee from

me and thou art become my ass.' Thereupon the man fell a-weeping and cried out to his fellows, saying, 'Alas, my lord! Flee forth of this wood and save yourselves, for one of the dwellers therein hath mounted on my shoulders, and the rest seek you, that they may ride you likewise.'

When they heard this, they all fled down to the boat and pushed off to sea; whilst the islanders followed them into the water, saying, 'Whither go ye? Come, bide with us and we will ride on your backs and give you meat and drink, and you shall be our asses.' With this, they redoubled their efforts, till they left them in the distance and fared on, trusting in God the Most High; nor did they leave going a whole month, till they came to another island and landed. Here they found fruits of various kinds and busied themselves with eating of them. Presently, they saw, afar off, somewhat lying in the road, as it were a column of silver. So they went up to it and one of the men gave it a push with his foot, when, lo, it was a creature of hideous aspect, long-eyed, cleft-headed and hidden under one of his ears, for he was used, whenas he lay down to sleep, to spread one ear under his head and cover himself with the other. He snatched up the man who had kicked him and carried him off into the inward of the island, and behold, it was all full of ghouls who eat men. So the man cried out to his fellows, saying, 'Flee and save yourselves, for this is the island of the man-eating ghouls, and they mean to tear me in pieces and eat me.'

When they heard this, they fled back to the boat, without gathering any store of the fruits, and putting out to sea, fared on some days till they came to another island, where they found a high mountain. So they climbed to the top and found there a thick wood. Now they were anhungred; so they fell to eating of the fruits; but, before they aware, there came upon them from among the trees black men of terrible aspect, each fifty cubits high, with teeth like elephants' tusks protruding from their mouths, and laying hands on Seif el Mulouk and his company, carried them to their king, whom they found seated on a piece of black felt laid on a rock, and about him a great company of blacks, standing in his service. Quoth the blacks to him, 'We found these birds among the trees;' and he was anhungred; so he took two of the servants and killed them and ate them; which when Seif saw, he feared for himself and wept and repeated these verses:

Troubles familiar with my heart are grown and
I with them, Erst shunning; for the generous are sociable still.
Not one mere kind of woe alone doth lieger with me lie;
Praised be God! there are with me thousands of kinds of ill.

Then he sighed and repeated these also:

Fate with afflictions still hath so beshotten me,
With shafts, as with a sheath, my entrails are o'erlaid;
And thus in such a case am I become that, when
An arrow striketh me, blade breaketh upon blade.

When the king heard his weeping and wailing, he said, 'Verily, these birds have sweet voices and their song pleaseth me: put them in cages.' So they set them each in a cage and hung them up at the king's head, that he might hear their song. On this wise

Seif and his men abode a great while, and the blacks gave them to eat and drink: and now they wept and now laughed, now spoke and now were silent, whilst the king of the blacks delighted in the sound of their voices.

Now this king had a daughter married in another island, who, hearing that her father had birds with sweet voices, sent to him to seek of him some of them. So he sent her, by her messenger, Seif el Mulouk and three of his men in four cages; and when she saw them, they pleased her and she commanded to hang them up in a place over her head. Then Seif fell to marvelling at that which had befallen him and calling to mind his former high estate and weeping for himself; and the three servants wept for themselves, whilst the king's daughter deemed that they sang. Now it was her wont, whenever any one from the land of Egypt or elsewhere fell into her hands and he pleased her, to advance him to high estate with her; and by the ordinance of God the Most High, it befell that, when she saw Seif el Mulouk, his beauty and grace and symmetry pleased her, and she commanded to loose him and his companions from their cages and bade entreat them with honour.

One day she took Seif apart and would have him lie with her; but he refused, saying, 'O my lady, I am an exile and distraught with passion for a beloved one, nor will I consent to love-delight with other than her.' Then she coaxed him and importuned him, but he held aloof from her, and she could not anywise approach him nor get her desire of him. At last, when she was weary of courting him in vain, she waxed wroth with him and his men and commanded that they should serve her and fetch her wood and water.

They abode thus four years, till Seif el Mulouk became weary of this life and sent to intercede with the princess, so haply she might release them and let them go their ways and be at rest from that their travail. So she sent for him and said to him, 'If thou wilt fall in with my desire, I will set thee free from this thy duresse and thou shalt go to thy country, safe and sound.' And she went on to humble herself to him and wheedle him, but he would not consent to do her will; whereupon she turned from him, in anger, and he and his companions abode in the same plight. The people of the island knew them for the princess's birds and dared not do them any hurt; and she herself was at ease concerning them, being assured that they could not escape from the island. So they used to absent themselves from her two and three days [at a time] and go round about the island in all directions, gathering firewood, which they brought to the princess's kitchen; and thus they abode five years.

One day, it chanced that the prince and his men were sitting on the sea-shore, devising of what had befallen, and Seif bethought him of his father and mother and his brother Saïd and calling to mind his former high estate, fell a-weeping and lamenting passing sore, whilst his servants wept likewise. Then said they to him, 'O king of the age, how long shall we weep? Weeping availeth not; for this thing was written on our foreheads by the ordinance of God, to whom belong might and majesty. Indeed, the pen runneth with that which He decreeth and nought will serve us but patience. Peradventure God (blessed and exalted be He!), who hath afflicted us with this calamity, will deliver us therefrom.' 'O my brothers,' said Seif, 'how shall we win free from this accursed woman? I see no way of escape for us, except God of His favour deliver us from her; but methinks we may flee and be at rest from this travail.'

'O king of the age,' answered they, 'whither shall we flee? For the whole island is full of man-eating ghouls and whithersoever we go, they will find us there and either eat us or carry us back to the king's daughter, who will be wroth with us.' Quoth Seif, 'I will contrive you somewhat, whereby it may be God the Most High will help us to escape from this island.' 'And how wilt thou do?' asked they. 'Let us cut some of these long pieces of wood,' answered he, 'and twist ropes of their bark and bind them one with another, and make of them a raft which we will cast into the sea and load with these fruits. Then will we fashion us oars and embark on the raft; peradventure God the Most High will make it the means of our deliverance from this accursed woman and vouchsafe us a fair wind to bring us to the land of Hind, for He can do all things.' 'This is well seen,' said they and were mightily rejoiced thereat.

So they arose and fell to work forthright to cut wood for the raft and twist ropes to bind the logs together, and at this they wrought a whole month. Every evening, they gathered somewhat of firewood and carried it to the princess's kitchen, and the rest of the day they busied themselves with working at the raft. When they had made an end of it, they cast it into the sea and loading it with the fruits of the island, embarked at close of day, having told none of their intent. They put out to sea and fared on four months, knowing not whither the raft carried them, till their victual failed them and they were reduced to the utmost extreme of hunger and thirst.

[One day, as they drifted along,] the sea became troubled and foamed and rose in great waves, and there came forth upon them a frightful crocodile, which put out its claw and snatching up one of the servants, swallowed him. At this sight Seif el Mulouk wept sore and he and the two men that remained to him pushed off from the place where they had seen the monster, sore affrighted. After this, they drifted on till one day they espied a terrible great mountain, rising high into the air, whereat they rejoiced and made towards it with all their might, glad in the prospect of reaching land; but hardly had they sighted the island [on which was the mountain], when the sea boiled and rose in huge waves and a second crocodile raised its head and putting out its claw, took the two remaining servants and swallowed them.

So Seif abode alone and making his way to the island, laboured till he reached the mountain-top, where he found a wood and walking among the trees, fell to eating of the fruits. Presently, he saw among the branches more than twenty great apes, each bigger than a mule, whereat he was seized with exceeding fear. The apes came down and surrounded him; then they went on before him, signing to him to follow them, and he did so, till he came to a lofty and strong-builded castle, the ordinance whereof was one brick of gold and one of silver. The apes entered and he after them, and he saw in the castle all manner of jewels and precious metals and things of price, such as the tongue fails to describe. Here also he found a young man, exceeding tall of stature, with no hair on his cheeks, and there was no human being but he in the castle.

The two young men greeted each other with delight, and the stranger marvelled exceedingly at sight of Seif el Mulouk and said to him, 'What is thy name and what countryman art thou and how camest thou hither? Tell me thy story and conceal from me nought thereof.' 'By Allah,' answered the prince, 'I came not hither of my own intent nor is this place that which I seek; but I cannot but go from place to place till I compass my desire.' 'And what is it thou seekest?' asked the youth. 'I am of the land of

Egypt,' replied Seif, 'and my name is Seif el Mulouk, son of King Aasim ben Sefwan;' and told him all that had befallen him, from first to last, [up to his coming to the land of China]. Whereupon the youth arose and stood in his service, saying, 'O king of the age, I was in Egypt [awhile since] and heard that thou hadst gone to the land of China; but it is a far cry from China hither. Verily, this is a strange thing and a rare case!'

'True,' answered the prince; 'but, when I left China, I set out, intending for the land of Hind;' and he told him all that had befallen him till he came thither; whereupon quoth the other, 'O king's son, thou hast had enough of strangerhood and its hardships; praised be God who hath brought thee hither! So now do thou abide with me, that I may enjoy thy company till I die, when thou shalt become king over this island, to which no bound is known, and these apes thou seest, which are skilled in all manner crafts; and all thou seekest thou wilt find here.' 'O my brother,' replied Seif el Mulouk, 'I may not abide in any place till my quest be accomplished, though I compass the whole world in pursuit thereof, so haply God may bring me to my desire or my course lead me to the place, wherein is the appointed term of my days, and I shall die.'

Then the youth signed to one of the apes, and he went out and was absent awhile, after which he returned with other apes, girt with napkins of silk. They laid the table and set on near a hundred dishes of gold and silver, containing all kinds of meats. Then they stood, after the manner of servants before kings, till the youth signed to the chamberlains, who sat down, and he whose wont it was to serve stood, whilst the two princes ate, till they had enough. Then the apes cleared the table and brought basins and ewers of gold, and they washed their hands; after which they set on nigh forty flagons, in each a different kind of wine, and they drank and took their pleasure and made merry; and all the apes danced and gambolled before them, what while they sat at meat; which when Seif saw, he marvelled at them and forgot that which had befallen him of strangerhood and its hardships. At nightfall, they lighted candles in candlesticks of gold and silver and set on dishes of fruits and confections. So they ate; and when the hour of rest was come, the apes spread them beds and they slept.

Next morning, the young man arose, according to his wont, and waking Seif, said to him, 'Put thy head forth of this lattice and see what stands beneath.' So he put out his head and saw the wide waste and all the desert filled with apes, whose number none knew save God the Most High. Quoth he, 'Here is great plenty of apes, for they fill the whole country: but why are they assembled at this hour?' 'This is their custom,' answered the youth. 'Every Saturday, all the apes in the island come hither, some from two and three days' distance, and stand here till I awake from sleep and put forth my head from this window, when they kiss the ground before me and go about their affairs.' So saying, he put his head out of the window; and when the apes saw him, they kissed the earth before him and went away.

Seif el Mulouk abode with the young man a whole month, at the end of which time he bade him farewell and departed, escorted by a company of nigh a hundred apes, which their king sent with him. They journeyed with him seven days, till they came to the limits of their island, when they took leave of him and returned to their places, while Seif fared on alone over hill and mountain and desert and plain, four months' journey, one day anhungred and the next full of meat, now eating of the herbs

of the earth and now of the fruits of the trees, till he repented him of having quitted the young man and was about to retrace his steps to him, when he saw somewhat black afar off and said in himself, 'Is this city or trees? I will not turn back till I see what it is.' So he made towards it and when he drew near, he saw that it was a lofty palace. Now he who built it was Japhet son of Noah (on whom be peace!) and it is of this palace that God the Most High speaketh in His precious Book, whenas He saith, 'And an abandoned well and a high-builded palace.'

Seif el Mulouk sat down at the gate and said in himself, 'I wonder what is within this palace and what king dwelleth there and whether its inhabitants are men or Jinn? Who will tell me the truth of the case?' He sat awhile, considering, but, seeing none go in or out, he rose and committing himself to God the Most High, entered the palace and walked on, till he had counted seven vestibules; but saw no one. Presently he espied, on his right hand, three doors, and before him, a fourth, over which hung a curtain. So he went up to the fourth door and raising the curtain, found himself in a great saloon, spread with silken carpets. At the upper end stood a golden throne, on which sat a young lady, whose face was like the moon, arrayed in kings' raiment and adorned as she were a bride on her wedding-night; and before the throne stood a table, whereon were forty trays spread with dishes of gold and silver, full of rich meats.

The prince went up to the lady and saluted her, and she returned his greeting, saying, 'Art thou of mankind or of the Jinn?' 'I am a man of the best of mankind,' replied he; 'for I am a king, son of a king.' Quoth she, 'What seekest thou? Up and eat of yonder food, and after tell me thy story from first to last and how thou camest hither.' So he sat down at the table and uncovering a tray of meats, ate (for he was hungry) till he had enough; then washed his hands and going up to the throne, sat down by the young lady who said to him, 'Who art thou and what is thy name and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither?' 'My story is a long one,' replied he; 'but do thou first tell me who and what thou art and why thou dwellest in this place alone.'

Quoth she, 'My name is Dauleh Khatoun and I am the daughter of the King of Hind. My father dwells in the city of Serendib and has a great and goodly garden, there is no goodlier in all the land of Hind; and in this garden is a great tank. One day, I went out into the garden with my waiting-women and we stripped and entering the tank, fell to sporting and taking our pleasure therein. Presently, before I could be ware, there swooped down on me somewhat, as it were a cloud, and snatching me from amongst my maids, flew up with me betwixt heaven and earth, saying, "Fear not, O Dauleh Khatoun, but be of good heart." Then he flew on with me a little while, after which he set me down in this palace and straightway became a handsome young man, elegantly clad, who said to me, "Dost thou know me?" "No, O my lord," answered I; and he said, "I am the Blue King, son of the Jinn; my father dwelleth in the Castle of El Culzum and hath under his hand six hundred thousand Jinn, flyers and divers. I chanced to see thee, as I was passing, and fell in love with thee; so I snatched thee up from among the slave-girls and brought thee to this strong castle, which is my dwelling-place. None may win hither, whether he be man or genie, and from Hind hither is a hundred and twenty years' journey: wherefore be thou assured that thou wilt never

again see the land of thy father and thy mother; but abide with me here, in content and peace, and I will bring thee whatsoever thou seekest."

Then he embraced me and kissed me, saying, "Abide here and fear nothing," after which he went away and presently returned with these tables and carpets and furniture. He comes to me every Tuesday and abides with me three days, and on Friday, at the time of afternoon prayer, he departs and is absent till the following Tuesday. When he is here, he eats and drinks and kisses and embraces me, but does nought [else] with me, and I am a clean maid, even as God the Most High created me. My father's name is Taj el Mulouk, and he knows not what is come of me. This is my story: now tell me thine.'

'My story is a long one,' answered the prince, 'and I fear lest the Afrit come, whilst I am telling it to thee. Quoth she, 'He went out from me but an hour before thy coming and will not return till Tuesday: so sit and take thine ease and be thy heart at rest and tell me what hath betided thee, from first to last.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he told her all that had befallen him from first to last, but, when she heard speak of Bediya el Jemal, her eyes ran over with streaming tears and she exclaimed, 'O Bediya el Jemal, I had not thought this of thee! Out upon fortune! O Bediya el Jemal, dost thou not remember me nor say, "Where is my sister Dauleh Khatoun gone?"' And she wept passing sore, lamenting Bediya el Jemal's forgetfulness of her.

Then said Seif, 'O Dauleh Khatoun, thou art a mortal and she is a genie: how then can she be thy sister?' 'She is my foster-sister,' replied the princess, 'and this is how it came about. My mother went out to take her pleasure in the garden, when the pangs of labour seized her and she gave birth to me. As fate would have it, the mother of Bediya el Jemal chanced to be passing with her guards, when she also was taken with the pains of travail; so she alighted in a part of the garden and was there delivered of Bediya el Jemal. She despatched one of her women to seek food and childbirth-gear of my mother, who sent her what she sought and invited her to visit her. So she came to her with her child and my mother suckled Bediya el Jemal; after which the latter and her mother abode with us in the garden two months.

Then Bediya's mother gave my mother somewhat, saying, "When thou hast need of me, I will come to thee in the midst of the garden," and departed to her own country; but she and her daughter used to visit us every year and abide with us awhile. Wherefore, O Seif el Mulouk, if thou wert with me in my own country and Bediya and I were together as of wont, I would go about with her to bring thee to thy desire of her: but I am here and they know not what is become of me, else could they deliver me from this place; but the matter is in God's hands (blessed and exalted be He!) and what can I do?' 'Come,' said Seif, 'let us flee and go whither God wills.' But she answered, 'We cannot do that: for, by Allah, though we fled hence a year's journey, yonder accursed wretch would overtake us in an hour and make an end of us.'

Then said the prince, 'I will hide myself in his way, and when he passes, I will smite him with the sword and slay him.' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'Thou canst not avail to slay him, except thou slay his soul.' 'And where is his soul?' asked he. 'Many a time have I questioned him thereof,' answered she; 'but he would not tell me, till one day I was instant with him and he waxed wroth with me and said to me, "How often wilt thou ask me of my soul? What hast thou to do with my soul?" "O Hatim,"

answered I, "there remaineth none to me but thou, except God; and my life dependeth on thine, and whilst thou livest, all is well for me; so, except I care for thy soul and set it in the apple of mine eye, how shall I live in thine absence? If I knew where thy soul is, I would, never whilst I live, cease to hold it embraced and would keep it as my right eye."

Whereupon he said to me, "When I was born, the astrologers predicted that I should lose my soul at the hands of the son of a king of mankind. So I took it and put it in the crop of a sparrow, which I shut up in a box. The box I set in a casket, and enclosing this in seven other caskets and seven chests, laid the whole in a marble coffer, which I buried within the marge of yonder ocean, that encompasseth the earth; for that these parts are far from the world of men and none of them can win thither. So now I have told thee what thou wouldst know, and do thou tell none thereof, for it is a secret between me and thee." "To whom should I tell it," rejoined I, "seeing that none but thou cometh hither with whom I may talk thereof? By Allah, thou hast indeed set thy soul in a right impregnable stronghold, to which none may gain access! How should a man win to it, even if the impossible be ordained and God decree like as the astrologers predicted?"

Quoth the genie, "Peradventure one may come, having on his finger the ring of Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!) and lay his hand with the ring on the surface of the water, saying, 'By the virtue of the names engraven upon this ring, let the soul of such an one come forth!' Whereupon the coffer will rise to the surface and he will break it open and do the like with the chests and caskets, till he come to the little box, when he will take out the sparrow and strangle it, and I shall die."' Then said Seif el Mulouk, 'I am the king's son of whom he spoke, and this is the ring of Solomon son of David on my finger. Come, let us go down to the sea-shore and see if his words be truth or leasing.'

So the two went down to the sea-shore and Dauleh Khatoun stood on the beach, whilst the prince entered the water to his middle, and laying his hand with the ring on the surface of the sea, said, 'By the virtue of the names and talismans engraven on this ring and of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!), let the soul of Hatim the genie, son of the Blue King, come forth!' Whereupon the sea became troubled and the marble coffer rose to the surface. Seif took it and shattered it against the rock and broke open the chests and caskets, till he came to the little box and took thereout the sparrow. Then he and the princess returned to the castle and sat down on the throne. Hardly had they done this, when there arose a terrible great cloud of dust and some huge thing came flying and saying, 'Spare me, O king's son, and slay me not; but make me thy freedman, and I will bring thee to thy desire!' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'The genie cometh; kill the sparrow, lest the accursed wretch enter the palace and take it from thee and slay thee and me after thee.' So the prince wrung the sparrow's neck and it died, whereupon the genie fell down at the door of the palace and became a heap of black ashes.

Then said the princess, 'We are delivered from the hand of yonder accursed wretch; what shall we do now?' 'It behoves us to ask aid of God the Most High, who hath afflicted us,' answered Seif; 'belike He will direct us and help us to escape from this our strait.' So saying, he arose and pulling down half a score of the doors of the

palace, which were wroughten of sandal and aloes-wood, with nails of gold and silver, bound them together with ropes of silk and sendal, which were there, and wrought of them a raft, which he made shift, he and the princess, to drag down to the sea-shore. They cast it into the water and making it fast to the beach, returned to the palace, whence they removed all the dishes of gold and silver and jewels and precious stones and metals and what not else was light of carriage and heavy of worth and freighted the raft therewith. Then they fashioned two pieces of wood into the likeness of oars, with which they embarked on the raft and casting off the moorings, let it drift out to sea with them, committing themselves to God the Most High, who contenteth those that put their trust in Him and disappointed them not.

They fared on thus four months, and when they lay down to sleep, the prince set Dauleh Khatoun behind him and laid a naked sword at his back, so that, when he turned, the sword was between them. At last, their victual came to an end and they were reduced to sore distress; their souls were straitened and they besought God the Most High to vouchsafe them deliverance from their strait. It chanced, one night, when Seif was asleep and the princess awake, that the raft fell off towards the land and entered a harbour wherein were ships. The princess saw the ships and heard a man (who was none other than the chief and head of the captains) talking with the sailors; whereby she knew that this was the port of some city and that they were come to an inhabited country. So she rejoiced mightily and waking Seif el Mulouk, bade him ask the captain the name of the city and harbour.

Accordingly Seif arose, rejoicing, and said to the captain, 'O my brother, how is this harbour called and what are the names of yonder city and its king?' 'O fool's face! O frosty beard!' replied the captain, 'if thou knewest not the name of this port and city, how camest thou hither?' Quoth Seif, 'I am a stranger and had taken passage in a merchant ship, which was wrecked and sank with all on board; but I saved myself on a plank and made my way hither; wherefore I asked thee the name of the place, and there is no harm in asking.' Then said the captain, 'This is the city of Amariyeh and this harbour is called Kemin el Behrein.' When the princess heard this, she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, 'Praised be God!' 'What is to do?' asked Seif. And she answered, saying, 'O Seif el Mulouk, rejoice in succour near at hand; for the king of this city is my father's brother and his name is Aali el Mulouk. Say to the captain, "Is the Sultan of the city, Aali el Mulouk, well?"'

The prince put the question to the captain, who was wroth with him and said, 'Thou sayst, "I am a stranger and never in my life came hither." Who then told thee the name of the lord of the city?' When Dauleh Khatoun heard this, she rejoiced and knew him for one of her father's captains, Muïneddin by name. Now he had come out in search of her, after her disappearance, and finding her not, had continued his cruise till he came to her uncle's city. Then she bade Seif say to him, 'O Captain Muïneddin, come and speak with thy mistress!' So he called out to him as she bade, whereat he was exceeding angry and answered, saying, 'O dog, who art thou and how knowest thou me?' Then he said to one of the sailors, 'Give me an ash-stick, that I may go to yonder pestilent fellow and break his head.'

So he took the stick and made for Seif el Mulouk, but, when he came to the raft, he saw Dauleh Khatoun sitting there, as she were a piece of the moon; whereat he was

confounded and said to the prince, 'Who is that with thee?' 'A damsel by name Dauleh Khatoun,' replied Seif. When the captain heard the princess's name and knew that she was his mistress and the daughter of his king, he fell down in a swoon, and when he came to himself, he left the raft and those that were thereon and going up to the palace, craved an audience of the king; whereupon the chamberlain went in to the latter and said, 'Captain Muïneddin is come to bring thee good news.' The king bade admit him: so he entered and kissing the earth, said to him, 'O king, thou owest me a gift for glad tidings; for thy brother's daughter Dauleh Khatoun hath arrived here, safe and sound, and is now on a raft in the harbour, in company with a young man like the moon on the night of its full.'

When the king heard this, he rejoiced and conferred a sumptuous dress of honour on the captain. Then he straightway commanded to decorate the city in honour of the safe return of his brother's daughter, and sending for her and Seif el Mulouk, saluted them and gave them joy of their safety; after which he despatched a messenger to his brother, to let him know that his daughter was found and was with him. As soon as the news reached Taj el Mulouk, he assembled his troops and set out for his brother's capital, where he found his daughter and they rejoiced with an exceeding joy. He sojourned with his brother a week, after which he took his daughter and Seif el Mulouk and returned to Serendib, where the princess foregathered with her mother and they rejoiced and held high festival in honour of her safe return; and it was a great day, never was seen its like.

As for Seif el Mulouk, the king entreated him with honour and said to him, 'O Seif el Mulouk, thou hast done me and my daughter all this good and I cannot requite thee therefor, nor can any requite thee, save the Lord of all creatures; but I wish thee to sit upon the throne in my stead and rule the land of Hind, for I make gift to thee of my throne and kingdom and treasures and servants.' Whereupon Seif rose and kissing the earth before the king, thanked him and answered, saying, 'O King of the age, I accept all thou givest me and return it to thee in free gift: for I covet not kingship nor sultanate nor desire aught but that God the Most High bring me to my desire.' 'O Seif el Mulouk,' rejoined the king, 'these my treasures are at thy disposal: take of them what thou wilt, without consulting me, and God requite thee for me with all good!' Quoth the prince, 'God advance the king! Indeed, there is no delight for me in treasure or dominion, till I attain my desire: but now I have a mind to take my pleasure in the city and view its streets and markets.'

So the king commanded to bring him a horse of the thoroughbred horses, saddled and bridled; and Seif mounted and rode through the streets and markets of the town. As he looked about him, his eyes fell on a young man, who was crying a tunic for sale at fifteen dinars: so he considered him and saw him to be like his brother Saïd; and indeed it was his very self, but he was pale and changed for long strangerhood and the hardships of travel, so that he knew him not. However, he said to his attendants, 'Take yonder youth and carry him to the palace where I lodge, and keep him with you till my return, that I may question him.' But they understood him to say, 'Carry him to the prison,' and said in themselves, 'Doubtless this is some runaway slave of his.' So they took him and carried him to the prison, where they laid him in irons and left him.

Presently Seif returned to the palace, but he forgot his brother Saïd, and none made mention of him to him. So he abode in prison, and when they brought out the prisoners, to labour upon the public works, they took Saïd with them, and he wrought with the rest. In this plight he abode a month's space, in squalor and misery, pondering his case and saying in himself, 'What is the cause of my imprisonment?' Meanwhile, Seif el Mulouk's mind was diverted from him by rejoicing and other things; but one day, as he sat, he bethought him of Saïd and said to his attendants, 'Where is the young man I gave into your charge on such a day?' 'Didst thou not bid us carry him to the prison?' said they. 'Nay,' answered he; 'I bade you carry him to my palace.' Then he sent his chamberlains for Saïd and they fetched him in irons, and loosing him from his fetters, set him before the prince, who said to him, 'O young man, what countryman art thou?' Quoth he, 'I am from Egypt and my name is Saïd, son of the Vizier Faris.'

When Seif heard this, he rose and throwing himself upon him, hung on his neck, weeping for very joy and saying, 'O Saïd, O my brother, praised be God that I see thee alive! I am thy brother Seif el Mulouk, son of King Aasim.' Then they embraced and wept together and all who were present marvelled at them. After this, Seif commanded his people to carry Saïd to the bath: and they did so. When he came out, they clad him in sumptuous apparel and carried him back to Seif, who seated him on the couch beside himself. When King Taj el Mulouk heard of the reunion of Seif and his brother Saïd, he was mightily rejoiced and came to them, and the three sat devising of all that had befallen them.

Then said Saïd, 'O my brother Seif el Mulouk, when the ship sank and all on board were cast into the sea, I saved myself on a plank with a company of servants, and it drifted with us a whole month, at the end of which time the wind cast us, by the ordinance of God the Most High, upon an island. So we landed and entering among the trees, fell to eating of the fruits, for we were anhungred. Whilst we were busy eating, there fell on us, at unawares, folk like Afrits and springing on our shoulders, said to us, "Go on with us; for ye are become our asses." So I said to him who had mounted me, "What art thou and why dost thou mount me?" But he twisted one of his legs about my neck, till I was all but dead, and beat upon my back the while with the other leg, till I thought he had broken it. So I fell to the ground on my face, having no strength left in me for hunger and thirst. When he saw this, he knew that I was hungry and taking me by the hand, led me to a pear-tree laden with fruit and said to me, "Eat thy fill of this tree." So I ate till I had enough and rose, against my will, to walk; but, before I had gone far, the creature turned and leaping on my shoulders again, drove me on, now walking, now running and now trotting, and he the while mounted on me, laughing and saying, "Never in my life saw I an ass like unto thee!"

We abode thus awhile, till, one day, it chanced that we came upon great plenty of vines, covered with ripe fruit; so we gathered a quantity of bunches of grapes and throwing them into a pit, trod them with our feet, till the pit became a great pool. Then we waited awhile and presently returning thither, found that the sun had smitten the grapejuice and it was become wine. So we used to drink of it, till we were drunken and our faces flushed and we fell to singing and dancing, for the hilarity of drunkenness; whereupon our masters said to us, "What is it that reddens your faces and

makes you dance and sing?" "Ask us not," answered we. "What is your intent in questioning us of this?" But they insisted, till we told them how we had pressed grapes and made wine. Quoth they, "Give us to drink thereof;" but we said, "The grapes are spent."

So they brought us to a valley, whose length we knew not from its breadth, wherein were vines without beginning or end, each bunch of grapes on them twenty pounds in weight and all within easy reach, and said, "Gather of these." So we gathered great store of grapes and filling therewith a great trench that we found there, bigger than the great tank [in the king's garden], trod them with our feet and did with the juice as before, till it became wine, whereupon we said to them, "It is come to perfection; but in what will ye drink it?" And they answered, saying, "We had asses like unto you; but we ate them and kept their heads: so give us to drink in their skulls." So we gave them to drink, and they became drunken and lay down, nigh two hundred of them.

Then said we to one another, "Is it not enough that they should ride us, but they must eat us also? There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! But we will ply them with wine, till they are overcome with drunkenness, when we will kill them and be at rest from them." So we awoke them and proceeded to fill the skulls and gave them to drink, but they said, "This is bitter." "Why say ye it is bitter?" answered we. "Whoso saith this, except he drink of it ten times, he dieth the same day." When they heard this, they feared death and said to us, "Give us to drink the whole ten times." So we gave them to drink, and when they had drunken the rest of the ten draughts, their senses failed them and they became helplessly drunk. So we dragged them [together] by the hands and laying them one upon another, collected great plenty of dry vine-stalks and branches and heaped it upon and about them: then set fire to the pile and stood afar off, to see what came of them. When the fire was burnt down, we came back and found them a heap of ashes, wherefore we praised God the Most High, who had delivered us from them. Then we sought the sea-shore, where we parted and I and two of the men fared on till we came to a great and thick wood and there busied ourselves with eating fruit.

Presently, up came a man of high stature, long-bearded and flap-eared, with eyes like cressets, driving before him a great flock of sheep. When he saw us, he rejoiced and said to us, "Welcome and fair welcome to you! Come with me, that I may slaughter you one of these sheep and roast it and give you to eat." Quoth we, "Where is thine abode?" And he said, "Hard by yonder mountain: go on towards it till ye come to a cave, where are many guests like yourselves. Enter and sit with them, whilst we make ready for you the guest-meal." We doubted not but he spoke the truth, so fared on, as he bade us, till we came to the cavern, where we found many guests, men like ourselves, but they were all blind; and when we entered, one said, "I am sick;" and another, "I am weak."

So we said to them, "What is this you say and what is the cause of your sickness and weakness?" "Who are ye?" asked they; and we answered, "We are guests." Then said they, "What hath made you fall into the hands of yonder accursed wretch? But there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! This is a ghoul who eats men and he hath blinded us and meaneth to eat us." "And how did he blind you?" asked we. "Like as he will blind yourselves even now," replied they. Quoth we, "And

how so?" And they answered "He will bring you cups of milk and will say to you, 'Ye are weary with travel: take this milk and drink it.' And when ye have drunken thereof, ye will become blind like unto us." Quoth I to myself, "There is no escape for us but by stratagem." So I dug a hole in the earth and sat over it.

Presently in came the accursed ghoul, with cups of milk, of which he gave one to each of us, saying, "Ye come from the desert and are athirst: so take this milk and drink it, whilst I roast you the meat." I took the cup and carrying it to my mouth, [made a show of drinking, but] emptied it into the hole; then I cried out, "Alas! my sight is gone and I am blind!" and clapping my hand to my eyes, fell a-weeping and lamenting, whilst he laughed and said, "Fear not." But, as for my two comrades, they drank the milk and became blind. Then the ghoul arose and stopping up the mouth of the cavern, came to me and felt my ribs, but found me lean and with no flesh on my bones: so he felt another and finding him fat, rejoiced. Then he slaughtered three sheep and skinned them and fetching iron spits, spitted the flesh thereon and set them over the fire to roast. When the meat was done, he set it before my comrades, who ate and he with them; after which he brought a skin full of wine and drank thereof and lay down on his face and snored.

Quoth I in myself, "He is drowned in sleep: how shall I slay him?" Then I bethought me of the spits and laying two of them in the fire, waited till they were red-hot: whereupon I girded myself and taking a spit in each hand, went up to the ghoul and thrust them into his eyes, pressing upon them with all my might. He sprang to his feet for dear life and would have laid hold of me; but he was blind. So I fled from him into the inner cavern, whilst he ran after me; but I found no place of refuge from him nor whence I might escape into the open country, for the cave was stopped up with stone; wherefore I was bewildered and said to the blind men, "How shall I do with this accursed wretch?" "O Saïd," answered one of them, "climb up to yonder niche and thou wilt find there a sharpened sword: bring it to me and I will tell thee what to do."

So I climbed up to the niche and taking the sword, returned to the blind man, who said to me, "Smite him with the sword in his middle, and he will die forthright." So I ran after the ghoul, who was weary with running after me and felt for the blind men, that he might kill them, and coming behind him, smote him with the sword in his middle and he fell in twain. Then he cried out to me, saying, "O man, an thou desire to kill me, smite me a second time." Accordingly, I was about to deal him another blow; but he who had directed me to the sword said to me, "Smite him not a second time, for he will not die, but will live and destroy us." So I held my hand, as he bade me, and the ghoul died. Then said the blind man to me, "Open the mouth of the cave and let us go out; so haply God may help us and deliver us from this place." Quoth I, "No harm can come to us now; let us rather abide here and rest and eat of these sheep and drink of this wine, for the land is long."

So we abode there two months, eating of the sheep and of the fruits of the island, till, one day, as we sat upon the beach, we caught sight of a great ship in the distance; so we cried out and made signs to the crew. They feared to draw near, knowing that the island was inhabited by a ghoul who ate men, and would have sheered off; but we ran down to the marge of the sea and made signs to them with the floating ends of our turbans and shouted to them, whereupon one of the sailors, who was sharp of sight, said to the rest, "Harkye, comrades, these seem men like ourselves, for they have not the fashion of ghouls." So they made for us, little by little, till they drew near us and were certified that we were indeed human beings, when they saluted us and we returned their greeting and gave them the glad tidings of the death of the accursed ghoul, wherefore they thanked us.

Then we transported to the ship all that was in the cavern of stuffs and sheep and treasure, together with provision of the fruits of the island, such as should serve us days and months, and embarking, sailed on with a fair wind three days; at the end of which time the wind veered round against us and the sky became exceeding dark, nor had an hour passed, before the wind drove the vessel on to a rock, where it broke up and its planks were rent asunder. However, God the Most High decreed that I should lay hold of one of the planks, which I bestrode, and it bore me along two days, for the wind had fallen fair again, and I paddled with my feet awhile, till God the Most High brought me safe to shore and I landed and came to this city, where I found myself a stranger, alone and friendless. And indeed I knew not what to do; for hunger was sore upon me and I was in great straits.

So I hid myself and pulling off my tunic, carried it to the market, saying in myself, "I will sell it and live on its price, till God accomplish His will of me." Then I took the tunic in my hand and cried it for sale, and the folk were looking at it and bidding for it, when, O my brother, thou camest up and seeing me, commandest me to the palace; but thine attendants took me and carried me to prison, where I abode till thou bethoughtest thee of me and badst bring me before thee. So now I have told thee what befell me, and praised be God for reunion!'

The two kings marvelled exceedingly at Saïd's story and Taj el Mulouk made ready a goodly dwelling for Seif el Mulouk and his vizier. [So they took up their abode therein] and Dauleh Khatoun used to visit Seif el Mulouk there and thank him for his favours and talk with him. One day, he foregathered with her and said to her, 'O my

lady, where is the promise thou madest me, in the palace of Japhet son of Noah, saying, "Were I with my people, I would make shift to bring thee to thy desire?"' And Saïd said to her, 'O princess, I crave thine aid to enable him to compass his desire.' 'It is well,' answered she. 'I will do my endeavour for him, that he may attain his wish, if it please God the Most High.' And she turned to Seif el Mulouk and said to him, 'Take comfort and be of good courage.' Then she rose and going in to her mother, said to her, 'Arise with me forthright and let us purify ourselves and make fumigations, to the intent that Bediya el Jemal and her mother may come and see me and rejoice in me.' 'With all my heart,' answered the queen and rising, betook herself to the garden and burnt of the perfumes [which Bediya's mother had given her to that intent]; nor was it long before Bediya el Jemal and her mother made their appearance.

The Queen of Hind foregathered with the other queen and acquainted her with her daughter's safe return, whereat she rejoiced; and Bediya el Jemal and Dauleh Khatoun foregathered likewise and rejoiced in each other. Then they pitched the pavilions and dressed rich meats and made ready the place of entertainment; whilst the two princesses withdrew to a tent apart and ate and drank and made merry together; after which they sat down to converse, and Bediya said, 'What hath befallen thee in thy strangerhood?' 'O my sister,' replied Dauleh Khatoun, 'ask me not what hath befallen me. Alas, what hardships mortals suffer!' 'How so?' asked Bediya. So she told her how the son of the Blue King had carried her off to the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and how Seif el Mulouk had slain the genie and brought her back to her father; and she told her also all that the prince had undergone of hardships and terrors, before he came to the castle.

Bediya marvelled at her story and said, 'O my sister, this is a wonder of wonders! By Allah, this Seif el Mulouk is indeed a man! But why did he leave his father and mother and betake himself to travel and expose himself to these perils?' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'I have a mind to tell thee the first part of his story; but shame of thee hinders me therefrom.' Quoth Bediya, 'Why shouldst thou have shame of me, seeing that thou art my sister and my friend and there is much between thee and me and I know thou seekest me nought but good? Tell me then what thou hast to say and be not abashed at me and conceal nothing from me.' 'By Allah,' answered Dauleh Khatoun, 'all the calamities that have betided this poor fellow have been on thine account and because of thee!' ' How so, O my sister?' asked Bediya; and the other said, 'Know that he saw thy portrait wroughten on a tunic that thy father sent to Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!) and he opened it not neither looked at it, but despatched it, with other presents, to Aasim ben Sefwan, King of Egypt, who gave it, still unopened, to his son Seif el Mulouk. The latter unfolded the tunic, thinking to put it on, and seeing thy portrait, became enamoured thereof; wherefore he came forth, love-distraught, in quest of thee, and left his people and kingdom and suffered all these perils and hardships on thine account.'

When Bediya heard this, she blushed and was confounded at Dauleh Khatoun and said, 'This may never be; for mankind accord not with the Jinn.' Then Dauleh Khatoun went on to praise Seif el Mulouk and extol his beauty and fashion and prowess and qualities, saying, 'For God's sake and mine, O my sister, come and speak with him, though but one word!' But Bediya el Jemal said, 'This that thou sayest I will

not hear, neither will I assent to thee therein;' and it was as if she heard nought of what the other said and as if no love of Seif el Mulouk and his beauty and fashion and prowess had gotten hold upon her heart. Then said Dauleh Khatoun, 'O Bediya el Jemal, by the milk we have sucked, I and thou, and by that which is graven on the seal of Solomon (on whom be peace!), hearken to these my words; for I pledged myself, in the Castle of Japhet, to show him thy face. So, God on thee, show thyself to him once, for the love of me, and look thyself on him!' And she ceased not to weep and implore her and kiss her hands and feet, till she consented and said, 'For thy sake, I will show him my face once.'

With that Dauleh Khatoun's heart was glad and she kissed her hands and feet. Then she went to the great pavilion in the garden and bade her women spread it with carpets and set up a couch of gold and place the wine-vessels in order; after which she went in to Seif and Saïd, whom she found seated in their lodging, and gave the former the glad tidings of the accomplishment of his wish, saying, 'Go to the pavilion in the garden, thou and thy brother, and hide yourselves there, so none in the palace may see you, till I come to you with Bediya el Jemal.' So they rose and repaired to the pavilion, where they found the couch of gold set and furnished with cushions, and meat and wine set ready. So they sat awhile, whilst Seif bethought him of his beloved and his breast was straitened and love and longing beset him: wherefore he rose and went forth from the vestibule of the pavilion. Saïd would have followed him, but he said to him, 'O my brother, follow me not, but abide in thy place, till I return to thee.' So Saïd abode seated, whilst Seif went down into the garden, drunken with the wine of desire and distracted for excess of passion and love-longing: yearning agitated him and transport overcame him and he recited the following verses:

O thou gloriously fair, I have no one but thee;
I'm the thrall of thy love. Oh, have pity on me!
Thou'rt all that I seek, my desire and my joy,
And mine entrails refuse to love other than thee.
Would I knew if thou knowst of my night-long lament,
Sleepless-lidded and weeping with tears like a sea.
Bid slumber alight on my lids, so perchance
In the visions of dreams I thine image may see.
Oh, show favour to one, who's distracted for love,
And his life from the deaths of thy cruelty free!
So may Allah increase thee in beauty and joy
And grant that all creatures thy ransom may be!
At the last, neath my banner all lovers shall rise
And all fair ones to gather neath thine shall agree.

Then he wept and recited these also:

All my desire is for a maid, who passeth all in charms;
Within my inmost soul she dwells, my heart's most secret core.
Lo, if I speak, my speech is of her charms, and if I'm dumb,
She is the cynosure of all my thoughts for evermore.

Then he wept sore and recited the following:

A flame is in my liver, that rages ever higher;
My wish art thou of wishes, and longsome is desire.
To thee and to none other I bend and crave thy grace,
(For lovers are long-suffering,) so thou mayst turn from ire
And rigour and take pity on one whose body love
Hath worn and racked, whose entrails with passion are on fire.
Relent, then; yea, be gracious, show favour and be kind;
Ne'er, ne'er will I renounce thee nor of thy service tire.

And also these:

Cares on me came, what time there came the love of thee,
And sleep as cruel is as thou thyself to me.
The messenger brings news to me that thou art wroth:
Now God forfend the ill whereof he tells should be!

Presently Saïd grew weary of awaiting him and going forth in quest of him, found him walking in the garden, in a state of distraction, reciting the following verses:

By Allah, by Allah the Great and eke by His virtue, the wight
The chapter who chanteth aloud of the Koran, "Creator" that hight,
The eyes of me range not at will o'er the beauties of those that I see,
But thine image, Bediya, alone, is my bosom-companion by night!

So he joined him and they walked about the garden together and ate of its fruits.

Meanwhile, the two princesses came to the pavilion and entering, sat down on the couch of gold, beside which was a window that gave upon the garden. The eunuchs set before them all manner rich meats and they ate, Dauleh Khatoun feeding her foster-sister by mouthfuls, till they were satisfied; when the former called for divers kinds of sweetmeats, and they ate what they would of them and washed their hands. After this, Dauleh Khatoun made ready wine and set on the drinking-vessels and flagons and proceeded to fill and give Bediya to drink, filling for herself and drinking in turn. Then Bediya looked from the window into the garden and gazed upon the fruits and branches that were therein, till her eyes fell on Seif el Mulouk, as he wandered about the garden, followed by Saïd, and she heard him recite verses, pouring forth copious tears the while.

The sight cost her a thousand sighs and she turned to Dauleh Khatoun and said to her (and indeed the wine sported with her senses), 'O my sister, who is that young man I see in the garden, distraught, love-lorn, melancholy, sighing?' Quoth Dauleh Khatoun, 'Dost thou give me leave to bring him hither, that we may look on him?' And Bediya answered, 'If thou canst avail to bring him, do so.' So Dauleh Khatoun called to him, saying, 'O king's son, come up hither and bring us thy beauty and thy grace!' Seif knew her voice and came up into the pavilion; but no sooner had he set eyes on Bediya el Jemal, than he fell down in a swoon; whereupon Dauleh Khatoun sprinkled a little rose-water on him and he came to himself.

Then he rose and kissed the earth before Bediya, who was amazed at his beauty and loveliness; and Dauleh Khatoun said to her, 'Know, O princess, that this is Seif el Mulouk, to whom, by the ordinance of God the Most High, I owe my deliverance, and he it is who hath endured all manner of afflictions on thine account: wherefore I would have thee look on him with favour.' With this Bediya laughed and said, 'And who keeps faith, that this youth should do so? For there is no [true] love in men.' 'O princess,' answered Seif, 'never shall lack of faith be in me, and all men are not created alike.' And he wept before her and recited these verses:

Harkye, Bediya el Jemal, have ruth upon a wight,
Whom thine enchanting, wicked eye hath brought to parlous plight.
By the fair colours in thy cheeks so featly that combine,
The colour of the anemone, rose-ruddy, ay, and white,
Afflict not with abandonment one who is sick to death;
For long estrangement, see, my frame is worn away outright.
This is the utmost of my wish, the end of my desire,
Though unto union should I strive to win, if but I might.

Then he wept sore and love and longing got the mastery over him and he greeted her with the following verses:

Peace from a lover be on thee, a slave of love in vain,
Still do the generous the approof of [God] the Generous gain.
Peace be upon thee! Never fail thine image to my dreams
Nor hall nor chamber ever cease thy presence to contain!
Indeed, I'm jealous over thee; I may not name thy name.
Surely belovéd, come what may, to lover should be fain.
Cut thou not off thy kindnesses from him who loves thee dear;
For grief destroys him; yea, he is for suffering all forslain.
I watch the shining stars, and they affright me; ay, my night,
For stress of yearning and desire, is long on heart and brain.
What words of asking shall I speak, to help me to my wish?
Resource nor patience any dele doth unto me remain.
Upon thee be the peace of God, in time of rigour; peace
Be on thee from the lover sad, long-suffering, 'spite his pain!

Then, for the stress of his passion and desire, he repeated these verses also:

If any other be my aim, my lords, but you,
Ne'er may I gain of you the grace for which I sue!
Who is there but yourselves doth loveliness comprise?
Who else could e'er stir up my soul to love anew?
How should I be consoled for passion, I, indeed,
Who've wasted all my life and all my breath for you?

When he had made an end of his verses, he wept sore and she said to him, 'O prince, I fear to grant thee entire acceptance, lest I find in thee neither love nor affection; for oftentimes men's virtues are few and their perfidy great and thou knowest how the lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), took Belkis to his love, but

forsook her whenas he saw another fairer than she.' 'O my eye and my soul,' replied Seif, 'God hath not made all men alike, and I, if it be His will, will keep my troth and die at thy feet. Thou shalt see what I will do in accordance with my words and God is my warrant for that I say.' Quoth Bediya, 'Sit and be of good heart and swear to me by thy religion and let us covenant together that we will not be false to each other; and may God the Most High punish whichever of us breaketh faith!'

So he sat down and laid his hand in hers and they swore to each other that neither of them would ever prefer to the other any one, either of mankind or of the Jinn. Then they embraced awhile and wept for excess of joy, whilst passion overcame Seif el Mulouk and he recited the following verses:

I weep for passion and for love and longing passing sore;
Ay, and desire of her my heart and soul do weary for.
Sore is my suffering for the length of severance from thee
And all too short my arm and weak to reach my wishes' shore.
Yea, and my grief for that whereby my fortitude's made strait,
Unto the railer doth reveal my bosom's secret sore.
The compass of my patience, once so wide, is narrow grown,
Nor is there left me any strength with trouble to wage war.
I wonder, will God e'er reknit our sundered lives and heal
My heart of all the pain and care that rankle at its core!

Then Seif el Mulouk arose and walked in the garden and Bediya el Jemal arose also and went forth a-walking, followed by a slave-girl bearing food and a flask of wine. The princess sat down and the damsel set the food and wine before her: nor was it long before they were joined by Seif el Mulouk, whom Bediya received with open arms and they sat awhile, eating and drinking. Then said she to him, 'O king's son, [thou must now go to the garden of Irem, where dwells my grandmother, and seek her consent to our marriage. My slave-girl Merjaneh will convey thee thither and there] thou wilt see a great pavilion of red satin, lined with green silk. Take courage and enter the pavilion boldly and thou wilt see therein an old woman sitting on a couch of red gold set with pearls and jewels. Salute her with courtesy and worship; then look at the foot of the couch, where thou wilt see a pair of sandals of cloth of gold, embroidered with jewels. Take them and kiss them and lay them on thy head; then put them under thy right armpit and stand before the old woman, in silence and with thy head bowed down. If she ask thee who thou art and how thou camest thither, make her no answer, but abide silent till Merjaneh enter, when she will speak with her and seek to win her approof for thee and cause her look on thee with favour; so haply God the Most High may incline her heart to thee and she may grant thee thy wish.'

Then she called Merjaneh and said to her, 'As thou lovest me, do my errand this day and be not slothful therein! If thou accomplish it, thou shalt be free, for the sake of God the Most High, and I will deal bounteously by thee and there shall be none dearer to me than thou, nor will I discover my secrets to any but thee. So, by my love for thee, do this my occasion and be not slothful therein.' 'O my lady and light of mine eyes,' replied Merjaneh, 'tell me what is it thou requirest of me, that I may accomplish it on my head and eyes.' Quoth Bediya, 'Take this mortal on thy shoulders

and carry him to the garden of Irem and the pavilion of my grandmother, my father's mother, and be careful of him. When thou hast brought him into her presence and seest him take the slippers and do them worship, and hearest her ask him who he is and how and why he came thither, do thou come forward in haste and salute her and say to her, "O my lady, I am she who brought him hither and he is the king's son of Egypt. It is he who slew the son of the Blue King and delivered the princess Dauleh Khatoun from the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and brought her back safe to her father: and I have brought him to thee, that he may give thee the glad news of her safety: so be thou gracious to him."

Then do thou say to her, "God on thee, O my lady, is not this young man handsome?" She will reply, "Yes:" and do thou rejoin, "O my lady, indeed he is accomplished in honour and manhood and valour and he is lord and King of Egypt and possesseth all praiseworthy qualities." If she say to thee, "What is his occasion?" do thou make answer, "My lady saluteth thee and saith to thee, how long shall she abide at home, a maid and unmarried? Indeed, the time is long upon her. What then is thine intent in leaving her without a husband and why dost thou not marry her in thy lifetime and that of her mother, like other girls?" If she say, "How shall we do to marry her? An she have any one in mind, let her tell us of him, and we will do her will as far as may be," do thou answer, "O my lady, thy daughter saith to thee, 'Ye were minded aforetime to marry me to Solomon (on whom be peace!) and wrought him my portrait on a tunic. But he had no lot in me; so he sent the tunic to the King of Egypt and he gave it to his son, who saw my portrait wroughten thereon and fell in love with me: wherefore he left kingdom and father and mother and turning his back on the world and all that is therein, went forth at a venture, a wanderer, love-distraught, and hath suffered the utmost perils and hardships for my sake.' Now thou seest his beauty and grace, and her heart is enamoured of him; so, if ye have a mind to marry her, marry her to this young man and forbid her not from him, for he is a passing goodly youth and King of Egypt, nor wilt thou find a comelier than he; and if ye will not give her to him, she will slay herself and marry none, neither man nor genie." 'And look, O my minnie Merjaneh,' continued Bediya el Jemal, 'how thou mayst do with my grandmother, to win her consent, and beguile her with soft words, so haply she may do my desire.' Quoth the damsel, 'O my lady, upon my head and eyes, I will serve thee and do what shall content thee.'

Then she took Seif el Mulouk on her shoulders and said to him, 'Shut thine eyes.' He did so and she flew up with him into the sky; and after awhile she said to him, 'O king's son, open thine eyes.' He opened them and found himself in a garden, which was none other than the garden of Irem; and she showed him the pavilion and bade him enter; whereupon he pronounced the name of God and entering, saw the old queen sitting on the couch, attended by her waiting-women. So he drew near her with courtesy and reverence and taking the sandals, did as Bediya had enjoined him. Quoth the old woman, 'Who art thou and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither? Wherefore dost thou take the sandals and kiss them and when didst thou ask a favour of me and I did not grant it thee?'

With this in came Merjaneh and saluting her reverently, repeated to her what Bediya el Jemal had told her; which when the old queen heard, she cried out at her and

was wroth with her and said, 'How shall there be accord between mankind and the Jinn?' But Seif answered her, saying, 'Indeed, I will conform to thy will and be thy servant and die in thy love and will keep faith with thee and regard none but thee: so shalt thou see my truth and lack of falsehood and the excellence of my honourable dealing with thee, if it be the will of God the Most High!' The old woman bowed her head and pondered awhile; after which she raised her head and said to him, 'O fair youth, wilt thou indeed keep faith and troth?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'by Him who raised the heavens and spread out the earth upon the water, I will indeed keep faith!'

Quoth she, 'God willing, I will accomplish thee thy desire: but now go thou into the garden and take thy pleasure therein and eat of its fruits, that have neither like nor equal in the world, whilst I send for my son Shehyal and talk with him of the matter. Nothing but good shall come of it, so God please, for he will not cross me nor depart from my commandment and I will marry thee with his daughter Bediya el Jemal. So be of good heart, O Seif el Mulouk, for she shall assuredly be thy wife.' The prince thanked her and kissing her hands and feet, went forth from her into the garden; whilst she turned to Merjaneh and said to her, 'Go and find my son Shehyal and bring him to me, wherever he is.' So Merjaneh went out in quest of King Shehyal and found him and brought him to his mother.

Meanwhile, as Seif el Mulouk walked in the garden, five Jinn of the people of the Blue King espied him and said to each other, 'Whence cometh yonder fellow and who brought him hither? Belike it is he who slew the Blue King's son: but we will go about with him and question him and find out who he is.' So they came softly up to him, as he sat in a corner of the garden, and sitting down by him, said to him, 'O fair youth, thou didst rarely in killing the son of the Blue King and delivering Dauleh Khatoun from him; for he was a perfidious dog and had played the traitor with her, and had not God appointed thee to her, she had never won free. But how didst thou slay him?' Seif looked at them and deeming them of the folk of the garden, answered, 'I slew him by means of this ring on my finger.' Therewith they were assured that it was he who had slain him; so they seized on him, two of them holding his hands, whilst other two held his feet and the fifth his mouth, lest he should cry out and King Shehyal's people should hear him and rescue him.

Then they lifted him up and flying away with him, stayed not in their flight till they set him down before their king and said to him, 'O king of the age, we bring thee the murderer of thy son.' 'Where is he?' asked the king: and they replied, 'This is he.' So the Blue King said to Seif, 'How slewest thou my son, the darling of my heart and the light of my eyes, and why didst thou slay him without right, for all he had done thee no injury?' Quoth the prince, 'I slew him, because of his wrong-doing and frowardness, in that he used to seize kings' daughters and sever them from their families and carry them to the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and transgress against them. I slew him by means of this ring on my finger, and God hurried his soul to the fire and ill is the abiding-place [to which he went].'

Therewithal the king was certified that this was indeed he who slew his son; so he called his viziers and said to them, 'Without doubt, this is the murderer of my son: so how do you counsel me to deal with him? Shall I slay him after the foulest fashion or torture him with the most grievous torments or how?' Quoth the chief vizier, 'Cut off

his limbs, one a day.' And another said, 'Beat him grievously every day [till he die].' And a third, 'Cut him in half.' A fourth, 'Cut off all his fingers and burn him with fire.' And a fifth, 'Crucify him.' And so on, each speaking according to his judgment.

Now there was with the Blue King an old amir, versed in affairs and experienced in the circumstance of the times, and he said, 'O king of the age, I have somewhat to say to thee, and it is for thee to judge whether thou wilt hearken to me or not.' Now he was the king's privy counsellor and the chief officer of his empire, and he was wont to give ear to his word and act by his counsel and gainsay him not in aught. So he rose and kissing the ground before the king, said to him, 'O king of the age, if I counsel thee in this matter, wilt thou follow my counsel and grant me indemnity?' 'Set forth thine opinion,' answered the king, 'and thou shalt have indemnity.' Then said he, 'O king of the age, if thou wilt accept my advice and hearken to my word, to slay this young man now is inexpedient, for that he is thy prisoner and in thy power, and whenas thou wilt, thou mayst lay thy hand on him and do with him as thou wilt. Have patience, then, O king of the age, for he hath entered the garden of Irem and is become the [affianced] husband of Bediya el Jemal, daughter of King Shehyal, and one of them. Thy people seized him there and brought him hither and he did not hide his case from them or from thee. So, if thou kill him, King Shehyal will seek to avenge him of thee and wage war on thee for his daughter's sake, and thou canst not avail to cope with him nor make head against his power.' So the king hearkened to his counsel and commanded to imprison Seif el Mulouk.

Meanwhile, Bediya's grandmother, her son Shehyal being come to her, despatched Merjaneh in quest of Seif el Mulouk; but she found him not and returning to her mistress, said, 'I found him not in the garden.' So the old queen sent for the gardeners and questioned them of the prince. Quoth they, 'We saw him sitting under a tree, and five of the Blue King's people alighted by him and spoke with him awhile, after which they took him up and stopping his mouth, flew away with him.' When the old queen heard this, it was no light matter to her and she was exceeding wroth: so she rose to her feet and said to her son, King Shehyal, 'Art thou a king and shall the Blue King's people come to our garden and carry off our guests unhindered, and thou alive?' And she proceeded to provoke him, saying, 'It behoves not that any transgress against us in thy lifetime.' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'this man slew the Blue King's son, who was a genie, and God threw him into his hand. He is a genie and I am a genie: how then shall I go to him and make war on him for the sake of a mortal?' But she answered, saying, 'Go to him and demand our guest of him, and if he be still alive and the Blue King deliver him to thee, take him and return; but if he have slain him, take the king alive and all his household and family and bring them to me, that I may slaughter them with my own hand and lay waste his dominions. Except thou do what I bid thee, I will not hold thee quit of my milk and my bringing up of thee shall be counted unlawful.'

So Shehyal rose and assembling his troops, set out, in deference to his mother, desiring to content her and her friends, and in accordance with that which had been fore-ordained from all eternity; nor did they leave journeying till they came to the country of the Blue King, who met them with his army and gave them battle. The Blue King's host was put to the rout and he and all his sons, great and small, and grandees

and officers taken and bound and brought before King Shehyal, who said to the captive monarch, 'O Azrec, where is my guest, the mortal Seif el Mulouk?' 'O Shehyal,' answered the Blue King, 'thou art a genie and I am a genie, and is it on account of a mortal, who slew my son, the darling of my heart and the delight of my soul, that thou hast done all this and spilt the blood of so many thousand Jinn?'

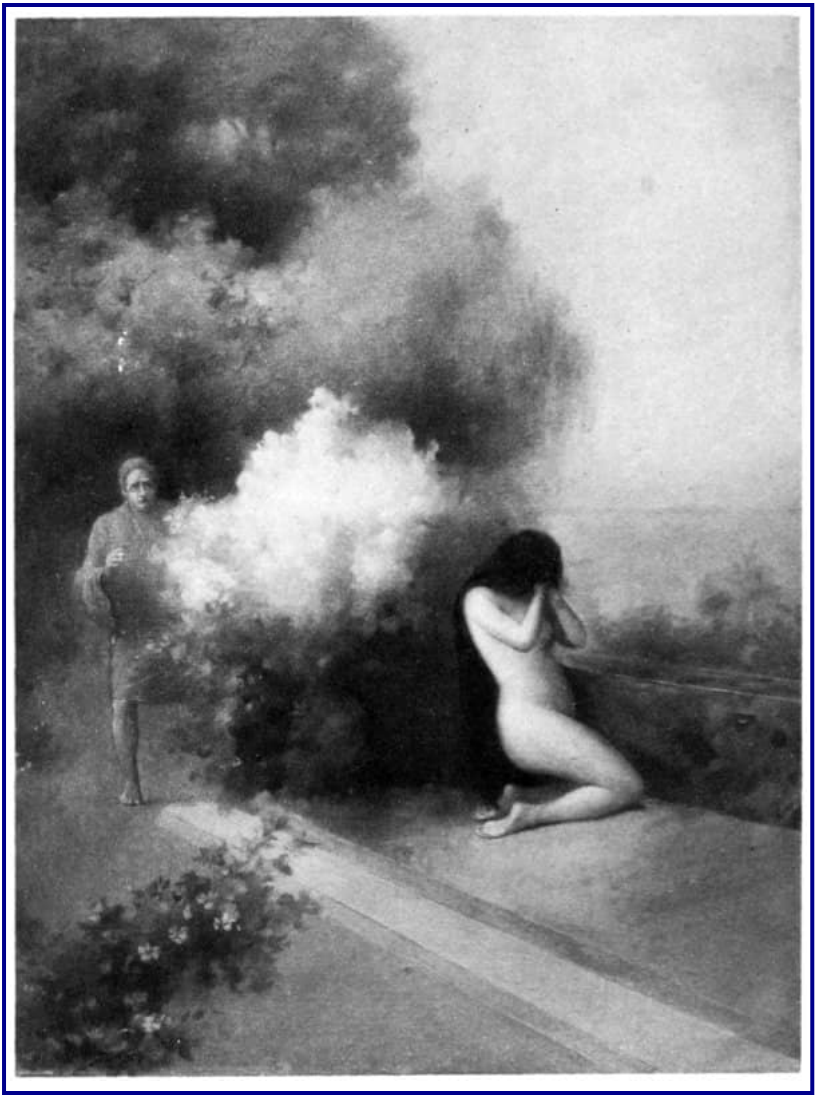
'Leave this talk,' rejoined Shehyal; 'knowest thou not that a single mortal is better, in God's sight, than a thousand Jinn? If he be alive, bring him to me, and I will set thee free and all whom I have taken of thy sons and people; but if thou have slain him, I will slaughter thee and thy sons.' 'O king,' said Azrec, 'is this fellow of more account with thee than my son?' Quoth Shehyal, 'Thy son was an evildoer, who carried off kings' daughters and shut them up in the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and evil entreated them.' Then said the Blue King, 'He is with me; but make thou peace between us.' So he delivered the prince to Shehyal, who made peace between him and the Blue King, and the latter gave him a writ of absolution for the death of his son. Then Shehyal conferred robes of honour on them and entertained the Blue King and his troops hospitably for three days, after which he took the prince and carried him back to the old queen, who rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy, and Shehyal marvelled at the beauty of Seif el Mulouk and his grace and perfection.

Then Seif related to him his story from beginning to end and Shehyal said, 'O my mother, since it is thy pleasure that this should be, I hearken and obey all that it pleaseth thee to command; wherefore do thou carry him to Serendib and there celebrate his wedding and marry him to her in all state, for he is a goodly youth and hath endured horrors for her sake.' So she and her maidens set out with Seif el Mulouk for Serendib and foregathered with Dauleh Khatoun and Bediya el Jemal in the Queen of Hind's garden. The old queen acquainted the two princesses with all that had passed between Seif el Mulouk and the Blue King; after which King Taj el Mulouk assembled the grandees of his realm and drew up the contract of marriage between Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal; and he conferred splendid robes of honour and gave banquets to the people.

Then Seif el Mulouk rose, and kissing the earth before the king, said to him, 'Pardon, O king! I would fain ask somewhat of thee, but fear lest thou refuse it to me and disappoint my expectation.' 'By Allah,' answered Taj el Mulouk, 'though thou soughtest my soul of me, I would not refuse it to thee, after all the kindness thou hast done me!' Quoth Seif, 'I wish thee to marry the princess Dauleh Khatoun to my brother Saïd, and we will both be thy servants.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Taj el Mulouk, and assembling his grandees a second time, let draw up the contract of marriage between his daughter and Saïd; after which they scattered gold and silver [among the people] and the king bade decorate the city. So they held high festival and Seif and Saïd went in to their brides on the same night.

As for Seif el Mulouk, he abode forty days with Bediya el Jemal, at the end of which time she said to him, 'O king's son, is there any regret for aught left in thy heart?' 'God forbid!' answered he. 'I have accomplished my quest and there abideth no regret in my heart: but I would fain visit my father and mother in Egypt and see if they continue well or not.' So Bediya commanded a company of her people to convey them to Egypt, and they carried them to Cairo, where Seif and Saïd foregathered with their

parents and abode with them a week; after which they took leave of them and returned to Serendib; and after this, whenever they longed for their people, they used to go to them and return. Then Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal abode in all delight and solace of life, as did Saïd and Dauleh Khatoun, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies. So glory be to the Living One who dieth not, who createth all creatures and decreeth to them death and who is the First, without beginning, and the Last, without end! This is all that hath come down to us of the story of Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal.



Hassan of Bassora and the King's Daughter of the Jinn.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a rich merchant, who dwelt in the land of Bassora. [In due time] God the all-hearing and knowing decreed that he should be admitted to the mercy of the Most High; so he died, leaving a widow and a son, by name Hassan, a youth of surpassing beauty and grace, to inherit his wealth. They laid him out and buried him, after which Hassan betook himself to the company of folk [of lewd life], women and boys, consorting with them in gardens and making them [banquets of] meat and wine for months together and occupying himself not with traffic, like as his father had done, for that he exulted in [the assured possession of] abundant wealth.

After he had led this life for some time and had wasted all his ready money, he sold all his father's lands and houses and [spent their price in riotous living, till] there remained in his hand nothing, neither little nor much, nor was one of his friends left who knew him. He abode thus, anhungred, he and his mother, three days, and on the fourth day, as he went along, unknowing whither, there met him a man of his father's friends, who questioned him of his case. So he told him what had befallen him and the other said, 'O my son, I have a brother, a goldsmith; if thou wilt, thou shalt be with him and learn his craft and become skilled therein.' Hassan consented and accompanied him to his brother, to whom he commended him, saying, 'This is my son; do thou teach him for my sake.' So Hassan abode with the goldsmith and busied himself with the craft; and God prospered him, [so that he became proficient therein] and [in due course] opened a shop for himself.

One day, as he sat in his shop in the bazaar, there came up to him a Persian, with a great white beard and a white turban on his head, having the appearance of a merchant, who looked at his handiwork and examined it knowingly. It pleased him and he shook his head, saying, 'By Allah, thou art a cunning goldsmith!' And he continued to look at his wares, whilst Hassan read in an old book he had in his hand and the folk were taken up with his beauty and grace and symmetry, till the hour of afternoon prayer, when the shop became clear of people and the Persian accosted the young man, saying, 'O my son, thou art a goodly youth! What book is that? Thou hast no father and I have no son, and I know an art, than which there is no goodlier in the world. Many have sought of me instruction therein, but I consented not to teach it to any of them; yet will I gladly teach it to thee, for the love of thee hath gotten hold upon my heart and I will make thee my son and set up a barrier between thee and poverty, so shalt thou be quit of this handicraft [and toil] with hammer and charcoal and fire.'

'O my lord,' said Hassan, 'and when wilt thou teach me this?' 'To-morrow,' answered the Persian, 'if it please God the Most High, I will come to thee and make thee fine gold of copper in thy presence.' Whereupon Hassan rejoiced and sat talking with the Persian till nightfall, when he took leave of him and going in to his mother, saluted her and ate with her; but he was dazed, without thought or reason, by reason of the hold that the stranger's words had gotten upon his heart. So she questioned him and he told her what had passed between himself and the Persian, which when she

heard, her heart fluttered and she strained him to her breast, saying, 'O my son, beware of hearkening to the talk of the folk, and especially of the Persians, and obey them not in aught; for they are sharpers and tricksters, who profess the art of alchemy and swindle people and take their good and devour it in vain.' 'O my mother,' answered Hassan, 'we are poor folk and have nothing he may covet, that he should put a cheat on us. Indeed, this Persian is an old man of worth and the signs of virtue are manifest on him; God hath inclined his heart to me and he hath adopted me to son.' She was silent for chagrin, and he passed the night with a heart full of what the Persian had said to him, nor did sleep visit him, for the excess of his joy therein.

On the morrow, he rose and taking the keys, opened the shop, nor was it long before the Persian made his appearance. Hassan rose to him and would have kissed his hands; but he forbade him from this and said to him, 'O Hassan, set on the melting-pot and mount the bellows.' So he did as the stranger bade him and lighted the charcoal. Then said the other, 'O my son, hast thou any copper?' And he answered, 'I have a broken dish.' So he caused him cut it into small pieces with the shears and cast it into the crucible and blow up the fire with the bellows, till the copper became liquid, when he took from his turban a folded paper and opening it, sprinkled thereout into the pot about half a drachm of somewhat like eye-powder. Then he bade Hassan blow the bellows, and he did so, till the contents of the crucible became a lump of gold.

When he saw this, he was at his wits' end for joy and taking the ingot [forth of the melting-pot], handled it and tried it with the file and found it pure gold of the finest quality: whereupon his reason fled and he was dazed with excess of delight and bent over the Persian's hand to kiss it. But he forbade him, saying, 'Carry the ingot to the market and sell it and take the price in haste and speak not.' So Hassan went down into the market and gave the ingot to the broker, who took it and rubbed it [with the touchstone] and found it pure gold. So they opened the biddings at ten thousand dirhems and the merchants bid against one another for it up to fifteen thousand dirhems, at which price he sold it and taking the money, went home and told his mother what had passed, saying, 'O my mother, I have learnt this art.' But she laughed at him, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' And she was silent for vexation.

Then, of his ignorance, he took a [brass] mortar and returning to the shop, laid it before the Persian, who was still sitting there and who said to him. 'O my son, what wilt thou do with this mortar?' 'Let us put it in the fire,' answered Hassan, 'and make of it ingots of gold.' The Persian laughed and said, 'O my son, art thou mad that thou wouldst go down into the market with two ingots of gold in one day? Knowst thou not that the folk would suspect us and we should lose our lives? If I teach thee this craft, thou must practise it but once a year; for that will suffice thee from year to year.' 'True, O my lord,' answered Hassan, and sitting down, threw charcoal on the fire and set on the melting-pot. Quoth the Persian, 'What wilt thou, O my son?' And Hassan replied, 'Teach me this craft.' 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' cried the Persian, laughing. 'Verily, O my son, thou art little of wit and in nowise fitted for this noble craft. Did ever any in his life learn this art in the beaten way or in the markets? If we busy ourselves with it here, the folk will say, "These

practise alchemy;" and the magistrates will hear of us, and we shall lose our lives. Wherefore, O my son, if thou desire this forthright, come with me to my house.'

So Hassan closed his shop and went with him; but by the way he bethought him of his mother's words and stood still, with bowed head, thinking in himself a thousand thoughts. The Persian turned and seeing him thus, laughed and said to him, 'Art thou mad? What! I purpose thee good in my heart and thou misdoubtest I will harm thee! But, if thou fear to go with me to my house, I will go with thee to thine and teach thee there.' 'It is well, O uncle,' answered Hassan, and the Persian said, 'Go thou before me.' So Hassan led the way to his own house, where he left the Persian standing at the door, and going in, told his mother of his coming. She set the house in order for them and when she had made an end of furnishing and adorning it, her son bade her go to one of the neighbours' houses. So she left the house to them and went her way, whereupon Hassan brought in the Persian.

Then he took a dish and going to the market, returned with food, which he set before the Persian, saying, 'Eat, O my lord, that there may be bread and salt between us, and may God the Most High do vengeance upon him who is unfaithful to the bond of bread and salt!' The Persian smiled and answered, 'True, O my son! Who knoweth the virtue of bread and salt?' Then he came forward and ate with Hassan, till they were satisfied; after which, 'O my son Hassan,' said he, 'bring us some sweetmeats.' So Hassan went to the market, rejoicing in his words, and returned with ten saucers of sweetmeats, of which they both ate and the Persian said, 'May God abundantly requite thee, O my son! It is the like of thee with whom folk company and to whom they discover their secrets and teach what may profit him!' Then said he, 'O Hassan, bring the gear.'

No sooner did Hassan hear this than he went forth, like a colt let out to grass in the Spring, and hastening to the shop, fetched the gear and set it before the Persian, who pulled out a paper and said, 'O Hassan, wert thou not dearer to me than my son, I would not let thee into this mystery, for I have none of the elixir left save what is in this paper; but by and by I will bring the ingredients whereof it is composed and make it before thee and teach thee its fashion; and do thou observe, when I compound the simples and lay them before thee. Know, O my son Hassan, that thou must lay to every ten pounds of copper half a drachm of that which is in this paper, and the whole will presently become virgin gold without alloy. There are in this paper three ounces, Egyptian measure, and when it is spent, I will make thee more.' Hassan took the packet and finding therein a yellow powder, finer than before, said to the Persian, 'O my lord, what is the name of this substance and where is it found and how is it made?' But he laughed and said, 'Of what dost thou question? Indeed, thou art an impertinent boy! Do and hold thy peace.'

So Hassan arose and fetching a [brass] bowl from the house, cut it up and threw it into the melting-pot; then he scattered on it a little of the powder and it became a lump of pure gold. When he saw this, he rejoiced mightily and was filled with amazement and could think of nothing but the gold; but, whilst he was occupied with taking up the ingot from the melting-pot, the Persian pulled out of his turban in haste a packet of Cretan henbane, which if an elephant smelt, he would sleep from night to night, and cutting off a little thereof, put it in a piece of sweetmeat. Then said he to

Hassan, 'O Hassan, thou art become my very son and dearer to me than my soul and my wealth and I have a daughter whose like never have eyes beheld for beauty and grace and symmetry. Now I see that thou befittest none but her and she none but thee; wherefore, if it be the will of God, I will marry thee to her.' 'I am thy servant,' replied Hassan; 'and whatsoever thou dost with me [of good] will be [credited to thee] with God the Most High.' 'O my son,' rejoined the Persian, 'have patience and good shall betide thee.'

Therewithal he gave him the piece of sweetmeat and he took it and kissed his hand, knowing not what was hidden for him in the future. Then he put it in his mouth, but hardly had he swallowed it, when he fell down, head foremost, and was lost to the world; whereupon the Persian rejoiced exceedingly and said, 'Thou hast fallen into my snare, O good-for-nothing dog of the Arabs! This many a year have I sought thee, O Hassan, and now I have got thee!' Then he girt himself and binding Hassan hand and foot, laid him in a chest, which he emptied for the purpose, and locked it upon him. Moreover, he emptied another chest and laying therein all Hassan's valuables, together with the ingot of gold [and the price of that which he had sold], locked it.

Then he ran to the market and fetching a porter, took up the two chests and made off with them without the city, where he set them down on the sea-shore, hard by a vessel at anchor there. Now this vessel was freighted by the Persian and her captain was awaiting him; so, when the sailors saw him, they came to him and carried the chests on board. Then the Persian called out to the captain, saying, 'Up and let us begone, for I have done my errand and compassed my desire.' So the captain cried out to the crew, saying, 'Weigh anchor and set sail!' And the ship put out to sea with a fair wind.

Meanwhile, Hassan's mother awaited him till nightfall, but heard neither sound nor news of him; so she went to the house and Ending it open, entered and saw none therein and missed the chests and valuables; wherefore she knew that her son was lost and that destiny had overtaken him and buffeted her face and tore her clothes, crying out and lamenting and saying, 'Alas, my son! Alas, the fruit of my entrails!' And she recited the following verses:

My patience fails me and unrest is sore upon me; yea,
Lament and sickness, after you, redouble on me aye.
By God, no fortitude have I to bear the loss of you!
How should I patience have, when all my hopes are fled away?
Since he I love is gone, in sleep how should I have delight?
Who can take pleasure in a life of misery and dismay?
Thou'rt gone and hast made desolate both house and folk and eke
Troubled the limpid streams whereat I did my thirst allay.
Thou wast mine aid in all distress; my glory and my pride
Among mankind, in every need my comfort and my stay.
Not hast thou ever, until now, been absent from my sight,
But unto me thou didst return again, ere ended day!

And she ceased not to weep and bemoan herself till the morning, when the neighbours came in to her and questioned her of her son, and she told them what had

befallen him with the Persian, assured that she should never see him again. Then she went round about the house weeping, till she espied two lines written upon the wall; so she sent for a learned man, who read them to her; and they were as follows:

The phantom of Leila came to me in dreams, tow'rds the break of day,
When slumber ruled and my comrades all in the desert sleeping lay;
But, when I awoke to the dream of the night, that came to visit me,
I found the air void and the wonted place of our rendezvous far away.

When she heard this, she cried out and said, 'Yes, O my son! Indeed, the house is desolate and distant the place of visitation!' Then the neighbours took leave of her and went away, after they had prayed that she might be vouchsafed patience and speedy reunion with her son; but she ceased not to weep all tides of the day and watches of the night and built a tomb amiddleward the house, on which she let write Hassan's name and the date of his loss, and thenceforward she quitted it not, but sojourned by it night and day.

Now this Persian was a Magian, who hated Muslims with an exceeding hatred and destroyed all who fell into his power. He was a lewd and filthy villain, an alchemist, an astrologer and a seeker after hidden treasures, such an one as he of whom quoth the poet:

A dog, the son of a dog, is he and his grandfather, too was one; And when was there ever aught of good in a dog, of a dog the son?

The name of this accursed wretch was Behram the Magian, and he was won: every year, to take a Muslim and slaughter him for a purpose of his own. So, when he had carried out his plot against Hassan the goldsmith, they sailed on till dark, when the ship made fast to the shore for the night, and at sunrise, when they set sail again, Behram bade his slaves and servants bring him the chest in which was Hassan. They did so and he opened it and taking out the young man, made him smell to vinegar and blew a powder into his nostrils. Hassan sneezed and cast up the henbane; then, opening his eyes, he looked about him and found himself on board a ship in full sail, amiddleward the sea, and saw the Persian sitting by him; wherefore he knew that the accursed Magian had put a cheat on him and that he had fallen into the very peril of which his mother had bidden him beware. So he spoke the words, which whoso utterest shall not be confounded, that is to say, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! O my God, be Thou gracious to me in Thine ordinance and give me patience to endure this Thine affliction, O Lord of all creatures!'

Then he turned to the Persian and bespoke him softly, saying, 'O my father, what fashion is this and where is [the bond of] bread and salt and the oath thou sworest to me?' But Behram looked at him and answered, 'O dog, knoweth the like of me [the bond of] bread and salt? I have slain a thousand youths like thee, save one, and thou shalt make up the thousand.' And he cried out at him and Hassan was silent, knowing that the arrow of fate had overtaken him.

Then the accursed wretch commanded to loose his bonds and they gave him a little water, whilst the Magian laughed and said, 'By the Fire and the Light and the

Shade and the Heat, methought not thou wouldst fall into my toils! But the Fire gave me the victory over thee and helped me to lay hold upon thee, that I might accomplish my need and return and make thee a sacrifice to it, so it may accept of me.' Quoth Hassan, 'Thou hast betrayed [the bond of] bread and salt.' Whereupon the Magian raised his hand and dealt him a buffet, that he fell and biting the deck, swooned away, whilst the tears steamed down his cheeks. Then Behram bade his servants light him a fire and Hassan said, 'What wilt thou do with it?' 'This is the Fire, giver of light and sparks,' replied the Magian. 'This it is I worship, and if thou wilt worship it even as I, I'll give thee half my wealth and marry thee to my daughter.' 'Out on thee!' cried Hassan. 'Thou art an infidel Magian, that worshippeth the Fire, instead of the All-powerful King, Creator of Night and Day; and this is nought but a calamity among faiths!'

At this the Magian was wroth and said to him, 'Wilt thou not then fall in with me, O dog of the Arabs, and enter my faith?' But Hassan consented not to this: so the accursed Magian arose and prostrating himself to the fire, bade his servants throw him down on his face. They did so, and he beat him with a whip of plaited hide, till his flanks were laid open, whilst he cried aloud for succour, but none succoured him, and besought protection, but none protected him. Then he raised his eyes to the All-powerful King and sought aid of Him, in the name of the Chosen Prophet. And indeed patience failed him; his tears ran down his cheeks, like rain, and he repeated the following verses:

Lord, I submit myself to Thee and eke to Fate, Content, if so
Thou please, to suffer and to wait.
Unjustly have they dealt by me and sore oppressed:
Belike Thou wilt the past with favour compensate.

Then the Magian commanded his slaves to raise him to a sitting posture and bring him meat and drink. So they set food before him; but he refused to eat or drink; and Behram's heart was hardened against him and he ceased not to torment him day and night during the voyage, whilst Hassan took patience and humbled himself in supplication to God the Most High, to whom belong might and majesty.

They sailed the sea three months till God the Most High sent forth upon them a contrary wind and the sea grew black and rose against the ship, by reason of the much wind; whereupon quoth the captain and the sailors, 'By Allah, this is all on account of yonder youth, who hath been these three months in torment with this Magian. Indeed, this is unlawful in the sight of God the Most High.' Then they rose against the Magian and slew his servants and all who were with him; which when he saw, he made sure of death and feared for himself. So he loosed Hassan from his bonds and pulling off the ragged clothes he had on, clad him in others. Moreover, he made his excuses to him and promised to teach him the craft and restore him to his native land, saying, 'O my son, bear me not malice for that I have done with thee.' Quoth Hassan, 'How can I ever again put faith in thee?' But Behram said, 'O my son, but for offence, there were no pardon. Indeed, I did all this with thee but to try thy patience, and thou knowest that the case is altogether in God's hands.'

The sailors and the captain rejoiced in Hassan's release, and he called down blessings on them and praised God the Most High and thanked Him. With this the wind fell and the sky cleared, and they continued their voyage with a fair breeze. Then said Hassan to Behram, 'O Persian, whither goest thou?' 'O my son,' answered the Magian, 'I am bound for the Mountain of Clouds, where is the elixir which we use in alchemy.' And he swore to him by the Fire and the Light that he had no longer any cause to fear him. So Hassan's heart was set at ease and he continued to eat and drink and sleep with the Magian, whilst the latter clad him in his own raiment.

Then they sailed on other three months, at the end of which time the ship came to an anchor off a long beach of pebbles of all colours, white and yellow and blue and black and what not, and the Magian rose and said to Hassan, 'Come, let us go ashore: for we have reached our destination.' So Hassan rose and landed with Behram, after the latter had commended his goods to the captain's care. They walked on inland, till they were out of sight of the ship when Behram sat down and taking from his pocket a little drum of copper and a silken strap, wroughten in gold with talismanic characters, beat the drum with the strap, whereupon there arose a cloud of dust from the further side of the desert.

Hassan marvelled at the Magian's doings and was afraid of him: and he repented of having come ashore with him, and his colour changed. But Behram looked at him and said, 'What ails thee, O my son? By the fire and the light, thou hast nought to fear from me; and were it not that my occasion may not be accomplished save be thy means, I had not brought thee ashore. So rejoice in all good; for yonder cloud of dust is the dust of somewhat we will mount and which will aid us to traverse this desert and make the passage thereof easy to us.' Presently, the dust lifted and discovered three dromedaries, one of which Behram mounted and Hassan another. Then they loaded their victual on the third and fared on seven days, till they came to a wide champaign, in whose midst they saw a pavilion vaulted upon four columns of red gold; so they alighted and entering therein, ate and drank and rested there.

Presently, Hassan chanced to look aside and seeing something lofty [in the distance], said to the Magian, 'O uncle, what is that?' 'It is a palace,' answered Behram. Quoth Hassan, 'Wilt thou not go thither, that we may enter and rest ourselves there and divert ourselves with viewing it?' But the Persian was wroth and said, 'Name not yonder palace to me; for therein dwells an enemy of mine, with whom there befell me somewhat whereof this is no time to tell thee.' Then he beat the drum and up came the dromedaries, and they mounted and fared on other seven days.

On the eighth day, the Magian said, 'O Hassan, what seest thou?' Quoth Hassan, 'I see clouds and mists between the east and the west.' 'That is neither clouds nor mists,' answered Behram, 'but a vast and lofty mountain, on which the clouds divide, and there are no clouds above it, for the excess of its height and the greatness of its elevation. Yonder mountain is the goal of my journey and thereon is what we seek. It is for that I brought thee hither, for my occasion may not be accomplished save at thy hands.' When Hassan heard this, he gave himself up for lost and said to the Magian, 'By the virtue of that thou worshippest and the faith in which thou believest, I conjure thee to tell me what is the occasion on which thou hast brought me!' Quoth Behram, 'The art of alchemy may not be successfully practised save by means of a herb, that

grows in the place where the clouds pass and whereon they divide. Such a place is yonder mountain; the herb grows there and I purpose to send thee up thither [to gather it]; and when we have it, I will show thee the secret of this craft that thou desirest to learn.' Hassan answered, in his fear, 'It is well, O my master.' And indeed he despaired of life and wept for his separation from his mother and people and country, repenting him of having gainsaid her and reciting the following verses:

Consider but thy Lord His doings and how what
Thou wouldst of quick relief He brings; nor at thy lot
Fret, nor despair, if thou affliction must endure;
For in affliction's self what mercies are there not.

They fared on till they came to the foot of the mountain, where they halted and Hassan saw thereon a palace and said to Behram, 'What is yonder palace?' And he answered, 'It is the abode of Jinn and ghouls and devils.' Then the Magian alighted and making Hassan dismount also, kissed his head and said to him, 'Bear me not malice for that I did with thee, for I will keep guard over thee in thine ascent to the palace; and I conjure thee not to wrong me of aught thou shalt bring therefrom, and I and thou will share therein equally.' And Hassan answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then Behram opened a bag and taking out a handmill and a quantity of wheat, ground the latter in the mill and kneaded three cakes of the flour; after which he lighted a fire and baked them.

Then he took out the drum and beat it with the strap, whereupon up came the dromedaries. He chose out one of them and slew and skinned it; then turned to Hassan and said to him, 'Give ear, O my son Hassan, to what I am about to enjoin on thee.' And Hassan replied, 'It is well.' 'Lie down on this skin,' said Behram, 'and I will sew thee up therein and lay thee on the ground; whereupon the rocs will come to thee and carry thee up to the mountain-top. Take this knife with thee, and when thou feelest that the birds have set thee down, slit open the skin with the knife and come forth. They will take fright at thee and fly away ; whereupon do thou look down and speak to me, and I will tell thee what to do.' So saying, he sewed him up in the skin, with the three cakes and a leathern bottle full of water, and withdrew to a distance.

Presently a roc pounced upon him and taking him up, flew away with him to the mountain-top and there set him down. As soon as Hassan felt himself on the ground, he slit the skin and coming forth, called out to the Magian, who rejoiced at hearing his speech and danced for excess of joy, saying to him, 'Look behind thee and tell me what thou seest,' Hassan looked and seeing great store of rotten bones and wood, told Behram, who said to him, 'This is what we seek. Make six bundles of the wood and throw them down to me, for this is wherewithal we do alchemy.' So he threw him the six bundles and when he had gotten them, he said to Hassan, 'O good-for-nought, I have accomplished my need of thee; and now, if thou Wilt, thou mayst abide on this mountain, or cast thyself down to the earth and perish.' So saying, he left him and went away, and Hassan exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! This accursed dog hath played the traitor with me! And he sat bemoaning himself and reciting the following verses:

When God upon a man possessed of reasoning,
Hearing and sight His will in aught to pass would bring,
He stops his ears and blinds his eyes and draws his wit
From him, as one draws out the hairs to paste that cling;
Till, His decrees fulfilled, He gives him back his wit,
That therewithal he may receive admonishing.
So say thou not of aught that haps, "How happened it?"
For fate and fortune fixed do order everything.

Then he rose to his feet and looked right and left, after which he walked on along the mountain-top, making sure of death. He fared on thus till he came to the other brow of the mountain, under which he saw a dark-blue foaming sea, swollen with clashing billows, each as it were a great mountain. So he sat down and repeated what he might of the Koran and besought God the Most High to ease him of his troubles, either by death or deliverance from that his strait. Then he recited for himself the funeral-prayer and cast himself down into the sea; but, by God's grace, the winds bore him up, so that he reached the water unhurt, and the angel to whose charge the sea is committed watched over him, so that, by the decree of the Most High, the waves carried him safe to land. So he rejoiced and praised God the Most High and thanked Him; after which he walked on in quest of somewhat to eat, for stress of hunger, and came presently to the place where he had halted with the Magian.

Then he fared on awhile, till he caught sight of a great palace, rising high into the air, and knew it for that of which he had questioned Behram and he had replied, 'An enemy of mine dwelleth there.' 'By Allah,' said Hassan in himself, 'needs must I enter yonder palace; peradventure relief awaits me there.' So he went up to it and finding the gate open, entered the vestibule, where he saw two girls, like moons, seated on a bench, with a table before them, playing at chess. One of them raised her eyes and seeing him, cried out for joy and said, 'By Allah, here is a mortal, and methinks it is he whom Behram the Magian brought hither this year!' Whereupon Hassan cast himself at their feet and wept sore, saying, 'Yes, by Allah, O my ladies, I am indeed that unhappy wretch!'

Then said the younger to the elder damsel, 'Bear witness against me, O my sister, that this is my brother before God and that I will die for his death and live for his life and rejoice for his joy and mourn for his mourning.' So saying, she embraced him and kissed him and taking him by the hand, led him, and her sister with her, into the palace, where she did off his ragged clothes and brought him a suit of kings' raiment, in which she clothed him. Moreover, she made ready all manner viands and set them before him, and sat and ate with him, she and her sister. Then said they to him, 'Tell us thine adventure with yonder wicked dog of a sorcerer, from the time of thy falling into his hands to that of thine escape from him; and after we will tell thee all that has passed between us and him, so thou mayst be on thy guard against him, if thou see him again.'

Hassan, finding himself thus kindly received, took heart of grace and his reason returned to him and he related to them all that had befallen him with the Magian from first to last. 'Didst thou ask him of this palace?' asked they. 'Yes,' answered

Hassan. 'But he said, "Name it not to me; for it belongs to devils and demons."' At this, the two damsels were mightily enraged and said, 'Did the infidel style us devils and demons?' And Hassan answered, 'Yes.' 'By Allah,' cried the younger sister, 'I will assuredly put him to death after the foulest fashion and make him to lack the wind of the world!' 'And how,' asked Hassan, 'wilt thou get at him, to kill him, for he is a crafty magician?' Quoth she, 'He is in a garden by name El Meshid, and needs must I slay him before long.'

Then said her sister, ' All that Hassan hath told us of this dog is true; but now tell him our history, that it may abide in his memory.' So the younger said to him, 'Know, O my brother, that we are the daughters of a king of the mightiest kings of the Jinn, having Marids to troops and guards and servants, and God the Most High blessed him with seven daughters by one wife; but such stiffneckedness got hold upon him and such jealousy and pride beyond compare that he would not give us in marriage to any one and summoning his viziers and officers, said to them, "Can ye tell me of any place inaccessible to men and Jinn and abounding in trees and fruits and streams?" And they said, "What wilt thou therewith, O king of the age?" Quoth he, "I desire to lodge my seven daughters there." "O king," answered they, "the place for them is the Castle of the Mountain of Clouds, built by one of the rebellious Jinn, who revolted from the covenant of cur lord Solomon, on whom be peace. Since his destruction, none hath dwelt there, man nor genie, for it is cut off [from the rest of the world] and none may win to it. It is compassed about with trees and fruits and streams, and around it is running water, sweeter than honey and colder than snow, whereof none trinkets, who is afflicted with leprosy or elephantiasis or what not else, but he is healed forthright."

So our father sent us hither, with an escort of his troops, and provided us with all that we need here. When he is minded to ride [to us], he beats a drum, whereupon all his guards present themselves before him and he chooses whom he shall ride and dismisses the rest; but, when he desireth that we shall visit him, he commandeth the enchanters, his followers, to fetch us, whereupon they come to us and carry us to him, so he may solace himself with our company and we accomplish our desire of him; after which they carry us back again. Our five sisters are gone a-hunting in the desert, wherein are wild beasts past count or reckoning, and we two abode at home, to make them ready food, it being our turn to do this. Indeed, we had besought God (blessed and glorified be He!) to vouchsafe us a man to cheer us with his company and praised be He who hath brought thee to us! So take heart and be of good cheer, for no harm shall befall thee.'

Hassan rejoiced and said, 'Praised be God who guideth us into the way of deliverance and inclineth hearts to us!' Then his [adopted] sister rose and taking him by the hand, led him into a private chamber, where she brought out to him linen and furniture such as no mortal can avail unto. Presently, the other damsels returned from the chase and their sisters acquainted them with Hassan's case; whereupon they rejoiced in him and going in to him in his chamber, saluted him and gave him joy of his deliverance. Then he abode in familiar intercourse with them, riding out with them to the chase and taking his pleasure with them in that fair palace with its gardens and flowers, whilst they entreated him courteously and cheered him with discourse, till his sadness ceased from him and he recovered health and strength and waxed stout and fat,

by dint of fair treatment and pleasant life; for indeed he led the goodliest of lives with the damsels, who delighted in him and he yet more in them. Moreover, the youngest princess told her sisters how the Magian had styled them ghouls and demons, and they swore that they would surely slay him.

Next year, the accursed Magian again made his appearance, having with him a handsome young Muslim, as he were the moon, bound hand and foot and suffering grievous tortures, and alighted with him in view of the palace. Now Hassan was sitting under the trees by the side of the stream; and when he espied Behram, his heart fluttered and he changed colour and smote hand upon hand. Then he said to the princesses, 'O my sisters, help me to slay yonder accursed wretch, for he is come back and in your grasp, and he hath with him, captive, a young Muslim of the sons of the notables, whom he is torturing with all manner of grievous torment. Fain would I slay him and solace my heart of him and earn God's favour by delivering the young Muslim from his mischief and restoring him to his country and friends. This will be an almsdeed from you and ye will reap the reward thereof from God the Most High!'

'We hear and obey God and thee, O Hassan,' replied they and binding chinbands about their faces, armed themselves and girt on their swords: after which they brought Hassan a charger of the best and equipped him in complete armour and armed him with goodly weapons. Then they all sallied out and found the Magian ill-using the young Muslim, to make him enter the hide of a camel that he had killed and skinned. Hassan came behind him, without his knowledge, and cried out at him, saying, 'Hold thy hand, O accursed! O enemy of God and of the Muslims! O dog! O traitor! O thou that servest the fire and walkest in the way of the wicked, worshipping the fire and the light and swearing by the shade and the heat!'

When the Magian heard this, he was startled and disconcerted; so he turned and seeing Hassan, thought to wheedle him and said to him, 'O my son, how madest thou thine escape and who brought thee down to earth?' 'God the Most High delivered me,' answered Hassan, 'He who hath appointed the taking of thy life to be at my hand, and I will torture thee even as thou torturedst me the whole way long. O misbeliever, O heretic, thou hast fallen into perdition and hast wandered from the way; and neither mother nor brother shall avail thee, nor friend nor solemn covenant; for thou saidst, "Whoso is faithless to bread and salt, may God do vengeance upon him!" And thou hast broken the bond of bread and salt; wherefore God hath delivered thee into my hands, and small chance hast thou of escape from me.' 'By Allah, O my son,' rejoined Behram, 'thou art dearer to me than my soul and the light of mine eyes!' But Hassan stepped up to him and smote him hastily between the shoulders, that the sword issued gleaming from the tendons of his throat and God hurried his soul to the fire, and evil is the abiding- place [to which he went].

Then Hassan took the Magian's bag and opening it, took out the drum and beat it with the strap, whereupon up came the dromedaries like lightning. So he loosed the young man from his bonds and setting him on one of the camels, loaded him another with victual and water. Then he bade him go whither he would and he departed, after God the Most High had thus delivered him from his strait at the hands of Hassan. When the princesses saw Hassan slay the Magian, they rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and encompassed him, marvelling at his valour and prowess. Moreover,

they thanked him for his deed and gave him joy of his safety, saying, 'O Hassan, thou hast done a deed, whereby thou hast healed the burning of him that thirsted [for vengeance] and pleased the Glorious King.'

Then they returned to the palace, and he abode with them, eating and drinking and laughing and making merry; and indeed his sojourn with them was pleasant to him and he forgot his mother; nor did he cease to lead this goodly life with them, till, one day, there arose a great cloud of dust, that darkened the sky, and made towards them from the further side of the desert. When the princesses saw this, they said to him, 'Rise, O Hassan, and hide thyself in thy chamber; or, if thou wilt, enter the garden and conceal thyself among the trees and vines; [but fear not,] for no harm shall befall thee.' So he arose and entering his chamber, locked the door upon himself. Presently the dust lifted and discovered a great host, as it were the swollen sea, coming from the king, the father of the damsels.

When they reached the castle, the princesses received them with all honour and entertained them three days; after which they questioned them of their case and errand, and they answered, saying, 'We come in quest of you from the king.' 'And what would the king with us?' asked the princesses. 'One of the kings celebrateth a marriage festival,' answered the envoys, 'and your father would have you be present thereat and divert yourselves therewith.' 'And how long shall we be absent from our place?' asked the damsels. 'The time to come and go,' answered they, 'and to sojourn two months.' So the princesses arose and going in to Hassan, acquainted him with the case and said to him, 'Verily this place is thy place and our house is thy house; so be of good cheer and fear not nor grieve, for none can come at thee here; but keep a good heart and a cheerful mind, till we return to thee. The keys of our chambers we leave with thee; but, O our brother, we beseech thee, by the due of brotherhood, not to open such a door, for thou hast no call thereto.' Then they took leave of him and went away with the troops, leaving him alone in the palace.

It was not long before his breast grew straitened and his patience came to an end: solitude and sadness were heavy on him and he grieved for his separation from them with an exceeding grief. The palace, for all its vastness, was straitened upon him and finding himself sad and solitary, he bethought him of the damsels and recited the following verses:

The spreading plain all straitened is, for longing, on my sight
And all my thoughts are troubled grown, that erst were calm and bright.
Since those I love have fared away, my joy is turned to grief
And eke mine eyes with bitter tears brim over day and night.
Sleep hath departed from my lids, for severance from them;
Yea, parting- saddened, eke, is grown my heart and all my spright.
I wonder will Fate e'er reknit our loves and Time restore
To me, with their companionship, my solace and delight!

He used to go a-hunting by himself in the desert and bring back the game and eat thereof alone: but melancholy and unease redoubled on him, by reason of his loneliness. So he arose and went round about the palace and explored its every part. Morever, he opened the princesses' apartments and found therein riches and treasures,

fit to do away the beholder's wits; but he delighted not in aught thereof, by reason of their absence. His heart was on fire with solicitude respecting the door they had charged him not to approach or open, and he said in himself, 'My sister had not forbidden me to open this door, except there were behind it somewhat, whereof she would have none to know; but, by Allah, I will arise and open it and see what is within, were death behind it!'

Then he took the key and opening the door, saw nothing therein but a winding stair of Yemen onyx at the upper end of the chamber. So he mounted the stair, which brought him out upon the terraced roof of the palace, whence he looked down upon gardens and orchards, full of trees and fruits and beasts and birds warbling the praises of God the One, the All-powerful, and said in himself, 'This is that wherefrom they forbade me.' Beyond these pleasaunces he saw a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, and he ceased not to explore the [terraces of the] palace right and left, till he came to a pavilion such as neither Caesar nor Chosroes ever possessed, builded with alternate courses of gold and silver and jacinth and emerald and supported by four columns.

The interior was paved and lined with a mosaic of jacinths and emeralds and balass-rubies and all manner other jewels, and in its midst was a basin of water, over which was a trellis of sandal and aloes-wood, netted with red gold and wands of emerald and set with various kinds of jewels and fine pearls, each the bigness of a pigeon's egg. The trellis was covered with a climbing vine, bearing grapes like rubies, and beside the pool stood a couch of aloes-wood, trellised with red gold and inlaid with great pearls and all manner vari-coloured gems and precious stones, symmetrically disposed. About it the birds warbled, celebrating the praises of God the Most High with sweet and various voices; but, save them, Hassan saw therein none of the creatures of God, whereat he marvelled and said in himself, 'I wonder to which of the kings this place pertaineth, or is it Many-Columned Irem whereof they tell, for who [among mortals] can avail to the like of this?' And indeed he was amazed and sat down in the pavilion, marvelling at the beauty of its ordinance and at the lustre of the pearls and jewels and the curious works that were therein, no less than at the gardens and orchards aforesaid and at the birds that sang the praises of God the One, the Almighty, and pondering the traces of him whom God the Most High had enabled to rear that structure, for indeed He is mickle of might.

Presently, he espied ten birds making for the pavilion from the direction of the desert, and knew that they were bound for the pool, to drink of its waters: so he hid himself lest they should see him and fly from him. They lighted on a great and goodly tree and circled round about it; and he saw amongst them an exceeding great and beautiful bird, the goodliest of them all, and the rest encompassed it and did it worship; whilst it pecked them with its bill and flouted them, and they fled from it. Then they entered the pavilion and perched on the couch; after which each bird rent open its skin with its claws and came forth therefrom; and behold, it was but a garment of feathers, and there came forth therefrom ten maidens, whose beauty shamed the lustre of the moon. They all put off their clothes and plunging into the pool, washed and fell to playing and sporting with one another; whilst the chief of them threw the

others down and ducked them, and they fled from her and dared not put out their hands to her.

When Hassan beheld her thus, he took leave of his wits and his reason was enslaved, and he knew that the princess had not forbidden him to open the door, save by reason of this; for he fell passionately in love with her, for what he saw of her beauty and grace and symmetry, as she played and sported and splashed the others with the water. His mind was amazed at her beauty and his heart taken in the snare of her love; fires were loosed in his heart for her sake and there waxed on him a flame, whose raging might not be quenched, and desire, whose signs might not be hidden. So he stood, looking upon them, whilst they saw him not, with eye gazing and heart burning and soul prompting to evil; and he sighed to be with them and wept for longing, because of the beauty and grace of the chief damsel.

Presently, they came up out of the pools whilst Hassan marvelled at their beauty and loveliness and the grace and elegance of their movements. Then he cast a glance at the chief damsel and there was manifest to him what was between her thighs, a goodly rounded dome, like a bowl of silver or crystal, which recalled to him the saying of the Poet:

When I took up her shift and discovered the terrace-roof of her kaze,
I found it as strait as my humour or eke my worldly ways:
I thrust it, incontinent, in, halfway, and she heaved a sigh.
"For What dost thou sigh?" quoth I. "For the rest of it sure," she says.

Then they all put on their dresses and ornaments, and the chief maiden donned a green dress, wherein she excelled all the fair ones of the world for loveliness and the lustre of her face outshone the resplendent full moons: she outdid the branches with the grace of her swaying gait and confounded the wit with apprehension of disdain; and indeed she was as saith the poet:

A damsel lithe and slim and full of agile grace;
Thou'dst deem the very sun had borrowed from her face.
She came in robes of green, the likeness of the leaf
That the pomegranate's flower doth in the bud encase.
"How call'st thou this thy dress?" asked we, and she replied
A word wherein the wise a lesson well might trace.
"Breaker of Hearts," quoth she, "I call it; for therewith
I've broken many a heart among the amorous race."

Then they sat talking and laughing, whilst he stood gazing on them, drowned in the sea of passion and wandering in the valley of melancholy thought. And he said in himself, 'By Allah, my sister forbade me not to open the door, but because of these maidens and lest I should fall in love with one of them!' And he continued to gaze on the charms of the chief damsel, who was the loveliest creature God had made in her time, and indeed she outdid all mortals in beauty. She had a mouth like Solomon's seal and hair blacker than the night of estrangement to the despairing lover; her forehead was as the new moon of the Feast of Ramazan and her eyes were like unto gazelles' eyes. She had a polished aquiline nose and cheeks like blood-red anemones, lips like

coral and teeth like strung pearls in carcanets of virgin gold and a neck like an ingot of silver, above a shape like a willow-wand. Her belly was full of folds and dimples, such as enforce the distracted lover to magnify God and extol Him therefor, and her navel held an ounce of musk, most sweet of savour. She had thighs great and plump, like columns of marble or bolsters stuffed with ostrich- down, and between them somewhat as it were a great hummock or a hare with ears laid back; and indeed she surpassed the willow-wand and the bamboo-cane with her beauty and symmetry, for she was even as saith the poet of her:

There came a lovely maid, whose mouth did dews like honey bear,
Yea, and her glances keener far than Indian sabres were.
She put the willow-wand to shame with graceful swaying gait;
The lightning from her teeth did flash, whenas she smiled, my fair.
Her cheeks I likened to the rose in blossom; but she laughed
In scorn and answered, "He who to the rose doth me compare
And eke pomegranates with my breasts likeness, hath he no shame?
How should pomegranates branches have, my breasts for fruit that wear?
Now, by my grace, my eyes, my soul, ay, and the paradise
Of my possession and the hell of my disdain, I swear,
If he to these comparisons return, I will my grace
To him deny, nor with my scorn to blast him will I spare!
They say, 'A rose in garth a-bloom [is she;]' but, nay, its flower
Is not my cheek nor yet its branch my shape so straight and rare.
If in the gardens of his land the like of me there be,
Why then, in quest thereof, forsooth, doth he to me repair?"

They ceased not to laugh and play, whilst Hassan stood watching them, forgetting meat and drink, till near the hour of afternoon-prayer, when the chief damsel said to her mates, 'O kings' daughters, it grows late and our country is distant and we have had enough of this place. Come, therefore, let us depart to our own place.' So they put on their feather vests, and becoming birds as before, flew away all together, with the chief damsel in their midst. Then Hassan, despairing of their return, would have arisen and gone away, but could not move; wherefore the tears ran down his cheeks and passion was sore on him and he recited the following verses:

May I be denied the fulfilment o' the troth that to me thou didst plight,
If, since you departed and left me, I've tasted of slumber's delight!
Mine eyes, since the days of your parting, have never been shut in repose,
Nor, since you forsook me, hath slumber been pleasant or sweet to my spright.
Meseemeth, indeed, that I see you, bytimes, in illusions of sleep:
Ah would that the visions were real we see in the dreams of the night!
Indeed, I'm desirous of slumber, I crave after sleep, without need,
So haply, therein, with the loved one a dream may the lover unite.

Then he walked on, little by little, heeding not how he went, till he reached the foot of the stirs, whence he dragged himself to his own chamber and shutting the door, lay there, sick and drowned in the sea of his solicitude, eating not nor drinking. He

passed the night thus, weeping and bemoaning himself, till the morning, when he repeated the following verses:

The birds took wing at nightfall and far away did fly,
And whoso dies of passion, no blame on him may lie.
I'll keep love's tidings secret, what while I keep it may;
But, if fierce longing conquer, 'twill out unto the spy.
A loved one's image haunts me, whose face is like the moon,
Anights; there comes no morning, for passion. in my sky.
I mourn for my beloved, what while the heart-free sleep,
And all the winds of passion their sports upon me ply.
I lavish tears and riches and soul and wit and life;
For lavishness is profit in love, as well know I.
The foulest of all evils and woes that may betide
Is when a man disfavour from fair ones must aby.
They say that to show favour's forbidden to the fair
And that their blood 'tis lawful to shed for love that sigh;
And so unto the lovesick, for alt resource, remains
His life for love to lavish, in jest, and jesting die.
I cry aloud, distracted with longing for my love;
For all the lover's effort is weeping and outcry.

When the sun rose, he went forth of the chamber and ascending to the roof, sat down before the pavilion and awaited the return of the birds, till nightfall; but they came not; wherefore he wept till he fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself he dragged himself down the stairs to his chamber; and indeed, the night was come and the whole world was straitened upon him and he ceased not to weep and bemoan himself, till the day broke and the sun rose over hill and plain. He ate not nor drank nor slept, nor was there any rest for him; but by day he was distracted and by night wakeful, delirious and drunken with melancholy and excess of passion. And he repeated the verses of the poet El Welhan:

Thou that confoundest outright the sun of the morning, heigho!
That puttest the branches to shame, though wherefore thou dost not know,
I wonder if fortune and time will ever vouchsafe thy return
And will the fires ever be quenched for aye in my bosom that glow?
And will the days ever on me, to hold thee embraced in mine arms,
Cheek to cheek, breast to breast, at the hour of meeting and union, bestow?
Who saith there is sweetness in Love? I warrant, he lieth, for lo!
In Love there are bitterer days, believe me, than aloes can show.

As he abode thus in the stress of his love-distraction, alone and finding none to cheer him with company, there arose a cloud of dust from the desert, wherefore he knew that the princesses had returned and ran down and hid himself. Before long, the troops halted round the palace and the seven princesses alighted and entering, put off their arms and harness. As for the youngest, she stayed not to doff her armour, but went straight to Hassan's chamber, where finding him not, she sought for him till she

lighted on him in one of the cabinets, thin and feeble, with wasted bones and emaciated body; and indeed his colour was changed and his eyes sunken for lack of food and much weeping, by reason of his love and longing for the damsel. When she saw him in this plight, she was confounded and [well-nigh] lost her wits [for amazement]; and she questioned him of his case and what had befallen him, saying, 'Tell me what ails thee, O my brother, that I may cast about to do away thine affliction, and I will be thy ransom.' Whereupon he wept sore and answered her with these verses:

Whenas a lover from his love to sever Fate hath wrought;
For him saw weariness and woe and misery there's nought.
Within him sickness is, without is burning fire of love:
His first is memory, his last is melancholy thought.

When she heard this, she marvelled at his eloquence and ready wit and goodliness of speech and at his answering her in verse and said to him, 'O my brother, when didst thou fall into this case and what hath befallen thee, that I find thee speaking in verse and shedding plenteous tears? I conjure thee by Allah, O my brother, by the love that is between us, tell me what ails thee and discover thy secret to me, nor hide from me aught of that which hath befallen thee in our absence; for my breast is straitened and my life troubled on thine account.' He sighed and shed tears like rain, after which he said, 'O my sister, I fear, if I tell thee, that thou will not help me to my desire, but wilt leave me to perish miserably in my anguish.' 'No, by Allah, O my brother,' answered she, 'I will not abandon thee, though it cost me my life!'

So he told her all that had befallen him in her absence and that the cause of his distress and affliction was the passion he had conceived for the damsel whom he had seen, when he opened the forbidden door, and how he had not tasted meat nor drink for ten days past. Then he wept sore and recited the following verses:

Restore the heart as it used to be to the bosom and the lids
Give back again to sleep and then forsake me, an ye list.
Do ye pretend that the nights have changed the covenant of love?
May he [or she] who would change be held unworthy to exist!

The princess wept for his weeping and was moved to compassion for him; so she said to him, 'O my brother, take comfort and be of good cheer, for I will venture my life to content thee and contrive thee a device wherewith thou mayst get possession of her and accomplish thy desire, if it be the will of God, though it cost me my life and all I hold dear. But I charge thee keep the matter secret and discover not thy case to any of my sisters, lest we both lose our lives. If they question thee of the forbidden door, answer them, "I opened it not, being troubled at heart for your absence and my loneliness here and yearning for you."' And he replied, 'Yes: this is the right course.' So he kissed her head and his heart was comforted and his bosom dilated, and his life returned to him, after he had been nigh upon death for excess of affright, for he had gone in fear of her by reason of his having opened the forbidden door.

Then he sought food of her [and she set it before him]; after which she left him and went in to her sisters, weeping and mourning for him. They questioned her of her case and she told them how she was heavy at heart for her brother, for that he was sick

and for ten days no food had entered his stomach. So they enquired the cause of his sickness and she said, 'The cause was our absence from him and our leaving him desolate; for these days we have been absent from him were longer to him than a thousand years, and no wonder, seeing he is a stranger, and solitary and we left him alone, with none to company with him or cheer his heart; more by token that he is but a youth and it is like he called to mind his family and his mother, who is an old woman, and bethought him that she weeps for him all tides of the day and watches of the night; and we used to solace him with our society and divert him from thinking of her.'

When her sisters heard this, they wept in the excess of their sorrow for him and said, "Fore Allah, he is excusable!' Then they went out to the troops and dismissed them after which they went in to Hassan and saluted him. When they saw him in sorry case, with his colour paled and his body wasted, they wept for very pity and sat with him and comforted him and cheered him with discourse, relating to him all the wonders and rarities they had seen by the way and what had befallen the bridegroom with the bride. They abode with him thus a whole month, soothing and caressing him; but every day sickness was added to his sickness, which when they saw, they wept sore for him, and the youngest more than any of them.

At the end of this time, the princesses were minded to ride forth a-hunting and invited their sister to accompany them; but she said, 'By Allah, O my sisters, I cannot go forth with you, whilst my brother is in this plight. Rather will I sit with him and comfort him, till he be restored to health and there cease from him that which is with him of affliction.' They thanked her for her humanity and said to her, 'God will requite thee all thou dost with this stranger.' Then they rode forth, taking with them twenty days' victual; and as soon as the youngest princess knew that they were far from the palace, she went in to Hassan and said to him, 'Come, show me where thou sawest the maidens.' He rejoiced in her words, making sure of attaining his desire, and answered, 'In the name of God! On my head!' Then he essayed to rise and show her the place, but could not walk; so she took him in her arms, and opening the staircase door, carried him up to the top of the palace, and he showed her the pavilion and the pool of water, where he had seen the girls.

Then she said to him, 'O my brother, set forth to me their case and how they came.' So he described them to her and especially the damsel of whom he was enamoured; whereupon she knew her and her colour changed and she was troubled. 'O my sister,' quoth he, 'what ails thee to change color and be troubled?' And she answered, 'Know, O my brother, that this damsel is the daughter of one of the most puissant kings of the Jinn, and her father hath dominion over men and Jinn and wizards and diviners and tribesmen and guards and countries and islands and cities galore and hath wealth in plenty. Our father is one of his vassals and none can avail against him, for the multitude of his troops and the vastness of his empire and his much wealth. He hath assigned to his daughters a tract of country, a whole year's journey in length and breadth, compassed about with a great river; and thereto none may win, nor man nor genie. He hath an army of women, smiters with swords and thrusters with spears, five-and-twenty thousand in number, each of whom, whenas she mounteth her charger and donneth her battle-harness, is a match for a thousand stout

horsemen. Moreover, he hath seven daughters, who equal and even excel their sisters in valour and prowess, and the eldest of them, the damsel whom thou sawest, he hath made queen over the country aforesaid. She is the wisest of her sisters and excels all the folk of her dominions in valour and horsemanship and craft and skill in magic. The damsels thou sawest with her are her guards and favourites and the grandees of her empire, and the feathered skins wherewith they fly are the handiwork of enchanters of the Jinn.

Now they resort to this place on the first day of each month; so, if thou wouldst get possession of this princess and unique jewel and enjoy her beauty and grace, do thou pay heed to my words and keep them in thy memory. Thou must sit here and watch for them; and when thou seest them coming, do thou hide near the pavilion, whereas thou mayst see them, without being seen of them, and beware lest thou show thyself or we shall all lose our lives. When they put off their clothes, note which is the feather-suit of the princess, her of whom thou art enamoured, and take it, and it only, for this it is that carries her to her country, and when thou hast it, thou hast her. And beware lest she beguile thee, saying, "O thou who hast stolen my dress, restore it to me, for I am here in thine hands and at thy mercy!! For, if thou give it her, she will kill thee and break down the palace over our heads and slay our father. Know then thy case and how thou shalt do. When her companions see that her feather-suit is stolen, they will leave her and fly away, and beware lest thou show thyself to them, but wait till they have flown away and she despaireth of them: whereupon do thou go in to her and seize her by the hair of her head and drag her to thee; which being done, she will be at thy mercy. Then carry her down to thy chamber and I rede thee discover not to her that thou hast taken the feather-suit, but keep it with care; for, so long as thou hast it, she is thy prisoner and in thy power, seeing that she cannot fly to her country save with it.'

When Hassan heard her words, trouble and affliction ceased from him and his heart became at ease; so he rose to his feet and kissing his sister's hand, went down with her into the palace, where they slept that night. He tended himself till the morning; and when the sun rose, he opened the staircase door and ascending to the terrace, sat there till nightfall, when his sister brought him meat and drink and a change of clothes and he slept; and thus they did till the end of the month. When he saw the new moon, he rejoiced and began to watch for the birds, and by and by up they came, like lightning. As soon as he saw them, he hid himself where he could watch them, unseen of them, and they lighted down, near the place where he was hidden, and putting off their clothes, descended into the pool. Thereupon Hassan arose and crept, little by little, towards the dresses, and God covered him, so that he possessed himself of the feather-suit, and none of them saw him, for they were laughing and playing with each other.

When they had made an end of their diversion, they came forth of the pool and each of them donned her suit of feathers, except the princess, who sought her suit, that she might put it on, but found it not; whereupon she shrieked and buffeted her face and rent her clothes. Her companions came to her and enquired what ailed her, and she told them that her feather-suit was missing; wherefore they wept and cried out and buffeted their faces: and they were confounded, knowing not the cause of this, and knew not what to do. Presently the night overtook them and they feared to abide with

her lest that which had befallen her should befall them also; so they took leave of her and flying away, left her alone. When they were out of sight, Hassan hearkened and heard her say, 'O thou who hast taken my dress and stripped me, I beseech thee to restore it to me and cover my nakedness, so may God not make thee taste my sorrow!'

When Hassan heard her speak thus, with speech sweeter than syrup, his love for her redoubled, passion got the mastery of his reason and he could not endure from her. So he rushed upon her and laying hold of her by the hair, dragged her to him and carried her down to his own chamber, where he threw over her a coverlet of silk and left her weeping and biting her hands. Then he shut the door on her and going to his sister, told her how he had made prize of the princess and carried her to his chamber, where she was now sitting, weeping and biting her hands. When she heard this, she rose forthright and betook herself to the chamber, where she found the captive princess weeping and mourning.

So she kissed the earth before her and saluted her, and the princess said to her, 'O king's daughter, do folk like you deal thus foully with kings' daughters? Thou knowest that my father is a mighty king and that all the kings of the Jinn stand in awe of him and fear his mischief; for that there are with him magicians and sages and diviners and devils and Marids, such as none may cope withal, and under his hand are folk whose tale none knoweth save God. How then doth it beseem you, O daughters of kings, to harbour mortals with you and discover to them our circumstance and yours? Else how should this man come at us?' 'O king's daughter,' answered the other, 'this man is perfect in nobleness and purposely thee no lewdness; but he loves thee, and women were made for men. Did he not love thee, he had not fallen sick and well-nigh given up the ghost on thine account.' And she told her how Hassan had seen her bathing in the pool, with her attendants, and fallen in love with her, and none had pleased him but she, for the rest were all her handmaids.

When the princess heard this, she despaired of deliverance and Hassan's sister fetched her a sumptuous dress, in which she clad her. Then she set before her meat and drink and ate with her and comforted her heart and appeased her fears. And she ceased not to speak her fair and caress her, soothing her with soft and pleasant words and instances and saying, 'Have pity on him who saw thee once and became the victim of thy love:' but she wept till daybreak, when her trouble subsided and she left weeping, knowing that she had fallen [into the snare] and that there was no escape for her. Then she said to Hassan's sister, 'O king's daughter, this my strangerhood and severance from my country and family was ordained of God [and written] upon my forehead, and it becomes me to support with patience what my Lord hath decreed.' Therewith the youngest princess assigned her a chamber, than which there was no goodlier in the palace, and ceased not to sit with her and cheer her and solace her heart, till she took comfort and her bosom dilated and she laughed and there ceased from her the trouble and oppression that possessed her, by reason of her separation from her people and family and country.

Then the youngest princess repaired to Hassan and said to him, 'Arise, go in to her in her chamber and kiss her hands and feet.' So he went in to her and did this and kissed her between the eyes, saying, 'O princess of fair ones and life of souls and delight of beholders, be easy of heart, for I took thee but that I might be thy slave till

the Day of Resurrection, and this my sister will be thy hand- maid. O my lady, I desire nought but to take thee to wife, after the law of God and His Apostle, and if thou wilt, I will journey with thee to my country and carry thee to the city of Baghdad and abide with thee there. Moreover, I will buy thee slaves, male and female, and I have a mother, of the best of women, who will be thine hand- maid. There is no goodlier land than ours; everything there is better than elsewhere and its folk are pleasant and bright of face.'

As he bespoke her thus and strove to comfort her, what while she answered him not a syllable, there came a knocking at the palace-gate. So Hassan went out to see who was at the gate and found there the six princesses, who had returned from hunting, bringing with them great plenty of gazelles and wild oxen and hares and lions and hyenas and other game, whereat he rejoiced and went to meet them and saluted them. They wished him health and safety and he wished them the like; after which they alighted and going each to her chamber, put off their soiled clothes and donned fair linen. Then they came forth and demanded the game: so they brought out some thereof for slaughter, keeping the rest by them in the palace, and Hassan girt himself and fell to slaughtering for them, whilst they sported and made merry, mightily rejoiced to see him standing amongst them [restored to health and spirits].

When they had made an end of slaughtering, they addressed themselves to make ready somewhat for their morning meal, and Hassan, coming up to the eldest princess, kissed her head and on like wise did he with the rest one after another. Whereupon said they to him, 'Indeed, O our brother, thou humblest thyself to us passing measure and we marvel at the excess of the affection thou showest us. But God forbid that thou shouldst do this thing, which it behoves us rather to do with thee, seeing thou art a man and insomuch worthier than we, who are of the Jinn.' Thereupon his eyes ran over with tears and he wept sore; so they said to him, 'What ails thee to weep? Indeed, thou troublest our lives with thy weeping this day. It would seem thou longest after thy mother and country. If so, we will equip thee and carry thee to thy home and thy friends.' 'By Allah,' answered he, 'I desire not to part from you!' 'Then which of us hath vexed thee,' asked they, 'that thou art thus troubled?' But he was ashamed to say, 'Nought troubleth me save love of the damsel,' lest they should disavow him: so he was silent and would tell them nought of his case.

Then his sister came forward and said to them, 'He hath caught a bird from the air and would have you help him tame her.' Whereupon they all turned to him and said, 'We are all at thy service and whatsoever thou seekest, we will do: but tell us thy story and conceal from us nought of thy case.' But he said to his sister, 'Do thou tell them, for I am ashamed to face them with these words.' So she said to them, 'O my sisters, when we went away and left this poor fellow alone, the palace was straitened upon him and he feared lest some one should come in to him, for ye know that the sons of Adam are light-witted. So, of his loneliness and trouble, he opened the door of the staircase leading to the roof and sat there, looking upon the valley and watching the gate, in his fear lest any should come thither. One day, as he sat thus, he saw ten birds making for the palace, and they lighted down on the brink of the pool in the pavilion. He watched them and saw, amongst them, one goodlier than the rest, which pecked the others and flouted them, whilst they dared not put out a claw to it.

Presently, they put their claws to their necks and rending their feathers, came forth therefrom and became damsels like the moon at its full, whereof one was fairer of face than the rest and goodlier of shape and more elegant of apparel. Then they put off their clothes and plunging into the water, fell to playing with one another, whilst the chief damsel ducked the other, who dared not lay a finger on her. They ceased not to do thus till near the hour of afternoon prayer, when they came forth of the pool and donning their feather-dresses, flew way, leaving Hassan distracted, with a heart on fire for love of the chief damsel and repenting him that he had not stolen her feather-dress. Wherefore he fell sick and abode on the roof, expecting her return and abstaining from meat and drink and sleep, till the new moon, when they again made their appearance and putting off their clothes went down into the pool. So he stole the chief damsel's feather-suit, knowing that she could not fly without it, and hid it, lest they should discover him and slay him. Then he waited till the rest had flown away, when he arose and seizing the damsel, carried her down into the castle.'

'Where is she?' asked her sisters; and she answered, 'She is with him in such a chamber.' Quoth they, 'Describe her to us, O our sister.' So she said, 'She is fairer than the moon on the night of its full and her face is brighter than the sun; the water of her mouth is sweeter than honey and her shape more slender than the cane. She hath black eyes and flower-white forehead; a bosom like a jewel, breasts like twin pomegranates and cheeks like apples, a belly covered with dimples, with a navel like a casket of ivory full of musk, and legs like columns of alabaster. She ravishes all hearts with liquid black eyes and the fineness of a slender waist and heavy buttocks and speech that heals the sick. She is goodly of shape and sweet of smile, as she were the full moon.' When the princesses heard this, they turned to Hassan and said to him, 'Show her to us.' So he arose, love- distraught, and carrying them to the chamber in which was the captive damsel, opened the door and entered, followed by the seven princesses.

When they saw her and noted her loveliness, they kissed the earth before her, marvelling at the fairness of her favour and the elegance of her shape, and said to her, 'O daughter of the Supreme King, this is indeed a parlous thing: and hadst thou heard tell among women of this mortal, thou hadst marvelled at him all thy days. Indeed, he is passionately enamoured of thee; yet, O king's daughter, he seeketh not lewdness, but desireth thee only in the way of lawful marriage. But that we know maids cannot do without men, we had hindered him from his intent, albeit he sent thee no messenger, but came to thee himself; and he tells us he hath burnt the feather-dress; else had we taken it from him.' Then one of them agreed with the princess and becoming her deputy in the matter of the marriage contract, performed the marriage ceremony between them, whilst Hassan clapped hands with her, laying his hand in hers, and she wedded him to the damsel with the latter's consent; after which they celebrated her marriage-festival, as beseemeth kings' daughters, and brought Hassan in to his bride. So he rose and opened the door and did away the barrier and broke her seal, whereupon the love of her waxed in him and he redoubled in passion and affection for her. Then, since he had gotten that which he sought, he gave himself joy and repeated these verses:

Thy shape a tempter is, thine eyes, gazelle-like, black and white;
Thy face with beauty's water drips, with every charm bedight.
Lo, in mine eyes most gloriously thou'rt pictured, jacinth half

And jewels rare another third, thou seemest to my spright.
Yea, and a fifth of thee is musk, a sixth pure ambergris,
And like unto the pearl thou art, indeed, but far more bright.
Ne'er gave our mother Eva birth unto the like of thee,
Nor is there other like to thee in Heaven's realms of light.
An if my punishment thou will, 'tis of love's usances,
And of thy favor, if thou choose to pardon my upright.
O thou adornment of the world, O end of all desire,
Who may with patience brook the lack of thy fair face's sight?

Now the princesses were standing at the door, and when they heard his verses, they said to her, 'O king's daughter, hearest thou what this mortal says? How canst thou blame us, seeing that he makes verses for love of thee?' When she heard this, she rejoiced and was glad, and Hassan abode with her forty days in all delight and solace and contentment and cheer, whilst the damsels made him new festivities every day and overwhelmed him with bounty and gifts and presents; and the princess became reconciled to her sojourn amongst them and forgot her people and friends. At the end of this time, Hassan saw in a dream, one night his mother mourning for him and indeed her bones were wasted and her body emaciated and she was pale and wan, whilst he was in good case. When she saw him thus, she said to him, 'O my son Hassan, how is it that thou livest at thine ease and forgettest me? See my plight since thy loss. I do not forget thee, nor will my tongue leave to name thee till I die; and I have made thee a tomb in my house, that I may never forget thee. I wonder, O my son, if I shall live to see thee with me and if we shall ever again be united as we were.'

Hassan awoke from sleep, weeping and lamenting; the tears on down his cheeks like rain and he became mournful and troubled; his tears ceased not nor did sleep visit him, but he had no rest and no patience was left to him. When he arose, the princesses came in to him and gave him good-morrow and made merry with him, as of their wont; but he paid no heed to them. So alley asked his wife what ailed him and she said, 'I know not.' Quoth they 'Ask him of his case.' So she went up to him and said, 'What ails thee, O my lord?' Whereupon he sighed and groaned and told her what he had seen in his dream. Then he repeated the following verses:

Afflicted sore am I, distraught with love and dole;
Union I seek, yet know no way unto my goal.
The stresses of desire redouble upon me
And even the light of love is heavy on my soul.

His wife repeated what he had said to the princesses, who, hearing the verses, took pity on him and said to him, 'In God's name, do as thou wilt, for we may not hinder thee from visiting thy mother, but will rather help thee thereto by all means in our power. But it behoves that thou desert us not, but visit us, though it be but once a year.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then they arose forthright and making him ready victual [for the journey], equipped the bride for him with clothes and ornaments and everything of price, such as beggar description. Moreover, they bestowed on him gifts and presents, such as the pen availeth not to set forth, amongst the rest five-and-twenty chests of gold and fifty of silver. Then they beat the drum and up came

dromedaries from all sides. They chose of them such as availed to carry all the gear they had prepared and mounting Hassan and his bride on others, rode with them three days, wherein they accomplished three months' journey.

Then they bade them farewell and addressed themselves to return; whereupon the youngest threw herself on Hassan's neck and wept till she fainted. When she came to herself she repeated the following verses:

Would God the day of parting ne'er might be!
It leaves no sleep unto the eyes of me.
It hath dissolved our loves and broken down
Our strength in soul and body utterly.

Then she bade him farewell, straitly charging him, whenas he should have come to his native land and foregathered with his mother and set his heart at ease, to fail not of paying her a visit once in every six months and saying, 'If aught trouble thee or thou be in fear of any vexation, beat the Magian's drum, whereupon the dromedaries will come to thee; and do thou mount and return to us.' He swore to do her bidding and conjured them to return. So they returned to the palace, mourning for their separation from him, especially the youngest, to whom no rest was left nor would patience come at her call, but she wept night and day.

Meanwhile, Hassan and his wife fared on night and day, through noontide heats and early dawns, over plains and deserts and valleys and stony wastes; and God decreed them safety, so that they reached Bassora without hindrance and made their camels kneel at the door of his house. Hassan then dismissed the dromedaries and going up to the door, to open it, heard his mother weeping and reciting the following verses, in a faint voice, from a heart worn [with sorrow] and on fire with consuming affliction:

How shall she taste, forsooth, of sleep, who lacks of all repose,
Who wakes anights, when every eye in slumber else doth close?
Honour and wealth and family he had and yet became
A lonely exile from his home in lands that no man knows.
Groaning and longing on her press, the utmost that can be,
And like a brazier, 'twixt her ribs the fire of yearning glows.
Passion the mastery o'er her hath got and ruleth her:
For suffering she Moans, yet still is constant 'neath her woes.
Her case for love proclaims that she afflicted is and sad:
Yea, and her tears are witnesses to that she undergoes.

When Hassan heard his mother weeping and lamenting, he wept also and knocked loudly at the door. Quoth she, 'Who is at the door?' And he said, 'Open.' Whereupon she opened the door and knowing him, fell down in a swoon: but he tended her till she came to herself, when he embraced her and she embraced him and kissed him, whilst his wife looked on. Then he carried his goods and gear into the house, whilst his mother repeated the following verses, for that her heart was comforted and God had reunited her with her son:

Fortune hath taken ruth on my case;
Yea, she hath pitied my long despair,

Granting me that whereafter I longed
And doing away from me dread and care.
So I will pardon her all the past
And the sins that she sinned 'gainst me whilere;
Ev'n to the wrong wherewith she wrought
To whiten the parting-place of my hair.

Then they sat talking and his mother said to him, 'O my son, how faredst thou with the Persian?' 'O my mother,' answered Hassan, 'he was no Persian, but a Magian, who worshipped the fire, not the All-powerful King.' Then he told her how he had dealt with him, in that he had journeyed with him (to the Mountain of Clouds) and sewed him in the camel's skin, and how the rocs had taken him up and set him down on the mountain-top and what he had seen there of dead folk whom the Magian had deluded and left (to perish) on the mountain, after they had done his occasion. And he told her how he had cast himself from the mountain-top into the sea and God the Most High had preserved him and brought him to the palace of the (seven) damsels and how the youngest of them had taken him to brother and he led sojourned with them, till God brought the Magian to the place where he was and he slew him. Moreover, he told her of his passion for the damsel and how he had made prize of her and of his seeing her (his mother) in sleep and all else that had befallen him up to the time when God reunited them.

She marvelled at his story and praised God who had restored him to her in health and safety. Then she arose and examined the baggage and loads and questioned him of them. So he told her what was in them, whereat she was mightily rejoiced. Then she went up to the princess, to talk with her and bear her company; but, when her eyes fell on her, she was confounded at her loveliness and rejoiced and marvelled at her beauty and grace and symmetry: and she sat down beside her, cheering her and comforting her heart. Next morning, early, she went down into the market and bought magnificent furniture and ten suits of the richest raiment in the city, and clad the princess and adorned her with every thing costly. Then said she to Hassan, 'O my son, we cannot abide in this city with all this wealth; for thou knowest that we are poor folk and the people will suspect us of practising alchemy. So come, let us depart to Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, where we may dwell in the Khalif's Sanctuary, and thou shalt sit in a shop to buy and sell, in the fear of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and He shall prosper thee with this wealth.'

Hassan fell in with her counsel and going forth straightway, sold the house and summoned the dromedaries, which he loaded with all his goods and gear, together with his mother and wife. Then he went down to the Tigris, where he hired a vessel to carry them to Baghdad and embarked therein with his mother and wife and all his possessions. They sailed up the river ten days, with a fair wind, till they came in sight of Baghdad, at which they rejoiced, and the ship landed them in the city, where Hassan hired a storehouse in one of the khans and transported his goods thither. He lodged in the khan that night and on the morrow, he changed his clothes and going down into the city, enquired for a broker. The folk directed him to one, and when the broker saw him, he asked him what he lacked. Quoth he, 'I want a house, a handsome and spacious one.' So the broker showed him the houses at his disposal and he chose one

that belonged to one of the viziers and buying it of him for a hundred thousand dinars, gave him the price. Then he returned to the khan and removed all his goods to the house; after which he went down to the market and bought all that was needed therefor of vessels and carpets and other household stuff, besides servants and a little black slave for the house.

He abode with his wife in all solace and delight of life three years, during which time he was vouchsafed by her two sons, one of whom he named Nasir and the other Mensour: but, at the end of this time, he bethought him of his sisters, the princesses, and called to mind all their goodness to him and how they had helped him to his desire. So he longed after them and going out to the markets of the city, bought trinkets and costly stuffs and confections such as they had never seen nor known. His mother asked him why he bought these rarities and he answered, 'I purpose to visit my sisters, who entreated me with all kindness and to whose goodness and munificence I owe all that I at present enjoy: wherefore I will journey to them and return soon, so God please.' Quoth she, 'O my son, be not [long] absent from me.'

Then said he, 'Know, O my mother, how thou shalt do with my wife. Here is her feather-dress in a chest, buried in the earth in such a place; do thou watch over it, lest she light on it and take it, for she would fly away, she and her children, and I should never hear of them again and should die of grief; wherefore I warn thee, O my mother, that thou name this not to her. Thou must know that she is the daughter of a king of the Jinn, than whom there is not a greater among the kings of the Jinn nor a richer in troops and treasure, and she is mistress of her people and dearest to her father of all he hath. Moreover, she is exceeding high-spirited, so do thou serve her thyself and suffer her not to go forth the door neither look out of window nor over the wall, for I fear the air for her, when it blows, and if aught befell her, I should slay myself for her sake.' 'O my son,' replied she, 'God forbid that I should gainsay thee! Am I mad that thou shouldst lay this injunction on me and I disobey thee therein? Depart, O my son, with a heart at ease, and God willing, thou shalt return in safety and see her and she shall tell thee how I have dealt with her: but tarry not beyond the time to come and go.'

Now, as fate would have it, his wife heard what he said to his mother and they knew it not. Then Hassan went without the city and beat the drum, whereupon up came the dromedaries and he loaded twenty of them with rarities of Irak; after which he returned to his mother and repeated his injunctions to her and took leave of her and his wife and children, one of whom was a yearling babe and the other two years old. Then he mounted and fared on ten days, without stopping night or day, over hills and valleys and plains and wastes, till, on the eleventh day, he reached the palace and went in to his sisters, with the presents he had brought them. The princesses rejoiced at his sight and gave him joy of his safety, whilst the youngest decorated the palace within and without. Then they took the presents and lodging him in a chamber as of old, enquired at him of his wife and mother and he told them that his wife had borne him two sons. And the youngest princess, seeing him well and in good case rejoiced with an exceeding joy and repeated the followed verse:

For news of thee, whene'er it blew, the wind I have besought, And never any but thyself occurreth to my thought.

Then he abode with them, an honoured guest, three months, passing his time in hunting and merrymaking and joy and delight.

To return to his wife. She abode with his mother two days after her husband's departure, and on the third day, she said to her, 'Glory be to God! Have I lived with him three years and shall I never go to the bath?' Then she wept and Hassan's mother took pity on her and said to her, 'O my daughter, we are strangers here and my husband is abroad. Were he at home, he would serve thee himself, but, as for me, I know no one. However, O my daughter, I will heat thee water and wash thy head in the bath that is in the house.' 'O my lady,' answered the princess, 'hadst thou spoken thus to one of the slave- girls, she had demanded to be sold in the open market and had not abode with thee. Men are excusable, for they are jealous and their reason tells them that, if a woman go forth the house, belike she will do lewdness. But, O my lady, women are not all alike and thou knowest that, if a woman have a mind to aught, whether it be the bath or what not else, none may avail against her, to guard her or keep her or debar her from her desire; and nought restraineth her but her reason and her religion.'

Then she wept and cursed and bemoaned herself and her strangerhood, till Hassan's mother was moved to pity for her case and knew that all she said was true and that there was nothing for it but to let her have her will. So she committed the affair to God (extolled and exalted be He!) and making ready all that they needed for the bath, took her and went with her thither. She carried her two little sons with her, and when they entered, they put off their clothes and all the women fell to gazing on the princess and glorifying God (to whom belong might and majesty) for that He had created so glorious a form. The report of her was noised abroad in Baghdad and the women of the city flocked to gaze upon her, till the bath was so crowded that there was no passing through it.

Now, as destiny would have it, there was present that day, with the rest of the women in the bath, one of the slave-girls of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, by name Tuhfeh the Lutanist, and she, finding the bath crowded and no passing for the multitude of women and girls, asked what was to do; and they told her of the [strange] damsel. So she went up to her and considering her straitly, was amazed at her grace and beauty and glorifed God (magnified be His majesty) for the fair forms He hath created. The sight of her diverted her from her bath, so that she went not [farther] in nor washed, but sat staring at the princess, till she had made an end of washing and coming forth [of the hot room] put on her clothes, whereupon beauty was added to her beauty. She sat down on the divan, whilst the women gazed upon her; then she looked at them and veiling herself, went out.

Tuhfeh went out with her and followed her, till she saw where she dwelt, when she left her and returned to the Khalif's palace. Then she went in to the lady Zubeideh and kissed the earth before her; and the princess said to her, 'O Tuhfeh, why hast thou tarried in the bath?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I have seen a marvel, never beheld I its like amongst men or women, and this it was that distracted me and confounded my wit and amazed me, so that I forgot to wash my head.' 'And what was that?' asked Zubeideh. 'O my lady,' replied Tuhfeh, 'I saw a damsel in the bath, having with her two little boys like moons, never saw any her like, before nor after her, nor is there the like

of her form in the whole world. By thy munificence, O my lady, if thou toldest the Commander of the Faithful of her, he would slay her husband and take her from him, for she hath not her like among women. I asked of her husband and they told me that he is a merchant called Hassan of Bassora. Moreover, I followed her from the bath to her own house and found it to be that of the vizier, with the two gates, one giving on the river and the other on the street. Indeed, O my lady, I fear lest the Khalif hear of her and break the law t and put her husband to death and take her to wife.'

'Out on thee, O Tuhfeh!' rejoined Zubeideh. 'Is this damsel endowed with such extraordinary grace and beauty that the Commander of the Faithful should, on her account, barter his soul's good for his worldly pleasure and transgress the law! By Allah, I must needs look on her, and if she be not as thou sayest, I will strike off thy head! O baggage, there are in the Khalif's harem three hundred and threescore slave-girls, after the number of the days of the year, yet is there none amongst them such as thou describest!' 'No, by Allah, O my lady!' answered Tuhfeh. 'Nor is there her like in all Baghdad; no, nor amongst the Arabs or the barbarians, nor hath God (to whom belong might and majesty) created the like of her!'

Therewith Zubeideh called for Mesrour, who came and kissed the earth before her, and she said to him, 'O Mesrour, go to the vizier's house, that with the two gates, one giving on the street and the other on the river, and bring me in haste the damsel who dwells there, with her two children and the old woman who is with her, and tarry not.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Mesrour and repairing to Hassan's house, knocked at the door. Quoth the old woman, 'Who is at the door?' 'Mesrour,' answered he, 'the eunuch of the Commander of the Faithful.' So she opened the door and he entered and saluted her; whereupon she returned his salute and asked his errand. Quoth he, 'The lady Zubeideh, daughter of El Casim and wife of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid, fifth of the sons of Abbas, uncle of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!), bids thee to her, thee and thy son's wife and her children; for the women have told her of her and her beauty.' 'O Mesrour,' answered the old woman, 'we are strangers and my son, the girl's husband, is abroad and hath straitly charged me not to go forth nor let her go forth, in his absence, neither show her to any of the creatures of God the Most High; and I fear me, if aught befall her and he come back, he will slay himself; wherefore I beseech thee, of thy favour, O Mesrour, require us not of that whereto we are unable.' 'O my lady,' rejoined Mesrour, 'if I knew aught to be feared for you in this, I would not require you to go; the lady Zubeideh desireth but to see her and [then] she may return. So disobey not, or thou wilt repent; and like as I take you, I will bring you both back in safety, so it please God the Most High.'

The old woman could not gainsay him; so she went in and making the damsel ready, brought her and her children forth and followed Mesrour to the Khalif's palace, where he carried them in and set them before the lady Zubeideh. They kissed the earth before her and called down blessings upon her; and Zubeideh said to the damsel, who was veiled, 'Wilt thou not uncover thy face, that I may look on it?' So she kissed the ground before her and unveiling, discovered a face that put to shame the full moon in the height of heaven. Zubeideh fixed her eyes on her and let them travel over her, whilst the palace was illuminated by the light of her countenance.

The princess and all who were present were amazed at her beauty and all who looked on her became mad and could speak to none. As for Zubeideh, she rose and making the damsel stand up, strained her to her bosom and seated her by herself on the couch. Moreover, she commanded to decorate the palace [in her honour] and calling for a suit of the richest raiment and a necklace of the most precious jewels, put them upon her. Then said she to her, 'O princess of fair ones, verily thou astoundest me and fillest mine eyes [with delight]. What arts knowest thou?' 'O my lady,' answered she, 'I have a dress of feathers, which if I put on before thee, thou wouldst see one of the fairest of fashions and marvel thereat, and all who saw it would talk of its goodliness, generation after generation.' 'And where is this dress of thine?' asked Zubeideh. 'It is with my husband's mother,' replied the damsel. 'Do thou seek it of her for me.'

So Zubeideh said to the old woman, 'My life on thee, O my mother, go and fetch us her feather-dress, that we may divert ourselves by looking on what she will do, and after take it again.' 'O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'this damsel is a liar. Hast thou ever seen a woman with a dress of feathers? Indeed, this pertaineth but to birds.' But the damsel said to Zubeideh, 'As I live, O my lady, she hath a feather-dress of mine and it is in a chest, which is buried in such a store-closet in the house.' So Zubeideh took from her neck a necklace of jewels, worth all the treasures of Chosroes and Caesar, and gave it to the old woman, saying, 'O my mother, I conjure thee by my life, take this necklace and go and fetch us this dress, that we may divert ourselves with the sight thereof, and after take it again!' But she swore to her that she had never seen the dress and knew not what the damsel meant by her speech.

Then Zubeideh cried out at her and taking the key from her, called Mesrour and said to him, 'Take this key and go to the house and enter such a store-closet there, amiddleward which thou wilt end a chest buried. Take it and break it open and bring me the feather-dress that is therein.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and went forth, whereupon the old woman arose and followed him, weeping and repenting her of having given ear to the damsel and gone to the bath with her, for her desire to go thither was but a trick. So she went with him to the house and opened the door of the closet, and he entered and brought out the chest. Then he took therefrom the feather-dress and wrapping it in a handkerchief, carried it to the princess Zubeideh, who took it and turned it about, marvelling at the beauty of its fashion; after which she gave it to the damsel, saying, 'Is this thy dress of feathers?' 'Yes, O my lady,' answered she, and took it joyfully. Then she examined it and rejoiced to find it whole as it was, not a feather missing. So she came down from beside the lady Zubeideh and taking her sons in her bosom, wrapped herself in the feather-dress and became a bird, by the ordinance of God (to whom belong might and majesty), whereat Zubeideh and all who were present marvelled. Then she walked with a proud and graceful gait and danced and sported and flapped her wings, whilst all eyes were axed on her and all marvelled at what she did.

Then said she with fluent tongue, 'Is this goodly, O my ladies?' And they answered, 'Yes, O princess of the fair! All that thou dost is goodly.' 'And this,' said she, 'that I am about to do is goodlier yet.' Then she spread her wings and flying up with her children to the dome of the palace, perched on the cornice of the saloon, whilst

they all looked at her, wide-eyed and said, 'By Allah, this is indeed a rare and goodly fashion! Never saw we its like.' Then, as she was about to take flight for her own land, she bethought her of Hassan and said, 'Hark ye, my mistresses!' and she recited the following verses:

Thou that hast left these lands and tow'rds the countries, where
Thy loved ones dwell, with swift and fleeting feet dost fare,
Think'st thou that I 'midst you abided in content
And deem'st thou that my days by you untroubled were?
When in Love's snare I fell, Love's self my gaol he made
And did unto the place of rendezvous repair.
He hid my vest and deemed that love had masters me
And that I of the One to seek it would forbear.
He wronged me, for my vest he to his mother gave
And in a closet charged her keep it with all care:
But I heard what they said and stored it in my mind
And much therein rejoiced and hoped for fortune fair.
My going to the bath, indeed, was but a trick.
That I to wonderment might move the people there.
The Khalif's bride no less did marvel at my charms,
When she on every side had viewed my shape and air.
'O wife of Er Reshid,' then said I, 'thou must know,
I have a, feather-dress, right splendid, rich and rare.
Were it on me, thou shouldst see wonders such an blot
Addiction from the spright and charm away despair.'
'Where is it?' deigned to ask the Khalif's wife, and I
Made answer, 'In his house who caught me in his snare.'
So Mesrour went in haste and brought the dress to her,
And lo, its lustre lit the palace everywhere.
I took it from his hand and opening, viewed it all,
To see 'twas whole and fit to wing withal the air.
Then, with my babes, therein I entered and my wings
Spreading, up to the roof I flew and perching there,
Said, 'Husband's mother mine, tell him, if he would meet
With me again, he must to leave his home prepare.'

When she had made an end of her verses, the lady Zubeideh said to her, 'Wilt thou not come down to us, that we may take our fill of thy beauty, O fairest of the fair? Glory be to Him who hath given thee eloquence and beauty!' But she said, 'God forbid that what is past should return!' Then to the mother of the wretched Hassan, 'By Allah, O my lady,' said she, 'it irketh me to part from thee; but, when thy son cometh and the days of separation are long upon him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him come to me in the Islands of Wac.' Then she took flight with her children and sought her own country, whilst the old woman wept and buffeted her face and lamented till she swooned away. When she came to herself she said to the lady Zubeideh, 'O my lady, what is this thou

hast done?' And Zubeideh said to her, 'O my lady the pilgrim, I knew not that this would happen and hadst thou told me of the case and acquainted me with her condition, I had not gainsaid thee. Nor did I know that she was of the Flying Jinn; else had I not suffered her to don the dress nor take her children: but now words profit nothing; so do thou acquit me of offence against thee.' And the old woman could do no otherwise than answer, 'Thou art acquitted.'

Then she went forth the palace and returning to her own house, buffeted her face till she swooned away. When she came to herself, she wearied after her daughter- in-law and her children and for the sight of her son and repeated the following verses:

Your absence, on the day of parting, when you went
From home, enforced me weep for grief and dreariment.
I cry out, for the smart of separation's pains,
What while mine eyelids still with scalding tears are brent,
'Parting this is: shall aye retuning be for us?
Concealment's done away by your abandonment.'
Would God they would return and keep their troth!
Ah, then, Time would belike restore the days of my content.

Then she dug three raves in the house and betook herself to them with weeping all tides of the day and watches of the night; and when her son's absence was long upon her and grief and longing and unquiet waxed upon her, she recited these verses:

Thine image 'twixt mine eyelids still harbours, when they close,
As in my heart thy memory in throbbing and repose.
Yea, and thy love for ever runs in the bones of me,
As in the fruited branches the sap in summer flows.
Indeed, my breast is straitened, the day I see thee not,
And e'en my censors hold me excuséd for my woes.
O thou, for whom love-longing hath gotten hold of me,
For love of whom distraction for ever on me grows,
Have mercy, as thou fearest the Merciful, on me:
The love of thee hath made me to taste of death, God knows.

Meanwhile, when Hassan came to the princesses, they conjured him to tarry with them three months [and he consented and sojourned with them for that time], after which they gave him eve loads of gold and the like of silver and one load of victual and accompanied him on his homeward way, till he conjured them to return, whereupon the youngest came up to him, to bid him farewell, and embracing him, wept till she fainted. Then she recited the following verses:

Ah, when shall parting's fire be quenched by thy return once more?
When shall I have my wish of thee and we be as of yore?
Indeed, the day of severance affrights and troubles me,
And languishment for love-taking on me is passing sore.

Then came forward the second princess and embraced him and recited these verses:

Like the parting from life is the parting from thee
And thy loss as the loss of heaven's rains is to me.
Thy departure's a heart-searing fire, for indeed,
In thy presence the gardens of Paradise be.

Then came forward the third and embraced him and recited these verses:

We left not to take leave, upon our parting day,
For weariness or aught of ill intention; nay,
My very soul thou art, and how unto my soul
Should I, of my free will, I prithee, farewell say?

Then came forward the fourth and embraced him and recited these verses:

Nought made me weep, save only when he, in parting guise,
Did me of his departure so cruelly apprise.
Behold this precious union I've hung upon mine ear:
'Twas of my tears I wrought it, fast dropping from mine eyes.

Then came forward the fifth and embraced him and recited these verses:

Depart thou not; for I've no strength without thee to endure
Nor unto a departing one courage to say farewell;
Nor any patience. severance to encounter; no, nor tears
To shed upon the ruined house wherein we twain did dwell.

Then came forward the sixth and embraced him and recited these verses:

I said, when the camels away with them fared
And longing mine entrails did ravage, 'Ah me!
If there were but a king over whom I had power,
I would seize, by main force, on each ship on the sea.'

Then came forward the seventh and embraced him and recited these verses:

Indeed, the severance from thee hath made my heart to ache:
I have no bowels of the like of thee farewell to take.
God knows I did not leave to speak the parting word to thee,
Save of the fear that in the act thy very heart would break.

Hassan also wept for parting from them, till he swooned, and repeated the following verses:

Indeed, upon the parting day, my eye with pearls did rain
Of dropping tears, whose necklaces I strung in many a skein.
The cameleer urged on his beasts with them, what while nor strength
Nor fortitude I found, nor did my heart with me remain.
I took my leave of them and turned away in grief, and eke
To quit the encampment and the place of meeting I was fain.
Yea, I turned back, unknowing of the road and comforting
My soul but with the thought that I should meet thee yet again.
List, O my friend, unto the tale of love, and God forbid

That I should speak and that thy heart to hearken should not deign!
Since thou hast lost them, O my soul, forswear the sweet of life
Nor covet its continuance, for, wanting them, 'twere vain.

Then he bade them farewell and fared on diligently night and day, till he came to Baghdad, the Abode of Peace and Sanctuary of the Abbaside Khalifs, unknowing what had passed in his absence. Here he dismissed the dromedaries and entering his house, went in to his mother, to salute her, but found her worn of body and wasted of bones, for much mourning and watching and weeping and lamentation, till she was grown like a skewer and could make him no answer. He asked her of his wife and children and she wept till she swooned away, whereupon he searched the house for them, but found no trace of them. So he went to the store-closet and finding it open and the chest broken and the feather-dress missing, knew that his wife had possessed herself thereof and flown away with her children. Then he returned with his mother and finding her recovered from her swoon, questioned her of his wife and children, whereupon she wept and said, 'O my son, may God amply requite thee their loss! These are their three tombs.'

When Hassan heard these words of his mother, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, in which he lay from the first of the day till noon; wherefore anguish was added to his mother's anguish and she despaired of his life. However, after awhile, he came to himself and wept and buffeted his face and rent his clothes and went about the house in a state of distraction, reciting the following verses:

Folk have made moan of passion before me, of past years,
And live and dead for absence have suffered pains and fears;
But that within my bosom I harbour, with mine eyes
I've never seen the like of nor heard it with mine ears.

Then he drew his sword, and coming up to his mother, said to her, 'Except thou tell me the truth of the case, I will strike of thy head and [after] kill myself.' 'O my son,' answered she, 'put up thy sword and sit down, till I tell thee what hath passed.' So he sheathed his sword and sat by her side, whilst she recounted to him all that had passed in his absence, adding, 'O my son, but that I saw her weep to go to the bath and feared that she would complain to thee, on thy return, and thou wouldst be wroth with me, I had not carried her thither; nor had I brought out the feather-dress, though I died for it, were it not that the princess Zubeideh was wroth with me and took the key from me by force: and thou knowest, O my son, that no hand may measure length with that of the Khalifate. When they brought her the dress, she took it and turned it over, fearing lest somewhat might be lost thereof, but found it whole, wherefore she rejoiced and making her children fast to her middle, donned the feather-vest, after the lady Zubeideh had pulled off to her all that was upon her and clad her therein, in honour of her and because of her beauty. No sooner had she done this than she shook and becoming a bird, walked about the palace, whilst all who were present gazed at her and marvelled at her beauty and grace. Then she flew up to the roof and perching on the cornice, looked at me and said, "When thy son cometh and the nights of separation are long on him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love

and longing agitate him, let him leave his native land and journey to the Islands of Wac." This, then, is her story and what befell in thine absence.'

When she had made an end of her story, Hassan gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon, from which he ceased not till nightfall, when he revived and fell to buffeting his face and writhing on the floor like a wounded snake. His mother sat by his head, weeping, till midnight, when he came to himself and wept sore and recited the following veres:

Pause and behold his sorry state whom ye have left to mourn,
So haply you will pity him, after despite and scorn.
For, if ye look on him, 'fore God, the man you will deny,
As 'twere you knew him not, so sick he is and passion-worn.
Forslain of love-longing for you he is, and of the dead
He'd reckoned be, but for the groans wherewith his breast is torn.
Think not that separation's light to him; nay, grievous 'tis
Unto the longing; death itself were easier to be borne.

Then he rose and went round about the house, weeping and lamenting and bemoaning himself, five days, without tasting meat or drink. His mother came to him and conjured him, till he broke his fast, and besought him to leave weeping; but he hearkened not to her and continued to weep and lament, whilst she strove to comfort him and he heeded her not. Then he recited the following verses:

My soul for love a burden bears, so great,
All strength that is would fail beneath its weight.
I'm all amazed and sore my languor is;
Alike are night and morn to this my strait.
Indeed, till now I went in fear of death,
But death today a remedy I rate.

He abode thus till daybreak when his eyes closed and he [fell asleep, for sheer weariness, and] saw [in a dream] his wife weeping and repentant for that which she had done. So he started up from sleep, crying out and reciting the following verses:

Their image is never absent a breathing-while from my breast:
I have made it within my bosom the place of the honoured guest.
But that I hope for reunion no instant more would I live,
And but that I see them in slumber, I would not lie down to rest.

He abode thus a whole month, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted, wakeful by night and eating little, till he bethought him to repair to his sisters and take counsel with them in the matter of his wife, so haply they might help him to regain her. So he summoned the dromedaries and loading fifty of them with rarities of Irak, committed the house to his mother's care and deposited all his goods in safe keeping, except some few he left with her. Then he set out on his journey and stayed not till he reached the palace of the Mountain of Clouds, when he went in to the princesses and gave them the presents, in which they rejoiced. Then they gave him joy of his safety and said to him, 'O our brother, what ails thee to come [again so soon], seeing thou wast with us but two months since?' Whereupon he wept and repeated the following verses:

I see my soul all pined for loss of her it held so dear;
It hath no ease, in any wise, of life and all its cheer.
My malady is one of those whose remedy's unknown;
And shall a malady be cured, except its leach be here?
Thou that forbidd'st me the delight of sleep, thou hast me left
The wind to question after thee, whenas its wafts draw near,
From my love's land but lately borne, my love who doth comprise
Beauties that make mine eyes to rain with many a bloody tear.
O wind, that visitest her land, haply a waft of air
The hearts with somewhat of her scent may quicken yet and cheer.

Then he gave a great cry and swooned away. The princesses sat round him, weeping over him, till he came to himself and repeated these verses:

It may be Fate at last shall turn its bridle-rein
And bring me her I love, for Fortune changeth still;
And things shall yet betide, despite the things fordone,
To further forth my hopes and bring me to my will.

Then he wept, till he fainted again, and presently coming to himself, recited the following:

O term of all my pains and all my languishment,
Art thou content? Indeed, in passion I'm content.
Dost thou forsake me thus, without or fault or cause?
Turn back to me, I pray, from rigour and relent.

Then he wept till he swooned away once more and when he came to himself, he repeated these verses:

Sleep hath my lids departed, but wake is ever nigh
And of the hoarded teardrops still lavish is mine eye.
It weepeth tears like rubies, for love, And evermore
With growing distance waxeth the tide of tears more high.
Longing within my bosom, beloved mine, hath lit
A fire that rageth ever and will not cease or die.
No tear, when I recall thee, I shed, but still herein
Is lightning, ay, and thunder of many a groan and sigh.

Then he wept till he fainted away a fourth time, and presently recovering, recited the following lines:

Do ye for passion and distress e'en suffer as we do?
And is the love of us with you, like to our love for you?
May Allah love-liking confound! How bitter 'tis, indeed!
What is it love would have of us? Ah, would to God I knew!
Your lovely faces, far and wide though distance 'twixt us stretch,
Still in our eyes, where'er we are, are mirrored, clear and true.
With memories of your dwelling-place my heart is occupied

And still the turtle, when she sings, my trouble doth renew.
O dove, that callest all the night upon thy mate, with me
Thou mak'st grief company and add'st longing my longing to.
Thou leav'st my lids unsatisfied with weeping and lament
For dear ones gone and far away, departed from our view.
Yea, every time and tide for them I yearn and am consumed
With longing, when on me the night falls with its darkling hue.

When his sisters heard this and saw his condition, the transport of love and longing and the passion and distraction that possessed him were manifest to them and they questioned him of his case. He wept and told them what had befallen in his absence and how his wife had taken flight with her children, wherefore they grieved for him and asked him what she said at leave-taking. 'O my sisters,' answered be, 'she said to my mother, "Tell thy son, when he cometh and the nights of separation are long upon him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him join me in the islands of Wac."' When they heard this, they signed to one another with their eyes and shook their heads, and each looked at her sister, whilst Hassan looked at them. Then they bowed their heads and bethought themselves awhile; after which they raised their heads and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Put forth thy hand to heaven and if thou win thither, then shalt thou win to thy wife and children.'

When he heard this, the tears ran down his cheeks like rain and wet his clothes, and he recited the following verses:

Red cheeks and eyes of melting black have charmed my wit away;
And still, when cometh sleeplessness, patience farewell doth say.
The fair with inhumanity have worn my body sore;
No breath of life abideth there that folk discover may.
Houris, as graceful in their gait as desert antelopes,
Whose unveiled beauties if saints saw, they'd doat thereon straightway;
Faring as fares the garden breeze that blows before the dawn,
Trouble and restlessness for love of these on me do prey;
I hung my hopes upon a maid of them, a loveling fair,
For whom my heart is all consumed with fire that rageth aye;
A loveling soft of sides and proud and graceful in her gait,
The darkness dwelleth in her hair, but in her face is day.
She troubleth me, and champions stout how many have the eyes
And cheeks of lovely women stirred to trouble and dismay!

Then he wept, whilst the princesses wept for his weeping, and they were moved to compassion and jealousy for him. So they fell to comforting him and exhorting him to patience and offering up prayers for his reunion with his wife; whilst his sister [the youngest] said to him, 'O my brother, take heart and be of good courage and have patience; so shalt thou come to thy desire; for whoso is patient and waiteth, attaineth that he seeketh. Patience is the key of relief and indeed the poet saith:

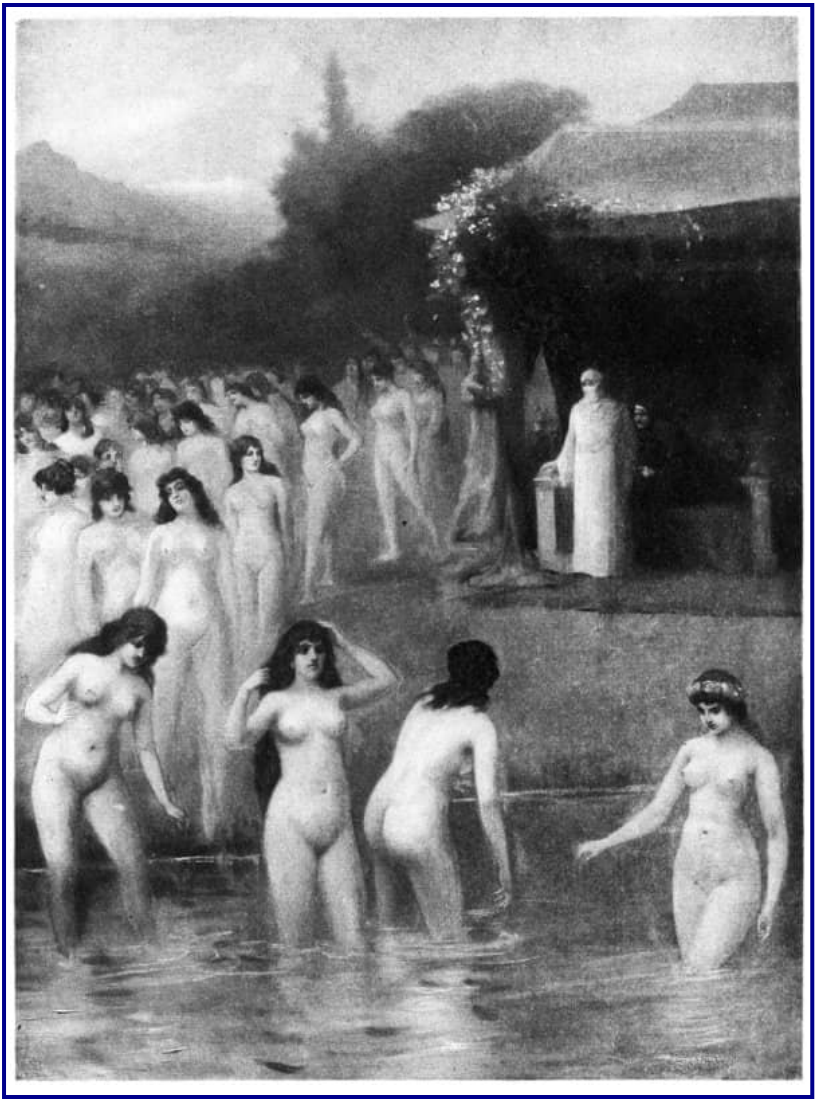
Let destiny with slackened rein its course appointed fare
And lie thou down to sleep by night, with heart devoid of care;
'twixt the closing of an eye and th' opening thereof, God hath it in
His power to change a case from foul to fair.

So take heart and brace up thy resolution, for one who is to live ten years diets not when he is but nine. Weeping and grief and mourning engender sickness and disease; wherefore do thou abide with us till thou be rested, and I will cast about how thou mayst win to thy wife and children, so it please God the Most High.' And he wept sore and recited these verses:

An if of its disease my body be made whole,
I'm still unhealed of that which harbours in my soul.
Except a lover be united with his love,
No cure for love's disease is nor lovers' dole.

Then he sat down beside her and she proceeded to talk with him and comfort him and question him of the manner of his wife's departure. So he told her and she said, 'By Allah, O my brother, I had it in mind to bid thee burn the feather-dress, but Satan made me forget it.' She ceased not to talk with him and caress him and company with him other ten days, whilst sleep visited him not and he delighted not in food; and when the case was long upon him and unrest waxed in him, he recited the following verses:

A loved one owns my heart, with whom I companied of yore:
There is no creature save herself I wish or weary for.
All that the Arabs boast of charms in her united are;
She's a gazelle, but on my heart she feedeth evermore.
Because my patience and resource do fail for love of her,
I weep, though weeping profits not to salve my secret sore.
A fair one, seven [years of age] she hath and seven thereto,
As she a moon of five nights were and five thereto and four.



When the youngest princess saw him thus distracted for passion and love-longing and the fever of desire, she went in to her sisters, tearful-eyed and mournful-hearted, and throwing herself upon them, kissed their feet, weeping, and besought them to devise some means of bringing Hassan to the Wac Islands and effecting his reunion with his wife and children. She ceased not to conjure them to further her brother in the accomplishment of his desire and to weep before them, till she made them weep and they said to her, 'Be of good cheer: we will do our endeavour to bring about his reunion with his family, if it be the will of God the Most High.' And he abode with them a whole year, during which his eyes ceased never from tears.

Now the princesses had an uncle, their father's brother- german, whose name was Abdulcuddous, and he loved the eldest with an exceeding love and was wont to visit her once a year and do her desires. They had told him of Hassan's adventure with the Magian and how he had availed to slay him; whereat he rejoiced and gave the eldest princess perfumes, saying, 'O daughter of my brother, if thou be in concern for aught or stand in any need or if aught irk thee, cast of these perfumes upon fire, naming me, and I will be with thee presently and will do thy desire.' This was said on the first day of the year that was now at an end; and the eldest princess said to her youngest sister, 'Lo, the year is wholly past and my uncle is not come. Rise, bring me somewhat of fire and the box of perfumes.' So the damsel arose, rejoicing, and fetching what she sought, laid it before her sister, who opened the box and taking thence a little of the perfume, cast it into the fire, naming her uncle; nor was it burnt out ere a cloud of dust appeared at the farther end of the valley and presently lifting, discovered an old man riding on an elephant, which trumpeted as it came.

As soon as he came within sight of the princesses, he fell to making signs to them with his hands and feet; nor was it long ere he reached the castle and alighting from the elephant, came in to them, whereupon they embraced him and kissed his hands and saluted him. Then he sat down, whilst the girls talked with him and questioned him of his absence. Quoth he, 'I was sitting but now with your aunt, when I smelt the perfumes and hastened to you on this elephant. What wouldst thou, O daughter of my brother?' 'O uncle,' answered she, 'indeed we longed for thee, for the year is past and it is not thy wont to be absent from us more than a year.' 'I was busy,' answered he, 'but I purposed to come to you to-morrow.' Wherefore they thanked him and blessed him and sat talking with him.

Presently the eldest said to him, 'O my uncle, we told thee the story of Hassan of Bassora, whom Behram the Magian brought and how he slew the latter and after made prize of the Supreme King's daughter and took her to wife and journeyed with her to his native land?' 'Yes,' answered he; 'and what befell him after that?' 'He was blest with two sons by her,' said the princess; 'but she played him false; for she took them in his absence and fled with them to her own country, saying to his mother, "When thy son returneth and asketh for me and the nights of separation are long upon him and he craveth reunion with me and meeting and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him come to me in the Islands of Wac."'

When Abdulcuddous heard this, he shook his head and bit his hands; then, bowing his head, he fell a-drumming on the earth with his fingers; after which he shook his head and looked right and left and shook his head again, whilst Hassan

watched him from a place where he was hidden from him. Then said the princesses to their uncle, 'Vouchsafe us an answer, for our hearts are rent in sunder.' But he shook his head at them, saying, 'O my daughters, this man hath wearied himself [in vain] and cast himself into grievous stress and sore peril; for he may not win to the Wac Islands.'

With this the princesses called Hassan, who came forth and kissed Abdulcuddous's hand and saluted him. The old man rejoiced in him and seated him by his side; whereupon quoth the damsels, 'O uncle, acquaint our brother Hassan with that which thou hast told us.' So he said to Hassan, 'O my son, put away from thee this sore torment; for thou canst never win to the Wac Islands, though the Flying Jinn and the wandering stars were with thee; for that betwixt thee and these islands are seven valleys and seven seas and seven mighty mountains. How then canst thou come at this place and who shall bring thee thither? Wherefore I conjure thee by Allah, O my son, do thou reckon them as dead and turn back forthright and weary not thy soul! Indeed, I give thee good counsel, an thou wilt but accept it.' At these words Hassan wept till he fainted, and the princesses sat round him, weeping for his weeping, whilst the youngest rent her clothes and buffeted her face, till she swooned away.

When the old man saw them in this transport of grief and trouble and mourning, he was moved to pity for them and bidding them be silent, said to Hassan, 'O my son, be of good comfort and rejoice in the accomplishment of thy desire, if it be the will of God the Most High. Rise, O my son, take courage and follow me.' So Hassan arose and followed him, rejoicing in the fulfilment of his wish, after he had taken leave of the princesses. Then the old man called the elephant and mounting, took Hassan up behind him and fared on three days and nights, like the blinding lightning, till he came to a vast blue mountain, whose stones were all blue and amiddleward which was a cavern, with a door of Chinese iron. Here he set Hassan down and alighting, dismissed the elephant. Then he went up to the door and knocked, whereupon it opened and there came out to him a black slave, hairless, as he were an Afrit, with a sword in his right hand and a target of steel in the other. When he saw Abdulcuddous, he threw his sword and buckler from his hand and coming up to him, kissed his hand.

Abdulcuddous took Hassan by the hand and entered with him, whilst the slave shut the door after them; whereupon Hassan found himself in a vast and spacious cavern, through which ran a vaulted passage, and they fared on therein a mile's space, till they came forth upon a great open space and made for an angle [of the mountain] wherein were two great doors of solid brass. The old man opened one of the doors and said to Hassan, 'Sit at the door, whilst I enter and return to thee in haste, and beware lest thou open it and enter.' Then he entered and shutting the door after him, was absent an hour, after which he returned, leading a horse saddled and bridled, which, when it ran, flew, and when it flew, the very dust overtook it not, and brought it to Hassan, saying, 'Mount.' So he mounted and Abdulcuddous opened the second door, beyond which appeared a vast desert.

They passed through the door into the desert and the old man said to him, 'O my son, take this letter and go whither this horse will carry thee. When thou seest him stop at the door of a cavern like this, dismount and throw the bridle over the saddle-bow and let him go. He will enter the cavern, which do thou not enter with him, but abide at the door five days, without losing patience. On the sixth day there will come

forth to thee a black elder, clad all in black, with a long white beard, flowing down to his navel. Kiss his hands and take his skirt and lay it on thy head and weep before him, till he take compassion on thee and ask thee what thou wouldst have. Then give him the letter, which he will take and go in and leave thee, without speaking. Wait at the door other five days, without wearying, and on the sixth day expect him; and if he come out to thee himself know that thy need will be accomplished but, if one of his servants come forth to thee, know that he who cometh forth to thee purposeth to kill thee; and peace be on thee! For know, O my son, that whoso imperilleth himself is his own undoer; wherefore, if thou fear for thy life, cast it not into [peril of] destruction; but, if thou fear not, up and do thy will, for I have expounded the case to thee. Yet, if thou be minded to return to thy friends, let me mount thee on the elephant; it will carry thee to the daughters of my brother, who will restore thee to thy country and thy home, and [belike] God will vouchsafe thee a better than this girl, of whom thou art enamoured.' Quoth Hassan, 'And how shall life be sweet to me, except I attain my desire? By Allah, I will never turn back till I regain my beloved or my death overtake me!' And he wept and recited the following verses:

For the loss of my belovéd and the passion that for e'er On me grows,
I stand proclaiming my abjection and despair.
Of my longing for my loved one, the encampment's dust I kiss,
Though it serve but to redouble my distraction and my care.
Allah watch o'er those who're absent, though their memory's in my heart!
Ever present art my sorrows and my joys are fled for e'er.
Quoth my censors to me, 'Patience!' But therewith they've fared away:
Lamentation but and burning have they left me to my share.
'Twas her taking leave affrayed me and her saying, 'When I'm gone,
Look my memory thou forget not and our loves in mind thou bear.'
Unto whom shall I for succour turn, in whom hope after them?
For in good and evil fortune still my hope and trust they were.
Ah, the anguish of returning, after having said farewell!
How my rancorous foes exulted, when they saw me backward fare!
O ye flaming fires of passion, still redouble on my heart!
This it is against whose danger, I, alas! had fain been ware.
If my loves are fled for ever, after them I will not live;
Yet, if they return to glad me, ho for joy and fortune fair!
Never shall mine eyes, by Allah, stint from weeping for their loss!
Stream on stream, my tears shall witness to the stress of my despair.

When Abdulcuddous heard this, he knew that he would not turn back from his desire nor would words have effect on him, and was certified that nothing would serve him but he must adventure himself, though it cost him his life. So he said to him, 'Know, O my son, that the Islands of Wac are seven islands, wherein are great plenty of troops, all virgin girls, and the inner isles are peopled by Satans and Marids and warlocks and tribesmen of the Jinn, whose land none ever entered and returned thence. So, God on thee, return presently to thy people; for know that she whom thou seekest is the king's daughter of all these islands; and how canst thou win to her? Hearken to me, O my son, and belike God will vouchsafe thee a better than she in her stead.' 'O

my lord,' answered Hassan, 'though for the love of her I were torn limb from limb, yet should I but redouble in love and transport! Needs must I enter the Wac Islands and come to the sight of my wife and children; and God willing, I will not return save with her and them.' 'Then,' said the sheikh, 'nothing will serve thee but thou must make the journey?' 'Nothing,' answered Hassan: 'and I only ask of thee thy prayers for aid and furtherance; so haply God will presently reunite me with my wife and children.' Then he wept for stress of longing and recited these verses:

Ye are my wish, the fairest fair of any mortal wight;
Indeed, I've lodged you in the stead of hearing and of sight.
Upon my heart you've gotten hold; it is your dwelling-place,
And after you I am become in torment day and night.
Think not in anywise I've ceased from loving you; indeed,
The love of you hath brought the wretch to sick and sorry plight.
Ye went away and with you went my gladness, and for me
Serenity became the worst of trouble and despite.
Yea, ye have left me here alone, to watch the stars for pain
And weep with tears that pour and pour, like rain from heaven's height.
O night, thou'rt long, indeed, on him who passed thee on wake,
Watching the visage of the moon, a love-distracted wight.
Wind, if thou pass the camp where they have lighted down, to them
My farewell greeting bear, for life is spent and ended quite;
And tell them somewhat of the pangs I suffer; for indeed
They know not what's to do with me nor that which ails my spright.

Then he wept till he swooned away; and when he came to himself Abdulcuddous said to him, 'O my son, thou hast a mother; make her not taste [the bitterness of] thy loss.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' replied he, 'I will never return except with my wife or my death overtake me.' And he wept and lamented and recited the following verses:

I swear by Love's virtue, my faith tow'rds thee hath not changed for a day
For absence; I am not, indeed, of those that their troth plight betray.
Such longing is in me that, if to the folk I discovered my case,
'Sure madness hath gotten a hold of the man,' without doubt they would say.
Love-longing and mourning and woe, the transport and pangs of desire,
When this is the case of a wight, how fares it with him, wellaway?

With this the old man knew that he would not turn from his purpose, though it cost him his life: so he gave him the letter and prayed for him and enjoined him how he should do, saying, 'I have in this letter given a strait charge concerning thee to Abourruweish, son of Belkis, daughter of Muin, for he is my master and teacher, and all, men and Jinn, humble themselves to him and stand in awe of him. Now go with the blessing of God.'

Hassan gave the horse the rein, and it flew off with him, swiftlier than lightning, and stayed not in its course ten days, when he saw before him a vast mountain, blacker than night, that walled the world from East to West. As he neared it, his horse neighed under him, whereupon there flocked to it horses in number as the drops of rain, none

could tell their tale, and fell to rubbing themselves against it. Hassan was affrighted at them and rode on, surrounded by the horses, till he came to the cavern which Abdulcuddous had described to him. The steed stood still at the door and Hassan alighted and threw the rein over the saddle-bow; whereupon the horse entered the cavern, whilst he abode without, as the old man had charged him, pondering the issue of his case and knowing not what would befall him.

He abode thus, at the mouth of the cavern, five days and nights, sleepless, mournful, distracted and perplexed, pondering his severance from home and friends and family, with tearful eye and mournful heart. Then he bethought him of his mother and of what might yet happen to him and of his separation from his wife and children and all that he had suffered and recited the following verses:

The med'cine of my heart's with you: indeed, my heart doth fail
And from my lids' hill-foot run tears, like rillets to the vale.
Yearning and dole and severance, desire and strangerhood,
And distance from my native land against me do prevail.
Nought but a lover for her loss he loves distraught am I;
Calamities have smitten me and made my spirit quail.
And if my love on me have brought affliction, where is he,
The noble, whom vicissitudes affect not nor assail?

Hardly had he made an end of his verses, when out came the Sheikh Abourruweish, black and clad in black raiment, and he knew him by the description that Abdulcuddous had given him. So he threw himself at his feet and rubbed his cheeks on them and taking his skirt, laid it on his head and wept before him. Quoth the old man, 'What wantest thou, O my son?' Whereupon he put out his hand to him with the letter, and he took it and re- entered the cavern, without making him any answer. Hassan remained in his place other five days, whilst fear and concern redoubled on him and restlessness clave fast to him, and he abode weeping and bemoaning himself for the anguish of estrangement and much watching. And he recited the following verses:

Glory to Him who rules the skies! The lover in affliction lies.
Who hath not tasted passion's food Knows not what misery can devise.
Rivers of blood, if I restrained My tears, would ripple from mine eyes.
How many a friend is hard of heart And us with sore affliction tries!
An she with me would but keep faith, I'd call a truce with tears and sighs.
I'm overthrown and ruin's eye Hath smitten me on woful wise.
Beasts weep to see my dreariment And everything in air that flies.

He ceased not to weep till dawn of the sixth day, when Abourruweish came forth to him, clad in white raiment, and beckoned to him to enter. So he went in, rejoicing and assured of the accomplishment of his desire, and the old man took him by the hand and leading him into the cavern, fared on with him half a day's journey, till they came to a vaulted gateway with a door of steel. Abourruweish opened the door and they entered a vestibule vaulted with onyx stones, inlaid with arabesques of gold, which led them to a great hall, wide and lined with marble. In its midst was a garden

containing all manner trees and flowers and fruits, with birds warbling on the branches and singing the praises of God, the Almighty King; and there were four estrades, each facing other, and in each estrade a fountain, at whose corners stood lions of red gold, spouting water from their mouths into the basin. On each estrade stood a chair, whereon sat an elder, with great store of books before him and censers of gold, containing fire and perfumes, and before each elder were students, who read the books to him.

When the two entered, the elders rose and did them honour; whereupon Abourruweish signed to them to dismiss their scholars and they did so. Then the four arose and seating themselves before Abourruweish, asked him of Hassan's case, and he said to the latter, 'Tell the company thy story and all that hath betided thee, first and last.' So Hassan wept sore and related to them his adventures [up to the time when Behram sewed him in the camel's skin and caused the rocs carry him up to the mountain- top]; whereupon all the sheikhs cried out and said, 'Is this indeed he whom the Magian caused ascend the Mountain of Clouds by means of the rocs, sewn up in the skin of a camel?' And he said, 'Yes.' So they turned to the Sheikh Abourruweish and said to him, 'O our sheikh, Behram contrived his ascent to the top of the mountain; but how did he descend thence and what wonders saw he there?' And Abourruweish said, 'O Hassan, tell them how thou camest down and what thou sawest of marvels.'

So he told them all that had befallen him, first and last, and how he had gotten the Magian into his power and slain him and delivered the youth from him and sent him back to his own country and how he had taken the king's daughter of the Jinn and married her and she had borne him two children, yet had played him false and taken them and flown away, and related to them all the perils and hardships he had undergone; whereat they all marvelled and said to Abourruweish, 'O elder of elders, by Allah, this youth is to be pitied! But belike thou wilt aid him to regain his wife and children.' 'O my brothers,' answered he, 'this is a grave and perilous matter; and never saw I any loathe life but this youth. You know that the Wac Islands are hard of access and that none may come to them but at the peril of his life; and ye know also the strength of their people and their guards. Moreover, I have sworn an oath not to tread their soil nor transgress against them in aught: so how shall this man win to the daughter of the Great King and who can avail to bring him to her or help him in this matter?'

'O elder of elders,' replied the others, 'verily this man is consumed with desire and he hath adventured himself to bring thee thy brother Abdulcuddous's letter; wherefore it behoves thee to help him.' And Hassan arose and kissed Abourruweish's feet and raising his skirt, laid it on his head, weeping and saying, 'I beseech thee, by Allah, to reunite me with my wife and children, though it cost me my life and soul!' The four elders all wept for his weeping and said to Abourruweish, 'Deal kindly with this poor fellow for the sake of thy brother Abdulcuddous and profit by this occasion to earn the reward of [God for] him.' Quoth he, 'This unhappy youth knoweth not what he undertaketh; but we will help him after the measure of our power.' When Hassan heard the sheikh's words, he rejoiced and kissed the hands of the five elders, one after another, imploring their aid.

Then Abourruweish took inkhorn and paper and wrote a letter, which he sealed and gave to Hassan, together with a leathern pouch, containing perfumes and flint and steel, and said to him, 'Take care of this pouch, and when thou fallest into any strait, burn a little of the perfumes therein and name me, whereupon I will be with thee presently and deliver thee from thy stress.' Moreover, he bade one of those present fetch him an Afrit of the Flying Jinn; and he did so forthright; whereupon quoth Abourruweish to the genie, 'What is thy name?' 'Thy slave is [called] Dehnesh ben Fectesh,' replied the Afrit. And the sheikh said, 'Draw near to me.' So Dehnesh drew near to him and he put his mouth to his ear and said somewhat to him, whereat the Afrit shook his head and answered, 'I accept, O sheikh of sheikhs.'

Then said Abourruweish to Hassan, 'Arise, O my son, mount the shoulders of this Afrit, Dehnesh the Flyer; but, when he soareth with thee to heaven and thou hearest the angels glorifying God in the air, have a care lest thou do the like; else wilt thou perish and he also.' 'I will not say a word,' replied he, and the old man continued: 'O Hassan, to-morrow at peep of day he will set thee down in a land of pure white, like unto camphor, whereupon do thou fare on ten days by thyself, till thou come to the gate of a city. Enter and enquire for the king of the city; and when thou comest to his presence, salute him and kiss his hand: then give him this letter and heed well that which he shall counsel thee.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Hassan and mounted the Afrit's shoulders, whilst the elders rose and offered up prayers for him and commended him to Dehnesh's care.

Then the Afrit soared with him to the very confines of the sky, till he heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, and flew on with him a day and a night, till he set him down, at dawn of the next day, in a land, white as camphor, and went his way, leaving him there. When Hassan found himself alone in the land aforesaid, he fared on day and night for ten days, till he came to the gate of the city in question and entering, enquired for the king. They directed him to him and told him that his name was Hessoun, King of the Land of Camphor, and that he had troops and soldiers, enough to fill the earth, in its length and breadth. So he sought an audience of him and being admitted to his presence, found him a mighty king and kissed the earth before him. Quoth the king, 'What is thine occasion?' Whereupon Hassan kissed the letter and gave it to him. The king read it and shook his head, then said to one of his officers, 'Take this youth and lodge him in the guest-house.' So he took him and lodged him in the guest-house, where he abode three days, eating and drinking and seeing none but the servant who waited on him and who entertained him with discourse and cheered him with his company, questioning him of his case and how he came thither; whereupon he told him his whole story.

On the fourth day, his attendant carried him before the king, who saith to him, 'O Hassan, the sheikh of sheikhs adviseth me that thou comest to me, seeking to enter the Wac Islands. O my son, I would send thee thither forthright, but that by the way are many perils and thirsty deserts, full of terrors; but have patience and all will be Deli, for needs must I make shift to bring thee to thy desire, so it please God the Most High. Know, O my son, that here is a great army, equipped with arms and horses and gear, who desire to enter the Wac Islands and cannot avail thereto. But, for the sake of the Sheikh Abourruweish, I may not send thee back to him unfulfilled of thy desire.

There will presently come to us ships from the Wac Islands, and I will set thee on board the first that arrives and give thee in charge to the sailors, so they may take care of thee and carry thee to the islands. If any question thee of thy case and condition, answer him, "I am kinsman to King Hessoun, lord of the Land of Camphor;" and when the ship makes fast to the shore of the Wac Islands and the master bids thee land, do thou land.

When thou comest ashore, thou wilt see a multitude of settles all about the beach, of which do thou choose one and crouch under it and stir not. As soon as it is dark night, thou wilt see an army of women appear and flock about the merchandise [landed from the ship], and one of them will sit down on the settle, under which thou hast hidden thyself, whereupon do thou put forth thy hand to her and take hold of her and implore her protection. If she accord it thee, thou wilt accomplish thy desire and win to thy wife and children; but, if she refuse thee, make thy moan for thyself and give up all hope of life, for thou art a dead man. For know, O my son, that thou adventurest thy life and except the Lord of Heaven had succoured thee, thou hadst not won hither. This is all I can do for thee, and peace be on thee!' When Hassan heard the king's words, he wept till he swooned away, and when he came to himself, he recited the following verses:

A term's decreed to me, which I must needs fulfil,
And when its days are spent, I die, will I or nill.
Though lions in their woods beset me, whilst a breath Is left me,
I shall get the better of them still.

Then he kissed the earth before the king and said to him, 'O mighty king, how many days remain till the coming of the ships?' 'In a month's time,' answered Hessoun, 'they will come and will tarry here other two months, to sell their cargo, after which they will return to their own country: so thou must not look to set out save after three whole months.' Then he bade him return to the guest-house and commanded to supply him with all that he needed of meat and drink and raiment fit for kings. Hassan abode there a month, at the end of which time the ships arrived and the king and the merchants went forth to them, taking Hassan with them. Amongst them he saw a ship, with much people therein, like the pebbles [of the beach] for number; none knew their tale save He who created them. She was anchored in mid-harbour and had small boats, which transported her lading to the shore.

Hassan abode till the crew had carried all the goods ashore and sold and bought and there wanted but three days of the day of departure; whereupon the king sent for him and equipped him with all that he required and gave him great gifts: after which he summoned the captain of the great ship and said to him, 'Take this youth with thee in the ship, so none may know of him but thou, and carry him to the Wac Islands and leave him there; and tell none of him.' And the captain said, 'I hear and obey.' Then said the king to Hassan, 'Look thou tell none of those who are with thee in the ships thine errand nor discover to them aught of thy case; else thou art a lost man.' He answered, 'I hear and obey,' and took leave of the king, after he had wished him long life and victory over his enemies and enviers; wherefore the king thanked him and wished him safety and the accomplishment of his desire. Then he committed him to

the captain, who laid him in a chest and taking boat therewith, carried him aboard, whilst the folk were busy transporting the goods and doubted not but the chest contained somewhat of merchandise.

After this, the ships set sail and fared on without ceasing ten days, and on the eleventh day they reached land. So the captain set Hassan ashore and there he saw settles without number, none knew their count save God, even as the king had told him. He went on, till he came to one that had no fellow and hid under it till nightfall, when there came up a great host of women on foot, as they were a swarm of locusts, armed cap-a-pie in hauberks and strait-knit coats of mail and bearing drawn swords in their hands, who, seeing the merchandise landed from the ships, busied themselves therewith.

Presently they sat down, to rest themselves, and one of them seated herself on the settle under which Hassan was hidden: whereupon he took hold of the hem of her skirt and laid it on his head and throwing himself before her, fell to kissing her hands and feet and weeping. 'Harkye, sirrah!' said she. 'Arise and stand up, ere any see thee and slay thee.' So he came forth and standing up, kissed her hands and wept and said to her, 'O my lady, I cast myself on thy protection! Have ruth on one who is parted from his people and wife and children, one who hath haste to rejoin them and adventureth his life and soul [for their sake!]. Take pity on me and be assured that Paradise will be thy reward; or, if thou wilt not receive me, I beseech thee, by God the Great, the Concealer, to conceal my case!' The merchants, seeing him talking with her, stared at him; and she, seeing his humility and hearing his speech, was moved to compassion for him; her heart inclined to him and she knew that he had not ventured himself and come to that place, save for a grave matter. So she said to him, 'O my son, take heart and be of good courage and return to thy hiding-place till the coming night, and God shall do as He will.'

Then she took leave of him and he crept under the settle as before, whilst the troops lighted flambeaux compounded of aloes-wood and crude ambergris and passed the night in sport and delight till the morning. At day- break, the boats returned to the shore and the merchants busied themselves with buying and selling and the transport of the goods and gear till nightfall, whilst Hassan abode hidden beneath the settle, tearful-eyed and mournful- hearted, knowing not what was decreed to him in the secret purpose of God. As he was thus, the woman with whom he had taken refuge came up to him and giving him a shirt of mail and a helmet and spear and sword and a gilded girdle, bade him don them and seat himself on the settle and let none know his case, after which she left him, for fear of the troops. So he arose and donned the coat of mail and helmet and clasped the girdle about his middle. Then he slung the sword over his shoulder and taking the spear in his hand, sat down on the settle, whilst his tongue forgot not to name God the Most High and call on Him for protection.

Presently, there appeared cressets and flambeaux and lanterns and up came the army of women. So he arose and mingling with them, became as one of them. A little before daybreak, they set out. and Hassan with them, and fared on till they came to their encampment, where they dispersed, each to her tent, and Hassan followed his protectress into hers. When she entered, she threw down her arms and put off her hauberk and veil. So Hassan did the like and looking at her, saw her to be a grizzled

old woman, blue-eyed and big-nosed, a calamity of calamities. Indeed, she was the foulest of all created things, with pock-marked face and bald eyebrows, gap- toothed and chapfallen, with hoary hair, running nose and slavering mouth; even as saith of the like of her the poet:

Within the corners of her face afflictions nine do dwell;
Each, when she lays her veil aside, discovers very hell.
A hideous face and favour foul, as a pig's snout it were;
A voiding-place thou'dst deem it nor deem otherwise than well.

And indeed she was like a pied snake or a bald she-wolf. When she looked at Hassan, she marvelled and said, 'How won this man to these lands and in which of the ships was he and how came he hither in safety?' And she fell to questioning him of his case and wondering at his coming, whereupon he fell at her feet and rubbed his face on them and wept till he swooned away ; and when he came to himself he recited the following verses:

When will the days vouchsafe reunion to us twain
And our long-severed loves reknit into one skein?
When shall I win of them the long-desired delight,
Reproach that hath an end and love that doth refrain?
If Nile ran like my tears, 'twould leave no barren place
Unwatered in the world nor any desert plain;
Egypt and Syria all and Irak 'twould o'erflow and o'er the
Heju pour its fertilizing rain:
And this, my love, because of thine abandonment.
Be kind, then, and vouchsafe me union again.

Then he took the old woman's skirt and laid it on his head and fell to weeping and craving her protection. When she saw his passion and transport and anguish and distress, her heart inclined to him and she promised him her protection, saying, 'Have no fear.' Then she questioned him of his case and he told her the manner of his coming thither, whereat she wondered and said, 'This that hath betided thee, methinks, never betided any but thyself and except thou hadst been vouchsafed the [especial] protection of God the Most High, thou hadst not been saved: but now, O my son, take comfort and be of good courage; thou hast nothing more to fear, for indeed thou hast reached thy goal and attained thy desire, if it please God the Most High!'

Thereat Hassan rejoiced with an exceeding joy and she sent to summon the captains of the army to her presence, and it was the last day of the month. So they presented themselves and the old woman said to them, 'Go out and proclaim to the troops that they come forth, all, to-morrow at daybreak and let none tarry behind, on pain of death.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and going forth, made proclamation as she bade them, after which they returned and told her of this; wherefore Hassan knew that she was the commander of the army and the chief in authority over them; and she was called Shewahi, hight Mother of calamities. She ceased not to command and forbid and Hassan put not off his arms from his body that day.

When the day broke, all the troops came forth from their places, but the old woman came not forth with them, and as soon as they were gone and the camp was clear of them, she said to Hassan, 'Draw near unto me, O my son.' So he drew near unto her and stood before her. Quoth she, 'Why hast thou adventured thyself hither and how came thy soul to consent to its own destruction? Tell me the truth and fear not, for thou hast my plighted word and I am moved to compassion for thy case and pity thee and have taken thee under my protection. So, if thou tell me the truth, I will help thee to accomplish thy desire, though it involve the loss of souls and the destruction of bodies; and since thou hast won to me, no hurt shall betide thee from me, nor will I suffer any to come at thee with harm of all that be in the Wac Islands.' So he related to her his story from first to last, acquainting her with the matter of his wife and of the birds, how he had taken her from amongst the ten and married her and abode with her, till she had borne him two sons, and how she had taken her children and flown away with them, whenas she knew the way to the feather-dress: brief, he concealed from her no whit of his case.

When Shewahi heard his relation, she shook her head and said to him, 'Glory be to God who hath brought thee hither in safety and made thee to happen upon me! For, hadst thou lighted on any but me, thou hadst lost thy life, without attaining thy desire: but the truth of thine intent and thy love and the excess of thy longing for thy wife and children, these it was that have brought thee to the attainment of thy wish. Didst thou not love her to distraction, thou hadst not thus adventured thyself, and praised be God for thy safety! Wherefore it behoves us to further thy desire and help thee to thy quest, so thou mayst presently attain that thou meekest, if it be the will of God the Most High. But know, O my son, that thy wife is not here, but in the seventh of the Wac Islands, and between us and it is seven months' journey, night and day. From here we go to an island called the Land of Birds, wherein, for the loud clamour of the birds and the flapping of their wings, one cannot hear other speak.

Therein we journey, night and day, eleven days, after which we come to another land, called the Land of Wild Beasts, where, for the roaring of the lions and howling of wolves and the screaming of hyenas and other beasts of prey, we shall hear nothing; and therein we travel twenty days' journey. Then we come to a third country, called the Land of Jinn, where, for the greatness of the crying of the Jinn and the noise of their groaning and the flaming of fires and the flight of sparks and smoke from their mouths and their arrogance in blocking up the road before us, our ears will be deafened and our eyes blinded, so that we shall neither hear nor see, nor dare any look behind him, or he perishes: but there the horseman bows his head on his saddle-bow and raises it not for three days. After this, we come to a vast mountain and a running river, bordering on the Wac Islands, which are seven in number and the extent whereof is a whole year's journey for a diligent horseman. And thou must know, O my son, that the ruler over us is a woman of these islands and that these troops are all virgin girls.

On the bank of the river aforesaid is another mountain, called Wac, and it is thus named by reason of a tree [which grows there and] which bears fruits like human heads. When the sun rises on them, the heads cry out all, saying, "Wac! Wac! Glory be to the Creating King!" And when we hear their crying, we know that the sun is risen. In like manner, at sundown, the heads set up the same cry, and so we know that the

sun hath set. No man may abide with us or win to us or tread our earth. Moreover, betwixt us and the abiding-place of the queen who ruleth over us is a month's journey from this shore, all the people whereof are under her hand, as are also the tribes of the Jinn, Marids and Satans and warlocks, whose number none knoweth save He who created them. Wherefore, if thou be afraid, I will send with thee one who will bring thee to the coast and embark thee on board a ship that shall carry thee to thine own country. But if thou be content to abide with us, I will not forbid thee and thou shalt be with me [as thou wert] in mine eye, till thou accomplish thy desire, so it please God the Most High.'

'O my lady,' answered Hassan, 'I will never leave thee till I foregather with my wife or lose my life!' 'This is a light matter,' rejoined she; 'be of good heart, for thou shalt come to thy desire, God willing; and needs must I let the queen know of thee, that she may help thee to attain thine object.' Hassan blessed her and kissed her head and hands, thanking her for her exceeding kindness. Then he set out with her, pondering the issue of his case and the horrors of his strangerhold; wherefore he fell a-weeping and groaning and recited the following verses:

From out my loved one's land a zephyr blows; for stress
Of love thou seest me dazed and passion's sheer excess.
The night of love-delight is as a brilliant moon
And separation's day a sombre night no less.
The parting from the loved a heavy sorrow is
And eke the taking leave of friends a sore distress.
There's not a faithful friend 'mongst men ; I'll not complain
To any but herself of her unrighteousness.
I cannot be consoled for you; no censor base
To solace can enforce my heart itself address.
O thou unique in charms, my love's unique: O thou
That failst of match, my heart fails also for duress.
Whoso pretends to love of thee and feareth blame,
Blameworthy sure is he and merits not success.

Then the old woman bade beat the drums for departure and the army set out. Hassan accompanied her, drowned in the sea of solicitude and reciting verses, whilst she strove to comfort him and exhorted him to patience; but he awoke not [from his melancholy] and paid no heed to her exhortations. They fared on thus till they came to the Land of Birds, and when they entered it, it seemed to Hassan as if the world were overturned, for the exceeding clamor. His head ached and his mind was dazed, his eyes were blinded and his ears deaved, and he feared with an exceeding fear and looked for nothing but death, saying in himself, 'If this be the Land of Birds, how will the Land of Beasts be?' But, when Shewahi saw him in this plight, she laughed at him, saying, 'O my son, if this be thy case in the first island, how will it fare with thee, when thou comest to the others?'

So he humbled himself in prayer to God, beseeching Him to succour him against that wherewithal He had afflicted him and bring him to his wishes; and they ceased not going till they passed out of the Land of Birds and traversing the Land of Beasts,

came to the Land of Jinn, which when Hassan saw, he was sore affrighted and repented him of having entered it with them. But he sought aid of God the Most High and fared on with them, till they were quit of the Land of Jinn and came to the river, on whose banks they halted and pitched their tents at the foot of a vast and lofty mountain. Then they rested and ate and drank and slept in security, for they were come to their own country.

On the morrow the old woman set Hassan a settle of alabaster, inlaid with pearls and jewels and nuggets of red gold, by the river-side, and he sat down thereon, having first bound his face with a chinband, that discovered nought of him but his eyes. Then she let proclaim among the troops that they should all assemble before her tent and put off their clothes and go down into the stream and wash; and this she did to the intent that she might show him all the girls, so haply his wife should be amongst them and he know her. So the whole army assembled before her and putting off their clothes, went down into the stream, [company after company;] and Hassan watched them washing and frolicking and making merry, whilst they took no heed of him, deeming him to be of the daughters of the kings. When he beheld them stripped of their clothes, his yard rose on end, for that he saw what was between their thighs, and that of all kinds, soft and domed, plump and cushioned, large-lipped, perfect, redundant and ample and their faces were as moons and their hair as night upon day, for that they were of the daughters of the kings.

When they were clean, they came up out of the water, naked, as the moon on the night of her full, and the old woman questioned Hassan of them, company by company, if his wife were among them; but, as often as she asked him, he made answer, 'She is not among these, O my lady.' Last of all, there came up a damsel, attended by half a score slave-girls and thirty waiting-women, all high-bosomed maids. They all put of their clothes and went down into the river, where the damsel fell to carrying it with a high hand over her women, throwing them down and ducking them. Presently, she came up out of the water and sat down and they brought her napkins of silk, embroidered with gold, with which she dried herself Then they brought her clothes and jewels and ornaments of the handiwork of the Jinn, and she donned them and rose and walked among the troops, she and her maids. When Hassan saw her, his heart fluttered and he said, 'Verily this girl is the likest of all folk to the bird I saw in the lake atop of the palace of my sisters the princesses, and she lorded it over her attendants even as doth this one.' 'O Hassan,' said the old woman, 'is this thy wife?' 'No, by thy life, O my lady,' replied he, 'this is not my wife, nor ever in my life have I set eyes on her; neither among all the girls I have seen in these islands is there the like of my wife nor her match for beauty and grace and symmetry!'

Then said Shewahi, 'Describe her to me and acquaint me with all her attributes, that I may have her in my mind; for I know every girl in the islands, being commander of the army of maids and governor over them; wherefore, if thou describe her to me, I shall know her and will contrive for thee to take her.' Quoth he, 'My wife is of surpassing beauty, dulcet of speech and sweet of fashion, as she were a bending branch. She hath a fair face, a slender shape, smooth cheeks, high breasts, great liquid black eyes, white teeth and soft red lips like coral. On her right cheek is a mole and on her belly, under her navel, is a sign; her face shines as the round of the moon, her waist is

slight, her buttocks heavy, and the water of her mouth healeth the sick, as it were Kauther or Selsebil.' 'Give me some plainer account of her,' said the old woman, 'may God increase thee of passion for her!' Quoth he, 'My wife hath a lovely face, oval cheeks like twin roses, long neck and melting black eyes, mouth like a seal of carnelian and flashing teeth, that stand one in stead of cup and ewer. She is cast in the mould of pleasantness and between her thighs is the throne of the Khalifate, there is no such sanctuary among the holy places; as saith in its praise the poet:

The letters of that which hath made Me distraught are renowned among men: They are four, multiplied into five, Thereafter and six into ten.'

Then wept Hassan and chanted the following couplet:

O heart, if the beloved should play thee false in aught,
Renounce her not, I rede thee, nor be thy love forgot.
Be patient; thou shalt bury thine enemies; God wot,
He who makes use of patience, it disappoint him not.

And this also:

If all thy days thou wouldst be safe from trouble and dismay,
Despair thou never neither be discouraged nor [too] gay.
Be patient and rejoice thou not nor mourn; but, if by day
Thou art afflicted, "Have we not expanded.....?" look thou say.

Thereupon the old woman bowed her head awhile, then, rising it, said, 'Glory be to God, the Mighty of Estate! Indeed I am afflicted with thee, O Hassan! Would I had never known thee! This woman, whom thou describers to me as thy very wife, I know by thy description to be none other than the eldest daughter of the Supreme King, she who ruleth over all the Wac Islands. So open thine eyes and consider thine affair; and if thou be asleep, awake; for, if this woman be indeed thy wife, it is impossible for thee ever to win to her, and though thou wonnest to her, yet couldst thou not avail to her possession, since the distance between thee and her is as that between earth and heaven. Wherefore, O my son, return presently and cast not thyself into destruction and me with thee; for meseemeth thou hast no lot in her; so return whence thou camest, lest our lives be lost.' And she feared for herself and for him.

When he heard her words, he wept till he swooned away and she sprinkled water on his face, till he came to himself when he continued to weep, so that he wet his clothes with his tears, for the much trouble and chagrin that betided him by reason of her words. And indeed he despaired of life and said to the old woman, 'O my lady, and how shall I turn back, after having won hither? Verily, I thought not thou wouldst forsake me nor fail of the accomplishment of my desire, especially as thou art the chief of the army of girls.' 'O my son,' answered Shewahi, 'I doubted not but thy wife was a maid of the maids, and had I known that she was the king's daughter, I had not suffered thee to come hither nor had I shown thee [the girls], for all the love I bear thee. But now, O my son, thou hast seen all the girls naked; so tell me which of them pleaseth thee and I will give her to thee, in lieu of thy wife, and do thou put it that thy wife and children are dead and take her and return to thine own country in safety, ere thou fall into the king's hand and I have no means of delivering thee. I conjure thee,

by Allah, hearken to me. Choose thyself one of these damsels, in the stead of yonder woman and return presently to thy country in safety and cause me not quaff the cup of thine anguish. For, by Allah, thou hast cast thyself into sore affliction and grievous peril, wherefrom none may avail to deliver thee!' But Hassan bowed him head and wept sore and recited these verses:

'Reproach me not,' to those who censured me I said;
'For sure my lids for tears and nought but tears were made."
They fill my eyes and thence o'erflow my cheeks for those
I cherish have my love with cruelty repaid.
My body's wasted sore, yet I my madness love:
Leave me to love and cease my passion to upbraid.
Beloved mine, desire is sore on me for you
Will ye not pity one for love of you decayed?
Ye swore me constancy and truth, yet cruelly
Forsook me and our love and friendship thus betrayed.
When on the parting day ye went, abjection's cup,
For rigour and despite, unto my lips was laid.
Wherefore my heart, dissolve with longing for their sight
And, O mine eyes, rain tears, unsparing and unstayed!

Then he wept till he swooned away and the old woman sprinkled water on him till he revived, when she said to him, 'O my son, I have no shift left; for, if I carry thee to the city, thy life is lost and mine also; for, when the queen cometh to know of this, she will blame me for admitting thee into her islands, to which none of the sons of Adam hath access, and will slay me for bringing thee with me and for suffering thee to look upon these virgins, whom no male hath touched, neither hath husband come near them.' And Hassan swore that he had never looked on them with an evil eye. 'O my son,' continued she, 'hearken to me and return to thy country and I will give thee a girl of the best of them, beside wealth and measures and things of price, such as shall suffice thee for all the women in the world. Give ear, then, to my words and return presently and imperil not thyself; indeed, I give thee good counsel.' But he wept and rubbed his cheeks against her feet, saying, 'O my lady and mistress and solace of mine eyes, how can I turn back without the sight of those I desire, now that I have made my way hither and come near to the abode of the beloved, hoping presently for meetings so haply there may be for me a portion in reunion?' And he recited the following verses:

Be kind, O kings of graces to one who's thrall to eyes
And eyelids that have ta'en Chosroës' realm to prize.
Ye overpass the scent of musk in fragrancy
And eke your beauty bright the full-blown rose outvies.
A zephyr of delight breathes round your camping-place
And scattering perfume thence, abroad the East wind hies.
O censor, cease to blame and counsel me; indeed,
Thou profferest advice on right unwelcome wise.
What ails thee to upbraid my passion, seeing thou

No knowledge hast thereof nor whence it doth arise?
Eyes languorous and soft have captivated me
And cast me into love, perforce and by surprise.
I pour forth tears galore what while I string my rhymes;
Ye are the theme whereon I prose and poetise.
Red cheeks have all consumed my entrails, and my heart
Burns, as on blazing coals, with fire that never dies.
If this my speech I leave, tell me, with what discourse
Shall I my breast dilate and stay my tears and sighs?
I'm weak of my life for passion for the fair;
But God belike shall bring relief, with Whom it lies.

Then the old woman was moved to pity for him and coming up to him, comforted him, saying, 'Be of good heart and cheerful eye and put away trouble from thy thought, for, by Allah, I will venture myself with thee, till thou attain thy desire or death overtake me!' With this, Hassan's heart was comforted and his bosom dilated and he sat talking with the old woman till the end of the day, when the girls dispersed, some entering their mansions in the city and others passing the night in the tents.

Then the old woman carried him into the city and lodged him in a place apart, lest any should come to know of him and tell the queen of him and she should kill him and her who had brought him thither. Moreover, she served him herself and strove to put him in fear of the mischief of the Supreme King, his wife's father; whilst he wept before her and said, 'O my lady, I choose death for myself and loathe the world, if I foregather not with my wife and children: I have set my life on the venture and will either attain my wish or die.' So the old woman fell to pondering the means of bringing him and his wife together and casting about how to do in this poor wretch's case, who had cast himself into destruction and would not be diverted from his purpose by fear or aught else; for, indeed, he recked not of his life and the byword saith, 'A man in love hearkeneth not to the speech of him who is heart-free.'

Now the name of the queen of the island in which they were was Nour el Huda, eldest daughter of the Supreme King, ruler over the islands and all the lands of Wac, and she had six virgin sisters, abiding with their father, whose court was in the chief city of the land of Wac. The old woman had a claim on her for favour, for that she had reared all the king's daughters and had authority over them all and was high in honour and consideration with them and with the king. So, when she saw Hassan on fire with yearning after his wife and children, she betook herself to the palace and going in to the queen, kissed the earth before her; whereupon Nour el Huda rose to her and embracing her, seated her by her side and asked her of her journey. 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered she, 'it was a blessed journey and I have brought thee a present, which I will lay before thee. Moreover, O my daughter, O queen of the age and the time, I have an occasion to thee and I would fain discover it to thee, that thou mayst help me to accomplish it, and but for my confidence that thou wilt not gainsay me therein, I would not expose it to thee.' 'And what is thine occasion?' asked the queen. 'Expound it to me, and I will accomplish it to thee, for I and my kingdom and troops are all at thy commandment and disposition.'

Therewithal the old woman shook, as the reed shakes on a day of stormy wind, and saying in herself, 'O Protector, protect me from the queen's mischief!' fell down before her and acquainted her with Hassan's case, saying, 'O my lady, a man who had hidden himself under my settle on the sea-shore, besought me of protection; so I took him under my safeguard and carried him with me among the army of women, armed and accoutred so that none might know him, and brought him into the city; and indeed I have striven to fear him with thy mischief, giving him to know of thy prowess and power; but, as often as I threaten him, he weeps and recites verses and says, "Needs must I regain my wife and children or die, and I will not return to my country without them." And indeed he hath adventured himself and won to the Islands of Wac, and never in my life saw I mortal stouter of heart than he or doughtier of courage, save that passion hath gotten the mastery of him to the utmost.'

When Nour el Huda heard this, she was exceeding wroth with her and bowed her head awhile. Then, raising it, she looked at Shewahi and said to her, 'O ill-omened old woman, art thou come to such a pass of lewdness that thou carriest males with thee into the Wac Islands and bringest them in to me, unfearing of my danger? Who hath foregone thee with this fashion, that thou shouldst do thus? By the head of the king, but for thy claim on me for fosterage and service, I would forthwith put both him and thee to the foulest of deaths, that travellers might take warning by thee, O accursed woman, lest any other do the like of this outrageous deed of thine, whereunto none hath dared hitherto! But go and bring him hither forthright, that I may see him; or I will strike off thy head, O accursed one.'

So the old woman went out from her, confounded, knowing not whither she went and saying, 'All this calamity hath God caused betide me from this queen because of Hassan!' and going in to the latter, said to him, 'Come speak with the queen, O thou whose last hour is at hand!' So he rose and went with her, whilst his tongue ceased not to call upon God the Most High and say, 'O my God, be gracious to me in Thy judgments and deliver me from [this] Thine affliction!' And Shewahi charged him by the way how he should speak with the queen. When he stood before Nour el Huda, he found her veiled with the chinband; so he kissed the earth before her and saluted her, reciting the following verses:

May God thy glory cause in gladness to endure
And that which unto thee He gives to thee secure!
In glory and in power th' Almighty thee increase And with
His aid against thine enemies ensure!

Then Nour el Huda bade the old woman question him before her, that she might hear his answers: so she said to him, 'The queen returns thy greeting and asks thee what is thy name and that of thy country, and what are the names of thy wife and children, on whose account thou art come hither?' 'O queen of the age and the day and peerless jewel of the epoch and the time,' answered he, (and indeed he had made firm his heart and providence aided him,) 'my name is Hassan, the fulfilled of sorrow, and my native city is Bassora. I know not the name of my wife, but my children's names are Mensour and Nasir.'

When the queen heard his reply, she bespoke him herself and said, 'And whence took she her children?' 'O queen,' answered he, 'she took them from the city of Baghdad and the palace of the Khalifate.' Quoth Nour el Huda, 'And did she say nought to thee, whenas she flew away?' And he replied, 'Yes; she said to my mother, "When thy son cometh and the days of separation are long upon him and he craveth meeting with me and reunion and the winds of love and longing agitate him, let him come to me in the Islands of Wac."' Whereupon the queen shook her head and said to him, 'Except she desired thee and yearned for reunion with thee, she had not said this to thy mother, neither had she bidden thee to her country nor acquainted thee with her abiding-place.' 'O mistress of kings and asylum of rich and poor,' rejoined Hassan, 'I have told thee what happened and have concealed nought thereof, and I appeal to God and to thee for succour; wherefore oppress me not, but have compassion on me and earn recompense and requital for me [from God] by aiding me to regain my wife and children. Grant me my urgent need and solace mine eyes with my children and help me to the sight of them.' Then he wept and lamented and recited the following verses:

What while the turtle-dove complains, I'll praise thee with my might,
Albeit I should fail of that which is thy due and right.
For, lo, I wallowed not in joys of old, but now I find
Thee to have been the cause and spring of all my past delight.

The queen shook her head and bowed it in thought a great while; then, raising it, she said to Hassan (and indeed she was wroth), 'I have compassion on thee and am resolved to show thee all the girls in the city and in the provinces of my island; and if thou know thy wife, I will deliver her to thee; but, if thou know her not and know not her place, I will put thee to death and crucify thee over the old woman's door.' 'I accept this from thee, O queen of the age,' answered Hassan, 'and am content to submit to this thy condition. There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' And he recited the following verses:

Ye've roused my heart to love and yet unmoved yourselves remain;
Ye've doomed my wounded lids to wake and sleep, whilst I complain.
Ye swore to me that ye would keep your plighted faith with me;
But, when my heart was yours, you broke the oath that you had ta'en.
I loved you as a child, indeed, unknowing what love was;
Wherefore 'twere surely foul unright, if I of you be slain.
Fear ye not God and will ye slay a lover who anights
Watches the stars, whilst all but he are bound in slumber's chain?
When I am dead, I prithee write, 'fore Allah, on my tomb,
'A slave of passion lieth here, who died of love in vain.'
It may be one, whom love like me hath smitten, passing by,
Shall see my tomb and to salute and pity me be fain.

Then Queen Nour el Huda commanded that all the girls in the city should come up to the palace and pass in review before Hassan and bade Shewahi go down and bring them up herself. So all the maidens in the city presented themselves before the queen, who caused them go in to Hassan, hundred by hundred, till there was no girl left in the place, but she had shown her to him; but he saw not his wife amongst them.

Then said she to him, 'Seest thou her amongst these?' And he answered, saying, 'By thy life, O queen, she is not amongst them.'

With this she was sore enraged against him and said to the old woman, 'Go in and bring out all who are in the palace and show them to him.' So she showed him all the girls in the palace, but he saw not his wife among them and said to the queen, 'As thy head liveth, O queen, she is not among these.' Whereat the queen was wroth and cried out to those about her, saying, 'Take him and drag him along, face to ground, and cut off his head, lest any adventure himself after him and intrude upon us in our country and tread the soil of our islands and spy out our estate.' So they threw him down on his face and covering his eyes with his skirt, stood at his head with drawn swords, awaiting permission [to strike].

But Shewahi came forward and kissing the earth before the queen, took her skirt and laid it on her head, saying, 'O queen, by the claim I have on thee for fosterage, be not hasty with him, more by token of thy knowledge that this poor wretch is a stranger, who hath adventured himself and suffered perils and hardships, such as none ever suffered before him, and God preserved him from death, for that his life was ordained to be long. He heard of thy justice and entered thy city and sanctuary; wherefore, if thou put him to death, the report will be noised abroad of thee, by means of the travellers, that thou hatest strangers and slayest them. In any case he is at thy mercy and the slain of thy sword, if his wife be not found in thy dominions; and whensoever thou desirest his presence, I can bring him back to thee. And indeed I took him not under my protection but of my confidence in thy generosity, through my claim on thee for fosterage, so that I engaged to him that thou wouldst bring him to his desire, of my knowledge of thy justice and kindness of heart. But for this, I had not brought him into thy kingdom; for I said to myself, "The queen will take pleasure in looking upon him and hearing his verses and his sweet and eloquent discoursed like strung pearls." Moreover, he hath entered our land and eaten of our victual; wherefore it behoved us to give him his due, the more that I promised to bring him in company with thee; and thou knowest that parting is grievous and separation slaughter, especially separation from children. Now he hath seen all our women, save only thyself; so do thou show him thy face.'

The queen smiled and said, 'How can he be my husband and have had children by me, that I should show him my face?' Then she made them bring Hassan before her and unveiled her face, which when he saw, he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. The old woman ceased not to tend him, till he came to himself and recited the following verses:

O zephyr from the land of Irak that dost stray
And blowest to the land of those 'Wac! Wac!' that say,
Carry my loved ones news of me and say I die
Of passion's bitter food, that's sour of savour aye.
O darlings of my love, show favour and relent!
My heart for parting's pains is melted all away.

Then he rose and looking on the queen's fare, cried out with a great cry, for stress whereof the palace was like to fall on those who were therein. Then he swooned away

again and the old woman tended him till he revived, when she asked him what ailed him and he said, 'This queen is either my wife or else the likest of all folk to her.' Quoth Nour el Huda to the old woman, 'Out on the, O nurse! This stranger is either mad or disordered in mind, for he stareth me in the face with wide eyes and saith I am his wife.' 'O queen,' answered Shewahi, 'indeed he is excusable; so blame him not, for the proverb says, "There is no remedy for the sick of love, and he and the madman are alike." And Hassan wept sore and recited the following verses:

I see their traces and pine for longing pain;
My tears rain down on the empty dwelling-place;
And I pray to God, who willed that we should part,
Once more to grant us reunion of His grace.

Then said he to the queen, 'By Allah, thou art not my wife, but thou art the likest of all folks to her!'

Nour el Huda laughed till she fell backward and turned over on her side. Then said she to him, 'O my friend, take thy time and observe me attentively: answer me at thy leisure what I shall ask thee and put away from thee madness and confusion and perplexity, for relief is at hand.' 'O mistress of kings and refuge of all, rich and poor,' answered Hassan, 'when I looked on thee, I was distracted, seeing thee to be either my wife or the likest of all folk to her; but now ask me what thou wilt.' Quoth she, 'What is it in thy wife that resembles me?' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'all that is in thee of beauty and elegance and amorous grace, such as the symmetry of thy shape and the sweetness of thy speech and the redness of thy cheeks and thy swelling breasts and so forth, resembleth her and thou art her very self in thy speech and the fairness of thy favour and the brilliancy of thy forehead.'

When the queen heard this, she smiled and gloried in her beatify and grace and her cheeks reddened and her eyes wantoned; then she turned to Shewahi and said to her, 'O my mother, carry him back to the place where he was with thee and tend him thyself, till I examine into his affair; for, if he be indeed a man of worth and mindful of friendship and love and affection, it becometh us to help him to his desire, more by token that he hath taken up his abode in our country and eaten of our victual, to say nought of the hardships of travel he hath suffered and the horrors and perils he hath undergone. But, when thou hast brought him to thy house, commend him to thy servants' care and return to me in all haste; and God willing, all shall be well.'

So Shewahi carried him back to her lodging and charged her servants and women wait upon him and bring him all he needed nor fail in that which was his due. Then she returned to Nour el Huda, who bade her don her arms and set out, taking with her a thousand stout horsemen, for the city of the Supreme King, her father, there to alight at the abode of her youngest sister, Menar es Sena, and say to her, 'Clothe thy two sons in the coats of mail that their aunt hath made them and send them to her; for she longeth for them.' Moreover the queen charged her keep Hassan's affair secret and say to Menar es Sena, 'Thy sister invitees thee to visit her.'

'Then,' continued she, 'take the children and bring them to me in haste and let her follow at her leisure. Do thou come by a road other than hers and journey night and day and beware of discovering this matter to any. And I swear by all possible oaths

that, if my sister prove to be his wife and it appear that her children are his, I will not hinder him from taking her and them and departing with them to his own country, but will aid him thereto. If she be not his wife, I will slay him; but if the children resemble him, we will believe him. For, O my mother, if my thought tell me true, my sister Menar es Sena is his wife, seeing that these traits are her traits and the attributes of surpassing beauty and excelling grace, of which he spoke, are found in none except my sisters and especially the youngest; but God alone is All-knowing!'

The old woman put faith in her words, knowing not what she purposed in herself; so she kissed her hand and returning to Hassan, told him what the queen had said, whereat he was transported for joy and coming up to her, kissed her head. 'O my son,' said she, 'kiss not my head, but my mouth, and be it by way of guerdon for thy salvation. Be of good heart and cheerful eye and grudge not to kiss my mouth, for I was the means of thy fore- gathering with her. So take comfort and be of good cheer nor be thy heart other than light, for, God willing, thy desire shall be accomplished at my hand.' So saying, she bade him farewell and departed, whilst he recited the following verses:

My witnesses unto the love of thee are four;
Two witnesses each case requireth, and no more.
A fluttering heart they are and limbs for aye a-quake,
Tongue knotted in its speech and body wasted sore.

And these also:

Two things there are, whereover if eye wept tear on tear
Of blood, till they for weeping were like to disappear,
They never could fulfil them the tithe of all their due,
The prime of youth and radiance from friends and lovers dear.

Then the old women armed herself and taking with her a thousand armed horsemen, set out and journeyed till she came to the island and the city where dwelt the princess Menar es Sena and between which and that of her sister Nour el Huda was three days' journey. Now the king had seven daughters, all sisters-german by one mother and father except the youngest: the eldest was called Nour el Huda, the second Nejm es Sebah, the third Shems ez Zuha, the fourth Shejeret et Durr, the fifth Cout el Culoub, the sixth Sheref el Benat and the youngest Menar es Sena, Hassan's wife, who was their sister by the father's side only. When Shewahi reached the city, she went in to the princess Menar es Sena and saluting her, gave her her sister's greeting and acquainted her with the latter's longing for her and her children and that she reproached her for not visiting her. Quoth Menar es Sena, 'Verily, I am beholden to my sister and have failed of my duty to her in not visiting her, but I will do so now.' Then she bade pitch her tents without the city and took with her a suitable present for her sister.

Presently, the king her father looked out of the window of his palace, and seeing the tents pitched by the road, enquired of them, and they said to him, 'The princess Menar es Sena hath pitched her tents there, being minded to visit her sister Queen Nour el Huda.' When the king heard this, he equipped troops to escort her to her sister

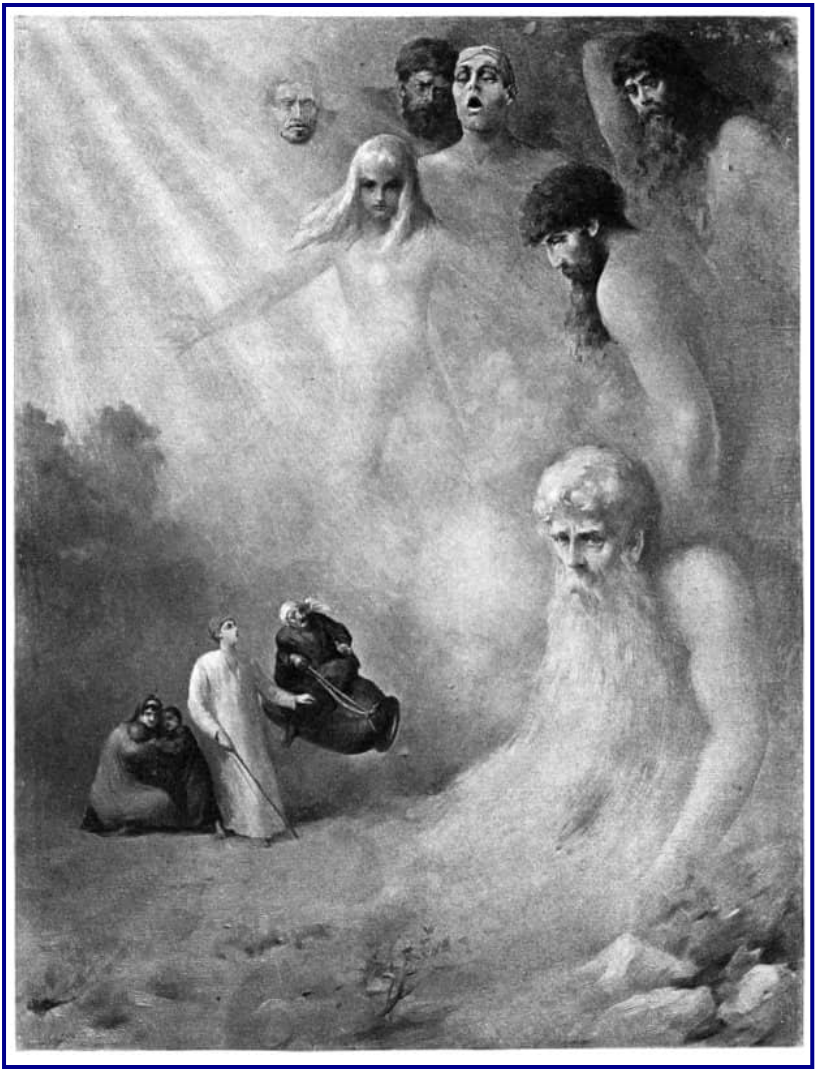
and brought out to her from his treasuries meat and drink and treasure and jewels and rarities, that beggar description. Presently the old woman again presented herself and kissed the earth before the princess, who said to her, 'Hast thou any need, O my mother?' Quoth Shewahi, 'Thy sister, Queen Nour el Huda, biddeth thee clothe thy sons in the two coats of mail which she made for them and send them to her by me, and I will take them and forego thee with them and be the harbinger of thy coming to her.'

When the princess heard these her words, her colour changed and she bowed her head a long while, after which she shook it and looking up, said to the old woman, 'O my mother, when thou namest my children, my mind is troubled and my heart fluttereth; for, from the time of their birth, none, neither genie nor man, male nor female, hath looked on their faces, and I am jealous for them of the soft-blowing zephyr.' 'What words are these, O my lady?' replied the old woman. 'Dost thou fear for them from thy sister? God keep thy reason! Thou mayst not cross the queen in this thing, for she would be wroth with thee. Indeed, O my lady, the children are young, and thou art excusable in fearing for them, for those that love are apt to deem evil: but, O my daughter, thou knowest my tenderness and solicitude over thee and thy children, for indeed I reared thee before them. I will take them and make my cheek their pillow and open my heart and set them within, nor is it needful to commend them to my care in the like of this case; so be of good heart and cheerful eye and send them to her, for, at the most, I shall but forego thee with them a day or two.' And she went on to urge her, till she gave way, fearing her sister's anger and knowing not what lurked for her in the future, and consented to send them with the old woman.

So she called them and bathed them and equipped them and changed their apparel. Then she clad them in the two coats of mail and delivered them to Shewahi, who took them and sped on with them like a bird, by another road than that by which their mother should travel, even as the queen had charged her; nor did she cease to fare on with all diligence, being fearful for them, till she came in sight of their aunt's city, when she crossed the river and entering the town, carried them in to Nour el Huda. The queen rejoiced at their sight and embraced them and pressed them to her bosom; after which she seated them, one on each knee, and said to the old women, 'Now fetch me Hassan, for I have granted him my safeguard and have spared him from my sabre and he hath sought refuge in my house and taken up his abode in my courts, after having endured hardships and horrors and come through all manner of mortal perils, each more terrible than the other; yet hitherto is he not safe from drinking the cup , of death and from the cutting off of his breath.' 'If I bring him to thee,' replied Shewahi, 'wilt thou reunite him with these his children? Or if they prove not his, wilt thou pardon him and restore him to his own country?'

The queen was exceeding wroth at her words and said to her, 'Out on thee, O ill-omened old woman! How long wilt thou play us false in the matter of this stranger, who hath dared [to intrude] upon us and hath lifted our veil and pried into our conditions? Thinkest thou that he shall come to our land and look upon our faces and soil our honours and after return in safety to his own country and expose our affairs to his people, wherefore our report will be bruited abroad among all the kings of the quarters of the earth and the merchants will bear tidings of us in every direction,

saying, "A mortal entered the Wac Islands and traversed the land of the Jinn and the lands of the Wild Beasts and the Birds and set foot in the country of the warlocks and the enchanters and returned in safety?" This shall never be; and I swear by Him who created the heavens and builded them. Him who spread out the earth and levelled it, who made all creatures and numbered them, that, if they be not his children, I will assuredly slay him and strike of his head with my own hand!'



Then she cried out at the old woman, who fell down for fear; and she said to the chamberlain, 'Take twenty slaves and go with this old woman and fetch me in haste the youth who is in her house.' So they dragged Shewahi along, pale and trembling in every nerve, till they came to her house, where she went in to Hassan, who rose to her and kissed her hands and saluted her. She returned not his greeting, but said to him, 'Come; speak with the queen. Did I not forbid thee from all this, saying, "Return presently to thine own country and I will give thee that to which no mortal may avail?" But thou wouldst not obey me nor hearken to my words, but rejectedst my counsel and chosest to bring destruction on thyself and me. Up, then, and take that which thou hast chosen; for death is at hand. Arise: speak with yonder wicked tyrannical baggage.' So Hassan arose, broken-spirited, mournful-hearted and fearful, despairing of life and saying, 'O Preserver, preserve Thou me! O my God, be gracious to me in that which Thou hast decreed to me of Thine affliction and protect me, O Thou the most merciful of those that show mercy!' Then he followed the old woman and the chamberlain and the guards to the queen's presence, where he found his two sons Nasir and Mensour sitting in her lap, whilst she played and made merry with them. As soon as his eyes fell on them, he knew them and giving a great cry, fell down in a swoon for excess of joy at their sight. They also knew him and natural affection moved them, so that they freed themselves from the queen's lap and fell upon Hassan, and God (to whom belong knight and majesty) made them speak and say to him, 'O our father!' Whereupon the old woman and all who were present wept for pity and tenderness over them and said, 'Praised be God, who hath reunited you with your father!' Presently, Hassan came to himself and embracing his children, wept till he fainted again, and when he revived, he recited the following verses:

Now, by your life, my heart may not 'gainst severance endure,
Though certain ruin union were and sure discomfiture!
'To-morrow,' quoth your wraith to me, 'reunion shall betide;'
And who to-morrow, 'spite the foe, shall life to me ensure?
Nay, since your parting-day, my lords, I swear it by your life,
No sweet of life delighteth me; all pleasance I abjure;
And if God order that I die for love of you, I die
Chiefest of all the martyrs slain of love unblest and pure.
Within my heart a fawn hath made her grazing-stead, whose form,
Like sleep, hath bed mine eyes and nought can back to me allure.
If she in lists of law deny the shedding of my blood,
Lo, in her cheeks against herself it beareth witness sure.

When Nour el Huda was certified that the little ones were indeed Hassan's children and that her sister, the princess Menar es Sena, was his wife, of whom he was come in quest, she was beyond measure enraged against her and railed at Hassan and reviled him and kicked him in the breast, so that he fell on his back in a swoon. Then she cried out at him, saying, 'Arise, fly for thy life! But that I swore no evil should betide thee from me, if thy story proved true, I would slay thee with mine own hand forthright!' And she cried out at the old woman, who fell on her face for fear, and said to her, 'By Allah, but that I am loath to break the oath that I swore, I would put both thee and him to death after the foulest fashion!' [Then, turning to Hassan,] 'Arise,'

[added she,] 'go out from before me in safety and return to thine own country, for I swear by my fortune. if ever mine eye behold thee or if any bring thee in to me after this, I will smite of thy head and that of whoso bringeth thee!' Then she cried out to her officers, saying, 'Put him out from before me!' So they put him out; and when he came to himself, he recited the following verses:

You're far away, yet to my thought you're nearest of all folk;
You're absent, yet within my heart for evermore you dwell.
By Allah, ne'er have I inclined to other than to you!
I've borne with patience the unright of fortune foul and fell.
My nights in love-longing for you for ever pass and end,
And in my Heart a flame there is and raging fires of hell.
Severance I ne'er could brook an hour; so how, now months have passed
O'er me estranged from her I love, can I my sufferings tell?
Jealous of every lightest breeze that blew on thee was I,
Exceeding jealous, yea, of aught the tender fair befell.

Then he once more fell down in a swoon, and when he came to himself, he found himself without the palace, whither they had dragged him on his face. (Now this was grievous to Shewahi; but she dared not remonstrate with the queen by reason of the violence of her wrath.) So he rose, stumbling in his skirts and hardly crediting his escape from Nour el Huda, and went forth, distracted and knowing not whither to go. The world, for all its wideness, was straitened upon him and he found none to comfort him nor any to whom he might resort for counsel or refuge; wherefore he gave himself up for lost, for that he availed not to journey [to his own country] and knew none to travel with him, neither knew he the way [thither] nor might pass through the Valley of Jinn and the Land of Beasts and the Island of Birds. So he bewept himself, till he fainted, and when he revived, he bethought him of his children and his wife and of that which might befall her with her sister, repenting him of having come to those parts and hearkened to none, and recited the following verses:

Let mine eyes weep for loss of her I love, with tears like rain:
Rare is my solace and my woes increase on me amain.
The cup of severance unmixt I've drunken to the dregs.
Who shall avail the loss of friends and dear ones to sustain?
Ye spread the carpet of reproach 'twixt me and you; ah when,
O carpet of reproach, wilt thou be folded up again?
I wake; ye sleep. If ye pretend that I've forgot your love,
Lo, I've forgotten to forget, and solace all is vain.
Indeed, my heart is racked with love and longing for your sight
And you the only leaches are can heal me of my pain.
See ye not what is fall'n on me through your abandonment?
I am abased to high and low, because of your disdain.
Fain would I hide my love for you: longing discovers it,
For burnt and seared with passion's fires are all my heart and brain.
Have ruth on me, compassionate my case, for still to keep
Our plighted faith in secrecy and trust I have been fain.

Will fortune reunite me aye with you, my heart's desire,
You unto whom my soul cleaves still, bound fast with many a chain?
My entrails ulcerated are with separation's pangs:
Would God with tidings from your camp to favour us you'd deign!

Then he went on, till he came without the city, where he found the river and fared on along its bank, knowing not whither he went.

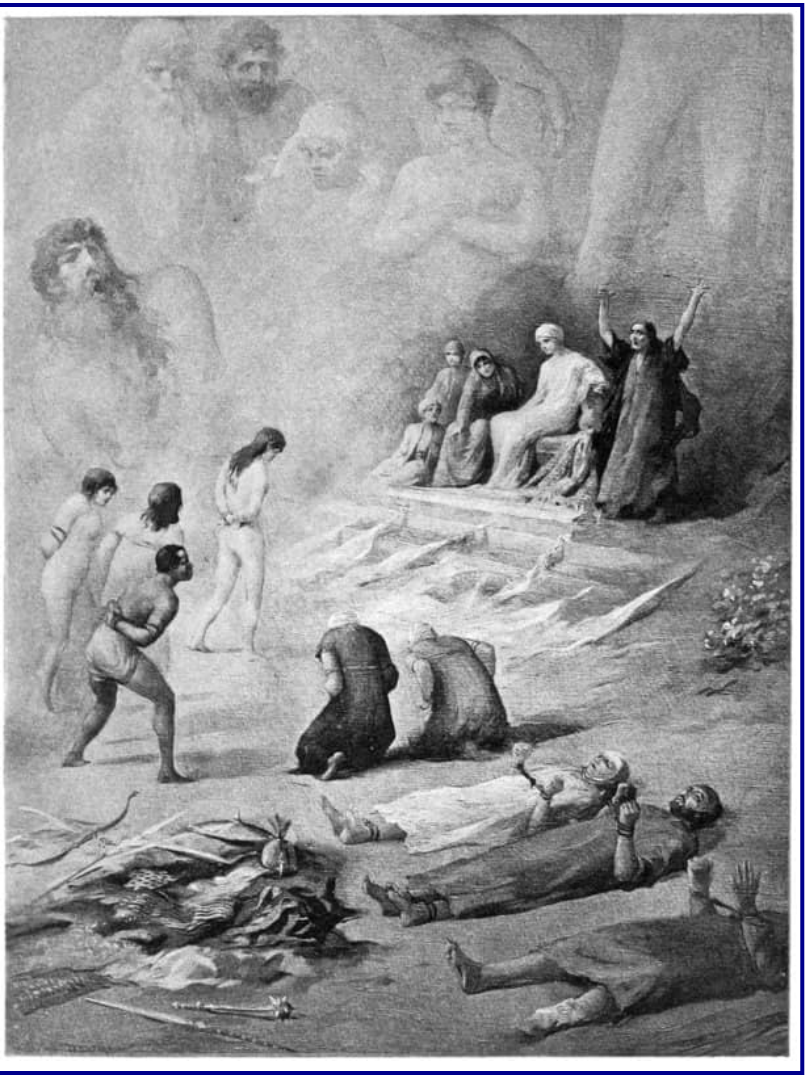
To return to his wife, Menar es Sena. As she was about to set out, on the second day after the departure of the old woman with her children, there came in to her one of the king her father's chamberlains and kissed the earth before her, saying, 'O princess, the king thy father salutes thee and bids thee to him.' So she rose and accompanied the chamberlain to her father, who made her sit by his side on the couch, and said to her, 'O my daughter, know that I have had a dream this night, which maketh me fear for thee and that long sorrow will betide thee from this thy journey.' 'How so, O my father,' asked she, 'and what didst thou see in thy dream?' Quoth he, 'I dreamt that I entered a hidden treasure, wherein was great store of jewels and jacinths and other riches; but meseemed nought pleased of all this me save seven beazels, which were the finest things there. I chose out one of the seven jewels, for it was the smallest and finest and most lustrous of them and its beauty pleased me; so I took it in my hand and went forth. When I came without the door of the treasure, I opened my hand and turned over the jewel, rejoicing, when, behold, there swooped down on me out of the sky a strange bird from a far land (for it was not of the birds of our country), and snatching it from my hand, returned with it whence it came. Whereupon grief and concern and vexation overcame me and exceeding chagrin, which troubled me so that I awoke, mourning and lamenting for the loss of the jewel. So I summoned the interpreters and expounders of dreams and related to them my dream, and they said to me, "Thou hast seven daughters, the youngest of whom thou wilt lose, and she will be taken from thee perforce, without thy consent." Now thou art the youngest and dearest of my daughters and the most loving of them to me, and thou art about to journey to thy sister, and I know not what may befall thee from her; so go thou not, but return to thy palace.'

When the princess heard her father's words, her heart fluttered and she feared for her children and bent her head awhile. Then she raised it and said to him, 'O King, Queen Nour el Huda hath made ready for me an entertainment and looks for my coming to her, hour by hour. She hath not seen me these four years and if I delay to visit her, she will be wroth with me. The most of my stay with her will be a month and then I will return to thee. Besides, who is there can travel our land and make his way to the Wac Islands? Who can avail to reach the White Country and the Black Mountain and come to the Land of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal, and how shall he traverse the Island of Birds and the Land of Beasts and the Valley of Jinn and enter our islands? If any stranger came hither, he would be drowned in the seas of destruction: so be of good heart and cheerful eye concerning my journey; for none may avail to tread our earth.' And she ceased not to persuade him, till he gave her leave to go and bade a thousand horse escort her to the river and abide there, till she entered her sister's city and palace [and returned to them], when they should take her and carry her back to him. Moreover, he charged her sojourn with her sister two days [only] and return to

him in haste; and she answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then she went forth and he with her and bade her farewell.

Now his words had sunken deep into her heart and she feared for her children; but it availeth not to fortify oneself by caretaking against the assaults of destiny. So she set out and fared on diligently three days, till she came to the river and pitched her tents on its banks. Then she crossed the stream, with some of her officers and attendants, and going up to the city and the palace, went in to Queen Nour el Huda, with whom she found her children, and they were weeping and crying out, 'O our father!' At this, the tears ran from her eyes and she wept and strained them to her bosom, saying, 'What put you in mind of your father at this time? Would the hour had never been, in which I left him! If I knew him to be in the house of the world, I would carry you to him.' Then she bemoaned herself and her husband and her children's weeping and recited these verses:

Distance despite, belovéd mine, and inhumanity,
I turn to you with yearning love, wherever you may be.
Mine eyes towards your country turn and all my heart bewails
The days of union, when in love and peace foregathered we.
How many a night in mutual love, unstirred by doubt, we spent,
What while caresses and fair faith delighted you and me!



When her sister saw her press her children to her bosom, saying, 'It is I who have wrought thus with myself and my children and have ruined my own house!' she saluted her not, but said to her, 'O harlot, whence hadst thou these children? Hast thou married without thy father's knowledge or hast thou committed fornication? If thou have played the whore, it behoves that thou be exemplarily punished; and if thou have married without our knowledge, why didst thou leave thy husband and sever thy children from their father and bring them hither? Thou hast hidden thy children from us. Thinkest thou we know not of this? God the Most High, He who knoweth the secret things, hath made known to us thy case and discovered thy shame.'

Then she bade her guards seize her and bind her hands behind her and shackle her with shackles of iron. So they did as she commanded and she beat her grievously, that her skin was torn, and crucified her by the hair; after which she cast her in prison and wrote the king her father a letter acquainting him with her case and saying, 'There hath appeared in our country a man, a mortal, by name Hassan, and our sister Menar es Sena avoucheth that she is lawfully married to him and hath by him two sons, whom she hath hidden from us and thee; nor did she discover aught of herself till there came to us this man and informed us that he married her and she abode with him a long while; after which she took her children and departed, without his knowledge, after bidding his mother tell her son, whenas longing betided him, to come to her in the Wac Islands. So we laid hands on the man and sent the old woman Shewahi to fetch her and her children, enjoining her to bring us the children in advance of her. And she did so, whilst Menar es Sena equipped herself, and set out to visit me.

When the children were come, I sent for Hassan, and he knew them and they him; wherefore I was certified that they were indeed his children and that she was his wife and that his story was true and he was not to blame, but that the blame and disgrace rested with my sister. Now I feared the soiling of our honour before the people of our islands; so, when this lewd traitress came in to me, I was incensed against her and beat her grievously and crucified her by the hair and cast her into prison. Behold, I have acquainted thee with her case and it is thine to command, and that thou orderest us, we will do. Thou knowest that in this affair is dishonour and disgrace to us and to thee, and belike the people of the islands will hear of it, and we shall become a byword amongst them; wherefore it befits that thou return us an answer with speed.'

Then she delivered the letter to a courier and he carried it to the king, who, when he read it, was exceeding wroth with his daughter Menar es Sena and wrote to Nour el Huda, saying, 'I commit her case to thee and give thee power over her life; so, if the thing be as thou sayest, put her to death, without consulting me.' When the queen received her father's letter, she sent for Menar es Sena and they brought her, drowned in her blood and pinioned with her hair, fettered with heavy shackles of iron and clad in hair-cloth; and she stood before her, abject and cast down. When she saw herself in this condition of humiliation and exceeding abasement, she called to mind her former high estate and wept sore and recited the following verses:

O Lord, my foes do cast about to slay me and conceive
I cannot anywise escape from out the snares they weave.

But, lo, in Thee I put my trust, their works to bring to nought;
For Thou the fearful's refuge art, the hope of those that grieve.

Then she wept, till she fell down in a swoon, and presently coming to herself, repeated the following verses:

Troubles familiar with my heart are grown and
I with them, Erst shunning; for the generous are sociable still.
Not one mere kind alone of woe doth lieger with me lie;
Praised be God! There are with me thousands of kinds of ill.

And also these:

Full many a sorry chance doth light upon a man and fill
His life with trouble; yet with God the issue bideth still.
His case is sore on him; but, when its meshes straitened are
To utt'rest, they relax, although he deem they never will.

Then the queen sent for a ladder of wood and made the eunuchs bind her with cords thereto, on her back, with her arms spread out; after which she uncovered her head and wound her hair about the ladder; for pity for her was rooted out from her heart. When Menar es Sena saw herself in this state of abjection and humiliation, she cried out and wept; but none succoured her. Then said she to the queen, 'O my sister, how is thy heart hardened against me? Hast thou no mercy on me nor on these little children?' But her words only hardened her sister's heart and she reviled her, saying, 'O wanton! O harlot! May God have no mercy on whoso hath mercy on thee! How should I have pity on thee, O traitress?' 'I appeal to the Lord of the Heavens,' replied Menar es Sena, 'concerning that wherewith thou reproached me and whereof I am innocent! By Allah, I have done no whoredom, but am lawfully married to him, and my Lord knoweth if I speak truth or not! Indeed, my heart is wroth with thee, by reason of thine excessive hard-heartedness against me! How canst thou accuse me of harlotry, without knowledge? But my Lord will deliver me from thee and if that whereof thou accusest me be true, may He punish me for it!' Quoth Nour el Huda, 'How darest thou bespeak me thus?' and beat her till she swooned away; whereupon they sprinkled water on her till she revived; and indeed her charms were wasted for excess of beating and humiliation and the straitness of her bonds. Then she recited these verses:

If I've in aught offended against you
Or anywise done that I should not do,
To you, repentant for what's past, I come
And as a suppliant, for forgiveness sue.

When Nour el Huda heard this, her wrath redoubled and she said to her, 'O harlot, wilt thou speak before me in verse and seek to excuse thyself for the heinous sin, thou hast done? It was my desire that thou shouldst return to thy husband, that I might witness thy depravity and assurance; for thou gloriest in thy lewdness and profligacy and the heinousness of thy conduct.' Then she called for a palm-stick and tucking up her sleeves, beat her from head to foot; after which she called for a whip of plaited thongs, wherewith if one smote an elephant, he would start off at speed, and beat her on her back and stomach and every part of her body, till she swooned away.

When the old woman Shewahi saw this, she fled forth from the queen's presence, weeping and cursing her; but Nour el Huda cried out to her guards, saying, 'Fetch her to me!' So they ran after her and seizing her, brought her back to the queen, who caused throw her on the ground and bidding them lay hold of her, rose and took the whip, with which she beat her, till she fainted, when she said to her waiting-women, 'Drag this ill- omened old woman forth on her face and put her out.' And they did as she bade them.

Meanwhile, Hassan walked on beside the river, in the direction of the desert, distracted, troubled and despairing of life; and indeed he was dazed and knew not night from day, for stress of affliction. He fared on thus, till he came to a tree, to which he saw a scroll hanging, so he took it and found these verses written thereon:

I ordered thy case, without hindrance or let,
Whilst thou in the womb of thy mother wast yet.
I made her heart yearn to thee, so she was fain
To tend thee and thee to her bosom to set.
We will compensate thee and requite thee for all
That hath wrought to afflict thee of trouble and fret;
So up and submit thee to Us, for indeed
We will aid thee to that thou desirest to get.

When he read this, he made sure of deliverance from trouble and reunion with those he loved. Then he went on a few steps and found himself alone in a wild and perilous desert, in which there was none to company with him; whereupon his heart sank within him for fear and loneliness and he trembled in every nerve, for that frightful place, and recited the following verses:

O East wind, if thou passest by my loved ones' dwelling-place,
Abundant greeting bear to them from me and full of grace,
And tell them I the hostage am of passion, verily,
And that my longing for their sight all longing doth outpace.
Happily, for sympathy, a wind shall blow on me from them
And the corruption of my bones relive thereto, percase.

Then he walked on a few steps farther beside the river, till he came upon two little boys of the sons of the magicians, beside whom lay a wand of brass, graven with talismans, and a skull-cap of leather, made in three pieces and wroughten in steel with names and figures. The boys were disputing and beating one another, till the blood ran down between them; whilst each said, 'None shall take the wand but I.' Hassan interposed and parted them, saying, 'What is the cause of this your contention?' 'O uncle,' answered they, 'be thou judge of our case, for God the Most High hath surely sent thee to do justice between us.' 'Tell me your case,' said Hassan; 'and I will judge between you.' So one of them said to him, 'We are brothers-german and our father was a mighty magician, who dwelt in a cavern in yonder mountain. He died and left us this cap and wand; and my brother says, "None shall have the wand but I," whilst I say the like; so be thou judge between us and deliver us from each other.' Quoth Hassan, 'What is the difference between the wand and the cap and what is their value? The wand appears to be worth six farthings and the cap three.' But they answered, 'Thou

knowest not their properties.' 'And what are their properties?' asked Hassan. 'Each of them hath a wonderful secret virtue,' replied they, 'wherefore the wand is worth the revenue of all the Wac Islands and their provinces and dependencies, and the cap the like.' And Hassan said, 'By Allah, O my sons, discover to me their secret virtues.'

'O uncle,' answered they, 'they are extraordinary; for our father wrought at their contrivance a hundred and thirty and five years, till he brought them to perfection and informed them with secret properties and engraved them after the likeness of the revolving sphere, so that he made them serve him extraordinary services and by their aid he dissolved all enchantments; and when he had made an end of their fashion, death, which needs must all suffer, overtook him. Now the virtue of the cap is, that whoso sets it on his head is hidden from all folk's eyes, nor can any see him, whilst it abideth on his head; and that of the wand is, that whoso possesseth it hath command and authority over seven tribes of the Jinn, who all serve the wand; and whenever he smiteth therewith on the ground, their kings [appear before him and] do him homage, and all the Jinn are at his service.'

When Hassan heard this, he bowed his head and said in himself, 'By Allah, I have need of this wand and cap, and I am worthier of them than these boys. So I will go about to get them from them by craft, that I may use them to free myself and my wife and children from yonder tyrannical queen, and then will we depart from this dismal place, whence there is no deliverance nor fight for mortal man. Doubtless, God caused me not to fall in with these two boys, but that I might get the wand and cap from them.' Then he raised his head and said to the boys, 'If ye would have me decide the case, I will make trial of you and see what each of you deserveth. He who overcometh his brother shall have the wand and he who faileth shall have the cap.' 'O uncle,' answered they, 'we depute thee to make trial of us and do thou decide between us as thou seest fit.' Quoth Hassan, 'Will ye hearken to me and have regard to my words?' And they said, 'Yes.' Then said he, 'I will take a stone and throw it and he who foregoeth his brother thereto and taketh it shall have the wand, and the other shall have the cap.' And they said, "We consent to this.'

Then he took a stone and threw it with his might, that it disappeared from sight. The two boys ran after it and when they were at a distance, Hassan donned the cap and taking the wand in his hand, removed from his place, that he might prove the truth of that which the boys had said, with regard to their properties. The younger outran the elder and coming first to the stone, took it and returned with it to the place where they had left Hassan, but found no signs of him. So he called to his brother, saying, 'Where is the man who was to judge between us?' Quoth the other, 'I see him not nor know whether he hath flown up to the height of heaven or sunk into the nether earth.' Then they sought for him, but saw him not, though all the while he was standing by them. So they reviled each other, saying, 'The wand and the cap are both gone; they are neither mine nor thine: and indeed our father warned us of this very thing; but we forgot what he said.' Then they retraced their steps and entered the city.

When Hassan was thus certified of the truth of their speech, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and returned to the city, with the cap on his head and the wand in his hand. None saw him and he entered the palace and went up into the lodging of Shewahi, who saw him not, because of the cap. Then he went up to a shelf over her head, on which were vessels of glass and chinaware, and shook it with his hand, so that what was thereon fell to the ground. The old woman cried out and buffeted her face; then she rose and restored the fallen things to their places, saying in herself, 'By Allah, methinks Queen Nour el Huda hath sent a devil to torment me, and he hath played

me this trick! I beg God the Most High to deliver me from her and ensure me against her wrath, for, O Lord, if she deal thus abominably with her sister, beating and crucifying her, dear as she is to her father, how will she do with a stranger like myself, against whom she is incensed?'

Then said she, 'I conjure thee, O devil, by the Most Merciful God, the Bountiful, the High of Estate, the Mighty of Dominion, Creator of men and Jinn, and by the writing upon the seal of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!) speak to me and answer me!' Quoth Hassan, 'I am no devil; I am Hassan, the afflicted, the distracted lover.' Then he took the cap from his head and appeared to the old woman, who knew him and taking him apart, said to him, 'What is come to thy wit, that thou returnest hither? Go and hide; for, if this wicked woman have tormented thy wife thus, and she her sister, how will she do, if she light on thee?'

Then she told him all that had befallen his wife and that wherein she was of duresse and misery and torment, adding, 'And indeed the queen repents her of having let thee go and hath sent one after thee, promising him a quintal of gold and my post in her service; and she hath sworn that, if he bring thee back, she will put thee and thy wife and children to death.' And she wept and discovered to Hassan what the queen had done with her self, whereat he wept and said, 'O my lady, how shall I do to deliver myself and my wife and children from this tyrannical queen and return with them in safety to my own country?' 'Out on thee!' replied the old woman. 'Save thyself.' Quoth he, 'Needs must I deliver her and my children from the queen in her despite.' 'How canst thou rescue them from her?' said Shewahi. 'Go and hide thyself, O my son, till God the Most High permit.'

Then Hassan showed her the wand and the cap, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, 'Glory be to Him who quickeneth the bones, though they be rotten! By Allah, O my son, thou and thy wife were but lost folk, but now thou art saved, thou and thy wife and children! For I know the wand and I know its maker, who was my master in magic. He was a mighty magician and wrought a hundred and thirty and five years at this wand and cap, till he brought them to perfection, when death the inevitable overtook him. And I have heard him say to his two sons, "O my sons, these things are none of your lot, for there will come a stranger from a far country, who will take them from you perforce, and ye shall not know how he takes them." "O our father," said they, "tell us how he will win to take them." But he answered, "I know not." And how,' added she, 'availedst thou to take them, O my son?'

So he told her how he had taken them from the two boys, whereat she rejoiced and said, 'O my son, since thou hast gotten [the means of freeing] thy wife and children, give ear to what I shall say to thee. There is no abiding for me with this wicked woman, after the fashion in which she hath dared to use me; wherefore I am minded to depart from her to the caves of the Magicians and abide with them there till I die. But do thou, O my son, don the cap and take the wand in thy hand and enter the place where thy wife and children are. Loose her bonds and smite the earth with the wand, saying, "Be present, O servants of these names!" whereupon the servants of the wand will appear; and if there present himself one of the heads of the tribes, command him what thou wilt.'

So he bade her farewell and donning the cap, went forth and entered the place where his wife was. He found her bound to the ladder by her hair, well-nigh lifeless, weeping-eyed and mourning-hearted, in the sorriest of plights, knowing no way to deliver herself. Her children were playing under the ladder, whilst she looked at them and wept for them and herself; and he heard her repeat the following verses:

Nothing is left her but a fluttering spright,
Ay, and an eye bereaved of its light.
A longing one, her entrails are a-fire,
Yet still she's silent in her woes' despite.
Her foes weep, pitying her; alas for those
Who pity in the exultant foe excite!

When Hassan saw her in this state of torment and misery and abjection, he wept till he swooned away; and when he revived, he saw his children playing and their mother aswoon for excess of pain; so he took the cap from his head and the children saw him and cried out, saying, 'O our father!' Then he covered his head again and the princess came to herself hearing their cry, but only saw her children weeping and crying out, 'O our father!' When she heard them name their father and weep, her heart was broken and her entrails rent in sunder and she said to them, 'What makes you in mind of your father at this time?' And she wept sore and cried out, from a bleeding heart and an aching bosom, 'Where are ye and where is your father?'

Then she recalled the days of her union with Hassan and what had befallen her since her desertion of him and wept till her face was drowned in tears and her cheeks were furrowed with much weeping. Her tears ran down and wet the ground and she had not a hand loose to wipe them from her cheeks, whilst the flies fed their fill on her skin, and she found no helper but weeping and no solace but repeating verses. Then she recited the following:

I call to mind the parting-day that rent our loves in twain,
When, as I turned away, the tears in very streams did rain.
The cameleer urged on his beasts with them, what while I found
Nor strength nor fortitude, nor did my heart with me remain.
Yea, back I turned, unknowing of the roads nor might shake off
The trance of grief and longing love that numbed my heart and brain;
And worst of all betided me, on my return, was one
Who came to me, in lowly guise, to glory in my pain.
Since the beloved's gone, O soul, forswear the sweet of life
Nor covet its continuance, for, wanting him, 'twere vain.
List, O my friend, unto the tale of love, and God forbid
That I should speak and that thy heart to hearken should not deign!
As 'twere El Asmai himself. of passion I discourse
With fancies rare and marvelous, linked in an endless chain.

Then she turned right and left, seeking the cause of her children's crying out, 'O our father!' but saw no one and marvelled that they should name him at that time and call upon him. When Hassan heard her verses, he wept till he swooned away and the

tears ran down upon his cheeks like rain. Then he drew near the children and uncovered his head to them, [unseen of his wife,] whereupon they saw him and knowing him, cried out, saying, 'O our father!' Their mother fell a-weeping again, when she heard them name their father and said, 'There is no resource against the ordinance of God the Most High! Strange! What makes them bethink them of their father at this time and call upon him, albeit it is not of their wont?' Then she wept and recited the following verses:

The land is empty of the moon that shone so bright whilere:
Be lavish of your tears, mine eyes; I charge you, do not spare!
They have departed: how shall I be patient of their loss?
Nor heart nor patience after them, is left with me, I swear.
Lords who are absent, but whose place is in the heart of me,
Will you return to me again and be as once you were?
What were the harm if they returned and I their company
Enjoyed and they had ruth upon my tears and my despair?
They made mine eyes rain wonder-fast upon the parting-day:
There's nought may quench the raging fire that 'twixt my ribs doth flare.
I would have had them stay, but Fate was contrary to me
And did with sev'rance disappoint my longing for the fair.
By Allah, O beloved mine, return to me! Enough
Of tears, indeed, I've shed to win ill-fortune to forbear.

With this, Hassan could no longer contain himself, but took the cap from his head; whereupon his wife saw him and recognizing him, gave a scream that startled all in the place. Then she said to him, 'How camest thou hither? Hast thou dropped from the sky or come up through the earth?' And her eyes filled with tears and Hassan also wept. 'O man,' quoth she, 'this is no time for tears or reproaches. Fate hath had its course and the sight was blinded and the pen hath run with what was ordained of God from all eternity: so, God on thee, whencesoever thou comest, go and hide, lest any see thee and tell my sister and she slaughter thee and me!' 'O my lady and lady of all queens,' answered he, 'I have ventured myself and come hither, and either I will die or I will deliver thee from this thy strait and return with thee and my children to my country, in despite of thy shrew of a sister.'

But she smiled and shook her head, saying, 'Far, O my life, far is it from the power of any save God the Most High to deliver me from this my stress! Save thyself by flight and cast not thyself into destruction; for she hath troops without number, that none may withstand. Grant that thou tookest me and wentest forth with me, how canst thou win to thy country and escape from these islands and the perils of these dreadful places? Verily, in thy way hither, thou hast seen the wonders and dangers and terrors of the road, such as none may escape, not even one of the rebellious Jinn. Depart, therefore, forthright and add not anguish to my anguish and trouble to my trouble, neither do thou pretend to rescue me from this my plight; for who shall bring me to thy country, through all these valleys and thirsty deserts and fatal places?' 'By thy life, O light of mine eyes,' rejoined Hassan, 'I will not depart this place but with thee!' 'O man,' quoth she, 'thou knowest not what thou sayst! How canst thou avail

unto this thing and what manner of man art thou? None can escape from these realms, even had he command over Jinn and Afrits and warlocks. So fly and leave me; peradventure God will bring about a change.' 'O lady of fair ones,' answered Hassan, 'I came but to deliver thee with this wand and cap.' And he told her what had befallen him with the two boys; but, whilst he was speaking, up came the queen and heard them talking.

When he was ware of her, he put on the cap and was hidden from sight, and she entered and said to the princess, 'O harlot, who is he with whom thou wast talking?' 'Who is with me that should talk with me,' answered Menar es Sena, 'except these little ones?' Then the queen took the whip and beat her, whilst Hassan stood by, nor did she leave beating her till she fainted; whereupon she bade remove her to another place. So they loosed her and carried her to another chamber, whilst Hassan followed [unseen]. There they cast her down, senseless, and stood looking upon her, till she revived and recited the following verses:

Long, long have I bewailed the sev'rance of our loves,
With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain,
And vowed that, if the days should reunite us two,
My lips should never speak of severance again,
And to the enviers, 'Die of sheer despite!' I'd say;
'By Allah, I have won my wishes to attain!'
Joy loath o'ercome me so, that, for the very stress
Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.
Tears are become to you a habit, O mine eyes,
So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Then the slave-girls went out from her and Hassan took off the cap; whereupon his wife said to him, 'See, O man, all this hath befallen me by reason of my having gainsaid thee and transgressed thy commandment and gone forth without thy leave. But, I conjure thee by Allah, reproach me not for mine offence and know that women know not a man's worth till they have lost him. Indeed, I have sinned and done evil; but I crave pardon of God the Great for that I did, and if He reunite us, I will never again disobey thee in aught.' Quoth Hassan (and indeed his heart ached for her), 'It was not thou that sinnedst, but I, for I departed and left thee with one who knew not thy rank nor thy worth. But know, O beloved of my heart and fruit of mine entrails and light of mine eyes, that God (blessed be He!) hath given me power to release thee; so wouldst thou have me carry thee to thy father, there to accomplish what God decreeth unto thee, or wilt thou presently depart with me to my country, now that relief is come to thee?' 'Who can deliver me save the Lord of the skies?' answered she. 'Go to thine own country and put away from thee false hope; for thou knowest not the perils of these parts: but, if thou obey me not, thou wilt see.' And she recited the following verses:

What thou wouldst have is law to me and pleasing in my sight!
What ails thee, then, to look on me with anger and despite?
Whate'er befell, now God forbid the love that was of old
'Twixt uS should e'er forgotten be, forspent and ended quite!

For from our side the spy ceased not, estrangement till he saw
Between us, when he cast about our loves to disunite.
Yes, I was constant in fair thought of thee, for all the spy
Dealt ill and did with evil words to evil thoughts excite.
We'll keep the secret of our loves and guard it from the folk,
Albeit with reproach the sword of blame be bared to smite.
My days in longing do I pass, so may a messenger
With tidings of acceptance come from thee and heal my spright.

Then she wept and her children wept also and the slave-girls heard them: so they came in to them and found them weeping, but saw not Hassan with them; wherefore they wept for pity of them and cursed Queen Nour el Huda. Then Hassan took patience till it was night and her guards had gone to their sleeping-places, when he went up to her and loosing her, pressed her to his bosom and kissed her on the head and between the eyes, saying, 'How long have we wearied for our country and for reunion there! Is this our meeting in sleep, or on wake?' Then he took up the elder boy and she took up the younger and they went forth. God covered them with the veil of His protection, so that they came safe to the outer door of the palace, but found it locked from without, and Hassan said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! We are God's and to Him we return!' With this they despaired of escape and Hassan beat hand upon hand, saying, 'O Thou that dispellest troubles! Verily, I had bethought me of every thing and considered its issue but this; and now, when it is day, they will take us, and what resource have we in this case?' And he recited the following verses:

Thou madest fair thy thought of Fate, whenas the days were fair,
And fearedst not the unknown ills that they to thee might bring.
The nights were fair and calm to thee; thou wast deceived by them,
For in the peace of night is born full many a troublous thing.

Then he wept and she wept for his weeping and for the abasement she had suffered and the cruelties of fortune: and he turned to her and recited the following verses:

Fortune is vehement on me, as if I were its foe;
Yea, day by day, she meeteth me with this or the other woe.
If aught of good I wish, Fate brings the contrary thereof,
And if 'tis bright for me one day, the next it foul doth show.

And also these:

My fate doth irk and baffle me, unknowing that I am
Most worthy and that Fortune's shifts are little worth, ywis.
It spends the night in showing me th' injustice of events
And I in showing forth to it what very patience is.

Then she said to him, 'By Allah, thee is no relief for us but to kill ourselves and be at rest from this great weariness; else we shall suffer grievous torment on the morrow.' At this moment, they heard a voice from without the door say, 'By Allah, O

my lady Menar es Sena, I will not open to thee and thy husband Hassan, except ye obey me in what I shall say to you!' When they heard this, they were silent for excess of fear and would have returned whence they came; when behold, the voice spoke again, saying, 'What ails you to be silent and answer me not?' Therewith they knew the speaker for the old woman Shewahi and said to her, 'Whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do; but first open the door to us, for this is no time for talk.' 'By Allah,' replied she, 'I will not open to you, except ye swear to me that you will take me with you and not leave me with yonder harlot: so, whatever befalls you shall befall me and if ye escape, I shall escape, and if ye perish, I shall perish: for yonder lewd minion entreats me with indignity and still torments me on your account; and thou, O my daughter, knowest my worth.'

So they trusted in her and swore to her such an oath as contented her, whereupon she opened the door to them and they came out and found her riding on a Greek jar of red earthenware with a rope of palm fibres about its neck [by way of halter], which turned under her and ran faster than a Nejd colt, and she said to them, 'Follow me and fear nothing, for I know forty magical formulas, by the least of which I could make this city a surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, and turn each damsel therein into a fish, and all before dawn. But I was not able to work aught of magic, for fear of the king her father and of regard for her sisters, for that they are redoubtable, by reason of their many guards and servants and tribesmen. However, I will yet show you wonders of my skill and magic; and now let us on, with God's help and blessing.'

Hassan and his wife rejoiced in this, making sure of escape, and they left the palace and went forth, till they came without the city, when he fortified his heart and smiting the earth with the wand, said, 'Ho, servants of these names, appear to me and discover to me your estates!' Thereupon the earth clove in sunder and out came seven Afrits, with their feet in the bowels of the earth and their heads in the clouds. They kissed the earth three times before Hassan and said with one voice, 'Here are we at thy service, O our lord and ruler over us! What dost thou bid us do? For we hear and obey thy commandment. An thou wilt we will dry thee up seas and remove mountains from their places.' Hassan rejoiced in their words and at their speedy answer [to his summons], so he took courage and bracing up his resolution, said to them, 'Who are ye and what are your names and races? And to what tribes and companies do ye belong?' They kissed the earth once more and answered with one voice, saying, 'We are seven kings, each ruling over seven tribes of the Jinn of all conditions, Marids and devils, flyers and divers, dwellers in mountains and wastes and deserts and haunters of the seas: so command us what thou wilt; for we are thy servants and slaves, and whoso possesseth this wand hath dominion over all our necks and we owe him obedience.'

When Hassan heard this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, he and his wife and the old woman, and he said to the Kings of the Jinn, 'I desire of you that ye show me your tribes and hosts and armies.' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'if we show thee our hosts, we fear for thee and these who are with thee, for they are many in number and various in form and fashion and favour. Some of us are heads without bodies and others bodies without heads, and others again are in the likeness of wild animals and beasts of prey. However, if this be thy will, needs must we first show thee those of us who are like unto wild beasts. But, O our lord, what wouldst thou of us at this present?'

Quoth Hassan, 'I would have you carry me forthwith to the city of Baghdad, me and my wife and this old woman.'

But they hung down their heads and were silent, whereupon quoth Hassan, 'Why do ye not reply?' And they said with one voice, 'O our lord and ruler over us, we are of the covenant of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace!) and he made us swear that we would carry none of the sons of Adam on our backs; since which time we have carried no moral on our backs or shoulders: but we will straightway harness the horses of the Jinn, that shall carry thee and thy company to thy country.' 'And how far are we from Baghdad?' asked Hassan. Quoth they, 'Seven years' journey for a diligent horseman.' Hassan marvelled at this and said to them, 'Then how came I hither in less than a year?' They answered, 'God inclined the hearts of His pious servants to thee, else hadst thou never won hither nor set eyes on these regions. For the Sheikh Abdulcuddous, who mounted thee on the elephant and the enchanted horse, traversed with thee, in ten days, three years' journey for a diligent horseman, and the Afrit Dehnesh, to whom the Sheikh Abourruweish committed thee, carried thee a like distance in a day and a night; all which was of the blessing of God the Most High, for that the Sheikh Abourruweish is of the lineage of Asef ben Berkhiya and knoweth the Most Great name of God. Moreover, from Baghdad to the Palace of the Mountain of Clouds is a year's journey, and this makes the seven years.'

When Hassan heard this, he marvelled exceedingly and said, 'Glory be to God, who maketh the difficult easy and leadeth the broken, who bringeth near the distant and humblest every froward tyrant who hath eased us of every stress and brought me hither and subjected these creatures to me and reunited me with my wife and children! I know not whether I sleep or wake or if I be sober or drunken!' Then he turned to the Jinn and said, 'In how many days will your horses bring us to Baghdad?' 'They will carry you thither in less than a year,' answered they, 'but not till after ye have endured terrible perils and hardships and traversed thirsty valleys and frightful wastes and terrors without number; and we cannot warrant thee, O our lord, from the people of these islands nor from the mischief of the Supreme King and his enchanters and warlocks. It may be they will force us and take you from us and we fall into affliction with them, and all to whom the news shall come after this will say to us, "Ye are evil-doers. How could ye affront tile Supreme King and carry a mortal out of his dominions, and the king's daughter with him?" Wert thou alone with us,' continued they, 'the thing were easy; but He who brought thee hither is able to cary thee back to thy country and reunite thee presently with thy people. So take heart and put thy trust in God and fear not; for we are at thy service, to convey thee to thy country.'

Hassan thanked them and said, 'God requite you with good. But now make haste with the horses.' 'We hear and obey,' answered they and struck the ground with their feet, whereupon it opened and they disappeared within it and were absent awhile, after which they reappeared with three horses, saddled and bridled, and on each saddle-bow a pair of saddle-bags, with a leathern bottle of water in one pocket and the other full of victual. Hassan mounted one horse and took a child before him, whilst his wife mounted a second and took the other child before her. Then the old woman alighted from the jar and mounted the third horse and they rode on, without ceasing, all night.

At break of day, they turned aside from the road and made for the mountain, whilst their tongues ceased not to name God.

They fared on under the mountain all that day, till Hassan caught sight of a black object in the distance, as it were a tall column of smoke ascending to the sky; so he recited somewhat of the Koran and sought refuge with God from Satan the Stoned. The black thing grew plainer, as they approached, and when they drew near to it, they saw that it was an Afrit, with a head like a huge dome and tusks like grapnels and jaws like a street and nostrils like ewers and ears like leathern bucklers and mouth like a cavern and teeth like pillars of stone and hands like winnowing forks and legs like masts: his head was in the clouds and his feet in the bowels of the earth. When he saw Hassan, he bowed himself and kissed the earth before him, saying, 'O Hassan, have no fear of me; for I am the chief of the dwellers in this land, which is the first of the Wac Islands, and I am a Muslim and a believer in the unity of God. I have heard of you and your coming and when I knew of your case, I desired to depart from the land of the magicians to another land, void of inhabitants, and far from men and Jinn, that I might dwell there alone and serve God till my end came upon me. Wherefore I wish to company with you and be your guide, till ye win forth of the Wac Islands. I will appear only at night: so comfort your hearts on my account; for I am a Muslim, even as ye are Muslims.'

When Hassan heard the Afrit's words, he was mightily rejoiced and made sure of deliverance; and he said to him, 'God amply requite thee! Go with us, with the blessing of Allah!' So the Afrit went before them and they followed, talking and making merry, for their hearts were at ease and their breasts relieved, and Hassan fell to telling his wife all that had befallen him and all the stresses he had undergone, whilst she excused herself to him and told him, in turn, all she had seen and suffered. The horses bore them on all night, like the blinding lightning, and when the day rose, they put their hands to the saddle-bags and took forth victual and water and ate and drank.

Then they sped on their way, preceded by the Afrit, who turned aside with them from the beaten track into another road, till then untrodden, along the sea-shore, and they fared on, without stopping, across valleys and deserts, a whole month, till on the one-and-thirtieth day there arose before them a cloud of dust, that walled the world and darkened the day, and they heard a frightful noise of crying and clamour. When Hassan saw and heard this, he was confused and turned pale; and the old woman said to him, 'O my son, this is the army of the Wac Islands, that hath overtaken us; and presently they will lay hands on us.' 'What shall I do, O my mother?' asked he. And she answered, 'Strike the earth with the wand.' He did so and immediately the seven kings presented themselves and saluted him, kissing the ground before him and saying, 'Fear not neither grieve.' Hassan rejoiced at their words and answered them, saying, 'Well said, O princes of the Jinn and the Afrits! This is your time.' Quoth they, 'Get ye up to the mountain-top, thou and thy company, and leave us to deal with them, for we know that you are in the right and they in the wrong and God will aid us against them.' So Hassan and his wife and children and the old woman dismounted and dismissing the horses, ascended the flank of the mountain.

Presently up came Queen Nour el Huda, with troops right and left, and the captains went round about among the troops and ranged them in battle array. Then the

two hosts charged down upon one another and clashed together with a mighty shock, the brave pressed forward and the coward fled and the Jinn cast flames of fire from their mouths, whilst the smoke of them rose up to the confines of the sky and the two armies appeared and disappeared. The champions fought and heads flew from bodies and the blood ran in streams, nor did the sword leave to play and the blood to bow and the fire of the battle to rage, till the dark night came, when the two armies drew apart and alighting, kindled fires and rested upon the field.

Therewith the seven kings went up to Hassan and kissed the ground before him. He thanked them and prayed God to give them the victory and asked them how they had fared with the queen's troops. Quoth they, 'They will withstand us but three days, for we had the better of them to-day, taking two thousand of them prisoners and slaying of them much people, whose number may not be told. So take comfort and be of good cheer.' Then they took leave of him and went down to their troops, to hearten them. They kept up the fires till the day rose with its light and shone, when the fighting-men mounted their stout horses and smote each other with the edge of the sword and thrust with the brown of the lance; nor did they cease from the battle that day. Moreover, they passed the night on horseback, clashing together like seas; the fires of war raged among them and they stinted not from battle and strife, till the army of Wac was defeated and their power broken and their courage quelled; their feet slipped and whithersoever they fled, defeat was before them; wherefore they turned their backs and betook themselves to flight: but the most part of them were slain and their queen and her chief officers and the grandees of her realm taken prisoners.

On the morrow, the seven kings set Hassan a throne of alabaster inlaid with pearls and jewels, and he sat down thereon. Moreover, they set thereby a throne of ivory, plated with glittering gold, for the princess Menar es Sena and another for the old woman Shewahi. Then they brought before them the captives and among the rest, Queen Nour el Huda bound and shackled, whom when Shewahi saw, she said to her, 'O harlot, O wicked wretch, thy recompense shall be that two bitches be starved and two horses stinted of water, till they be athirst: then shalt thou be bound, with the bitches after thee, to the horses' tails and the latter driven to the river, that the bitches may rend thy skin; and after, thy flesh shall be cut of and given them to eat. How couldst thou deal thus with thy sister, O vile woman, seeing that she was lawfully married, after the law of God and of His Apostle? For there is no monkery in Islam and marriage is of the ordinances of the Apostles (on whom be peace!) nor were women created but for men.'

Then Hassan commanded to put all the captives to death and the old woman cried out, saying, 'Slay them all and spare none!' But, when Menar es Sena saw her sister in this plight, a prisoner and in fetters, she wept over her and said, 'O my sister, who is this hath conquered us and made us captives in our own land?' Quoth Nour el Huda, 'Verily, this is a grave matter. Indeed this man Hassan hath gotten the mastery over us and God hath given him dominion over us and over all our realm and he hath overcome us, us and the Kings of the Jinn.' And her sister answered her, saying, 'Indeed, God aided him not against you nor did he overcome you nor make you prisoners, save by means of this cap and wand.' So Nour el Huda was assured that he had conquered her by means thereof and humbled herself to her sister, till she was

moved to pity for her and said to Hassan, 'What wilt thou do with my sister? Behold, she is in thy hands and she hath done thee no offence that thou shouldst punish her.' Quoth Hassan, 'Her torturing of thee was offence enough.' But she answered, saying, 'She hath excuse for all she did with me. As for thee, thou hast set my fathers heart on fire for the loss of me, and how will it be with him, if he lose my sister also?' And he said to her, 'It is thine to decide; do what thou wilt.'

So she commanded to loose her sister and the rest of the captives, and they did her bidding. Then she went up to Queen Nour el Huda and embraced her, and they wept together awhile; after which quoth the queen, 'O my sister, bear me not malice for that I did with thee.' 'O my sister,' replied Menar es Sena, 'this was decreed to me.' Then they sat on the couch talking and Menar es Sena made peace between the old woman and her sister, after the goodliest fashion, and their hearts were set at ease. After this Hassan dismissed the servants of the wand, thanking them for the succour which they had afforded him against his enemies, and Menar es Sena related to her sister all that had befallen her with Hassan and all he bad suffered for her sake, saying, 'O my sister, it behoves us to fail not of what is due to him who hath done these deeds and is possessed of this might and whom God the Most High hath gifted with such exceeding prowess, that he hath won to our country and beaten thine army and taken thee prisoner and defied our father, the Supreme King, who hath dominion over all the princes of the Jinn.' 'By Allah, O my sister,' replied Nour el Huda, 'thou sayst sooth! What this man hath undergone is something marvellous and none may fail of respect to him, more by token of his generosity. But was all this on thine account?' 'Yes,' answered Menar es Sena, and they passed the night in converse till the morning.

When the sun rose, they were minded to depart; so Hassan smote the earth with the wand and the Jinn appeared and saluted him, saying, 'Praised be God who hath set thy heart at ease! Command us what thou wilt, and we will do it for thee in less than the twinkling of an eye.' He thanked them and said to them, 'God requite you with good! Saddle me two horses of the best.' So they brought him forthwith two saddled horses, one of which he mounted, taking his elder son before him, and his wife mounted the other, taking the younger son before her. Then the queen and the old woman also took horse and they bade each other farewell and departed, Hassan and his wife taking the right and the queen and Shewahi the left-hand road. The former fared on with their children, without stopping, for a whole month, till they came in sight of a city, compassed about with trees and streams, and alighted among the trees, thinking to rest there. As they sat talking, they saw many horsemen coming towards them, whereupon Hassan rose and going to meet them, found that it was King Hessoun, lord of the Land of Camphor and Castle of Crystal, with his attendants.

So he went up to the king and kissed his hands and saluted him; and when the latter saw him, he returned his salute and gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy. Then he dismounted and seating himself with Hassan upon carpets under the trees, said to him, 'O Hassan, tell me all that hath befallen thee, first and last.' So he told him all that had passed and the king marvelled thereat and said to him, 'O my son, none ever won to the Wac Islands and returned thence but thou, and indeed thy case is wonderful; but praised be God for safety!' Then he mounted and carried Hassan and his wife and children into the city, where he lodged

them in the guest-house of his palace; and they abode with him three days, feasting and making merry, after which Hassan sought his leave to depart to his own country and he granted it. So they took horse and the king rode with them ten days, after which he took leave of them and turned back, whilst Hassan and his wife and children fared on a whole month, till they came to a great cavern, whose floor was of brass. Quoth Hassan to his wife, 'Knowest thou yonder cavern?' And she answered, 'No.' Said he, 'Therein dwells a Sheikh named Abourruweish, to whom I am greatly beholden, for that he was the means of my knowing King Hessoum.'

Then he went on to tell her all that had passed between him and Abourruweish and as he was thus engaged, behold, the Sheikh himself issued from the cavern. When Hassan saw him, he dismounted and kissed his hands, and the Sheikh saluted him and gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced in him. Then he carried him into the cavern and sat down with him, whilst Hassan told him what had befallen him in the Wac Islands; whereat the Sheikh marvelled exceedingly and said, 'O Hassan, how didst thou deliver thy wife and children?' So he told him the story of the cap and the wand, at which he marvelled and said, 'O Hassan, O my son, but for this wand and cap, thou hadst never delivered thy wife and children.' And he replied, 'Even so, O my lord.'

As they were talking, there came a knocking at the door and Abourruweish went out and found Abdulcuddous mounted on his elephant. So he saluted him and brought him into the cavern, where he embraced Hassan and gave him joy of his safety, rejoicing greatly in his return. Then said Abourruweish to Hassan, 'Tell the Sheikh Abdulcuddous all that hath befallen thee, O Hassan.' So he repeated to him all that had passed, till he came to the story of the wand and cap, whereupon quoth Abdulcuddous, 'O my son, thou hast delivered thy wife and thy children and hast no further need of the wand and the cap. Now we were the means of thy winning to the Wac Islands and I have done thee kindness for the sake of the daughters of my brother; wherefore I beg thee, of thy bounty and favour, to give me the wand and the Sheikh Abourruweish the cap.'

When Hassan heard this, be hung down his head, being ashamed to reply, 'I will not give them to you,' and said in himself, 'Indeed, these two elders have done me great kindness and but for them, I had never won to the Wac Islands and delivered my children, nor had I gotten me this wand and cap.' So he raised his head and answered, 'Yes, I will give them to you: but, O my lords, I fear lest the Supreme King, my wife's father, come upon me with his hosts and beset me in my own country, and I be unable to repel them, for want of the wand and the cap.' 'Fear not, O my son,' answered Abdulcuddous; 'we will succour thee and keep watch for thee in this place and fend off from thee whosoever shall come against thee from thy wife's father or any other; wherefore be thou of good cheer and comfort and fear nothing, for no harm shall come to thee.' When Hassan heard this, he was abashed and gave the cap to Abourruweish, saying to Abdulcuddous, 'Bear me company to my own land and I will give thee the wand.' At this the two elders rejoiced exceedingly and made him ready riches and treasures past description.

He abode with them three days, at the end of which time he set out again and the Sheikh Abdulcuddous made ready to depart with him. So he and his wife mounted their beasts and Abdulcuddous whistled, whereupon a great elephant came running up

from the heart of the desert and he mounted it. Then they took leave of Abourruweish and fared on across country, whilst Abdulcuddous guided them by a short and easy way, till they drew near the princesses' country; whereupon Hassan rejoiced and praised God for his safe return and reunion with his wife and children after so many hardships and perils and thanked Him for His favours and bounties, reciting the following verses:

Sure God will soon for us cause union to betide
And in your arms locked fast, I shall to you confide
The wonders that have chanced to me and all I've felt
Of anguish since the day that did our loves divide;
And I shall heal mine eyes with looking on your sight,
For long my heart for you with yearning hath been wried.
I've hidden you a tale within my heart, that
I Will tell you, when we meet: indeed, I shall you chide
For what you wrought of wrong aforetime; but reproach
Shall end and pass away and only love abide.

Hardly had he made an end of these verses, when they came in sight of the green pavilion and the pool and the green palace, and the Mountain of Clouds appeared to them afar off; whereupon quoth Abdulcuddous, 'Rejoice, O Hassan, in good news! For to-night shalt thou be the guest of my nieces.' At this he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, he and his wife, and they alighted at the pavilion, where they ate and drank and rested; after which they took horse again and rode on till they came in sight of the palace.

As they drew near, the princesses came forth to meet them and saluted them; and their uncle said to them, 'O daughters of my brother, behold, I have accomplished your brother Hassan's occasion and have helped him to regain his wife and children.' So they embraced him and gave him joy of his return in health and safety and of his reunion with his wife and children, and it was a day of festival with them. Then came forward his sister, the youngest princess, and embraced him, weeping sore, whilst he also wept for his long estrangement: after which she complained to him of that which she had suffered for the pangs of separation and weariness of heart in his absence and recited these verses:

Mine eyes, since thou departedst hence, ne'er on a creature fell,
But straight thine image mirrored rose before it, sooth to tell;
Nor have I ever closed my lids in slumber, but In dreams
I saw thee, as it were 'twixt eye and eyelid thou didst dwell.

When she had made an end of her verses, she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and Hassan said to her, 'O my sister, I have thee to thank in this matter, over all thy sisters, and may God the Most High vouchsafe thee aid and countenance!' Then he related to her all that had befallen him in his journey, first and last, and all that he had undergone, telling her what had betided him with his wife's sister and how he had delivered his wife and children and all that he had seen of marvels and grievous perils, even to how Queen Nour el Huda would have slain him and his wife and children and none saved them from her but God the Most High. Moreover, he related to her the adventure of the cap and the wand and how Abdulcuddous and Abourruweish had

sought them of him and he had not agreed to give them to them but for her sake; wherefore she thanked him and wished him long life; and he said, 'By Allah, I shall never forget all the kindness thou hast done me, first and last!'

Then she turned to his wife Menar es Sena and embraced her and pressed her children to her bosom, saying to her, 'O daughter of the Supreme King, was there no pity in thy heart, that thou partedst him and his children and set his heart on fire for them? Didst thou desire by this that he should die?' The princess laughed and answered, 'Thus was it ordained of God (blessed and exalted be He!) and whoso beguileth folk, may God beguile him!' Then they set on meat and drink, and they all ate and drank and made merry. They abode thus ten days feasting and merry-making, at the end of which time Hassan prepared to continue his journey. So his sister rose and made him ready riches and rarities, such as beggar description. Then she strained him to her bosom, because of leave-taking, and embraced him, whilst he recited the following verses on her account:

Solace from those who love far distant is, heigho!
And severance of friends is nought but grievous woe.
Estrangement and disdain a sore affliction are
And he who's slain of love a martyr is, I trow.
How long is night on him who's parted from his love,
A lover left forlorn, how weariful and slow!
His tears upon his cheeks course down, what while he saith,
'Ah woe is me for tears! Can more be yet to flow?'

With this he gave the wand to the Sheikh Abdulcuddous, who rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and thanking him. mounted and returned to his own place. Then Hassan took horse with his wife and children and departed from the palace of the princesses, who went forth with him, to bid him farewell. Then they turned back and Hassan fared on, over hill and dale, two months and ten days, till he came to the city of Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, and repairing to his house by the private way that gave upon the open country, knocked at the door.

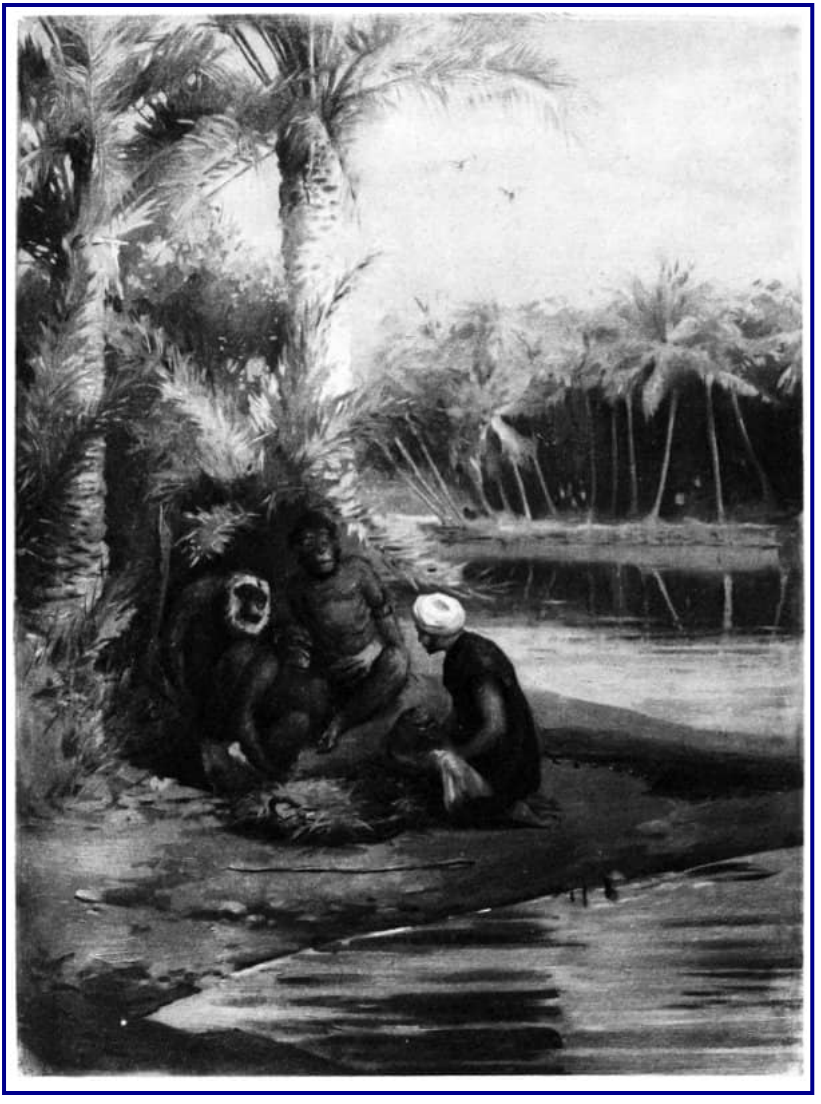
Now his mother, for long absence, had forsworn repose and given herself to mourning and weeping and lamentation, till she fell sick and ate not, neither took delight in sleep, but shed tears night and day. Her son's name was never from her mouth, albeit she despaired of his return; and as he stood at the door, he heard her weeping and reciting the following verses:

By Allah, med'cine, O my lord, one sick for love of you,
Whose heart is broken and her frame all wasted and unsound!
Yet, of your bounty, if ye would but union her vouchsafe,
Sure in her loved ones' favours, then, her sorrows would be drowned.
She doth not of your sight despair, for God almightly is
And in the midmost stress of woe, the prosperous times come round.

When she had made an end of these verses, she heard her son's voice at the door, calling out and saying, 'O mother mine, fortune hath been kind and vouchsafeth [us] reunion!' She knew his voice and went to the door, between belief and doubt; but,

when she opened it and saw him standing there and with him his wife and children, she cried out, for excess of joy, and fell to the earth in a swoon. Hassan tended her, till she revived and embraced him, weeping; after which she called his slaves and servants and bade them carry his baggage into the house. So they brought in all the loads, and his wife and children entered also, whereupon Hassan's mother went up to the princess and kissed her head and feet, saying, 'O daughter of the Supreme King, if I have failed of thy due, behold, I crave pardon of God the Great.'

Then she turned to Hassan and said to him, 'O my son, what was the cause of this long absence?' So he related to her all his adventures from beginning to end; and when she heard tell of all that had befallen him, she gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. He tended her, till she came to herself and said to him, 'By Allah, O my son, thou hast erred in parting with the wand and the cap, for, hadst thou kept them, thou wert master of the whole earth, in its breadth and length; but praised be God for thy safety and that of thy wife and children!' They passed the night in all pleasance and happiness, and on the morrow Hassan changed his clothes and donning a suit of the richest apparel, went down into the bazaar and bought slaves and slave-girls and stuffs and ornaments and raiment and carpets and costly vessels and all manner other precious things, whose like is not found with kings. Moreover, he bought houses and gardens and lands and so forth and abode with his wife and children and mother, eating and drinking and taking their pleasure: nor did they cease from all delight and solace of life till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies. And Glory be to Him who hath dominion over the Seen and the Unseen, the Living, the Eternal, who dieth not!



Khelifeh the Fisherman of Baghdad.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the city of Baghdad, a fisherman called Khelifeh, a very poor man, who had never been married. It chanced, one day, that he took his net and went forth, according to his wont, to fish before the others came. When he reached the river, he girt himself and tucked up his skirts; then, stepping into the water, he spread his net and cast it once and again, but brought up nothing. He ceased not to throw it, till he had made ten casts, and still nothing came up in it; wherefore his breast was straitened and his mind perplexed concerning his case and he said, 'I crave pardon of God the Great, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal, and I repent unto Him. There is no power and no virtue save in God, the Most High, the Supreme! What He wills, is, and what He wills not, is not! Upon God (to whom belong might and majesty) dependeth provision! When He giveth to a creature, none denieth him, and when He denierth a creature, none giveth to him.' And of the excess of his chagrin, he recited the following couplet:

If Fate with a calamity afflict thee, thou wert best
Meet it with patience and oppose thereto an open breast;
For God, the Lord of all that be, shall, of His power and grace,
Cause ease to follow after stress, and after travail, rest.

Then he sat awhile, with his head bowed down, pondering his case, and recited these verses also:

I rede thee, the sweet and the bitter of fortune with fortitude bear,
And know, whatsoever betideth, that God of His purpose fails ne'er.
A night often acts upon troubles, as whiles on an abscess it acts,
Whereon, till it ripen, it worketh and doth it for bursting prepare.
And so with the shiftings of fortune, they pass o'er a man and then cease
And after no longer they irk him nor come to his memory fore'er.

Then he said to himself, 'I will make this one more cast, trusting in God, so haply He may not disappoint my expectation.' So saying, he rose and casting the net as far as he could into the river, gathered the cords in his hands and waited awhile. Then he pulled at it and finding it heavy, handled it gently and drew it in, little by little, till he got it ashore, when he found in it a one-eyed, lame ape. Quoth Khelifeh, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! What miserable ill-luck and sorry fortune is this! What is come to me this blessed day? But all this is of the ordinance of God the Most High!' Then he bound the ape with a cord to a tree that grew on the river-bank, and taking a whip he had with him, raised it in the air, thinking to bring it down upon him, when God made the ape speak with a fluent tongue, saying, 'O Khelifeh, hold thy hand and beat me not, but leave me bounden to this tree and go down to the river and cast thy net, confiding in God, for He will give thee thy daily bread.'

So he went down to the river and casting his net, let the cords run out. Then he pulled it in and found it heavier than before; so he tugged at it, till he brought it to

land, when, behold, there was another ape in it, with front teeth wide apart, eyes pencilled with kohl and hands stained with henna; and he was laughing and wore a tattered waistcloth about his middle. Quoth Khelifeh, 'Praised be God who hath changed the fish of the river into apes!' Then, going up to the first ape, he said to him, 'See, O unlucky wretch, how foul was the counsel thou gavest me! None but thou made me light on this second ape: and for that thou gavest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness, I am become distressed and weary, without dirhem or dinar.' So saying, he took a stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to bring it down upon the lame ape, when it cried out for mercy and said to him, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, spare me for this my fellow's sake and seek of him thy need; for he will guide thee to thy desire!'

So he held his hand from him and throwing down the stick, went up to the second ape, who said to him, 'O Khelifeh, this [my] speech will profit thee nothing, except thou hearken to what I say to thee; but, if thou do my bidding and cross me not, I will be the means of thine enrichment.' 'And what hast thou to say to me,' asked Khelifeh, 'that I may obey thee therein?' 'Go and cast thy net a third time,' replied the ape; 'and after I will tell thee what to do.' So he took his net and going down to the river, cast it once more and waited awhile. Then he drew it in and finding it heavy, laboured at it till he got it ashore, when he found in it yet another ape; but this one was red, with a blue waistcloth about his middle; his hands and feet were stained with henna and his eyes blackened with kohl.

When Khelifeh saw this, he exclaimed, 'Glory to God the Great! Extolled be the perfection of the Lord of Dominion! This is indeed a blessed day from first to last: its ascendant was fortunate in the countenance of the first age, and the book is known by its superscription! Verily, this is a day of apes: there is not a fish left in the river, and we are come out to-day but to catch apes!' Then he turned to the third ape and said, 'And what art thou for another unlucky wretch?' Quoth the ape, 'Dost thou not know me, O Khelifeh?' 'Not I,' answered the fisherman; and the ape said, 'I am the ape of Aboussaadat the Jew money-changer.' 'And what dost thou for him?' asked Khelifeh. Quoth the ape, 'I give him good-morrow every morning, and he gains five dinars; and again at the end of the day, I give him good-even and he gains other five dinars.' Whereupon Khelifeh turned to the first ape and said to him, 'See, O unlucky wretch, what fine apes other folk have! As for thee, thou givest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness and thine unlucky visnomy and I become poor and bankrupt and hungry!'

So saying, he took the stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it on the first ape, when Aboussaadat's ape said to him, 'Hold thy hand from him, O Khelifeh, and come hither to me, that I may tell thee what to do.' So Khelifeh threw down the stick and said, 'And what hast thou to say to me, O prince of all apes?' 'Leave me and the other two apes here,' answered the ape, 'and take thy net and cast it into the river; and whatever comes up, bring it to me, and I will tell thee what shall pleasure thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the fisherman and took the net and gathered it on his shoulder, reciting the following verses:

Whene'er my breast is straitened, for aid I supplicate
A Maker who availeth to save from every strait;
For, ere the glance returneth, the captive is set free
From bonds and healed the broken, by grace of God the Great.
All thine affairs to Him, then, commit; for every man
Of understanding knoweth His bounties without date.

And also these:

Thou'rt He who dost the folk, indeed, cast into weariness
And cares and woes, effect and cause, dispellest none the less.
Cause me not Thou to covet aught that is beyond my reach.
How many a man hath failed to win his wish, for all his stress!

Then he went down to the river and casting his net, waited awhile; after which he drew it up and found therein a fine perch, with a big head, a tale like a ladle and eyes like dinars. When Khelifeh saw this fish, he rejoiced, for he had never in his life caught its like, so he took it, marvelling, and carried it to the ape of Aboussaadat the Jew, as 'twere he had gotten possession of the whole world. Quoth the ape, 'O Khelifeh, what wilt thou do with this and with thine ape?' 'I will tell thee, O prince of apes,' answered the fisherman. 'First, I will cast about to make away with yonder accursed one, my ape, and take thee in his stead and give thee every day to eat of what thou wilt.' 'Since thou hast made choice of me,' rejoined the ape, 'I will tell thee how thou shalt do, wherein, if it please God the Most High, shall be the mending of thy fortune. Take another cord and tie me also to a tree, where leave me and go to the midst of the dyke and cast thy net into the Tigris. Then draw it up, after waiting awhile, and thou shalt find therein a fish, than which thou never sawest a finer in thy life. Bring it to me and I will tell thee how thou shalt do after this.'

So he rose forthright and casting his net into the Tigris, drew up a great shad, the bigness of a lamb; never had he set eyes on its like, for it was larger than the first fish. He carried it to the ape, who said to him, 'Gather some green grass and put half of it in a basket; lay the fish on it and cover it with the other half. Then shoulder the basket and leave us here tied and betake thee to Baghdad. If any bespeak thee or question thee by the way, answer him not, out fare on till thou comest to the market of the money-changers, at the upper end whereof thou wilt find the shop of Master Aboussaadat the Jew, Sheikh of the money-changers, and wilt see him sitting on a divan amiddleward his slaves and servants, black and white, with a cushion behind him and two coffers, one for gold and one for silver, before him.

Go up to him and set the basket before him, saying, "O Aboussaadat, I went out to-day to fish and cast my net in thy name, and God the Most High sent me this fish." He will say, "Hast thou shown it to any but me?" And do thou answer, "No, by Allah!" Then will he take it of thee and give thee a dinar. Give it him back and he will give thee two dinars; but do thou return them also and take nothing from him, though he give thee the fish's weight in gold. Then will he say to thee, "Tell me what thou wouldst have." And do thou reply, 'By Allah, I will not sell the fish save for two words!" He will ask, "What are they?" And do thou answer, "Stand up and say, 'Bear witness, O ye who are present in the market, that I give Khelifeh the fisherman my ape in exchange for

his ape and that I barter my lot for his lot and my luck for his luck.' This is the price of the fish, and I have no need of gold." If he do this, I will every day give thee good-morrow and good-even, and thou shalt gain ten dinars a day; whilst this one-eyed, lame ape shall daily give the Jew good-morrow, and God shall afflict him every day with an exaction, which he must needs pay, nor will he cease to be thus afflicted till he is reduced to beggary and hath nought. Hearken then to my words; so shalt thou prosper and be guided aright.'

Quoth Khelifeh, 'I accept thy counsel, O king of all apes! But, as for this unlucky wretch, may God not bless him! I know not what to do with him.' 'Let him go into the water,' said the ape, 'and let me go also.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Khelifeh and unbound the [three] apes, which went down into the river. Then he washed the shad and wrapping it in grass, laid it in the basket, and shouldering the latter, set out for Baghdad, chanting the following quatrain:

Commit thy case to God and thou shalt have security:
Do kindness ever, so thou shalt be from repentance free.
Consort not with suspected folk, lest doubt should fall on thee,
And guard thy tongue, reviling not, lest thou reviled be.

When he came to the city, the people knew him and cried out to him, saying, 'What hast thou there, O Khelifeh?' But he paid no heed to them and went on till he came to the money-changers' bazaar and passing between the shops, found the Jew seated at the upper end, with his servants in attendance upon him, as he were a king of the kings of Khorassan. So he went up to him and stood before him, whereupon Aboussaadat raised his eyes and knowing him, said, 'Welcome, O Khelifeh! What wantest thou? If any have missaid thee or picked a quarrel with thee, tell me and I will go with thee to the Master of Policed who shall do thee justice on him.' 'Nay, as thy head liveth, O chief of the Jews,' replied Khelifeh, 'none hath missaid me. But I went forth this morning and casting my net into the Tigris, in thy name, brought up this fish.'

Therewith he opened the basket and threw the fish before the Jew, who admired it and said, 'By the Pentateuch and the Ten Commandments, I dreamt last night that the Virgin came to me and said, "Know, O Aboussaadat, that I have sent thee a fine present!" And doubtless it is this fish.' Then he turned to Khelifeh and said to him, 'Tell me, on thy faith, hath any seen it but I?' 'No, by Allah and by Abou Bekr the Truth-teller,' answered Khelifeh, 'none hath seen it but thou, O chief of the Jews!' Whereupon the Jew turned to one of his servants and said to him, 'Carry this fish to my house and bid Saadeh dress it and fry and broil it, against I make an end of my business and come home.' And Khelifeh said, 'Go, boy; let the master's wife fry some of it and broil the rest.' 'I hear and obey, O my lord,' answered the boy, and taking the fish, went away with it to the house.

Then the Jew put out his hand and gave the fisherman a dinar, saying, 'Take this for thyself, O Khelifeh, and spend it on thy family.' When Khelifeh saw the dinar in his hand, he took it, saying, 'Glory to the Lord of Dominion!' as if he had never seen aught of gold in his life, and went away; but before he had gone far, he bethought him of the ape's injunction and turning back, threw the dinar to the Jew, saying, 'Take thy

gold and give folk back their fish. Are folk a laughing-stock to thee?' The Jew thought he was jesting and offered him other two dinars, but he said, 'Without a joke, give me the fish. How knewst thou I would sell it at this price?' Whereupon the Jew gave him two more dinars and said, 'Take these five dinars for thy fish and leave covetise.' So Khelifeh took the five dinars and went away, rejoicing, looking and marvelling at the gold and saying, 'Glory be to God! There is not with the Khalif of Baghdad what is with me this day!'

Thep he went on till he came to the end of the market, when he remembered the ape's words and returning to the Jew, threw him back the gold. Quoth he, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh? Dost thou want change for thy dinars in dirhems?' 'I want nor dirhems nor dinars,' answered the fisherman. 'I only want thee to give me back folk's fish.' With this the Jew was enraged and cried out at him, saying, 'O fisherman, thou bringest me a fish, that is not worth a dinar, and I give thee five for it; yet art thou not content! Art thou mad? Tell me for how much thou wilt sell it.' 'I will not sell it for silver nor gold,' answered Khelifeh, 'only for two words that thou shalt say to me.'

When the Jew heard this, he rolled his eyes and breathed hard and ground his teeth for rage and said to him, 'O scum of the Muslims, wilt thou have me forswear my faith for the sake of thy fish, and wilt thou debauch me from my religion and my belief that I inherited from my forefathers?' Then he cried out to his servants, saying, 'Out on you! Baste me this unlucky rogue's back and drub him soundly!' So they fell on him and beat him till he fell downs beneath the shop, and the Jew said to them, 'Leave him and let him rise.' Whereupon Khelifeh sprang up, as if nothing ailed him, and the Jew said to him, 'Tell me what price thou askest for the fish and I will give it thee; for thou hast gotten but scurvy fare of us this day.' 'Have no fear for me, O master,' answered the fisherman, 'because of the beating; for I can eat ten asses' allowance of stick.'

The Jew laughed at his words and said, 'God on thee, tell me what thou wilt have and by the virtue of my faith, I will give it thee!' Quoth the fisherman, 'I will take nothing of thee save the two words I spoke of.' And the Jew said, 'Meseemeth thou wouldst have me become a Muslim.' 'By Allah, O Jew,' replied Khelifeh, 'if thou become a Muslim, it will neither advantage the Muslims nor hurt the Jews; and in like manner, if thou hold to thy heresy, it will neither damage the Muslims nor profit the Jews. But what I desire of thee is that thou rise to thy feet and say, "Bear witness against me, O people of the market, that I barter my ape for that of Khelifeh the fisherman and my lot in the world for his lot and my luck for his luck."' 'If that be all thou desirest,' said the Jew, 'it is lightly done.' So he rose forthright and standing on his feet, repeated the required words; after which he turned to the fisherman and said to him, 'Hast thou aught else to ask of me?' 'No,' answered he, and the Jew said, 'Go in peace.'

So Khelifeh took up his net and basket and returned straight to the Tigris, where he threw his net and pulled it in. He found it heavy and brought it not ashore but with difficulty, when he found it full of fish of all kinds. Presently, up came a woman with a dish, who gave him a dinar, and he gave her fish for it; and after her an eunuch, who also bought a dinar's worth of fish, and another and another, till he had sold ten dinars' worth. And he continued to sell ten dinars' worth of fish daily for ten days, till he had gotten a hundred dinars.

Now he dwelt in the Passage of the Merchants, and as he lay one night in his lodging, [drunken with hashish,] he said to himself, 'O Khelifeh, the folk all know thee for a poor fisherman, and now thou hast gotten a hundred dinars. The Commander of the Faithful will assuredly hear of this from some one, and mayhap he will be in need of money and will send for thee and say to thee, "I have occasion for a sum of money and I have been told that thou hast a hundred dinars: so do thou lend them to me." "O Commander of the Faithful," shall I answer, "I am a poor man, and whoever told thee that I had a hundred dinars lied against me; for I have nought of this." Thereupon he will commit me to the chief of the police, saying, "Strip him of his clothes and torment him with beating, till he confesses and gives up the hundred dinars in his possession." Wherefore meseems the best thing I can do, to provide against this predicament is to rise forthright and baste myself with the whip, so to use myself to beating.' And the fumes of the hashish [he had eaten] said to him, 'Rise, put off thy clothes.'

So he arose and putting off his clothes, proceeded to belabour himself with a whip, laying every other blow upon a leathern pillow he had by him and roaring out the while, 'Alas! Alas! By Allah, O my lord, it is a false saying and they have lied against me; for I am a poor fisherman and have nought of the goods of the world!' The noise of the blows falling on the cushion and on his body resounded in the night and the folk heard it, and amongst others the merchants, and said, 'What can ail yonder poor fellow, that he crieth and we hear the noise of blows falling on him? It would seem robbers have broken in upon him and are tormenting him.' So they all came forth of their lodgings, at the noise of the blows and the crying, and repaired to Khelifeh's door, but found it locked and said to each other, 'Belike the robbers have come in upon him from the back of the [adjoining] saloon. It behoves us to climb over by the roofs.'

So they climbed over the roofs and coming down through the ventilator, saw him naked and flogging himself and said to him, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh?' 'Know, O folk,' answered he, 'that I have gotten some dinars and fear lest my case be reported to the Commander of the Faithful and he send for me and demand them of me; whereupon I should deny, and I fear that, if I deny, he will torture me: so I am torturing myself, by way of using myself to what may come.' The merchants laughed at him and said, 'Leave this foolery, may God not bless thee and the dinars thou hast gotten! For thou hast disturbed us this night and troubled our hearts.'

So Khelifeh left flogging himself and slept till the morning, when he arose and would have gone about his business, but bethought him of his hundred dinars and laid in himself, 'If I leave them at home, thieves will steal them, and if I put them in a belt about my waist, belike some one will see me and lay in wait for me in some lonely place and slay me and take the money from me: but I have a device that should serve me right well.' So he made him a pocket in the collar of his gown and tying the hundred dinars up in a purse, laid them therein. Then he took his net and basket and staff and went down to the Tigris, where he cast his net, but brought up nothing. So he removed to another place and cast again, but still the net came up empty; and he went on removing from place to place and casting the net without better success, till he had gone half a day's journey from the city. So he said in himself 'By Allah, I will cast but this once more, whatever come of it!'

Then he cast the net with all his forte, of the excess of his vexation, and the purse flew out of his pocket and lighting in the middle of the stream, was carried away by the current; whereupon he threw down the net and pulling off his clothes, left them on the bank and plunged into the water after the purse. He dived for it nigh a hundred times, without chancing on it, till his strength was exhausted and he came up for sheer fatigue. When he despaired of finding the purse, he returned to the shore, where he saw nothing but his net and basket and staff and sought for his clothes, but could light on no trace of them: so he said to himself, 'O vilest of those whereon was made the byword, "The pilgrimage is not perfected but by swiving the camel!"' Then he wrapped the net about him and taking the staff in one hand and the basket in the other, went trotting about like a camel in heat, running right and left and backward and forward, dishevelled and covered with dust, as he were a refractory Afrit let loose from Solomon's prison.

Now the Khalif Haroun er Reshid had a friend, a jeweller called Ibn el Kirnas, and all the merchants and brokers and middle-men and other the folk knew him for the Khalif's merchant, wherefore there was nought sold in Baghdad, by way of rarities and things of price or slaves, male or female, but was first shown to him. As he sat one day in his shop, there came up to him the chief of the brokers, with a slave-girl, whose like eyes never saw, for she was of the utmost beauty and grace and symmetry, and among her excellences was that she knew all arts and sciences and could make verses and play upon all manner of instruments of music. So he bought her for five thousand dinars and clothed her with other thousand; after which he carried her to the Khalif, with whom she lay the night and who made trial of her in every kind of knowledge and accomplishment and found her versed in all manner arts and sciences, having no equal in her time. Her name was Cout el Culoub and she was even as saith the poet:

I gaze on her, when she unveils, again and yet again:
In her refusal of herself to sight are woes and bane.
She doth the slender-necked gazelle resemble, when she turns;
And to gazelles, 'tis said, doth grace of movement appertain.

And what is this beside the saying of another?

Give me brunettes; the Syrian spears, so limber and so straight,
Tell of the slender dusky maids, so lithe and proud of gait.
Languid of eyelids, with a down like silk upon her cheek,
Within her wasting lover's heart she queens it still in state.

On the morrow, the Khalif sent for Ibn el Kirnas and ordered him ten thousand dinars to her price. And his heart was taken up with her and he forsook the princess Zubeideh bint el Casim, for all she was his father's brother's daughter, and all his favourites and abode a whole month without stirring from Cout el Culoub's side, save to go to the Friday prayers and return to her in haste. This was grievous to the grandees of the realm and they made their complaint thereof to the Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide, who waited till the next Friday, when he entered the congregational mosque and foregathering with the Khalif, related to him all that occurred to him of extraordinary stories concerning love, with intent to draw out what was in his mind. 'By Allah, O Jaafer,' said Haroun, 'this is not of my choice; but my heart is caught in the snare of

love and I know not what is to be done!' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'this girl Cout el Culoub is become at thy disposal and of the number of thy servants, and that which the hand possesseth the soul coveteth not. Moreover, I will tell thee another thing and it is that the greatest glory of kings and princes is in hunting and the pursuit of sport and victory; and if thou apply thyself to this, belike it will divert thee from her, and it may be thou wilt forget her.' 'Thou sayest well, O Jaafer,' rejoined the Khalif. 'Come, let us go a-hunting forthright.'

Accordingly, as soon as the Friday prayers were over, they left the mosque and mounting their mules, rode forth to the chase. They fared on into the open country, engaged in talk, and their attendants outwent them. Presently the heat became oppressive and the Khalif said to his vizier, 'O Jaafer, I am sore athirst.' Then he looked round and espying a figure in the distance on a high mound, said to Jaafer, 'Seest thou what I see?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the vizier; 'I see a dim figure on a high mound; belike he is the keeper of a garden or of a cucumber-plot, and in either case, water will not be lacking in his neighbourhood. I will go to him and fetch thee some.' But Er Reshid said, 'My mule is swifter than thine; so do thou abide here, on account of the troops, whilst I go myself to him and get of him drink and return.'

So saying, he spurred his mule, which started off like fleeting wind or lapsing water and brought him, in the twinkling of an eye, to the mound, when he found the figure he had seen to be none other than Khelifeh the fisherman, naked and wrapped in the net; and indeed he was horrible to look upon, as he swayed to and fro, with eyes like flaming cressets for very redness and dishevelled hair, covered with dust, as he were an Afrit or a lion. The Khalif saluted him and he returned his salutation; and he was angry and fires might have been kindled at his breath. Quoth Er Reshid, 'O man, hast thou any water?' And Khelifeh answered, 'O fellow, art thou blind or mad? Get thee to the river Tigris, for it is behind this mound.'

So the Khalif turned the mound and going down to the river, drank and watered his mule: then he returned to Khelifeh and said to him, 'Harkye, sirrah, what ails thee to stand here, and what is thy calling?' Quoth the fisherman, 'This is a stranger question than that about the water. Seest thou not the tools of my craft on my shoulder?' 'Belike thou art a fisherman?' said the Khalif, and he answered, 'Yes.' 'Where is thy gown?' asked Er Reshid. 'And where are thy waistcloth and girdle and [the rest of] thy clothes?' Now these were the very things that Khelifeh had lost, like for like; so, when he heard the Khalif name them, he took it into his head that it was he who had stolen his clothes from the river bank and coming down from the top of the mound, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, laid hold of the mule's bridle, saying, 'Harkye, sirrah, give me back my things and leave jesting.' 'By Allah,' replied Er Reshid, 'I have not seen thy clothes, nor know I aught of them!'

Now the Khalif had large cheeks and a small mouth; so Khelifeh said to him, 'Belike, thou art a singer or a piper by trade? But give me back my clothes, without more ado, or I will belabour thee with this staff till thou bepiss thyself and foul thy hose.' When Er Reshid saw the staff in the fisherman's hand and that he had the vantage of him, he said in himself, 'By Allah, I cannot brook half a blow of that staff from this mad beggar!' Now he had on a satin gown; so he pulled it off and gave it to Khelifeh, saying, 'Take this in place of thy clothes.' The fisherman took it and turned it

about and said, 'My clothes are worth ten of this painted clout.' 'Put it on, till I bring thee thy clothes,' rejoined the Khalif. So Khelifeh donned the gown, but finding it too long for him, took a knife he had with him, tied to the handle of his basket, and cut off nigh a third of the skirts so that it [but] fell beneath his knees.

Then he turned to Er Reshid and said to him, 'God on thee, O piper, tell me what wage thou gettest every month from thy master, for thy craft of piping.' 'My wage is ten dinars a month,' replied the Khalif. And Khelifeh said, 'By Allah, my poor fellow, I am sorry for thee! Why, I make thy ten dinars every day! Hast thou a mind to take service with me and I will teach thee the art of fishing and share my gain with thee? So shalt thou earn five dinars a day and be my knave and I will protect thee against thy master with this staff.' 'I will well,' answered Er Reshid; and Khelifeh said, 'Then get off thy she-ass and tie her up, so she may serve us to carry the fish hereafter, and come hither, that I may teach thee to fish forthright.'

So the Khalif alighted and hobbling his mule, tucked his skirts into his girdle, and Khelifeh said to him, 'Harkye, piper, lay hold of the net thus and put it over thine arm thus and cast it into the Tigris thus.' Accordingly, Er Reshid took heart of grace and casting the net, as the fisherman showed him, pulled at it, but could not draw it up. So Khelifeh came to his aid and tugged at it with him; but the two together could not pull it up: whereupon, 'O piper of ill omen,' said the fisherman, 'I took thy gown in place of my clothes; but, if I find my net torn, I will have thine ass for it and will beat thee to boot, till thou bepiss and bemire thyself!' Quoth Er Reshid, 'Let us both pull at once.'

So they both pulled at once and succeeded with difficulty in dragging the net ashore, when they found it full of fish of all kinds and colours; and Khelifeh said to Er Reshid, 'By Allah, O piper, thou art an ugly fellow; but, if thou apply thyself to fishing, thou wilt make a fine fisherman. But now thou wert better mount thine ass and go to the market and fetch me a pair of frails, and I will take care of the fish, till thou return, when we will load it on thine ass's back. I have scales and weights and all we require, and thou wilt have nothing to do but to hold the scales and take the money; for we have here twenty dinars' worth of fish. So be quick with the frails and loiter not.'

'I hear and obey,' answered the Khalif and mounting, left him with the fish.

Then he spurred his mule, in great good humour, and ceased not laughing over his adventure with the fisherman, till he came up to Jaafer, who said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, belike, when thou wentest to drink, thou foundest a pleasant garden and enteredst and tookst thy pleasure therein alone?' At this Er Reshid fell a-laughing again and all the Barmecides rose and kissed the ground before him, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, may God make joys to endure for thee and do away troubles from thee! What was the cause of thy tarrying and what hath befallen thee?' 'Verily,' answered the Khalif 'a right rare and pleasant thing hath befallen me.' And he told them what had passed between himself and the fisherman, how he had accused him of stealing his clothes and he had given him his gown and how he had cut of a part of it, finding it too long for him. 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Jaafer, 'I had it in mind to beg the gown of thee: but now I will go straight to the fisherman and buy it of him.' 'By Allah,' answered the Khalif, 'he hath cut off a third

part of the skirt and spoilt it! But, O Jaafer, I am tired with fishing in the river, for I have caught great store of fish, and my master Khelifeh is waiting with them on the river-bank for me to return to him with a couple of frails and a cleaver. Then we are to go, he and I, to the market and sell the fish and share the price.'

'O Commander of the Faithful,' said Jaafer, 'I will bring you a purchaser for your fish.' And Er Reshid rejoined, 'O Jaafer, by the virtue of my holy forefathers, whoso bringeth me one of the fish that are before Khelifeh, who taught me to fish, I will give him a gold dinar for it!' So the crier proclaimed among the troops that they should go forth and buy fish for the Khalif, and they all arose and made for the river-side. So, while Khelifeh was awaiting for the Khalif's return with the two frails, the guards swooped down upon him like vultures and took the fish and wrapped them in gold-embroidered handkerchiefs, beating one another in their eagerness. Whereupon quoth Khelifeh, 'Doubtless these are of the fish of Paradise!' and taking two fish in each hand, plunged into the water up to his neck and fell a-saying, 'O God, by the virtue of these fish, let Thy servant the piper, my partner, come to me forthwith!'

At this moment up came the chief of the Khalif's black slaves, who had tarried behind the rest, by reason of his horse having stopped to stale by the way, and finding all the fish gone, looked right and left, till he espied Khelifeh standing in the water, with the fish in his hands, and said to him, 'Come hither, O fisherman!' But Khelifeh answered, 'Begone and meddle not with what doth not concern thee!' So the eunuch went up to him and said, 'Give me the fish and I will pay thee their price.' 'Art thou little of wit?' replied the fisherman. 'I will not sell them.' Therewith the eunuch drew his mace upon him, and Khelifeh cried out, saying, 'Hold thy hand, wretch that thou art! Better largesse than the mace.' So saying, he threw the fish to the eunuch, who took them and hid them in his handkerchief. Then he put his hand in his pocket, but found not a single dirhem and said to Khelifeh, 'O fisherman, verily, thou art out of luck; for, by Allah, I have not a rap about me! But come to-morrow to the palace of the Khalifate and ask for the eunuch Sendel; whereupon the slaves will direct thee to me and thou shalt get what falleth to thy lot and go thy ways therewith.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'Indeed, this is a blessed day and its blessedness was manifest from the first of it!'

Then he shouldered his net and returned to Baghdad; and as he passed through the streets, the people saw the Khalif's gown on him and stared at him; [but he paid no heed to them and fared on] till he came to the gate of his quarter, by which was the shop of the Khalif's tailor. When the latter saw him wearing a dress of the apparel of the Khalif, worth a thousand dinars, he said to him, 'O Khelifeh, whence hadst thou that gown?' 'What ails thee to meddle?' replied the fisherman. '[An thou must know,] I had it of one whom I taught to fish and who is become my apprentice. Moreover, I forgave him the cutting-off of his hand, for that he stole my clothes and gave me this clout in their place.' So the tailor knew that the Khalif had come upon him, as he was fishing, and jested with him and given him the gown; and Khelifeh went to his house.

Meanwhile, when the lady Zubeideh heard of the Khalif's devotion to Cout el Culoub, there took hold upon her the jealousy proper to women, so that she refused meat and drank and forswore the delight of sleep and awaited the Khalif's going forth on a journey or what not, that she might set a snare for the damsel in his absence. So, when she learnt that he was gone a-hunting, she caused her women furnish the palace

and decorate it after the most magnificent manner and serve up viands and confections; and amongst the rest she made a china dish of the daintiest sweetmeats, in which she had put henbane.

Then she bade one of her eunuchs go to the damsel and bid her to eat with her, saying, 'The lady Zubeideh bint el Casim, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, hath drunken medicine to-day and having heard tell of the sweetness of thy singing, is minded to divert herself with somewhat of thy fashion.' Cout el Culoub answered, 'Hearing and obedience [are due] to God and the lady Zubeideh,' and rose forthright, knowing not what was hidden for her in the secret purpose of God. Then she took with her what instruments she needed and accompanied the eunuch to the presence of the princess.

When she entered, she kissed the ground before her again and again, then rising to her feet, said, 'Peace be on the lady of the lofty curtain and the inaccessible majesty, the daughter of the house of Abbas and scion of the family of the Prophet! May God fulfil thee of peace and prosperity in the days and the years!' Then she stood with the rest of the women and eunuchs, and the lady Zubeideh looked at her and saw a damsel with smooth cheeks and breasts like pomegranates, moon- bright face, flower-white forehead and great black eyes. Languor sat on her eyelids and her face beamed with light. It seemed as if the sun rose from her forehead and the darkness of the night from her brow-locks. The fragrance of musk exhaled from her breath and flowers bloomed from her lovely face; the moon beamed from her forehead and the branches waved in her slender shape. She was like the full moon shining in the darkness of the night; her eyes wantoned, her eyebrows were arched like a bow and her lips moulded of coral. Her beauty amazed all who saw her and her glances enspelled all who looked on her. Glory be to Him who created and fashioned her and wrought her to perfection! Brief, she was even as saith the poet of one who favoured her:

When she is wroth, I trow, thou seest folk slain and sped,
And when she's pleased, their souls return unto their stead.
Eyes hath she, wheelie proceed bewitching looks, wherewith
She slayeth whom she will and raiseth from the dead.
All creatures with her glance she captivates; it seems
As if all folk to her were servants, born and bred.

'Welcome and fair welcome to thee, O Cout el Culoub!' said Zubeideh. 'Sit and divert us with thine accomplishments and the goodliness of thy fashion.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the damsel and putting out her hand, took the tambourine, whereof one of its praisers speaks in the following verses:

O thou o' the tabret, my heart for longing flies
And whilst thou smitest, aloud for passion cries.
Blame not, my fairest, a wounded heart, a wight
Who for thine answer to his petition sighs.
So say, – or weighty or light, – a word and sing
Whate'er thou pleasest: thou charmest anywise.
Be kind; discover thy face, my love; arise
And dance and gambol and please all ears and eyes.

Then she smote the tambourine briskly and sang thereto, that she arrested the birds in the air and the place danced with them; after which she laid down the tambourine and took the flageolet, whereof it is said:

Eyes hath she and the pupils thereunto that belong Are governed by the fingers to undiscordant song.

And as the poet also says:

When it bringeth with fluting the songs to the goal, The time, for sheer gladness, yields solace of soul.

Then she laid down the flageolet, after she had charmed therewith all who were presents and took up the lute, whereof saith the poet:

How many a tender branch a lute for singing-girl becomes,
Whereto the hearts of erudite and generous are fain!
She sweeps it with her finger-tips, of her vivacity
Tormenting it, what while she binds it fast with many a chain.

Then she turned its pegs and tuned its strings and laying it in her lap, bent over it as the mother bends over her child; and it seemed as it were of her and her lute that the poet spoke in the following verses:

Featly she discourseth on the Persian string,
Sense in him, who senseless was awakening.
Yea, she tells that passion deadly is and plays
Havoc with the Muslims' wit and reasoning.
Lo, a maid, by Allah, in whose hand, in lieu
Of a mouth-possessor, speaks a painted thing.
As a skilled physician stops the flux of blood,
With the lute she staunches passion's running spring.

Then she preluded in fourteen different modes and sang an entire piece to the lute, so as to confound the lookers- on and delight her hearers. After which she recited this couplet:

Blest is the coming unto thee:
New joys therein for ever be.
Delight sans cease to it pertain
And never-ending jubilee.

Then she rose and exhibited tricks of sleight of hand and legerdemain and all manner of pleasing arts, till the lady Zubeideh came near to fall in love with her and said in herself, 'Verily, my cousin Er Reshid is not to blame for loving her!' Then Cout el Culoub kissed the earth before Zubeideh and sat down, whereupon they set food before her. Then they brought her the drugged dish of sweetmeats and she ate thereof; and hardly had it settled in her stomach when her head fell backward and she sank on the ground, asleep. With this, Zubeideh said to her women, 'Carry her up to one of the clambers, till I call for her.' And they answered, 'We hear and obey.' Then she bade one of her eunuchs fashion her a chest and commanded to make the semblance of a tomb

and to spread the report that Cout el Culoub had choked and died, warning her attendants that she would stake off the head of whoever should say, 'She is alive.'

Presently, the Khalif returned from the chase, and his first enquiry was for the damsel. So there came to him one of his eunuchs, whom Zubeideh had charged to say she was dead, if the Khalif should ask for her, and kissing the ground before him, said, 'May thy head live, O my lord! Know that Cout el Culoub choked in eating and is dead.' Whereupon, 'May God never gladden thee with good news, O wicked slave!' cried Er Reshid, and entered the palace, where he heard of her death from every one and said, 'Where is her tomb?' So they brought him to the burial-place and showed him the pretended tomb, saying, 'This is it.' When he saw it, he cried out and wept and embraced it, reciting the following verses:

By Allah, O tomb, have her beauties ceased and disappeared from sight
And is the countenance changed and wan, that shone so wonder-bright?
O tomb, O tomb, thou art neither heaven nor garden, verily:
How comes it then that swaying branch and moon in thee unite?

He abode awhile by the tomb, weeping sore for her, after which he arose and went away, in the utmost distress.

Meanwhile, Zubeideh, seeing that her plot had succeeded, sent for the damsel and locking her up in the chest, said to the eunuch, 'Make shift to sell this chest and make it a condition with the purchaser that he buy it locked; then give alms with the price.' So he took it and went forth, to do her bidding.

To return to Khelifeh the fisherman. When the morning arose and lighted [all things] with its radiance, he said to himself, 'I cannot do better to-day than visit the eunuch who bought the fish of me, for he appointed me to come to him in the palace of the Khalifate.' So he went forth of his lodging, intending for the palace, and when he came thither, he found eunuchs and slaves and servants black and white, sitting and standing, and looking at them, saw, seated amongst them, the eunuch who had bought the fish of him, with the others waiting on him. Presently, one of the servants called out to him; whereupon the eunuch turned to see who he was and knew him for the fisherman.

When Khelifeh was ware that he saw him and recognized him, he said to him, 'I have not failed [of my appointment], O Rosy-cheeks! On this wise are men of their word.' 'By Allah, thou art right, O fisherman,' replied the eunuch, laughing, and put his hand to his pouch, to give him somewhat; but at that moment there arose a great clamour. So he raised his head to see what was to do and finding that it was the Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide coming forth from the Khalif's presence, rose and went before him, and they walked about, conversing, a long while. Khelifeh waited awhile; then, growing weary of standing and finding that the eunuch took no heed of him, he set himself in his way and beckoned to him from afar, saying, 'O my lord Rosy-cheeks, [give me my due and] let me go!'

The eunuch saw him, but was ashamed to answer him, because of the vizier's presence; so he went on talking with Jaafer and took no notice of the fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khelifeh, 'O tardy paymaster! May God put to shame all

curmudgeons and all who take people's goods and baffle them! I appeal to thee, O my lord Paunch o'bran, to give me my due and let me go!' The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him before Jaafer; and the latter saw the fisherman beckoning and talking to him, though he knew not what he said; so he said to Sendel, disliking his behaviour, 'O eunuch, what would yonder poor fellow with thee?' 'Dost thou not know him, O my lord the vizier?' asked Sendel; and Jaafer answered, 'By Allah, I know him not! How should I know a man l have never seen before?' 'O my lord,' rejoined the eunuch, 'this is the fisherman whose fish we seized on the banks of the Tigris. I came too late to get any and was ashamed to return to the Commander of the Faithful, empty- handed, when all the rest had some. Presently I espied the fisherman standing in mid-stream, calling on God, with four fish in his hands, and said to him, "Give me what thou hast there and take their price." So he gave me the fish and I put my hand into my pocket, to give him somewhat, but found it empty and said, "Come to me in the palace, and I will give thee wherewithal to succour thy poverty." Accordingly, he came to me to-day and I was putting my hand to my pouch, to give him somewhat, when thou camest forth and I rose to wait on thee and was diverted with thee from him, till he grew tired of waiting; and this is how he comes to be standing here.'

When the vizier heard this, he smiled and said, 'O Eunuch, how is it that this fisherman cometh in his hour of need and thou fulfillest not his desire? Dost thou not know him, O chief of the eunuchs?' 'No,' answered Sendel, and Jaafer said, 'This is the master and partner of the Commander of the Faithful, and our lord the Khalif hath arisen this morning, strait of breast and heavy of heart, nor is there aught will lighten his breast like this fisherman. So let him not go, till I take the Khalif's pleasure concerning him and bring him before him; peradventure God will relieve him of his oppression and distract him from the loss of Cout el Culoub, by means of the fisherman's presence, and he will give him wherewithal to better himself; and thou wilt be the cause of this.' 'O my lord,' replied Sendel, 'do as thou wilt, and may God the Most High long continue thee a pillar of the dynasty of the Commander of the Faithful, whose shadow God perpetuate and prosper it, root and branch!'

Then the vizier went in to the Khalif and Sendel ordered the attendants not to leave the fisherman; whereupon, 'How goodly is thy bounty, O Rosy-cheeks!' cried Khelifeh. 'The seeker is become the sought. I come to seek my due, and they imprison me for arrears!' When Jaafer came in to the presence of the Khalif, he found him sitting with his head bowed down, sick at heart and absorbed in melancholy thought, chanting the verses of the poet:

My censor bid me be consoled for her: what power,
I pray, Over my heart have I, if it my best will not obey?
How from a tender maiden's love shall one endure? In me
My love's estrangement to support I find no patience aye.
I can't forget her nor the time the cup 'twixt us went round
And for her glances' wine, o'er me did drunkenness hold sway.

Quoth Jaafer, 'Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful and Defender of the Faith and descendant of the uncle of the prince of Apostles, God bless him and gave him and all his family!' The Khalif raised his head and answered, 'And on thee be

peace and the mercy of God and His blessings!' Quoth Jaafer; 'If it like the Commander of the Faithful, his servant will speak without restraint.' 'And when was restraint put upon thee in speech,' asked the Khalif, 'and thou the Prince of Viziers? Say what thou wilt.' 'O my lord,' answered Jaafer, 'when I went out from before thee, intending for my house, I saw thy master and teacher and partner, Khelifeh the fisherman, standing at the door, and he was aggrieved at thee and complaining of thee and saying, "Glory be to God! I taught him to fish and he went away to fetch me a pair of frails, but returned not: and this is not the way a partner should use his partner nor an apprentice his master." So, if thou hast a mind to partnership, well and good; and if not, tell him, that he may take another to partner.'

When the Khalif heard this, he smiled and his heart was lightened and he said, 'My life on thee, is this the truth thou sayest, that the fisherman standeth at the door?' 'By thy life, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'he standeth at the door.' Quoth the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, by Allah, I will do my best to give him his due! lf God send him, at my hands, misery, he shall have it; and if fortune, he shall have it.' Then he took a piece of paper and cutting it in pieces, said to the Vizier, 'O Jaafer, write down twenty sums of money, from one dinar to a thousand, and the names of all kinds of offices and dignities from the least employ to the Khalifate, also twenty kinds of punishment from the lightest beating to death.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer and did as he was bidden.

Then said the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, I mean to summon the fisherman and bid him take one of these papers, whose contents none knoweth save thou and I; and I swear, by my holy forefathers and by my kinship to Hemzeh and Akil, that whatsoever is written in the paper he shall choose, I will give it to him; though it be the Khalifate, I will divest myself thereof and invest him therewith and grudge it not to him; and on the other hand, if there be written therein hanging or mutilation or death, I will execute it upon him. Now go and fetch him to me.' When Jaafer heard this, he said in himself, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! It may be somewhat will fall to this poor wretch's lot that will bring about his destruction, and I shall be the cause. But the Khalif hath sworn; so there is nothing for it but to bring him in, and nought wilt happen save what God willeth.' So he went out to Khelifeh and laid hold of his hand, to carry him in to the Khalif, whereupon his reason fled and he said in himself, 'What a fool I was to come after yonder ill- omened slave, Rosy-cheeks, whereby he hath brought me in company with Bran-belly!'

Jaafer fared on with him, with guards before and behind him, whilst he said, 'Doth not arrest suffice, but these fellows must go before and behind me, to prevent my making off?' till they had traversed seven vestibules, when the vizier said to him, 'Harkye, fisherman! Thou standest before the Commander of the Faithful and Defender of the Faith!' Then he raised the great curtain and Khelifeh's eyes fell on the Khalif, who was seated on his couch, with the grandees of the realm standing in attendance upon him. As soon as he knew him, he went up to him and said, 'Welcome to thee, O piper! It was not well done of thee to make thyself a fisherman and go away, leaving me sitting guarding the fish, and never return! For, before I was aware, there came up slaves, on beasts of all manner colours, and snatched away the fish from me; and this was all of thy fault; for, hadst thou returned presently with the frails, we had

sold a hundred dinars' worth of fish. And now I come to seek my due, and they have arrested me. But who hath imprisoned thee also in this place?'

The Khalif smiled and raising a corner of the curtain, said to the fisherman, 'Come hither and take one of these papers.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'Yesterday thou wast a fisherman, and now I find thee an astrologer: but the more trades a man hath, the poorer he is.' But Jaafer said, 'Do as the Commander of the Faithful bids thee and take the paper at once, without prating.' So he came forward, saying, 'God forbid that this piper should ever again be my journeyman and fish with me!' Then he put out his hand and taking a paper, handed it to the Khalif, saying, 'O piper, what hath come up for me therein. Hide nought thereof.' Er Reshid gave the paper to Jaafer and said to him, 'Read what is therein.' So he looked at it and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' '[God grant thou hast] good news, O Jaafer!' said the Khalif. 'What seest thou therein?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the vizier, 'there appeareth on the paper, "Let the fisherman receive a hundred blows with a stick."'

So the Khalif commanded to beat the fisherman and they gave him a hundred blows with a stick; after which he rose, saying, 'Confound this play. O Bran-belly! Are imprisonment and beating part of the game?' Then said Jaafer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, this poor wretch is come to the river, and how shall he go away thirsting? We hope of the charity of the Commander of the Faithful that he may have leave to take another paper, so haply he may happen upon somewhat wherewithal he may succour his poverty.' 'By Allah, O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'if he take another paper and "death" be written therein, I will assuredly kill him, and thou wilt be the cause.' 'If he die,' answered Jaafer, 'he will be at rest.' But Khelifeh said to him, 'May God never gladden thee with good news! Have I made Baghdad strait upon you, that you seek to kill me?' Quoth Jaafer, 'Take a paper and crave the blessing of God the Most High!'

So he put out his hand and taking a paper, gave it to Jaafer, who read it and was silent. 'Why art thou silent, O son of Yehya?' asked the Khalif. And he answered, 'O Commander of the Faithful, there is written on this paper, "The fisherman shall not be given aught."' Then said the Khalif, 'Bid him depart our presence, for there is no good fortune appointed to him from us.' 'By thy pious forefathers,' quoth Jaafer, 'let him take a third paper; it may be it will bring him good fortune.' 'Let him take one, then, and no more,' replied the Khalif. So he put out his hand and took a third paper, and behold, therein was written, 'Let the fisherman receive one dinar.' Quoth Jaafer to him, 'I sought good fortune for thee, but God willed to thee nought but this dinar.' And Khelifeh answered, 'Verily, a dinar for every hundred stripes were rare good luck, may God not send thy body health!'

The Khalif laughed at him and Jaafer took him by the hand and led him out. When he reached the door, Sendel the eunuch saw him and said to him, 'Hither, O fisherman! Give us largesse of that which the Commander of the Faithful hath bestowed on thee, whilst jesting with thee.' 'By Allah, O Rosy-cheeks,' replied Khelifeh, 'thou art right! Wilt thou share with me, blackskin? Indeed, I have eaten stick to the tune of a hundred blows and gotten one dinar, and thou art welcome to it.' So saying, he threw him the dinar and went out, with the tears running down his cheeks. When the eunuch saw him in this plight, he knew that he had spoken truth and called to the

attendants to fetch him back: so they brought him back and Sendel putting his hand to his pouch, pulled out a red purse, whence he emptied a hundred dinars into the fisherman's hand, saying, 'Take this in payment of thy fish and go thy ways.'

So Khelifeh took the hundred dinars and the Khalif's one dinar and went his way, rejoicing, and forgot the beating. Now, as God willed it for the accomplishment of that which He had decreed, he passed by the slave- girls' market and seeing there a great crowd of people assembled in a ring, said to himself, 'What is this crowd?' So he elbowed his way through the merchants and others, who said, 'Make way for Captain Cullion!' and let him pass. Then he looked and saw a chest, with an eunuch seated thereon, and behind it an old man standing up and crying, 'O merchants, O men of wealth, who will venture his money for this chest [of] unknown [content,] from the palace of the Lady Zubeideh bint el Casim, wife of the Commander of the Faithful? What shall I say for you, may God bless you?'

'By Allah,' quoth one of the merchants, 'this is a risk! But I will say one word and no blame to me. Be it mine for twenty dinars.' Quoth another, 'Fifty,' and they went on bidding, one against the other, till the price reached a hundred dinars. Then said the crier, 'O merchants, will any of you bid more?' And Khelifeh said, 'Be it mine for a hundred dinars and one.' The merchants thought he was jesting and laughed at him, saying, 'O eunuch, sell it to Khelifeh for a hundred and one dinars!' Quoth the eunuch, 'By Allah, I will sell it to none but him! Take it, O fisherman, God bless thee in it, and hand over the money.' So Khelifeh pulled out the money and gave it to the eunuch, who delivered him the chest and bestowed the price in alms on the spot; after which he returned to the palace and told Zubeideh what he had done, whereat she rejoiced.

Meanwhile the fisherman shouldered the chest, but could not carry it [so,] of the excess of its weight; so he lifted it on to his head and carried it thus to the place where he lived. Here he set it down and being weary, sat awhile, considering what had befallen him and saying in himself, 'Would I knew what is in this chest!' Then he opened the door of his lodging and tugged at the chest, till he got it into his chamber; after which he strove to open it, but without success. Quoth he, 'What possessed me to buy this chest? There is nothing for it but to break it open and see what is therein.' So he applied himself to the lock, but could not open it, and said in himself, 'I will leave it till to-morrow.'

Then he would have lain down to sleep, but could find no room; for the chest filled the whole chamber. So he climbed up on to it and lay down to sleep; but, when he had lain awhile, he felt something stir in the chest, whereat he was affrighted and sleep forsook him and his reason fled. So he arose and said, 'Meseems there are Jinn in the chest. Praised be God who hindered me from opening it! For, had I done so, they had come upon me in the dark and made an end of me, and no good would have betided me from them.' Then he lay down again, when, behold, the chest moved a second time, more than before; whereupon he sprang up and said, 'There it is again: but this is terrible!' And he hastened to look for the lamp, but could not and it and had no money to buy another. So he went forth and cried out, saying, 'Ho, people of the quarter!'

Now the most part of the folk were asleep; but they awoke at his crying and said, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh?' 'Bring me a lamp,' answered he; 'for the Jinn are upon me.' They laughed at him and gave him a lamp, with which he returned to his chamber. Then he beat upon the lock of the chest with a stone and broke it and opening it, saw a damsel like a houri lying asleep within. Now she had been drugged with henbane, but at that moment she threw up the henbane and awoke. Then she opened her eyes and feeling herself cramped, moved: whereupon quoth Khelifeh, 'By Allah, O my lady, whence art thou?' Quoth she, 'Bring me Jessamine and Narcissus.' And Khelifeh answered, 'There is nought here but henna-bowers.' Thereupon she came to herself and looking at Khelifeh, said to him, 'What art thou and where am I?' He answered, 'Thou art in my lodging.' Quoth she, 'Am I not in the palace of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid?' 'O madwoman,' replied he, 'what manner of thing is Er Reshid? Thou art nought but my slave- girl; I bought thee this very day for a hundred dinars and one and brought thee home, and thou wast asleep in this chest.'

When she heard this, she said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Khelifeh,' answered he. 'How comes my star to have grown propitious, when I know it to have been otherwise?' She laughed and said, 'Spare me this talk. Hast thou anything to eat?' 'No, by Allah,' answered he, 'nor yet to drink! I have not eaten these two days and am now in want of a morsel.' 'Hast thou no money?' asked she; and he said, 'God keep this chest that hath beggared me! I gave all I had for it and am become bankrupt.' She laughed at him and said, 'Go and seek of thy neighbours somewhat for me to eat, for I am hungry.' So he went forth and cried out, saying, 'Ho, people of the quarter!'

Now they were asleep; but they awoke and said, 'What ails thee, O Khelifeh?' 'O my neighbours,' answered he, 'I am hungry and have nothing to eat.' So one came down to him with a cake of bread and another with broken meats and a third with a piece of cheese and a fourth with a cucumber, and so on till his lap was full and be returned to his chamber and laid the whole before her, saying, 'Eat.' But she laughed at him, saying, 'How can I eat of this, when I have not a drop of water to drink? I fear to choke with a mouthful and die.' Quoth he, 'I will fill thee this pitcher.' So he took the pitcher and going forth, stood in the midst of the street and cried out, saying, 'Ho, people of the quarter!' Quoth they, 'What a pest thou art to-night, O Khelifeh!' And he said, 'Ye gave me food and I ate; but now I am athirst; so give me to drink.'

So one came down to him with a jug and another with an ewer and a third with a gugglet; and he filled his pitcher and carrying it back to the damsel, said to her, 'O my lady, thou lackest nothing now.' 'True,' answered she; 'I want nothing more at present.' Quoth he, 'Speak to me and tell me thy story.' And she said, 'Harkye! If thou knowest me not, I will tell thee who I am. I am Cout el Culoub, the Khalif's slave-girl, and the lady Zubeideh was jealous of me; so she drugged me and put me in this chest. Praised be God for that the matter hath come to no worse issue! But this befell me not save for thy good luck, for thou wilt certainly get of the Khalif Er Reshid money galore, that will be the means of thine enrichment.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'Is not the Khalif he in whose palace I was imprisoned?' 'Yes,' answered she; and he said, 'By Allah, I never saw a stingier than he, that piper little of good and wit! He gave me a hundred blows with a stick yesterday and one poor dinar, for all I taught him to fish and made him my partner; but he played me false.' 'Leave this unseemly talk,' replied she, 'and open thine

eyes and look thou bear thyself respectfully, whenas thou seest him after this, and thou shalt attain thy desire.'

When he heard her words it was as if he had been asleep and awoke; and God removed the veil from his judgment, because of his good luck, and he answered, 'On my head and eyes!' Then said he to her, 'Sleep, in the name of God.' So she lay down and fell asleep, and he slept at a distance from her, till the morning, when she sought of him inkhorn and paper and wrote to Ibn el Kirnas, acquainting him with her case and how she was with Khelifeh the fisherman, who had bought her. Then she gave him the letter, saying, 'Go to the jewel- market and enquire for the shop of Ibn el Kirnas the jeweller and give him this letter and speak not.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Khelifeh and going to the market, enquired for the shop of Ibn el Kirnas. They directed him thither and he saluted the merchant, who returned his greeting with an air of disdain and said to him, 'What dost thou want?'

So he gave him the letter and he took it, but read it not, thinking the fisherman a beggar, who sought an alms of him, and said to one of his servants, 'Give him half a dirhem.' Quoth Khelifeh, 'I want no alms; read the letter.' So Ibn el Kirnas read the letter and no sooner knew its import than he rose and kissing it, laid it on his head and said to Khelifeh, 'O my brother, where is thy house?' 'What wantest thou with my house?' asked Khelifeh. 'Wilt thou go thither and steal my slave-girl?' 'Not so,' answered Ibn el Kirnas; 'on the contrary, I will buy somewhat whereof yon may eat, thou and she.' So he said, 'My house is in such a quarter.' And the merchant rejoined, 'Thou hast done well. May God not give thee health, O unlucky one!'

Then he called two of his slaves and said to them, 'Carry this man to the shop of Muhsin the money-changer and bid him give him a thousand dinars and bring him back to me in haste.' So they carried him to the money- changer, who gave him the money, and returned with him to their master, whom they found mounted on a dapple mule, with slaves and servants about him, and by his side another mule like his own, saddled and bridled. Quoth the jeweller to Khelifeh, 'In the name of God, mount this mule.' 'Nay,' replied he; 'I fear lest she throw me.' 'By Allah,' said Ibn el Kirnas, 'but thou must mount!' So he came up and mounting her, face to crupper, caught hold of her tail and cried out; whereupon she threw him on the ground and they laughed at him: but he rose and said, 'Did I not tell thee I would not mount this great ass?' Ibn el Kienas left him in the market and repairing to the Khalif, told him of the damsel; after which he returned and removed her to his own house.

Meanwhile, Khelifeh went home to look after the damsel and found the people of the quarter assembled together, saying, 'Verily, Khelifeh is to-day altogether undone! Where can he have gotten this damsel?' Quoth one of them, 'He is a mad pimp: belike he found her by the way, drunk, and carried her to his own house, and his absence shows that he knows his crime.' As they were talking, up came Khelifeh, and they said to him, 'What a plight is thine, O unhappy wretch! Knowest thou not what is come to thee?' 'No, by Allah!' answered he. And they said, 'But now there came slaves and took away thy slave-girl, whom thou stolest, and sought for thee, but found thee not.' 'And how came they to take my slave-girl?' asked Khelifeh. And one said, 'Had he fallen in their way, they had slain him.' But he paid no heed to them and returned, running, to the shop of Ibn el Kirnas, whom he met riding, and said to him, 'By Allah, it was a

scurvy trick of thee to amuse me and send thy servants meanwhile to take my slave-girl!' 'O madman,' replied the jeweller, 'hold thy peace and come with me.'

So he took him and carried him into a handsome house, where he found the damsel seated on a couch of gold, with ten slave-girls like moons round her. Ibn el Kirnas kissed the ground before her and she said, 'What hast thou done with my new master, who bought me with all he had?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I gave him a thousand dinars,' and related to her Khelifeh's history from first to last, at which she laughed and said, 'Blame him not; for he is but a common man. These other thousand dinars are a present from me to him and God willing, he shall get of the Khalif what shall enrich him.'

As they were talking, there came an eunuch from the Khalif, in quest of Cout el Culoub, for, when he knew that she was in Ibn el Kirnas's house, he could not restrain his impatience, but sent forthwith to fetch her. So she repaired to the palace, taking Khelifeh with her, and going in to the presence, kissed the ground before the Khalif, who rose to her, saluting and welcoming her, and asked her how she had fared with him who had bought her. 'He is a man named Khelifeh the fisherman,' answered she, 'and standeth presently at the door. He tells me that he hath an account to settle with the Commander of the Faithful, by reason of a partnership between him and the Khalif in fishing.' 'Is he at the door?' asked Er Reshid; and she answered, 'Yes.'

So the Khalif sent for him and he kissed the ground before him and wished him continuance of glory and prosperity. The Khalif marvelled at him and laughed at him and said to him, 'O fisherman, wast thou in very earnest my partner yesterday?' Khelifeh took his meaning and summoning courage, replied, 'By Him who bestowed upon thee the succession to thine uncle's son, I know her not in anywise and have had no commerce with her save by way of looking and talking!' Then he told him all that had befallen him, since he last saw him, whereat the Khalif laughed and his breast dilated and he said to Khelifeh, 'Ask of us what thou wilt, O thou that bringest folk their own!' But he was silent; so the Khalif ordered him fifty thousand dinars and a sumptuous dress of honour from the royal wardrobe and a mule, and gave him black slaves to wait on him, so that he became as he were one of the kings of the time.

The Khalif was rejoiced at the recovery of his favourite and knew that this was of the doing of his wife Zubeideh, wherefore he was sore enraged against her and held aloof from her a great while, visiting her not neither relenting to her. When she was certified of this, she was sore concerned for his anger and her face paled, that was wont to be rosy, till, when her patience was exhausted, she sent a letter to her cousin, the Commander of the Faithful, making her excuses to him and confessing her offences, and ending with these verses:

I long once more thy sometime love and favour to regain,
That therewithal I may assuage my sorrow and my pain.
Pity the transport of my love and passion, O my lords!
So I have suffered at your hands enough of dole and bane.
My patience all, beloved mine, for your estrangement's spent:
You've troubled all my life serene with rigour and disdain.
'Tis life to me, if you fulfil the vows you swore to me,

And very death if you to me fulfilment will not deign.
Grant that I've sinned, be bountiful; forgive me, for, by God,
How sweet the loved one is, when he forgives and takes again!

When the Khalif read her letter and saw that she acknowledged her offence and sent to make her excuses to him therefor, he said, 'Verily, God pardoneth all offences; for He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.' And he returned her an answer, containing [assurance of] satisfaction and pardon and forgiveness for what was past, whereat she rejoiced greatly.

As for Khelifeh, the Khalif assigned him a monthly allowance of fifty dinars, by way of recompense, and took him into his especial favour. Then he kissed the earth before the Commander of the Faithful and went forth with stately gait. When he came to the door, the eunuch Sendel saw him and knowing him, said to him, 'O fisherman, how camest thou by all this?' So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, whereat Sendel rejoiced, in that he had been the cause of his enrichment, and said to him, 'Wilt thou not give me largesse of this wealth that is become thine?' So Khelifeh put his hand to his pouch and taking out a purse containing a thousand dinars, gave it to the eunuch, who said, 'Keep thy money and God bless thee in it!' and marvelled at his generosity and at the liberality of his soul, for all his [late] poverty.

Then he mounted his mule and rode, with the slaves' Hands on her crupper, till he came to his lodging, whilst the folk stared at him and marvelled at that which had betided him of advancement. When he alighted, they accosted him and enquired the cause of his change of fortune, and he told them all that had happened to him, from first to last. Then he bought a fine house and laid out much money thereon, till it was perfect in all respects. And he took up his abode therein and was wont to recite the following verses thereon:

Behold a house that's like the Dwelling of Delight!
Its aspect heals the sick and banishes despite.
Its sojourn for the great and wise appointed is,
And fortune fair therein abideth day and night.

As soon as he was settled in his house, he sought in marriage a handsome girl, daughter of one of the chief men of the city, and went in to her and led a life of all delight and happiness and prosperity. So, when he found himself in this fortunate condition, he offered up thanks to God [blessed and gloried be He!] for the abounding wealth He had bestowed on him and for His continual favours, praising his Lord with the praise of the grateful and chanting the words of the poet:

To Thee the praise, O Thou whose grace doth no remission know,
Whose bounties all-embracing are and all things overflow!
To Thee be praise from me! Accept my homage, for indeed,
I'm mindfull of Thy bounties all and all to Thee I owe.
Thou hast indeed with benefits and favours and largesse
O'erwhelmed me;So I turn to Thee, my gratitude to show.
Out of the ocean of Thy grace and goodness all men drink
And Thou doth succour them in time of trouble and of woe.

O Thou that pardoneth my sins, Thou, O my Lord, on us
Heap'st favours, crowning aye with new those that did them forego,
Still for the sake of him who came, in mercy to mankind,
A prophet, noble, true of speech and clean and pure as snow;
God's blessing and His peace, so long as men his tomb do seek,
On him and on his helpers be and lineage, high and low!
And eke on his companions all, th' illustrious, the wise,
The noble, whilst within the brake the bird doth singing go!

He continued to pay frequent visits to the Khalif, with whom he found acceptance and who ceased not to overwhelm him with favours and bounty: and he abode in the enjoyment of the utmost honour and happiness and prospects and of all the delights and comforts of life, till there came to him the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and extolled be the perfection of Him to whom belong glory and permanence, the Living, the Eternal, who shall never die!

Appendix.

Note

The Breslau version of the story of Khelifeh differs so widely from the foregoing, in which I have, as usual, followed Sir William Macnaghten's Edition of the Arabic Text, that I have thought it well to translate it *en bloc* by way of supplement, instead of contenting myself, as in cases where the Breslau Edition presents but occasional variations from my standard text, with amending and correcting the latter by its light.

Khelif the Fisherman of Baghdad.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the city of Baghdad, a fisherman, by name Khelif, a man of many words and little luck. One day, as he sat in his lodging, he bethought himself and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what is my offence in the sight of my Lord and [the cause of] the blackness of my fortune and my little luck among the fishermen, albeit I dare say there is not in the city of Baghdad a fisherman like myself.' Now he lodged in a ruined place called a khan, to wit, an inn, without a door, and when he went forth to fish, he would shoulder the net, without basket or knife, and the folk would look at him and say to him, 'O Khelif, why dost thou not take with thee a basket, to hold the fish thou catches?' Quoth he, ' Even as it went forth empty, so would it come back, for I never Take aught.'

One night he arose, in the darkness before dawn, and taking his net on his shoulder, raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'O my God, O Thou who subjectedst the sea to Moses son of Amran, provide Thou me, for Thou art the best of providers!' Then he [went down to the Tigris and] spreading his net, cast it into the river and waited till it had settled down, when he pulled it in and drawing it ashore, found in it a dead dog. So he freed the net from the carcase and threw it away, saying, 'O morning of ill luck! What a sorry handsel is this dead dog, after I had rejoiced in its weight!' Then he mended the rents in the net, saying, 'Needs must there be fish in plenty, after this carrion, attracted by the smell,' and made a second cast.

After awhile, he drew up and found in the net a dead camel, that had caught in the meshes and rent them right and left. When he saw his net in this plight, he wept and said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what is my offence and [the reason of] the blackness of my fortune and the scantiness of my luck, of all folk, so that I catch neither carplet nor barbel, that I may broil in the sand and eat, for all I dare say there is not a fisherman like me in the city of Baghdad.'

Then he pronounced the name of God and casting his net a third time, drew it ashore and found in it a scurvy, one-eyed, mangy, lame ape, with a rod of ivory in his hand. When he saw this, he said, 'This is indeed a blessed handsel! What art thou, O ape?' 'Dost thou not know me?' answered the ape, and Khelif said, 'No, by Allah, I have no knowledge of thee!' Quoth the ape, 'I am thine ape;' and Khelif said, ' What use is there in thee, O my ape?' ' Every day,' replied the ape, 'I give thee good-morrow, so God the Most High may not vouchsafe thee provision.'

Quoth Khelif, thou failest not [of this], O one-eye of ill-omen! May God not bless thee! Needs must I put out thy sound eye and break thy sound leg, so thou mayst become a blind cripple and I be quit of thee. But what is the use of that rod thou hast in thy hand?' 'O Khelif,' answered the ape, 'I scare the fish therewith, so they may not enter thy net.' 'Is it so?' rejoined Khelif. 'Then this very day will I appoint to thee a grievous punishment and devise thee all manner torments and strip thy flesh from thy bones and be at rest from thee, sorry bargain that thou art!'

So saying, he unwound from his middle a piece of rope and binding him to a tree by his side, said to him, ‘ Harkye, O dog of an ape! I mean to cast the net again and if aught come up therein, well and good but, if it come up empty, I will make an end of thee, by dint of beating, and be quit of thee.’ So he cast the net and drawing it ashore, found in it another ape and said, ‘Glory be to God! I was wont to pull nought but fish out of this Tigris, but now it yields nothing but apes.’

Then he looked at the second ape and saw him round-faced and fair of fashion, with pendants of gold in his ears and a blue waistcloth about his middle, and he was like unto a lighted flambeau. So he said to him, ‘What art thou, thou also, O ape?’ And he answered, saying, ‘O Khelif, I am the ape of Aboussaadat the Jew, the Khalif’s money- changer. Every day, I give him good-morrow, and he makes a profit of ten diners.’ ‘By Allah,’ cried the fisherman, ‘thou art a fine ape, not like this unlucky wretch of mine!’

So saying, he took a stick and came down upon the one-eyed ape’s flanks, till he broke his ribs and he jumped up and down. And the other ape answered him, saying, ‘O Khelif, what will it profit thee to beat him, though thou belabour him till he die?’ Quoth Khelif, ‘ How shall I do? Shall I let him go, that he may scare me the fish with his hang-dog favour and give me good-morrow and good-even every day, so God may not provide me? Nay, I will kill him and be quit of him and thou shalt give me good-morrow [in his stead]; so shall I gain ten diners a day.’

‘I will tell thee a better way than that,’ answered the second ape, ‘and if thou hearken to me, thou shalt be at rest and I will become thine ape in his stead.’ ‘And what cost thou counsel me?’ asked the fisherman; and the ape said, ‘Cast thy net and thou shalt bring up a noble fish, never saw any its like, and I will tell thee how thou shalt do with it.’ ‘Harkye, thou also!’ replied Khelif. ‘If I throw my net and there come up therein a third ape, I will cut the three of you into six pieces.’ And the second ape answered, ‘So be it, O Khelif. I agree to this condition.’

Then Khelif took the net and cast it and drew it up, when behold in it a fine young carp, with a round head, as it were a milking-pail, which when he saw, his reason fled for joy and he said, ‘Glory be to God! What is this noble creature? Were yonder apes in the river, I had not brought up this fish. ‘Quoth the second ape, ‘Harkye, Khelif! If thou give ear to my rede, it will bring thee good fortune.’ ‘May God curse him who would gainsay thee henceforth!’ replied the fisherman, and the ape said, ‘O Khelif, take some grass and lay the fish thereon in the basket and cover it with more grass and take somewhat of basil from the greengrocer’s and set it in the fish’s mouth. Cover it with a napkin and get thee to the bazaar of Baghdad. Whoever bespeaks thee of selling it, sell it not [but fare on] till thou come to the market of the jewellers and money-changers.

Count five shops on the right-hand side and the sixth shop is that of Aboussaadat the Jew, the Khalif’s money-changer. When thou standest before him, he will say to thee, “What seekest thou?” And do thou answer, “I am a fisherman. I cast my net in thy name and took this noble carp, which I have brought thee as a present.” If he give thee aught of money, take it not, be it little or much, for it will put to nought that which thou wouldst do, but say to him, “ I want of thee but one word, that thou say to

me, ‘ I sell thee my ape for thine ape and my luck for thy luck.”’ If he say this, give him the fish and I shall become thine ape and this mangy, one-eyed cripple will be his ape.’

‘Good, O ape,’ replied Khelif, [and shouldering his basket, made for Baghdad], nor did he cease going and observing that which the ape had said to him, till he came to the Jew’s shop and saw him seated, with slaves and servants about him, commanding and forbidding and giving and taking. So he said to him, ‘O Sultan of the Jews, I am a fisherman and went forth to-day to the Tigris and cast my net in thy name, saying, “ This is for the luck of Aboussaadat ;” and there came up to me this carp, which I have brought thee by way of present.’

So saying, he lifted the grass and discovered the fish to the Jew, who marvelled at its fashion and said, ‘Extolled be the perfection of the Most Excellent Creator!’ Then he gave the fisherman a diner, but he refused it and he gave him two. This also he refused and the Jew went on adding to his offer, till he made it ten diners; but he still refused and Aboussaadat said to him, ‘By Allah, thou art covetous, O Muslim! Tell me what thou wouldst have.’ Quoth Khelif, ‘ I want of thee but a single word.’

When the Jew heard this, he changed colour and said, ‘Wouldst thou have me forsake my faith? Go thy ways.’ But Khelif said to him, ‘By Allah, O Jew, it is nought to me if thou become a Muslim or a Christian!’ ‘Then what wouldst thou have me say?’ asked the Jew, and the fisherman answered, ‘Say, “I sell thee my ape for thy ape and my luck for thy luck.”’ The Jew laughed, deeming him little of wit, and said by way of jest, ‘I sell thee my ape for thy ape and my luck for thy luck. Bear witness against him, [O merchants!] By Allah, O unhappy wretch, thou art debarred [from making any further claim on me]!’

So Khelif turned back, blaming himself and saying, ‘There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! Alas, that I had taken the gold!’ and fared on till he came to the Tigris, but found not the two apes, whereupon he wept and buffeted his face and strewed dust on his head, saying, ‘But that the second ape deluded me and put a cheat on me, the one-eyed ape had not made his escape.’ And he gave not over weeping and crying out, till heat and hunger grew sore on him, when he took the net, saying, ‘ Come, let us make a cast, trusting in the blessing of God; belike I may catch a barbel or a carplet, that I may broil and eat.’

So he cast the net [and waiting] till it had settled down, drew it ashore, and found it full of fish, whereat he rejoiced and busied himself with killing the fish and casting them on the earth. Presently, up came a woman seeking fish and crying out and saying, ‘ There is no fish in the town.’ She caught sight of Khelif and said to him, ‘Wilt thou sell this fish, master?’ ‘I am going to turn it into clothes,’ answered Khelif; ‘it is all for sale, even to my beard. Take what thou wilt. ‘So she gave him a diner and he filled her a basket.

Then she went away and up came another servant, seeking a diner’s worth of fish; nor did the folk leave coming till it was the hour of afternoon prayer and Khelif had sold ten diners’ worth of fish. Then, being faint with hunger, he shouldered his net and repairing to the market, bought himself a woollen gown, a skull-cup with a plaited border and a yellow turban for a diner, receiving two dirhems change, with which he

bought fried cheese and a fat sheep's tail and honey and setting them in the oilman's platter, ate till he was full.

Then he betook himself to his lodging, clad in the gown and the yellow turban and with the nine diners in his mouth, rejoicing in what he had never in his life seen. He entered and lay down, but could not sleep for the trouble of his spirits and abode playing with the money half the night. Then said he in himself 'Belike, the Khalif may hear that I have gold and say to Jaafer, "Go to Khelif the fisherman and borrow us some money of him. "If I give it him, it will be no light matter to me, and if I give it not, he will torment me; but torture is easier to me than the giving up of the cash. However, I will arise and make trial of myself, if I have a skin proof against beating or not.'

So he put off his clothes and taking a sailor's plaited whip, of a hundred and sixty strands, fell a-beating himself, till his sides and body were all bloody, crying out at every stroke he dealt himself and saying, '[Help,] O Muslims! I am a poor man! O Muslims, I am a poor man! O Muslims, whence should I have gold, whence should I have money?' till the neighbours who dwelt with him in that place, hearing him [roaring out thus and] saying, 'Go to men of wealth and take of them,' doubted not but that thieves were torturing him, to get money from him, and that he was crying out for succour.

So they flocked to him, arms in hand, and finding the door of his lodging locked and hearing him roaring out for help, thought that the thieves had come down upon him from the roof; so they fell upon the door and burst it open. Then they entered and found him naked and bare-headed, with body dripping blood, and altogether in a piteous plight; so they said to him, 'What is this case in which we find thee? Hast thou taken leave of thy wits and hath madness betided thee this night?' And he answered them, saying, 'Nay; but I have gold with me and I feared lest the Khalif send to borrow of me and it were grievous to me to give him aught; yet, if I gave not to him, he would assuredly put me to the torture; wherefore I arose to see if my skin were beating-proof or not.'

When they heard this, they said to him, 'May God not assain thy body, unlucky madman that thou art! Of a surety thou art fallen mad to-night! Lie down [and go to sleep], may God not bless thee! How many thousand diners hast thou, that the Khalif should come and borrow of thee?' Quoth he, 'By Allah, I have nought but nine diners.' And they all said, 'By Allah, he is indeed rich.'

Then they left him, marvelling at his lack of wit, and he took his money and wrapped it in a rag, saying in himself, 'Where shall I hide this gold? If I bury it, they will take it, and if I put it out on deposit, they will deny [having received] it, and if I carry it on my head, they will snatch it, and if I tie it to my sleeve, they will cut it away.' Presently, he espied a little pocket in the breast [of the gown] and said, 'By Allah, this is fine! It is under my gullet and hard by my mouth; so if any put out his hand to take it, I can come down on it with my mouth and hide it in my throttle.' So he put the rag containing the gold in the pocket [and lay down], but slept not that night for inquietude and care and restlessness.

On the morrow, he went forth of his lodging, on fishing intent, and betaking himself to the river, went down into the water, up to his knees. Then he cast the net and shook it mightily; whereupon the purse [flew out of his pocket] and fell into the stream. So he tore off gown and turban and plunged in after it, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Nor did he give over diving, till the day was half spent, but found not the purse.

Now one saw him diving and plunging and his gown and turban lying in the sun at a distance from him, with no one by them; so he watched him, till he dived again, when he pounced down upon the clothes and made off with them. Presently, Khelif came ashore and missing his gown and turban, was mightily chagrined for their loss and ascended a high mound, to look for some passer-by, of whom he might enquire [concerning them], but found none.

Now the Khalif [Haroun er Reshid] had gone a-hunting that day and returning at the season of the [noontide] heat, was oppressed thereby and thirsted; so he looked from afar off [seeking water] and seeing a naked man standing on the mound aforesaid, said to Jaafer, 'Seest thou what I see?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the Vizier; 'I see a man standing on a knoll.' 'What is he?' asked Er Reshid, and Jaafer said, 'Belike he is the guardian of a cucumber-plot.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Belike he is a pious man; I would fain go to him, alone, and desire him of his prayers; and abide ye in your stead.' So he went up to Khelif and saluting him, said to him, 'What art thou, O man?' Quoth the fisherman, 'Dost thou not know me? I am Khelif the fisherman.' And the Khalif said, ' [What?] The fisherman with the woollen gown and the [yellow] turban?'

When Khelif heard him name the clothes he had lost, he said in himself, 'this is he who took my gear: belike he did but jest with me.' So he came down from the knoll and said, 'Can I not take a noonday nap but thou must play me this trick? I saw thee take my clothes and knew that thou west jesting with me.' At this, laughter got the better of the Khalif and he said, 'What clothes hast thou lost? I know nothing of that whereof thou speakest, O Khelif.'

'By God the Great,' cried Khelif, 'except thou bring me back the gear, I will break thy ribs with this staff!' For he still carried a quarterstaff. Quoth the Khalif, 'By Allah, I have not seen the things whereof thou speakest!

But Khelif said, 'I will go with thee and take note of thy dwelling-place and complain of thee to the chief of the police, so thou mayst not play me this trick again. By Allah, none took my gown and turban but thou, and except thou give them back to me forthright, I will throw thee off the back of that she-ass of thine and come down on thy pate with this staff, till thou canst not stir!'

So saying, he tugged at the mule's bridle, so that she reared up on her [hind] legs and the Khalif said to himself, 'What predicament is this I have fallen into with this madman?' Then he pulled off a gown he had on, worth a hundred diners, and said to Khelif, 'Take this gown in lieu of thine own.' He took it and donning it, judged it too long; so he cut it short at the knees and winding the cut-off piece about his head, turban-wise, said to the Khalif, 'What art thou and what is thy craft? But [there needs no asking]: thou art none other than a trumpeter.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'What discovered

to thee that I was a trumpeter by trade?' And Khelif answered, 'Thy big nostrils and small mouth.' 'Well done!' cried the Khalif 'Yes, I am a trumpeter.'

Then said Khelif, 'If thou wilt hearken to me, I will teach thee the art of fishing: it will be better for thee than trumpeting and thou wilt eat lawfully [earned bread]. 'Teach it me,' replied Er Reshid, 'so I may see whether it will suit me or no.' And Khelif said, 'Come with me, O trumpeter.' So the Khalif followed him down to the river and took the net from him, whilst he taught him how to cast it. So he cast it [and drew it up], when, behold, it was heavy, and the fisherman said, 'O trumpeter, if the net be caught on one of the rocks, beware lest thou tug hard at it, or it will break and by Allah, I will take thy she-ass in payment of it!'

The Khalif laughed at his words and drew up the net little by little, till he brought it ashore and found it full of fish; which when Khelif saw, his reason fled for joy and he said, ' By Allah, O trumpeter, thy luck is good in fishing! Never in my life will I part with thee! But now I mean to send thee to the fish market, where do thou enquire for the shop of Ahmed the fisherman and say to him, " My master Khelif salutes thee and bids thee send him a pair of frails and a knife, so he may bring thee fish more than yesterday." Run and return to me in haste.'

'On my head, O master!' replied Er Reshid, laughing, and mounting his mule, rode back to Jaafer, who said to him, Tell me what hath befallen thee.' So the Khalif told him all that had passed between the fisherman and himself, from first to last, and added, 'I left him awaiting my return to him with the baskets and I am resolved that he shall teach me how to scale fish and clean them.' 'And I,' said Jaafer, 'will go with thee, to sweep up the scales and clean out the shop.' And the affair abode thus.

Then said Er Reshid to his vizier, ' O Jaafer, I desire of thee that thou despatch the young slaves, saying to them, "Whoso bringeth me a fish from before yonder fisherman, I will give him a diner;" for I love to eat of my own catching.' Accordingly Jaafer repeated to the slaves what the Khalif had said and directed them where to find the fisherman. So they came down upon Khelif and snatched the fish from him; and when he saw them and noted their goodliness, he doubted not but that they were of the black-eyed boys of Paradise; so he caught up a couple of fish and plunging into the river, said, 'O my God, by the secret [virtue] of these fish, forgive me!' Presently, up came the chief eunuch, in quest of fish, but found none and seeing Khelif ducking and rising in the water, with the two fish in his hands, called out to him, saying, ' Harkye, Khelif, what hast thou there?' 'Two fish,' answered the fisherman, and the eunuch said, 'Give them to me and take a hundred diners for them.' When Khelif heard speak of a hundred diners, he came up out of the water and said, 'Hand over the hundred diners.' Quoth the eunuch, 'Follow me to the house of Er Reshid and take the money, O Khelif,' and taking the fish, made off to the Khalif's palace.

Meanwhile Khelif betook himself to Baghdad, clad as he was in the Khalifs gown, which barely reached to his knees, turbaned with the piece which he had cut off therefrom and girt about the middle with a rope, and passed through the midst of the city. The folk fell a-laughing and marvelling at him and saying, 'Whence hadst thou that gown?' And he went on, saying, 'Where is the house of Er *Reshad*? 'Quoth they,

'Say, "The house of Er *Reshid*;"' and he answered, 'It is all one,' and fared on, till he came to the palace of the Khalifate.

Now the tailor, who had made the gown, was standing at the door, and when he saw it upon the fisherman, he said to him, 'How many years hast thou had [admission to the palace]?' ' Ever since I was a boy,' answered Khelif, and the tailor said, 'Whence hadst thou that gown, that thou hast ruined thus?' Quoth Khelif, 'I had it of my apprentice the trumpeter.' Then he went up to the door, where he found the chief eunuch sitting and seeing him exceeding black of hue, said to him, 'Wilt thou not bring the hundred diners, O uncle Rosy-cheeks? Quoth he, 'On my head, O Khelif;' when, behold, out came Jaafer from the presence of the Khalif and seeing the fisherman talking with the eunuch and saying to him, 'This is the reward of goodness, O Rosy-cheeks,' went in to Er Reshid and said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, thy master the fisherman is with the chief eunuch, dunning him for a hundred diners.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Bring him to me, O Jaafer.' And the vizier answered, 'I hear and obey.'

So he went out to the fisherman and said to him, 'O Khelif, thine apprentice the trumpeter bids thee to him.' So he followed Jaafer into the presence-chamber, where he saw the Khalif seated, with a canopy over his head. When he entered, Er Reshid wrote three scrolls and laid them before him, and the fisherman said to him, '[It would seem] thou hast given up the trumpeting trade and turned astrologer.' Quoth the Khalif to him, 'Take a scroll.'

Now in one he had written, 'Let him be given a diner,' and in another, 'A hundred diners,' and in the third, 'Let him be given a hundred blows with a whip.' So Khelif put out his hand and as fate would have it, it lighted on the scroll wherein was written, 'Let him receive a hundred lashes,' and kings, whenas they ordain aught, go not back therefrom. So they threw him down and gave him a hundred lashes, whilst he roared for succour, but none succoured him, and said, 'By Allah, this is a fine thing, O trumpeter! I teach thee fishing and thou turnest astrologer and drawest me an unlucky lot!'

When the Khalif heard his speech, he swooned away for laughter and said, 'O Khelif, no harm shall betide thee: fear not. Give him a hundred diners.' So they gave him a hundred diners, and he went out and fared on, till he came to the trunk-market, where he found the folk assembled in a ring about a broker, who was crying out and saying, 'At a hundred diners, less one! A locked chest!'

So Khelif pushed through the crowd and said to the broker, 'Mine for a hundred diners.' The broker adjudged him the chest and took the money of him, wherupon there was left him neither little nor much. The porters disputed [awhile] about [who should carry] the chest and [presently] said all, ' By Allah, none shall carry this chest but Zureic!' And the folk said, 'Zureic hath the best right to it.'

So he shouldered the chest, after the goodliest fashion, and followed Khelif. As they went along, the fisherman said [in himself], 'I have nothing left to give the porter; how shall I rid myself of him? I will traverse the streets with him and lead him about, till he is weary and [sets the chest down and] leaves it, when I will take it up and carry it to my lodging.' Accordingly, he went round about [Baghdad] with the porter from

noontide to sun-down, till the man began to grumble and said, 'O my lord, where is thy house?' Quoth Khelif, 'Yesterday I knew it, but today I have forgotten it.' And the porter said, ' Give me my hire and take thy chest.' But Khelif said, 'Go on at thy leisure, till I bethink me where my house is. I have no money with me. It is all in my house and I have forgotten where it is.'

As they were talking, there passed by them one who knew the fisherman and said to him, 'O Khelif, what brings thee hither?' Quoth the porter, 'O uncle, where is Khelif's house?' And he answered, ' It is in the ruined khan in the Rewasin.' Then said Zureic [to Khelif], 'Go to; wouldst thou had never lived nor been!' And the fisherman went on, followed by the porter, till they came to the place and Zureic said, 'O thou whose worldly provision God cut off, we have passed this place a score of times! Hadst thou said to me, "It is in such a place," thou hadst spared me this great toil; but now give me my hire and let me go my way.' Quoth Khelif 'Thou shalt have silver, if not gold. Stay here, till I bring thee the money.' So he entered his lodging and taking a maul he had there, set with forty nails, — wherewith if he smote a camel, he made an end of him, — made for the porter and raised his hand to strike him therewith; but Zureic cried out at him, saying, 'Hold thy hand! I have no claim on thee,' [and made off].

Then Khelif carried the chest into the khan, whereupon the neighbours flocked about him, saying, 'O Khelif, whence hadst thou this gown and chest?' Quoth he, 'My apprentice Er Reshid gave them to me,' and they said, ' The knave is mad! Er Reshid will surely hear of his talk and hang him over the door of his lodging and hang all in the khan on his account. This is a [fine] farce!' Then they helped him to carry the chest into his lodging and it filled the whole chamber.'

So much for Khelif and now for the history of the chest. The Khalif had a Turkish slave-girl, by name Cout el Culoub, whom he loved with an exceeding love, and the Lady Zubeideh came to know of this and was exceeding jealous of her and plotted mischief against her. So, whilst the Commander of the Faithful was absent a-hunting, she sent for Cout el Culoub and inviting her [to eat with her] set before her meat and wine, and she ate and drank. Now the wine was drugged with henbane; so she slept and Zubeideh sent for her chief eunuch and putting her in a chest, locked it and gave it to him, saying, ' Take this chest and cast it into the river.'

So he took it up before him on a mule and set out with it for the sea, but found it uneath to carry; so, seeing the sheikh of the brokers, as he passed by the trunk-market, he said to him, 'Wilt thou sell me this chest, O uncle?' 'Yes,' answered the broker, [and the eunuch said], 'But look thou sell it not except locked.' 'It is well,' replied the other; 'we will do that.' So he set down the chest, and they cried it for sale, saying, 'Who will buy this chest for a hundred diners?' At this moment, up came Khelif and bought the chest and there passed between him and the porter that which hath been before set out.

To return to Khelif. He lay down on the chest, to sleep, and presently Cout el Culoub awoke from the effects of the drug and finding herself in the chest, cried out and said, 'Alas!' Whereupon Khelif sprang off the chest and cried out and said, 'Ho, Muslims! Come to my help! There are Afrits in the chest.' So the neighbours awoke

from sleep and said to him, 'What ails thee, O madman?' Quoth he, 'The chest is full of Afrits.' And they said, 'Go to sleep; thou hast troubled our rest this night, may Allah not bless the! Go in and sleep, without madness.' 'I cannot sleep,' answered he; but they railed at him and he went in [and lay down again].

Presently, Cout el Culoub spoke and said, 'Where am I?' whereupon Khelif fled forth the chamber and said, 'O neighbours of the inn, come to me!' Quoth they, 'What hath befallen thee? Thou troublest the neighbours' rest.' And he said, 'O folk, there are Afrits in the chest, moving and speaking.' 'Thou liest,' answered they. 'What do they say?' And he, 'They say, "Where am I? "' 'Would thou wert in hell!' rejoined they. 'Thou disturbest the neighbours and hinderest them of sleep. Go to sleep, would thou hadst never lived nor been!' So Khelif went in, fearful [and knowing not what to do], for he had no place wherein to sleep save on the top of the chest, when, behold, as he stood, with ears listening for speech, Cout el Culoub spoke again and said, 'I am hungry.'

So he fled forth in affright and cried out, saying, ' Ho, neighbours, ho, dwellers in the khan, come to me!' Said they, ' What is to do with thee now?' And he answered, 'The Afrits in the chest say, "We are hungry."' Quoth the neighbours to each other, 'It would seem Khelif is hungry let us feed him and give him of what is left from the evening meal; else he will not let us sleep to-night.' So they brought him bread and meat and dates and radishes and gave him a basket full of all kinds of things, saying 'Eat thy fill and go to sleep and talk not, else will we break thy ribs and beat thee to death.' So he took the basket and entering his lodging, sat down on the chest and fell to eating of the food with both hands.

Now it was a moonlight night and the moon shone full upon the chest and lit up the chamber. Presently Cout el Culoub spoke again and said, 'Have pity on me, O Muslims, and open to me!' So Khelif arose and taking a stone he had with him, broke open the chest and beheld therein a young lady as she were the shining sun, with flower-white forehead, moon-bright face, red cheeks and speech sweeter than sugar, clad in a dress worth a thousand diners and more. At this sight he was transported for joy and said, 'By Allah, thou art of the fair!' Quoth she, 'What art thou, O fellow?' and he answered, 'I am Khelif the fisherman.' 'Who brought me hither?' asked she, and he said, 'I bought thee, and thou art my slave-girl.' Quoth she, 'I see on thee a gown of the raiment of the Khalif [Whence hadst thou it?]'

So he told her all that had betided him, from first to last, and how he had bought the chest; wherefore she knew that the Lady Zubeideh had played her false; and she ceased not to talk with him till the morning, when she said to him, 'O Khelif, look [thou get] me from some one inkhorn and pen and paper and bring them to me. So he found what she sought with one of the neighbours and brought it to her, whereupon she wrote a letter and folded it and gave it to him, saying, ' O Khelif, take this letter and carry it to the jewel-market, where do thou enquire for the shop of Aboulhusn the jeweller and give it to him.' 'O my lady,' answered the fisherman, 'this name is difficult to me; I cannot remember it.' And she said, 'Then ask for the shop of Ibn el Ucab.' lady,' asked he, 'what is an *ucab*?' And she said, 'It is a bird that folk carry on their fists, with its eyes hooded.' Quoth he, 'O my lady, I know it.' Then he went forth from her and fared on, repeating the name, lest it pass his memory; but, by the time he reached

the jewel-market, he had forgotten it. So he accosted one of the merchants and said to him, 'Is there any here named after a bird?' 'Yes,' answered the merchant; ' thou meanest Ibn el Ucab.' Quoth Khelif, 'That's the man I want,' and making his way to him, gave him the letter, which when he read and knew the purport thereof, he fell to kissing it and laying it on his head; for it is said that Aboulhusn was the agent of the Lady Cout el Culoub and her intendant over all her property in lands and houses.

Now she had written to him, saying, 'From Her Highness the Lady Cout el Culoub to Master Aboulhusn the jeweller. As soon as this letter reacheth thee, set apart for us a saloon completely equipped with furniture and vessels and slaves and slave-girls and what not else is needful and seemly, and take the bearer hereof and carry him to the bath. Then clothe him in costly apparel and do with him thus and thus.'

So he said, 'I hear and obey,' and locking up his shop, took the fisherman and carried him to the bath. where he committed him to one of the bathmen, that he might serve him, as of wont. Then he went forth to carry out the Lady Cout el Culoub's orders. As for Khelif, he concluded, of his lack of wit, that the bath was a prison and said to the bathmen, 'What have I done, that ye should imprison me?' They laughed at him and made him sit on the edge of the tank, whilst the bathman took hold of his legs, that he might rub them. Khelif thought he meant to wrestle with him and said in himself, 'This is a wrestling-place and I knew not of it.' Then he arose and seizing the bathman's legs, lifted him up and threw him on the ground and broke his ribs. The man cried out for help, whereupon the other bathmen fell upon Khelif and overcoming him by dint of numbers, delivered their comrade from his clutches [and tended him], till he came to himself.

Then they knew that the fisherman was a simpleton and served him, till Aboulhusn came back with a dress of rich stuff and clad him therein; after which he brought him a handsome mule, ready saddled, and taking him by the hand, carried him forth of the bath and bade him mount. Quoth he, ' How shall I mount? I fear lest she throw me and break my ribs in my body.' Nor did he mount the mule, save after much pressure and trouble, and they fared on, till they came to the place which Aboulhusn had set apart for the Lady Cout el Culoub.

Khelif entered and found her sitting, with slaves and servants about her and the porter at the door, staff in hand. When the latter saw the fisherman, he sprang up and kissing his hand, went before him, till he brought him within the saloon, where he saw what amazed his wit, and his eyes were dazzled by that which he beheld of riches past count and slaves and servants, who kissed his hand and said, '[God grant thee] solace of the bath.'

When he entered the saloon and drew near unto Cout el Culoub, she sprang up to him and taking him by the hand, seated him on a high divan. Then she brought him a vase of sherbet of sugar, mingled with rose-water, and he took it and drank it off and left not a single drop. Moreover, he passed his finger round the inside of the vessel and would have licked it, but she forbade him, saying, 'That is ill.' Quoth he, ' Hold thy peace: this is nought but good honey;' and she laughed at him and set before him a tray of meats, whereof he ate his fill. Then they brought an ewer and basin of gold, and he washed his hands and abode in all delight of life and worship.

Meanwhile, when the Commander of the Faithful came back from his journey and found not Cout el Culoub, he questioned the Lady Zubeideh of her and she said, 'She is dead, may thy head live, O Commander of the Faithful!' Now she had let dig a grave amiddleward the palace and built over it a mock tomb, of her knowledge of the love the Khalif bore to Cout el Culoub. So she said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I made her a tomb amiddleward the palace and buried her there.' Then she donned black, leasing-wise, and feigned mourning a great while.

Now Cout el Culoub knew that the Khalif was come back from his journey; so she turned to Khelif and said to him, 'Arise; go to the bath and come back.' So he arose and went to the bath, and when he returned, she clad him in a dress worth a thousand diners and taught him manners and the rules of good breeding. Then said she to him, 'Go hence to the Khalif and say to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, it is my desire that thou be my guest this night."'

So Khelif arose and mounting his mule, rode, with slaves and servants before him, till he came to the palace of the Khalifate. Quoth the wise, 'Clothe a stick with generosity [and it will become generous].' And indeed his comeliness was manifest and the goodliness of his fashion, and the folk marvelled at this. Presently, the eunuch saw him, who had given him the hundred diners, that had been the cause of his good fortune; so he went in to the Khalif and said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, Khelif the fisherman is become a king, and on him is a dress worth a thousand diners.' The Khalif bade admit him; so he entered and said, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful and Vicar of the Lord of the Worlds and Protector of the people of the Faith! May God the Most High prolong thy days and advance thy dominion and exalt thy station to the loftiest!'

The Khalif looked at him and marvelled at him and how fortune had come to him at unawares; then he said to him, 'O Khelif, whence hadst thou that dress that is upon thee?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'it comes from my house.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Hast thou then a house?' 'Yes,' replied Khelif, ' and thou, O Commander of the Faithful, art my guest this day.' And Er Reshid said, 'I alone, O Khelif, or I and those who are with me?' And he answered, saying, ' Thou and whom thou wilt.' So Jaafer turned to him and said, 'We will be thy guests this night;' whereupon he kissed the earth again and withdrawing, mounted his mule and rode off, attended by his servants, leaving the Khalif marvelling at this and saying to Jaafer, 'Sawst thou Khelif, with his mule and dress and servants, and his dignity? But yesterday I knew him for a buffoon and a laughing-stock.' And they marvelled at this.

[Then they mounted and rode, till they drew] near Khelif's house, when the latter alighted and taking a parcel from one of his attendants, opened it and pulled out therefrom a piece of tabby silk and spread it under the hoofs of the Khalif's mule; then he brought out a piece of velvet and another of cloth of gold and a third of fine satin and did with them likewise; and thus he spread nigh a score pieces of rich stuffs, till they reached the house; when he came forward and said, '[Enter,] in the name of God, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth Er Reshid to Jaafer, 'I wonder to whom this house belongs,' and he said, 'It belongs to a man hight Ibn el Ucab, Syndic of the Jewellers.'

So the Khalif alighted and entering, with his company, saw a high-builded saloon and a spacious, with couches raised [on daises] and carpets and divans laid. So he went up to the couch that was set for him on four pillars of ivory, plated with glittering gold and covered with seven carpets. This pleased him and behold, up came Khelif, with servants and little slaves, bearing all manner sherbets, compounded with sugar and lemon and perfumed with rose and willowflower-water and odoriferous musk.

The fisherman advanced and drank and gave the Khalif to drink, and the cup-bearers came forward and served the rest of the company. Then Khelif brought a table spread with meats of various colours and geese and fowls and other birds, saying, ' In the name of God!' So they ate their fill; after which he let remove the tables and kissing the earth three times before the Khalif, craved his leave to bring wine and music. He gave him leave for this and turning to Jaafer, said to him, 'As my head liveth, the house and that which is therein is Khelifs; for that he is ruler over it and I am wondered at him, whence there came to him this great good fortune and exceeding affluence! However, this is no great matter to Him who saith to a thing, 'Be!' and it is; what I [most] wonder at is his understanding, how it hath increased, and whence he hath gotten this lordliness and dignity; but, when God willeth good unto a man, He amendeth his wit before his fortune.'

As they were talking, up came Khelif, followed by cup-bearers like moons, girt with zones of gold, who spread a cloth of siglaton and set thereon flagons of chinaware and tall flasks of glass and cups of crystal and bottles and hanaps of all colours; and the flagons they filled with pure clear old wine, whose scent was as the fragrance of virgin musk and it was even as saith the poet:

Ply me and ply this mate of mine
With cups of the first-pressed Grecian wine.
Daughter of nobles, they her display
In raiment of goblets clear and fine.
They girdle her round with gems, and pearls
Of finest water therewith entwine;
So by these tokens in her, I trow,
"The bride" they style the juice of the vine.

And round about these vessels were sweetmeats and flowers, such as may not be surpassed. When Er Reshid saw this from Khelif, he showed favour to him and smiled upon him and invested him [with an office]; whereupon Khelif wished him long life and abiding glory and said, 'Will the Commander of the Faithful give me leave to bring him a singing-girl, a lutanist, never was heard her like among mortals?' Quoth the Khalif, ' So be it.'

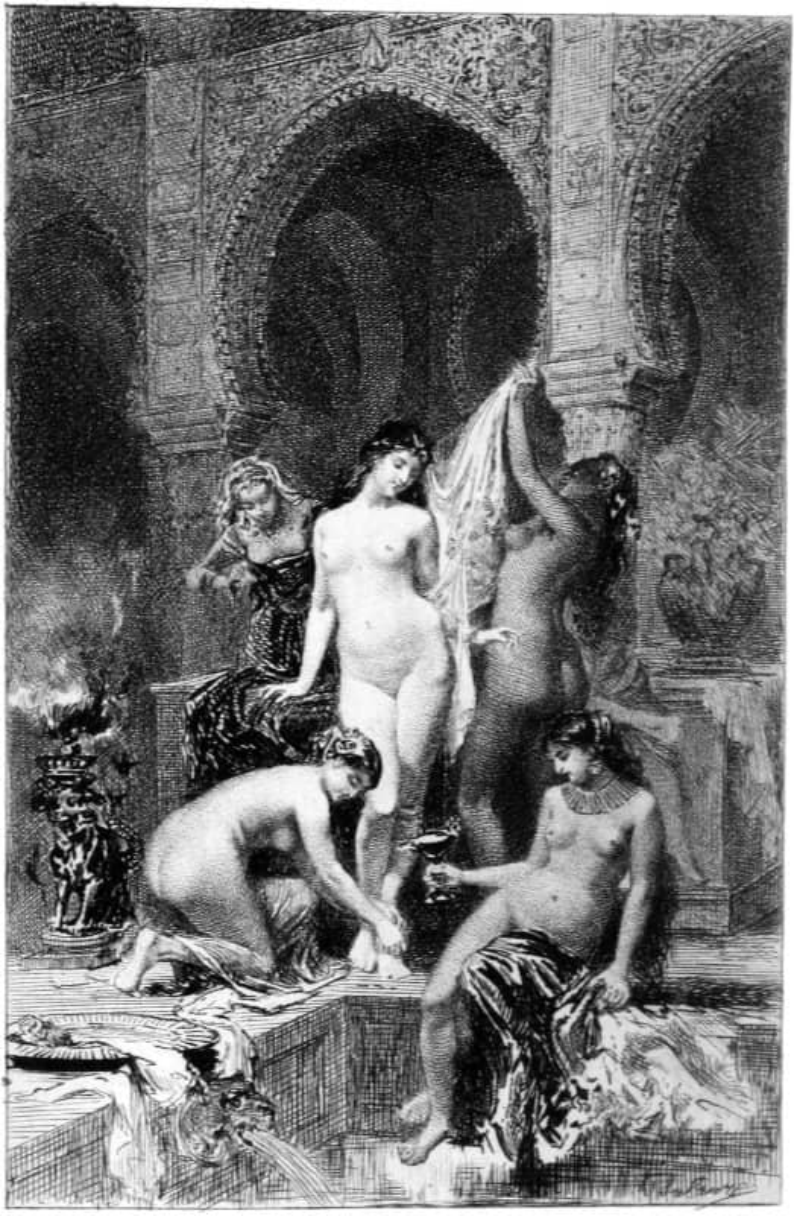
So he kissed the earth before him and going to a closet, called Cout el Culoub, who came, shuffling in her robes and trinkets, after she had veiled herself from head to foot, and kissed the earth before the Commander of the Faithful. Then she sat down and tuning the lute, swept its strings and played upon it, till all present were transported for excess of delight; after which she improvised and sang the following verses:

I wonder, will our time with those we love come back again?
Will fate reunion and its sweets, I wonder, aye ordain
To one who yearns for those that dwelt once in the ruined steads?
Shall we find peace and will time's shifts no longer work us bane?
How bitter life is since their loss and ah, how dearly sweet
The nights of union, when our loves one dwelling did contain!
Draw near to me, beloved mine, vouchsafe to me the grace
Of meeting; else my life, indeed, is frustrate all and vain.

When the Khalif heard this, he could not contain him-self, but rent his clothes and fell down in a swoon; whereupon all who were present hastened to pull off their apparel and throw it over him, whilst Cout el Culoub beckoned to Khelif and said to him, 'Go to yonder chest and bring what is therein;' for she had made ready therein a suit of the Khalif's apparel against the like of this time. So Khelif brought it to her and she threw it over the Commander of the Faithful who came to himself and knowing her for Cout el Culoub, said, 'Is this the day of Resurrection and hath God called up those who are in the tombs; or am I asleep and is this an illusion of dreams?' Quoth Cout el Culoub, 'We are awake, not asleep, and I am alive, nor have I tasted the cup of death.'

Then she told him all that had befallen her, and indeed, since he lost her, life had not been easy to him nor sleep sweet, and he abode now wondering, now weeping and anon afire for longing. When she had made an end of her story, the Khalif rose and took her by the hand, intending for her palace, after he had kissed her lips and strained her to his bosom; whereupon Khelif rose and said, 'By Allah, it is good, O Commander of the Faithful! Thou hast already wronged me once, and now thou wrongest me again.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'Indeed' thou sayst sooth, O Khelif,' and bade the Vizier Jaafer give him what should content him. So he straightway gave him all he desired and assigned him a village, the yearly revenue whereof was twenty thousand diners.

Moreover, Cout el Culoub made gift to him of the house and all that was therein of furniture and hangings and slaves and servants and slave-girls, great and small. So Khelif became possessed of this great affluence and exceeding wealth and took him a wife, and good fortune taught him gravity and dignity and prosperity overwhelmed him. The Khalif enrolled him among his boon-companions and he abode in all delight and solace of life, till he was admitted to the mercy of God.



VOLUME VIII.

Mesrour and Zein El Mewasif.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a merchant named Mesrour, who was of the goodliest of the folk of his day, and he had wealth galore and was in easy case, but loved to take his pleasure in gardens and orchards and to divert himself with the love of fair women. One night, as he lay asleep, he dreamt that he was in a most lovely garden, wherein were four birds, and amongst them a dove, white as polished silver. The dove pleased him and an exceeding love for her grew up in his heart. Presently a great bird swooped down on him and snatched the dove from his hand, and this was grievous to him. Then he awoke and strove with his yearnings till the morning, when he said in himself, 'Needs must I go to-day to some one who will expound to me this dream.' So he went forth and fared right and left, till he was far from his dwelling-place, but found none to interpret the dream to him. Then he set out to return, but on his way the fancy took him to turn aside to the house of a certain rich merchant, and when he drew near to it, he heard from within a plaintive voice, reciting the following verses from a sorrowful heart:

The East wind from her traces blows to-us-ward, fragrance-fraught,
With perfume such as heals the sick and soothes the love-distraught.
By the deserted steads I stand and question; but my tears
Nought answers save the witness mute, the ruin time hath wrought.
Breath of the breeze, I prithee tell, quoth I, shall its delight
To this abiding-place return, by fairer fortune brought?
And shall I yet a fawn enjoy, whose shape hath ravished me,
Yea, and whose languor-drooping lids have wasted me to nought?

When he heard this, he looked in at the door and saw a garden of the goodliest of gardens, and at its farther end a curtain of red brocade, embroidered with pearls and jewels, behind which sat four damsels, and amongst them a young lady over four and under five feet in height, as she were the round of the moon and the shining full moon. She had great liquid black eyes and joined eyebrows, a mouth as it were Solomon's seal and lips and teeth like pearls and coral; and indeed she ravished all wits with her beauty and grace and symmetry. When Mesrour saw her, he entered the garden and went on, till he came to the curtain: whereupon she raised her head and saw him. So he saluted her and she returned his greeting with dulcet speech; and when he beheld her more closely, his reason was confounded and his heart transported. Then he looked at the garden and saw that it was full of jessamine and gillyflowers and violets and roses and orange blossoms and all manner sweet-scented flowers. All the trees were laden with fruits and there ran down water from four estrades, which occupied the four angles of the garden. He looked at the first estrade and found the following verses written around it with vermilion:

May grief ne'er enter thee nor yet dismay,
O house, nor fortune e'er thy lord beway!
Fair fall the house that harbours every guest,
When straitened upon him is place and way!

Then he looked at the second estrade and found the following written thereon in red gold:

The garment of fair fortune shine on thee, dwelling, still,
Whilst on the garden-branches the song-birds pipe and trill!
May fragrant odours harbour in every part of thee
And lovers in thy precincts their hearts' desire fulfil!
In glory and in pleasance still may thy dwellers live,
What while a wandering planet shines out on heaven's hill!

Then he looked at the third, on which he found these verses written in ultramarine:

Still mayst thou last in glory and prosper, house of mine,
As long as night shall darken, as long as lights shall shine!
All at thy gates who enter good luck embrace and good
From thee betide each comer in one unbroken line!

And on the fourth was painted in yellow characters the following verse:

This garden and this lake, a pleasant sitting-place, These, by the clement Lord, are all I ask of grace.

Moreover, in that garden were birds of all kinds, turtle and cushat and culver and nightingale, each carolling his several song, and amongst them the lady, swaying gracefully to and fro and ravishing all who saw her with her beauty and grace and symmetry. 'O man,' said she to Mesrour, 'what brings thee into a house other than thy house and wherefore comest thou in unto women other than thy women, without leave of their owner?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I saw this garden, and the goodliness of its verdure pleased me and the fragrance of its flowers and the singing of its birds; so I entered, thinking to gaze on it awhile and go my way.' 'With all my heart,' said she. Mesrour was amazed at the sweetness of her speech and the amorous languor of her glances and the elegance of her shape, and transported by her beauty and grace and the pleasantness of the garden and the birds. So he recited the following verses:

She shone, a moon, amongst the ways, midmost a garden fair,
Wherein sweet jessamine and rose and fragrant basil were,
And myrtle and anemones blood-red and eglantine
And violets, compassing about the cassia-tree, blew there.
The zephyr steals from it the scents, wherewith it laden is;
Its perfume from the boughs exhaled, breathes fragrance everywhere.
Hail, O thou garden, that all flowers and sweets doth comprehend,
That perfect art in every grace and fashion of the fair!
Under the shadow of thy boughs the full moon shineth bright
And with the sweetest melodies the song-birds fill thine air.
Thy ringdove and thy mocking-bird, yea, and thy turtle-dove
And nightingales stir up my soul to longing and despair;
And yearning harbours in my heart: dazed at thy goodliness
Am I, and as one stupefied for drunkenness, I fare.

Then she said to him, 'Harkye, sirrah! Begone about thy business, for we are none of the women who are neither thine nor another's.' And he answered, 'O my lady, I said nothing ill.' Quoth she, 'Thou soughtest to divert thyself with the sight [of the garden] and thou hast looked on it; so go thy ways.' 'O my lady,' said he, 'belike [thou wilt give me] a draught of water, for I am athirst.' Quoth she, 'How canst thou drink of a Jew's water, and thou a Nazarene?' But he replied, 'O my lady, your water is not forbidden to us nor ours to you, for we are all [as] one creature.' So she said to her slave-girl, 'Give him to drink.' And she did so. Then she called for the table of food, and there came four damsels, high-bosomed maids, bearing four trays [of meats] and four flagons full of old wine, as it were the tears of a slave of love for clearness, and [set them down before him on] a table around whose marge were graven the following verses:

They set a table down before the boon companions' eyne,
For eating, borne on wroughten feet of gold and silver fine;
The Garden of Eternity it seemed, the which unites
All that the soul can weary for of costly meat and wine.

Quoth she, 'Thou soughtest to drink of our drink; so up and at our meat and drink!' He could hardly credit his ears and set down forthright at the table; whereupon she bade her nurse give him a cup, that he might drink. Now her slave-girls were called, one Huboub, another Khutoub and the third Sukoub, and she who gave him the cup was Huboub. Presently, the breeze blew [on the lady] and the scarf fell from her head and discovered a fillet of glittering gold, set with pearls and jewels and jacinths; and on her breast was a necklace of all manner gems and precious stones, to which hung a sparrow of red gold, with feet of red coral and bill of white silver and [body] full of aloes and ambergris and odoriferous musk. Then he looked at the breast of her shift and saw thereon the following verse wroughten in red gold:

The fragrance of musk, that breathes from the breasts of the fair, The zephyr borrows, to sweeten the morning air.

Mesrour marvelled at this with an exceeding wonder and was confounded at her charms and amazement got hold upon him. Then said she to him, 'Begone from us and go about thy business, lest the neighbours hear of and even us with the lewd.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' replied he, 'suffer me to enjoy the sight of thy beauty and grace.' With this she was wroth with him and leaving him, walked in the garden, followed by her maids [Khutoub and Sukoub], whilst Huboub abode by the curtain with Mesrour, who entered into discourse with her and presently said to her, 'O Huboub, hath thy mistress a husband or not?' 'She hath a husband,' answered the damsel; 'but he is presently abroad on a journey with merchandise of his.'

When he heard that her husband was abroad on a journey, his heart lusted after her and he said, 'O Huboub, extolled be the perfection of Him who created this damsel and fashioned her! How sweet is her beauty and her grace and her shape and symmetry! Verily, my heart is in sore travail for her. O Huboub, [look] how I may come to enjoy her, and thou shalt have of me what thou wilt of money and what not else.' 'O Nazarene,' answered Huboub, 'if she heard thee speak thus, she would kill thee, or else she would kill herself, for she is the daughter of a champion of the Jews nor is there her

like amongst them. Moreover, she hath no need of money and keepeth herself still cloistered, discovering not her case to any.' Quoth Mesrour, 'O Huboub, an thou wilt but bring me to enjoy her, I will be thy slave and thy servant and will serve thee all my life and give thee whatsoever thou seekest of me.'

But she said, 'O Mesrour, this woman hath no desire for money nor yet for men, for my lady Zein el Mewasif is straitly cloistered, going not forth of the door of her house, lest the folk see her; and but that she forbore thee by reason of thy strangerhood, she had not suffered thee to pass her threshold; no, not though thou wert her brother.' 'O Huboub,' rejoined he, 'be thou our go-between and thou shalt have of me an hundred gold dinars and a dress worth as much more, for that the love of her hath gotten possession of my heart.' And she said, 'O man, let me go about with her in talk and I will return thee an answer and acquaint thee with what she saith. Indeed, she loves those who berhyme her and set forth her charms and her grace and beauty in verse, and we may not avail against her save by beguilement and soft speech and craft.'

Then she rose and going up to her mistress, talked with her privily of this and that and presently said to her, 'O my lady, look at yonder young man, the Nazarene; how sweet is his discourse and how elegant his shape!' When Zein el Mewasif heard this, she turned to her and said, 'An his comeliness like thee, love him thyself. Art thou not ashamed to bespeak the like of me with these words? Go, bid him begone about his business; or it shall be the worse for him.' So Huboub returned to Mesrour, but acquainted him not with that which her mistress had said. Then the latter bade her go to the door and look if she saw any of the folk, lest foul befall them. So she went and resuming, said, 'O my lady, there are folk in plenty without and we cannot let him go forth to-night.' Quoth Zein el Mewasif, 'I am troubled because of a dream I have had and am fearful by reason thereof.' And Mesrour said, 'What sawest thou [in thy dream?] May God not trouble thy heart!' 'I was asleep in the middle of the night,' answered she, 'and behold an eagle swooped down upon me from the highest of the clouds and would have carried me off from behind the curtain, wherefore I was affrighted at him. Then I awoke from sleep and bade my women bring me meat and drink, so haply, when I had drunken, the terror of the dream would cease from me.'

When he heard this, he smiled and told her his dream and how he had caught the dove, whereat she marvelled exceedingly. Then he went on to talk with her and said, 'Now am I certified of the truth of my dream, for thou art the dove and I the eagle, and needs must this be, for, whenas I set eyes on thee, thou tookest possession of my vitals and settest my heart on fire for love of thee!' Thereupon Zein el Mewasif became exceeding wroth and said to him, 'God forfend that this should be! God on thee, begone about thy business, ere the neighbours see thee and there betide us sore reproach.' Then, 'Harkye, fellow!' added she. 'Let not thy soul covet that it shall not attain to. Thou weariest thyself [in vain]; for I am a merchant's wife and a merchant's daughter and thou art a druggist; and when sawst thou a druggist and a merchant's daughter on this wise?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'never lacked love between folk [of different condition]; so cut thou not off from me hope of this and whatsoever thou seekest of me of money and raiment and trinkets and what not else, I will give thee.'

Then he abode with her in discourse and chiding whilst she still redoubled in anger, till nightfall, when he said to her, 'O my lady, take this dinar and fetch me a little wine, for I am athirst and heavy at heart.' So she said to Huboub, 'Fetch him wine and take nought from him, for we have no need of his dinar.' [So she went to fetch the wine, whilst] Mesrour held his peace and bespoke not Zein el Mewasif, who improvised the following verses:

Harkye, O man! Desist from this thou dost design
Nor to the crooked ways of frowardness incline.
Love is a net, and if thou fall into its snare,
The day thereafterward for weariness thou'lt pine
Occasion to our spy thou'lt give for talk and all
The people will reproach me with this love of thine.
Small marvel 'tis if thou a fair one love: gazelles
Thou seest lions chase and in their snares entwine.

And he answered her with these:

O cassia-branch, delight of garth and knoll,
Spare thou my heart, who dost possess my soul.
The cup of death for love thou'st made me drain,
Clad me in wede of abjectness and dole.
How shall I be consoled, since thou hast taken
My heart, for love of thee a red-hot coal!

'Away from me!' cried she. 'Quoth the adage, "He who giveth loose to his eyes wearieth his heart." By Allah, I am tired of discourse with thee and chiding, and indeed thy soul coveteth that which shall never be thine; nay, though thou gavest me my weight in gold, thou shouldst not get thy wish of me; for, by the bounty of God the Most High, I know nought of the things of the world, save pleasant life.' 'O my lady Zein el Mewasif,' answered he, 'ask of me what thou wilt of the goods of the world.' Quoth she, 'What shall I ask of thee? For sure thou wilt go out into the highway [and discover my case to the folk] and I shall become a laughing-stock among them and they will make a byword of me in verse, me who am the daughter of the chief of the merchants and whose father is known of the notables of the people. I have no need of money or raiment and this love will not be hidden from the folk and I shall be brought to shame, I and my family.'

With this Mesrour was confounded and could make her no answer; but presently she said, 'Indeed, the skilful thief, if he steal, stealeth not but what is worth [the adventuring of] his neck, and every woman who doth lewdness with other than her husband is styled a thief; so, if it must be thus and no help, thou shalt give me whatsoever my heart desireth of money and raiment and trinkets and what not.' Quoth he, 'An thou soughtest of me the world and all that is therein, from East to West, it were but a little thing, compared with thy favour.' And she said, 'I will have of thee three suits, each worth a thousand dinars, and pearls and jewels and jacinths, and I require of thee, to boot, that thou swear to me that thou wilt keep my secret nor discover it to any and that thou wilt company with none but me; and I in turn will swear to thee a true oath that I will never play thee false.'

So he swore to her the oath she required and she swore to him, and they agreed upon this; after which she said to her nurse Huboub, 'To-morrow go thou with Mesrour to his lodging and seek somewhat of musk and ambergris and aloes and rose-water and see what he hath. If he be a man of condition, we will take him into favour; else will we leave him.' Then said she to him, 'O Mesrour, I desire somewhat of musk and ambergris and aloes-wood; so do thou send it me by Huboub.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey; my shop is at thy commandment.' Then the wine went round between them and their session was pleasant; but Mesrour's heart was troubled for the passion and longing that possessed him; and when Zein el Mewasif saw him in this plight, she said to her slave-girl Sukoub, 'Arouse Mesrour from his stupor; mayhap he will awake.' 'Willingly,' answered Sukoub and sang the following verses:

An if thou be in love, bring gold and gear and in thy lays
Set forth thy love, so thou mayst win the aim of thine essays
And taste the favours of a fawn, soft-eyed and smiling-lipped,
Whose shape is as the cassia-branch, when to the breeze it sways.
Look on her; in her charms thou'lt see matter for wonderment
And pour thy life out, ere the term appointed to thy days.
These be the attributes of love, an thou but knewst thereof;
But, if the gold delude thee, leave the gold and go thy ways.

Mesrour apprehended [her meaning] and said, 'I hear and understand. Never was stress but after came relief, and He who afflicteth will order [the issue].' Whereupon Zein el Mewasif recited the following:

Awake, O Mesrour, from love's stupor; for lo,
I fear lest our love bring thee travail and woe.
Sure proverbs on us East and West shall be made
And the folk our report for a wonder shall know.
Leave loving my like, or for sure thou'lt have blame. –
Why cleav'st thou to me of all women? I trow,
One well-born shouldst thou love. –
Thou'lt a byword become And find not a pitying friend high or low
I'm a Pharisee's child and the folk fear my wrath:
Would the term of my life were accomplished, heigho!

And Mesrour answered her with these verses:

Leave me to my affliction; to love thee I'm content;
And blame me not, for censure my passion doth augment.
Over my heart ye lord it in tyrant-wise, whilst
I Fare westward neither eastward for very languishment.
Forbidden 'tis to slay me of passion's law; they say,
'The slain of love's a victim, oppressed and innocent.'
Were there a judge in passion, to him I'd make my moan,
Mayhap he'd do me justice in his arbitrament.

They ceased not from chiding and discourse till the morning beamed, when Zein el Mewasif said to him, 'O Mesrour, it is time for thee to depart, lest one of the folk see

thee and foul befall us.' So he arose and going forth, fared on, accompanied by Huboub, till they came to his lodging, where he talked with her and said to her, 'All thou seekest of me thou shalt presently have, so but thou wilt bring me to her enjoyment.' Quoth Huboub, 'Comfort thy heart;' whereupon he rose and gave her a hundred dinars, saying, 'O Huboub, I have by me a dress worth a hundred dinars.' 'O Mesrour,' answered she, 'make haste with the dresses and what not else thou didst promise her, ere she change her mind, for we may not avail to take her save with craft and beguilement, and she loveth the recitation of verses.' Quoth he, 'I hear and obey,' and bringing her the musk and ambergris and aloes-wood and rose-water, returned with her to Zein el Mewasif and saluted her. She returned his greeting with the sweetest of speech, and he was confounded at her beauty and improvised the following verses:

O sun, midmost the dark that shinest in the skies,
O thou that hast benumbed my wit with great black eyes,
O loveling sweet, that com'st with neck surpassing fair,
Whose cheek the garden-rose eclipses and outvies,
Blind not with thy disdain our sights, for thy disdain
A grievous matter is, the heart that terrifies.
Passion took up its stead with me, and 'tis forbid
To it to carry off the life's last lingering sighs.
Indeed, the love of you doth lord it in my heart,
And save to you, I find no issue anywise.
Yet haply thou'lt relent towards a lover sad;
So shall his darkness flee and morning bright arise.

When she heard his verses, she cast at him a look, that bequeathed him a thousand regrets and his heart and soul were ravished thereby and answered him as follows:

Think not from her, of whom thou art enamoured, aye
To win delight; so put desire from thee away.
Leave that thou hop'st, for 'gainst her rigours whom thou lov'st
Among the fair, in vain is all thou canst essay.
My looks to lovers bring discomfiture and woe:
Indeed, I make no count of that which thou dost say.

When he heard this, he dissembled and took patience, saying in himself, 'There is nothing for it but patience against calamity;' and on this wise they abode till night-fall, when she called for food and they set before her a tray, wherein were all manner meats, quails and pigeons and mutton and so forth, of which they ate till they had enough. Then she bade take away the tables and they did so and brought washing gear. So they washed their hands, after which she ordered her women to bring the candlesticks, and they set on candlesticks and candles therein of camphorated wax.

Then said she, 'By Allah, my breast is straitened to night and I am fevered.' Quoth Mesrour, 'May God dilate thy breast and do away thy trouble!' And she aaid, 'O Mesrour, I am used to play at chess: knowest thou aught of the game?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'I am skilled therein;' whereupon she bade her maid Huboub fetch her the

chessboard. So she went away and presently returning with the board, set it before her, and behold, it was of ebony inlaid with ivory, with squares traced out in glittering gold, and its pieces were of pearl and ruby. Mesrour was amazed at this and she said to him, 'Wilt thou have red or white?' 'O princess of fair ones and adornment of the morning,' answered he, 'do thou take the red, for they are handsome and fitter for the like of thee, and leave me the white.' 'So be it,' answered she and taking the red pieces, ranged them opposite the white, then put out her hand to make the first move.

He looked at her fingers, which were white as paste, and was confounded at their beauty and elegant shape; whereupon she turned to him and said, 'O Mesrour, be not bewildered, but take patience and calm thyself.' 'O thou whose beauty puts the moons to shame,' answered he, 'how shall a lover look on thee and have patience?' 'Checkmate!' said she and beat him; wherefore she knew that he was mad for love of her and said to him, 'O Mesrour, I will not play with thee save for a set stake.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and she said, 'Swear to me and I will swear to thee that neither of us will cheat the other.' So they swore this and she said, 'O Mesrour, if I beat thee, I will have ten dinars of thee, and if thou beat me, I will give thee nothing.' 'O my lady,' rejoined he, 'be not false to thine oath, for I see thou art an over match for me at this game!' 'Agreed,' said she and they ranged their men and fell again to playing.

Now she had on her head a kerchief of blue brocade; so she laid it aside and tucking up her sleeve, showed a wrist like a shaft of light and passed her hand over the red pieces, saying to him, 'Look to thyself.' But he was dazzled at her beauty and the sight of her charms bereft him of reason, so that he became dazed and stupefied and put out his hand to the white men, but it lit upon the red. 'O Mesrour,' said she, 'where are thy senses? The red are mine and the white thine.' And he replied, 'Who can look on thee, without losing his senses?' Then, seeing how it was with him, she took the white from him and gave him the red, and they played and she beat him.

He ceased not to play with her and she to beat him, whilst he paid her each time ten dinars, till, seeing him to be distracted for love of her, she said to him, 'O Mesrour, thou wilt never come to thy desire, except thou beat me; and henceforth, I will not play with thee save for a stake of a hundred dinars a game.' 'With all my heart,' answered he and they went on playing, whilst she still beat him and he won not a single game, but paid her a hundred dinars each time; and on this wise they abode till the morning, when he rose. Quoth she, 'What wilt thou, O Mesrour?' And he replied, 'I mean to go to my lodging and fetch somewhat of money: it may be I shall attain my desire.' 'Do as seemeth good to thee,' said she. So he went home and taking all the money he had, returned to her, reciting the following verses:

Methought I caught a bird in sleep, as I did deem,
All in a garden fair with smiling flowers agleam.
That I shall get of thee the amorous delight,
Th' interpretation is, me-seems, of this my dream.

Then they fell a-playing again; but she still beat him and he could not beat her once; and on this wise they abode three days, till she had gotten of him all his money: whereupon, 'O Mesrour,' said she, 'what wilt thou do now?' And he answered, 'I will stake thee a druggist's shop.' 'What is its worth?' asked she; and he replied, 'Five

hundred dinars.' So they played and she won the shop of him in five bouts. Then he staked slave-girls and lands and houses and gardens, and she won them all, till she had gotten of him all he had; whereupon she turned to him and said, 'Hast thou aught left to stake?' 'By Him who made me fall into the snare of thy love,' answered he, 'I have neither money nor aught else left, little or much!' 'O Mesrour,' said she, 'the end of that whose beginning was contentment shall not be repentance; wherefore, if thou repent thee, take back thy good and begone from us, and I will hold thee quit towards me.' 'By Him who decreed these things to us,' replied Mesrour, 'though thou soughtest to take my life, it were a little thing, compared to thine approof, for I love none but thee!'

Then said she, 'Go and fetch the Cadi and the witnesses and make over to me by deed all thy lands and possessions.' 'Willingly,' replied he and going out forthright, returned with the Cadi and the witnesses. When the magistrate saw her, his reason fled and his mind was troubled by reason of the beauty of her fingers, and he said to her, 'O my lady, I will not draw up the deed of conveyance, save upon condition that thou purchase the lands and houses and slave-girls and that they all pass under thy control and into thy possession.' 'We are agreed upon that,' replied she; 'write me a deed, whereby all Mesrour's houses and lands and slave-girls and all his hand possesseth shall pass to Zein el Mewasif and become her property at such a price.' So he wrote out the deed and the witnesses set their hands thereto; whereupon she took it from the Cadi and said to Mesrour, 'Now go thy ways.' But her slave-girl Huboub turned to him and said, 'Recite us some verses.' So he improvised the following verses upon [his own case and] the game of chess:

Of Fate I plain me and for that which hath befall'n me sigh
And make my moan of loss by chess and by the [evil] eye,
For love of one, a damsel fair, slender and delicate;
Female or male, there's not her like of all beneath the sky.
Arrows upon me from her looks she launched and 'gainst me brought
Troops that would conquer all the world and all men, far and nigh;
Red men and white men, ay, and knights for shock of battle ranged;
Then came she forth to me and did to single fight defy.
'Look to thyself,' quoth she; but, when she put her fingers out,
Mid-most a pitch-black night, most like her sable hair in dye,
I had no power to move the white, to rescue them from her
And passion caused the tide of tears in me run fierce and high.
On, with the queens, fall pawns and rooks; they charge the host of white,
And these give way, discomfited, and turn their backs to fly;
Yea, and she launched at me, to boot, an arrow of her looks,
And to the kernel of my heart the quivering shaft did hie.
'Twixt the two hosts she gave me choice, and I chose that which white
Was with the whiteness of the moon that shineth in the sky.
'The white, indeed, are those which best beseem to me and they
Are what I fain would have; so take the red to thee,' quoth I.
Then played she with me for a stake agreed 'twixt us; but

Fate did unto me the wished-for boon of her consent deny.
Alas, the misery of my heart! Alas, my longing sore
For the enjoyment of a maid who with the moon doth vie!
It is not for my goods and lands my heart is all a-fire
But that, alack! familiar 'tis grown with the [evil] eye.
Distraught I'm grown and stupefied for drearіment, and
Fate, For what's betided me, I chide with many a tear and cry.
'What ails thee to be dazed?' asked she, and I, 'Shall wine-bibbers
Be whole of wit, when drunkenness their sense doth stupefy?'
A mortal maid hath ta'en my wit with her fair shape; if it
Be soft, her bowels are like rock, uneath to mollify.
Myself I heartened, saying, 'Her to-day I shalt possess
Upon the wager, fearing not defeat I should aby.
My heart ceased not to covet her, till I to poverty
Became reduced, and beggared now in goods and hope am I.
Will he who is in love forswear a love that irketh him,
Though in the oceans of desire he struggle like to die?
So is the slave grown penniless, to love and longing thrall,
All unaccomplished yet the hope he staked his all to buy.

Zein el Mewasif marvelled at the eloquence of his tongue and said to him, 'O Mesrour, leave this madness and return to thy senses and go thy ways; for thou hast wasted all thy substance at the game of chess, yet hast not attained to thy desire, nor hast thou any resource whereby thou mayst accomplish it.' But he turned to her and said, 'O my lady, ask of me what thou wilt and I will bring it to thee and lay it at thy feet.' 'O Mesrour,' answered she, 'thou hast no money left.' 'O goal of all hopes,' rejoined he, 'if I have no money, the folk will help me.' Quoth she, 'Shall the giver turn asker?' And he said, 'I have friends and kinsfolk, and whatsoever I seek of them, they will give me.' Then said she, 'O Mesrour, I will have of thee four bladders of musk and four vases of civet and four pounds of ambergris and four thousand dinars and four hundred pieces of coloured brocade, wroughten with gold. Bring me these things, and I will grant thee my favours.' 'This is a light matter to me, O thou that puttest the moons to shame,' replied he and went forth to fetch her what she sought.

She sent Huboub after him, to see what interest he had with the folk of whom he had spoken to her; but, as he went along the streets, he turned and seeing her afar off, waited till she came up to him and said to her, 'Whither away, O Huboub?' So she told him what her mistress had said to her and he said, 'By Allah, O Huboub, I have nothing!' 'Then why didst thou promise her?' asked she; and he answered, 'How many a promise is unkept of its maker! Fine words needs must be in love-matters.' When she heard this, she said to him, 'O Mesrour, be of good heart and cheerful eye, for, by Allah, I will be the means of thy coming to enjoy her!' Then she left him and returned, weeping sore, to her mistress, to whom said she, 'O my lady, indeed he is a man of great consideration, well-reputed among the folk.' Quoth Zein el Mewasif, 'There is no resource against the ordinance of the Most High! Verily, this man found not in me a compassionate heart, for that I spoiled him of his substance and he got of me neither affection nor complaisance in granting him the amorous mercy; but, if I incline to his

desire, I fear lest the thing be bruited abroad.' 'O my lady,' answered Huboub, 'verily, his present plight and the loss of his good is grievous upon us, and thou hast with thee none but myself and thy slave-girl Sukoub; so which of us two would dare prate of thee, and we thy hand-maids?'

With this, she bowed her head and the damsels said to her, 'O my lady, it is our counsel that thou send after him and show him favour and suffer him not ask of the sordid; for how bitter is asking!' So she accepted their counsel and calling for inkhorn and paper, wrote him the following verses:

Fulfilment draws near, O Mesrour: rejoice in fair presage and true,
For, to-night, when the darkness falls down, the deed without fail thou shalt do;
And ask not the sordid, O youth, for money to mend thine estate:
Indeed, I was drunken, but now my wit is restored me anew.
Moreover, thy good that I took shall all unto thee be restored,
And to crown, O Mesrour, my largesse, I'll add thee my favours thereto;
Since patience thou hadst and in the long-suffering and sweetness there was
With a loved one's unkindness to bear, who wronged thee with rigours undue.
So hasten forthright to enjoy my possession, fair fall thee thereof!
And tarry not neither neglect, lest my folk come to know of us two.
Then come to us quickly, I pray, and loiter not neither delay,
And eat of the fruits of delight, whilst my husband is absent, the Jew.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to Huboub, who carried it to Mesrour and found him weeping and reciting the following verses, in a transport of passion and love-longing:

There blew upon my heart a breeze of love and wantonness,
And all my entrails crumbled were with passion pitiless.
My longing, since my loved one's loss, is passing sore on me
And still mine eyelids overflow for very tears' excess.
My heart with doubts and fears is racked, which did I but reveal
Unto hard rocks and stones, forthright they'd soften for distress.
Ah, would I knew if I shall live to win to my delight, if,
In th' enjoyment of my wish, my hope I shall possess!
Shall parting's nights, the wide outspread, be folded up again
And shall I e'er of that be healed which doth my heart oppress?

As he was repeating these verses, Huboub knocked at the door; so he rose and opened to her, and she entered and gave him the letter. He read it and said to her, 'O Huboub, what news bringest thou of thy mistress?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'in this letter is what dispenses me from answering, for thou art of the folk of understanding.' And he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and repeated the following verses:

The letter came, and its contents rejoiced us, heart and brain,
And in my very heart of hearts to keep it I were fain.
Yea, I redouble in desire, whene'er the writ I kiss;
For 'tis as if 't the very pearl of passion did contain.

Then he wrote a letter in answer and gave it to Huboub, who returned with it to her mistress and fell to extolling his charms to her and expatiating on his generosity and good qualities; for she was become a helper to him, to bring about his union with her. 'O Huboub,' said Zein el Mewasif, 'indeed he tarrieth to come to us.' And Huboub answered, 'He will certainly come speedily.' Hardly had she made an end of speaking when he knocked at the door, and she opened to him and brought him in to her mistress, who saluted him and bade him welcome and seated him by her side.

Then she said to Huboub, 'Bring me a suit of the goodliest of apparel;' so she brought a dress embroidered with gold and Zein el Mewasif threw it over him, whilst she herself donned one of the richest of dresses and covered her head with a net of pearls of the finest water. About this she bound a fillet of brocade, embroidered with pearls and rubies and other jewels, from beneath which fell down two tresses [of plaited silk], each looped with a pendant of ruby, charactered with glittering gold, and she let down her hair, as it were the sombre night. Moreover she incensed herself with aloes-wood and scented herself with musk and ambergris, and Huboub said to her, 'God guard thee from the [evil] eye!' Then she began to walk, with a graceful swimming gait, whilst Huboub, who excelled in verse-making, recited the following in her honour:

She shames the cassia-branches with every step she tries
And sore besets her lovers with glances from her eyes.
A moon from out the darkness appearing of her hair,
It is as from her browlocks the very sun did rise.
Happy by whom the night long with all her charms she lies
And happy he who, swearing by her life, for her dies!

Zein el Mewasif thanked her and went up to Mesrour, as she were the full moon all displayed. When he saw her, he rose to his feet and exclaimed, 'Except my thought deceive me, she is no mortal, but one of the brides of Paradise!' Then she called for food and they brought a table, about whose marge were written the following verses:

Dip thou with spoons in saucers four and gladden heart and eye
With many a various kind of stew and fricassee and fry.
Thereon fat quails (ne'er shall I cease to love and tender them)
And rails and fowls and dainty birds of all the kinds that fly.
Glory to God for the kabobs, for redness all aglow,
And potherbs steeped in vinegar, in porringers thereby!
Fair fall the rice with sweet milk dressed, wherein the hands did plunge
And eke the forearms of the fair were buried, bracelet-high!
How my heart yearneth with regret over two plates of fish
That by two manchet-cakes of bread of Tewarij did lie!

Then they ate and drank and made merry, after which the servants removed the table of food and set on the wine service. The cup and the bowl passed round between them and their hearts were gladdened. Then Mesrour filled the cup and saying, 'To her whose I am and who is my mistress!' chanted the following verses:

I marvel at mine eyes that feed their fill upon the charms
Of a fair maid whose beauty bright enlightens every place.

In all her time she hath no like nor any may compare
With her for very goodliness and sweet harmonious grace.
The willow sapling envies her the slimness of her shape,
When, in her symmetry arrayed, she fares with stately pace.
The crown of her, for radiance, is as the crescent moon,
Ay, and the full moon of the dark she shames with shining face.
Whenas she walks upon the earth, her fragrance wafts abroad
A breeze that scents her every hill and every level space.

'O Mesrour,' said she, 'whoso keepeth his faith and hath eaten our bread and salt, it behoveth us to give him his due; so put away from thee the thought of what hath passed and I will restore thee thy lands and houses and all I have taken from thee.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I acquit thee of that whereof thou speakest, though thou hadst been false to the oath we swore to each other, thou and I; for I will go and become a Muslim.' Then said Huboub to her, 'O my lady, thou art young of years and knowest many things, and I claim the intercession of God the Most High with thee, for, except thou do my bidding and heal my heart, I will not lie the night with thee in the house.' 'O Huboub,' replied her mistress, 'it shall be as thou wilt: so rise and make us ready another room.'

So she rose and made ready another room and adorned and perfumed it after the goodliest fashion, on such wise as her mistress loved and preferred, after which she set on fresh food and wine, and the cup went round between them and their hearts were glad. Presently quoth Zein el Mewasif to Mesrour, 'O Mesrour, the time of union and favour is come; so, as thou studiest for my love, recite us some verses, surpassing of fashion.' So he recited the following ode:

I am ta'en captive; in my heart a fire flames up amain,
Over a bond of love-delight by sev'rance shorn in twain;
Ay, and for love of a fair maid, whose shape hath rent my heart,
Whose cheeks so soft and delicate my reason do enchain.
Joined brows and arched and melting eyes of liquid black hath she
And teeth that like the lightning flash, when she to smile doth deign.
Her years of life are ten and four; my tears, for love of her,
Resemble drops of dragon's blood, as from mine eyes they rain.
'Twixt stream and garden first mine eyes beheld her, as she sat,
With face the full moon that outshone in heaven's high domain.
I stood to her, on captive wise, for awe, and said, 'The peace
Of God for ever light on thee, O dweller in the fane!'
Then she, with sweet and dulcet speech, like pearls in order strung,
My salutation graciously returned to me again;
And when she heard my speech to her, she knew for sure what
I Desired, and therewithal her heart was hardened 'gainst her swain.
'Is not this idle talk?' quoth she, and I made answer,
'Spare the longing lover to upbraid, who doth of love complain.'
If thou vouchsafe me thy consent this day, the thing were light;
Thy like belovéd is and mine still slaves of love in vain.'

And when she knew my wish, she smiled and answered,
'By the Lord Him who created heaven and earth and all that they contain,
[I am] a Jewess, born and bred in Jewry's straitest sect
And thou unto the Nazarenes as surely doth pertain.
How think'st thou to enjoy me, then, and art not of my faith?
To-morrow, sure, thou wilt repent, if thou this thing obtain.
Is't lawful with two faiths to jest in love? The like of me
Were blamed of all and looked upon with flouting and disdain.
Wilt thou thus mock at all belief and all religious rites
And doubly guilty, this my faith and eke thine own profane?
An if thou lov'dst me, thou'dst become a Jew for love of me,
And, save my favours, all to thee forbidden would remain,
And by th' Evangel thou wouldst swear a strait and binding oath
To keep the secret of the love that is betwixt us twain.'
So by the Pentateuch I swear, a true and certain oath,
That, in the time that's past and gone and ne'er will be again,
I swore to her upon my faith, upon my law and creed,
And her unto a solemn oath on like wise did constrain.
Quoth I, 'O term of all desire, what is thy name?'
And she, 'Zein el Mewasif am I called in this my own demesne.'
'Zein el Mewasif,' then cried I, 'my entrails are enthralled
For love of thee; thou hast indeed enslaved me, heart and brain.'
I saw her beauty underneath the chin-veil and became
Afflicted sore at heart, distraught for love and longing pain;
Nor neath the curtain did I cease to humble me and eke
Of the much passion to make moan that in my heart did reign;
Till, when she saw my plight and all the transport of my love,
A smiling visage she unveiled, that did me straight assain.
The wind of amorous delight blew full on us and she
Scented of musk her neck and wrists, till all the house had ta'en
Perfume from her and every place, whilst I her lips did kiss
And from her sweet and smiling mouth its wine of balm did drain.
Under her robes she swayed, as sways the willow, and delight
And union did permit, till then forbidden to the swain.
We lay the night together and with many a clip and kiss
And sucking lips, was union perfected for us twain.
There's no adornment of the world, excepting she thou lov st
Be near thee, so thou mayst of her the wished delight obtain.
Whenas day broke, she rose to say farewell, with lovely face
Excelling far the moon that shines in heaven's spreading plain;
And at her leave-taking, this verse she chanted, whilst the tears
Ran down her cheeks, now one by one, now linked in many a chain,
'By the Great Oath and by the nights so fair, I'll ne'er forget
The pact of Allah 'twixt us two, whilst I on life remain!'

Zein el Mewasif was charmed with these verses and said to him, 'O Mesrour, how goodly are thy parts! May he live not who would harm thee!' Then she entered a privy chamber and called him. So he went in to her and taking her in his arms, embraced her and kissed her and got of her that which he had deemed impossible and rejoiced in the attainment of the sweet of amorous delight. Then said she, 'O Mesrour, now we are become lovers, thy good is forbidden to me and is lawfully thine again.' So she restored to him all she had won of him and said to him, 'Hast thou a garden, whither we may go and take our pleasure therein?' 'Yes, O my lady,' answered he, 'I have a garden that hath not its like.'

Then he returned to his house and bade his slave-girls make ready a handsome room and provide a splendid banquet; after which he summoned Zein el Mewasif, who came with her damsels, and they ate and drank and made merry, whilst the cup passed round between them and their hearts were glad. Then the lovers withdrew to privy chamber and Zein el Mewasif said to Mesrour, 'I have bethought me of some pleasant verses, which I would fain sing to the lute.' And he answered, 'Do so.' So she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following to pleasant air:

Mirth from the smitten strings o'ercometh me and cheer;
Sweet is our morning-draught, when daybreak draweth near.
Love still its bondman's heart uncovereth and in
The tearing down of veils doth love-longing appear;
With wine strained bright, so pure and goodly that it seems
The sun in hands of moons unveiled and shining clear.
It bringeth us anights its gladness and with joy
Obliterates the stains of dreariment and fear.

Then said she to him, 'O Mesrour, recite us somewhat of thy verse and favour us with the fruit of thy wit.' So he recited the following:

In a full moon we do rejoice, that carries round its wine,
And in the sweet strains of the lute in gardens fair and fine,
Whose turtles in the dawning-hour sing and whose branches sway
And eke their paths the uttermost of all desire enshrine.

When he had finished, she said to him, 'If thou be occupied with love of me, make us some verses on that which hath passed between us.' 'With all my heart,' answered he and recited the following ode:

Stay thou and hear what me befell
For love of yonder fair gazelle
A white doe shot me with a shaft
And fierce her glances on me fell.
Ravished with love, my every shift
Straitened on me for passion's spell,
I pined for a coquette, enclosed
With spear-points inexpugnable.
I saw her midst a garden fair:
In symmetry she did excel.

'Peace be on thee!' quoth I to her:
She answered, 'And on thee as well.'
'What is thy name?' asked I; and she,
'My name my qualities doth tell.
Zein el Mewasif am I called.'
'Pity my case deplorable,'
Quoth I, 'such longing with me is,
No lover is my parallel.'
'An if thou love and wouldst my charms
Enjoy,' said she, 'I will not sell
My favours save for wealth galore,
Past count and unattainable.
Raiment of silk I'll have of thee
And costly damasks, many an ell,
And musk four quintals, pearls of price,
Cornelians uncountable,
Silver and gold and trinkets fine
And jewelled gauds I'll have as well;
One night of my possession these
Shall buy: I'll bate no particle.'
I showed fair patience, though, God wot,
For fires of love I was in hell,
And she to bless me deigned one night
The new moon's radiance on us fell.
If th' envious blame me, 'List, O folk,'
Quoth I, 'to that I have to tell,
Long locks hath she, as black as night,
And in her cheeks a rose doth dwell,
As red as very flames of fire:
Her looks are arrows sharp and snell,
And in her lashes is a sword
That serves her lovers to repel.
Wine in her mouth is and her lips
With dews like limpid water well.
Her teeth are like a necklace strung
With pearls of price, fresh from the shell.
Her neck, perfected in all grace,
Is as the neck of a gazelle.
As marble white her bosom is,
Wherein, like towers, her breasts do swell.
Her belly hath a fold perfumed
With essences invaluable;
And underneath it lies a thing,
That is my wishes' pinnacle;

Fat, plump, high-cushioned, O my lords,
As 'twere a king's throne, sooth to tell,
To whom I plain me of the woes
My soul to madness that enspell.
Betwixten columns twain thou'lt find
High benches set before the cell.
It hath such attributes as daze
Men's wits and wonderment compel;
Wide lips it hath and mouth, to boot,
As 'twere a mouth of mule or well;
An eye of red it shows and lips
Like camel's lips: its face doth swell,
For very redness, still with wrath.
So look, O man, thou guard thee well.
If thou come to it with intent
To do, thou'lt find it hot as hell,
Ardent of meeting and endowed
With strength to battle fierce and fell;
And well I wot, each champion, eased
Of lust of battle, 'twill repel.
Bytimes thou'lt find it with a beard,
As 'twere a man's; another spell
Thou'lt find it beardless, hot with lust
Of battle 'gainst the infidel.
One who is great of grace and sheen
To thee of this doth tidings tell,
One from whom Zein herself alone
For all perfection bears the bell.
I came to her by night and got
That which was sweet as œnomel;
Yes, and the night I lay with her
Did all mine other nights excel.
When daybreak came, with new-moon face
She rose and shape as flexible
As swaying boughs or slender spears,
And turned to me to say farewell.
Quoth she, 'When shall the nights return
Wherein such joyance us befell?'
And I, 'O lustre of mine eyes,
Come,' answered, 'when it likes thee well.'

Zein el Mewasif was charmed with these verses and the utmost gladness possessed her. Then said she, 'O Mesrour, the day is at hand and there is nothing for it but to depart, for fear of scandal.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and rising, carried her to her house, after which he returned home and passed the rest of the night meditating on

her charms. When the morning appeared and gave forth its light and shone, he made ready a sumptuous present and carried it to her and sat with her.

They abode thus awhile, in all delight and solace of life, till one day there came to Zein el Mewasif a letter from her husband, advising her of his speedy return. 'May God not preserve him nor quicken him!' exclaimed she. 'If he come hither, our life will be troubled. Would I might despair of him!' Presently came Mesrour and sat talking with her, as of wont, and she said to him, 'O Mesrour, I have received a letter from my husband, announcing his speedy return from his travels. What is to be done, since neither of us can live without the other?' 'I know not,' answered he; 'but thou art better able to judge, being acquainted with thy husband's ways, more by token that thou art one of the keenest-witted of women and mistress of devices such as contrive that whereof men fail.' Quoth she, 'He is a hard man and jealous of the people of his household: but, when thou hearest of his coming, do thou repair to him and salute him and sit down by his side, saying, "O my brother, I am a druggist." Then buy of him various kinds of drugs and spices and pay him frequent visits and talk long with him and gainsay him not in whatsoever he shall bid thee; so haply that may betide, [as] of chance, for which I would fain contrive.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Mesrour and went out from her, with a heart on fire for love.

When her husband came home, she rejoiced in him and bade him welcome; but he looked in her face and seeing it pale and sallow, (for she had washed it with saffron, making usage therein of one of women's arts,) asked her how she did. She replied that she had been sick, she and her women, from the time of his setting out on his journey, and said, 'Verily, our hearts have been troubled for thee by reason of the length of thine absence.' And she went on to complain to him of the misery of separation and to weep copious tears, saying, 'Hadst thou but a companion with thee, my heart had not suffered all this anxiety for thee. So, God upon thee, O my lord, travel not again without a companion and keep me not without news of thee, that my heart and mind may be at rest concerning thee!' 'With all my heart,' answered he. 'Thy counsel is good, and by thy life, it shall be as thou wishest.'

Then he took some of his goods and carrying them to his shop, opened it and sat down to sell in the bazaar. Presently up came Mesrour and saluting him, sat down by his side and talked with him awhile. Then he pulled out a purse and taking forth gold, handed it to the Jew and said, 'Give me the worth of this money in various kinds of drugs and spices, that I may sell them in my shop.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and gave him what he sought. Mesrour continued to pay him frequent visits, till, one day, the merchant said to him, 'I have a mind to take me a man to partner in trade.' 'And I also,' replied Mesrour, 'desire to take a partner; for my father was a merchant in the land of Yemen and left me great wealth and I fear lest it go from me.' Quoth the Jew, 'Wilt thou be my partner, and I will be thine and a true friend and comrade to thee at home and abroad, and I will teach thee to sell and buy and give and take?' And Mesrour said, 'With all my heart.'

So the merchant carried him to his house and seated him in the vestibule, whilst he went in to his wife and said to her, 'I have taken me a partner and have bidden him hither as a guest; so do thou prepare us a handsome entertainment.' When she heard this, she rejoiced, doubting not but this was Mesrour, and made ready a magnificent

banquet, of her joy in the success of her device. Then said her husband to her, 'Come out with me to him and bid him welcome and say, "Thou gladdenest us [with thy company]."' But she made a show of anger, saying, 'Wilt thou have me discover myself to a strange man? God forbid! Though thou cut me in pieces, I will not appear before him!' 'Why shouldst thou be abashed at him,' rejoined he, 'seeing that he is a Nazarene and we are Jews and we are become associates, he and I?' Quoth she, 'It liketh me not to present myself before a strange man, on whom I have never set eyes and whom I know not.'

He thought she spoke sooth and ceased not to importune her, till she rose and veiling herself, took the food and went out to Mesrour and bade him welcome; whereupon he bowed his head, as he were ashamed, and the Jew, seeing this, said in himself, 'Doubtless, this man is a devotee.' They ate their fill and the table being removed, wine was set on. As for Zein el Mewasif, she sat over against her lover and gazed on him and he on her till ended day, when Mesrour went home, with a heart on fire and the Jew abode pondering the grace and goodliness of his new partner. As soon as it was night, his wife brought him the evening meal and they sat down to eat.

Now he had a mocking-bird, that was used, whenas he sat down to meat, to come and eat with him and hover about his head; but in his absence it was grown familiar with Mesrour and used to eat with him and hover about him. When its master returned, it knew him not and would not draw near him, and this made him thoughtful. As for Zein el Mewasif, she could not sleep for thinking of Mesrour, and thus it was with her three nights, till the Jew became aware of her distraction and watching her, began to suspect something wrong. On the fourth night, he awoke in the middle of the night and heard his wife talking in her sleep and calling upon Mesrour, what while she lay in her husband's arms, wherefore he misdoubted of her; but he dissembled his suspicions and on the morrow betook himself to his shop and sat there. Presently, up came Mesrour and saluted him. He returned his greeting and said to him, 'Welcome, O my brother! I have wished for thee;' and he sat talking with him awhile, after which he said to him, 'O my brother, come with me to my house, that we may enter into the pact of brotherhood.' 'With all my heart,' replied Mesrour and they went to the Jew's house, where the latter went in and told his wife of Mesrour's coming, saying, 'Make us ready a goodly entertainment, and needs must thou be present and witness our brotherhood.' But she answered, 'God on thee, cause me not show myself to this strange man, for I have no mind to company with him.' So he forbore to press her and bade the waiting-women bring meat and drink. Then he called the mocking-bird, but it knew him not and settled in Mesrour's lap; and the Jew said to him, 'O my lord, what is thy name?' and he answered, 'Mesrour.' Whereupon the Jew remembered that this was the name which his wife had repeated all night long in her sleep.

Presently, he raised his head and saw her making signs to Mesrour and motioning to him with her eyebrows; wherefore he knew that he had been tricked and said, 'O my lord, excuse me awhile, till I fetch my kinsmen, so they may be present at our treaty of brotherhood.' 'Do what seemeth good to thee,' answered Mesrour; whereupon the Jew went forth the house and returning privily by a back way, betook himself to a window that gave upon the saloon and whence he could watch them, unseen of them. Quoth Zein el Mewasif to her maid Sukoub, 'Whither is thy master gone?' And she said, 'He is

gone without the house.' 'Lock the door,' said Zein, 'and bar it with iron and open not till he knock, after thou hast told me.' 'So be it,' answered Sukoub.

Then she rose and filling a cup with wine, flavoured with powdered musk and rose-water, went up to Mesrour, who rose to meet her, saying, 'By Allah, the water of thy mouth is sweeter than this wine!' 'Here it is for thee,' quoth she and filling her mouth with wine, gave him to drink thereof, whilst he did the like with her; after which she sprinkled him with rose-water from head to foot, till he scented the whole place. All this while, the Jew was looking on and marvelling at the greatness of the love that was between them, and his heart was filled with rage for what he saw and he was jealous with an exceeding jealousy. Then he went out again and coming to the door, found it locked and knocked loudly, of the excess of his anger; whereupon quoth Sukoub, 'O my lady, here is my master.' 'Open to him,' replied Zein el Mewasif; 'would God had not brought him back in safety!'

So she went and opened the door to the Jew, who said to her, 'What ailed thee to lock the door?' Quoth she, 'It hath never ceased to be locked thus during thine absence; nor hath it been opened night nor day.' 'Thou hast done well,' answered he; 'this pleases me.' Then he went in to Mesrour, laughing and dissembling his chagrin, and said to him, 'O Mesrour, let us put off the conclusion of our treaty of brotherhood till another day.' 'As thou wilt,' replied Mesrour and went away, leaving the Jew pondering his case and knowing not what to do; for his heart was sore troubled and he said in himself, 'Even the mocking-bird disavows me and the slave-girls shut the door in my face and favour another.' And of the excess of his chagrin, he fell to reciting the following verses:

A life made fair with all delight of days and solacement
Mesrour doth live, what while my life is severed and forspent.
Fortune hath played the knave with me in her whom I adore
And all my heart's on flames of fire, that rage without relent.
Once with the fair a time was bright for thee; 'tis past and gone;
Yet art thou ever love-distraught that lovely one anent.
Mine eyes her goodly beauty saw and in the love of her,
My heart to passion thrall became, for very ravishment.
Of the sweet water of her lips she poured me out, fine wine
On thirst, whilst yet the time endured of favour and content.
What ails thee, O my mocking-bird, that thou forsakest me
And to another than myself in love dost yield consent?
Strange things, indeed, mine eyes have seen, that from my lids, if they
Were ever drowsed with slumber, sleep would chase incontinent.
I see my loved one hath forsworn the love of me and eke
My mocking-bird round me no more hovers with blandishment.
By the worlds' Lord, who, when upon His creatures
He'd fulfil His ordinance, afflicteth them with many a dour event,
The evil-doer I'll requite with that which he deserves
Who frowardly to her draws near, on her enjoyment bent!

When Zein el Mewasif heard this, she trembled in every nerve and said to her handmaid, 'Heardest thou that?' Quoth she, 'I never heard him recite the like of these verses; but let him say what he will.' Then the Jew, having assured himself of the truth of his suspicions, began to sell all his property, saying in himself, 'Except I remove her from her native land [and separate them], they will never turn back from this that they are engaged in.' So, when he had turned all his possessions into money, he forged a letter, purporting to come from his kinsmen and inviting him to visit them, him and his wife, and read it to her. 'How long shall we tarry with them?' asked she, and he replied, 'Twelve days.' So she consented to this and said, 'Shall I take any of my maids with me?' 'Take Huboub and Sukoub,' answered he, 'and leave Khutoub here.'

Then he made ready a handsome camel litter for his wife and her women and prepared to set out with them; whilst she sent to Mesrour, telling him what had happened and saying, 'If the trysting-time that is between us pass and I come not [back], know that he hath put a cheat on us and laid a plot to separate us from each other; so forget thou not the plighted faith betwixt us, for I fear his craft and perfidy.' Then she fell a-weeping and lamenting and no peace was left her, night or day. Her husband saw this, but took no note thereof; and when she saw there was no help for it, she gathered together her clothes and gear and deposited them with her sister, telling her what had befallen her. Then she took leave of her and going out from her, weeping, returned to her own house, where she found her husband had brought the camels and was busy loading them, having set apart the handsomest for her riding; and when she saw this and knew that needs must she be separated from Mesrour, she was distracted.

Now it chanced that the Jew went out on some occasion of his; so she went forth to the outer door and wrote thereon the following verses:

O dove of this our dwelling-place, our parting greeting bear
From lover to beloved one and tell him I shall ne'er
Cease to regret the past delight and all its ravishments
And all the sweetness of the days for us whilom that were;
And bid him also never leave to be the slave of love,
Fulfilled of grief for our content that's past and gone for e'er.
Indeed, we passed our time awhile in solace and in cheer
And love-delight both night and day we did enjoy whilere;
But, when we woke, the raven gave us morrow with his croak
And did against us twain the doom of severance declare.
Now must we journey far away and leave the dwellings void:
Would we might ne'er depart the lands nor breathe a foreign air!

Then she went to the second door and wrote thereon the following verses:

O thou to this door that comest, by Allah, watch for the grace
Of my loved one midmost the darkness and tell him I weep apace,
When I think of the time of union with him, and the tears that come
Of my weeping for him cease never to ripple adown my face;
And say to him, 'If no patience for what is fallen on me
Thou findest, I rede thee sprinkle thy head with the dust of the place

And travel the lands to Eastward and Westward and look thou live
In patience, for God hath ordered and yet will order the case.'

Then she went to the third door and wept sore and wrote thereon these verses:

Harkye, Mesrour, an if thou come to this her dwelling, see
Thou read upon the doors the lines that she hath writ for thee.
How oft thou'st tasted of the sweet and bitter of the nights!
Forget thou not the pact of love, if thou a true man be.
By Allah, do not thou forget her neighbourhood, Mesrour;
For in thyself her solace all and gladness leaveth she!
Weep for the days of love-delight and all their sweets and all
The goodly nights that with their shade encurtained thee and me;
And to the farthest of the lands, for my sake, journey thou;
Search all its deserts after us and plunge into its sea.
The nights of our delight are gone from us; estrangement's dark
Hath quenched their radiance and made an end of all our glee.
God's blessing on the bygone days! How glad indeed they were,
When in the gardens of desire their blossoms gathered we!
We would have had them stay; but God denied the wished-for boon;
Only their rose and our true hearts to last permitted He.
Will the returning days renew our union? An they do,
Their every vow unto my Lord accomplished then shall be.
Think, in His hand, who writes upon the table of the brows
Their lines, are all things, and submit to that He doth decree.

Then she wept sore and returned to the house, lamenting and recalling what had passed and saying, 'Glory be to God who hath decreed this to us!' And her affliction redoubled for the loss of her beloved and her departure from the lands, and she recited these verses:

Upon thee be the peace of God, O empty house!
Ah me, The days indeed have made an end of all their cheer in thee!
Dove of the house, ne'er mayst thou leave to mourn for her who from
Her moons and her full moons is torn by Fate's unkind decree!
Harkye, Mesrour! Make thou thy moan for loss of us; indeed
Mine eyes in losing thee have lost their lustre, verily.
Would God thine eyes our parting day and eke the flaming fire,
That in my heart redoubles still unquenchably, might see!
Forget not thou our plighted troth within the garden's shade,
That held our loves and with its veils encurtained thee and me.

Then she presented herself before her husband, who set her in the litter he had let make for her; and when she found herself on the camel's back, she recited the following verses:

God's peace on thee, O lonely house, for evermore alight,
Wherein whilere we fed our fill of solace and delight!

Would that my time within thy shade its nights accomplished had,
So I for passion had been slain, a martyr in Love's right!
For parting I am sore concerned and longing for the home I love:
I knew not what should hap nor looked for Fate's despite.
Would God I knew if I shall e'er return to it again,
And will it ever, as of yore, be pleasant to our spright!

'O Zein el Mewasif,' said her husband, 'grieve not for thy departure from thy dwelling; for, God willing, thou shalt return to it before long.' And he went on to comfort her heart and soothe her. Then they set out and fared on till they came without the town and struck into the high road, whereupon she knew that separation was assured, and this was grievous to her.

Meanwhile, Mesrour sat in his house, pondering his case and that of his mistress, and his heart forewarned him of separation. So he rose forthright and repairing to her house, found the outer door shut and read the verses she had written thereon; whereupon he fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he opened the door and entering, read what was written upon the two other doors; whereupon passion and love-longing and distraction waxed on him. So he went forth and hastened in her track, till he came up with the caravan and found her at the rear, whilst her husband rode in the van, because of his goods. When he saw her, he clung to the litter, weeping and lamenting for the anguish of separation, and recited the following verses:

Would I knew for what crime we are shot, wellaway!
With the shafts of estrangement for ever and aye!
O desire of the heart, to thy dwelling I came,
When distress for thy love sorely irked me, one day,
And I found the house empty, laid waste, and complained
Of estrangement and groaned, in my spirit's dismay,
Then I questioned the walls of my loves that are gone
And have taken my heart as a pledge, 'Where are they?'
And they said, 'They made passion in ambush to lie
In the entrails and fared from the dwellings away.'
They wrote for me lines on the portals, the deed
Of the folk that keep faith nor their troth-plight betray.

When Zein el Mewasif heard this, she knew that it was Mesrour and wept, she and her maidens, and said to him, 'I conjure thee by Allah, O Mesrour, turn back, lest my husband see us!' At these words he swooned away; and when he revived, they took leave of each other and he recited the following verses:

The chief of the caravan to depart calls loud and high,
In the darkness ere the dawn, and the zephyr wafts the cry,
They gird their burdens on and hasten to depart,
And on, at the leader's voice, the caravan doth hie.
They perfume the lands, through which they journey, on every side,
And still through the valley's midst their travel in haste they ply.
Possession they took of my soul in passion and fared away

And left me to toil in vain in the track of their passing by.
Beloved, I purposed indeed to part with you never in life
And the earth is drenched with the tears that flow from the wanderer's eye.
Alack! How hath parting's hand with mine entrails wroughten!
Woe's me For my heart! Since my loves are gone, it irketh me like to die.

Then he clung to the litter, weeping and lamenting, whilst she besought him to turn back ere morning, for fear of discovery. So he came up to her and bidding her farewell a second time, fell down in a swoon. He lay a great while without life, and when he came to himself, he found the caravan out of sight. So he turned in the direction of their travel and inhaled the breeze that blew from their quarter, chanting the following verses:

No wind of nearness to the lover's blown
But of the pains of longing he makes moan.
The breeze of dawning blows on him; he wakes
And in the world he finds himself alone.
Blood, mingled with his streaming tears, he weeps,
For languor on the bed of sickness prone;
For loved ones lost he weeps; his heart with them
Fares midst the camels over sand and stone.
No breeze blows from their quarter but I stand,
With eyes attent and nostrils open thrown,
And on the South wind snuff their musky gale,
Whose scent is grateful to the lover lone.

Then he returned, mad with love-longing, to her house, and finding it empty and deserted, wept till he wet his clothes; after which he swooned away and his soul was like to depart his body. When he revived, he recited the following couplet:

O house, on my abjection have ruth and on my plight,
My tears for ever flowing and body wasted quite,
And waft me the aroma of their sweet-scented breeze,
So haply with its fragrance it heal my anguished spright.

Then he returned to his own house and abode there, confounded and tearful-eyed, for the space of ten days.

Meanwhile, the Jew journeyed on with Zein el Mewasif half a score days, at the end of which time he halted at a certain city and she wrote to Mesrour a letter and gave it to Huboub, saying, 'Send this to Mesrour, so he may know how we have been tricked and how the Jew hath cheated us.' So Huboub despatched it to Mesrour, whom when it reached, its news was grievous to him and he wept till he wet the ground. Then he wrote a reply and sent it to his mistress, subscribing it with the following couplets:

Where is the road unto the doors of solace? How shall he,
Who's all for love-longing on flames of fire consoléd be?
How pleasant were the days of yore, that now are past away!
Ah would some scantling of their times were yet with thee and me!

When the letter reached Zein el Mewasif, she read it and gave it to her maid Huboub, bidding her keep it secret. However, the Jew came to know of their correspondence and removed with her to another city, at a distance of twenty days' journey.

As for Mesrour, sleep was not sweet to him nor was peace or patience left unto him, and he ceased not to be thus till, one night, his eyes closed for weariness and he dreamt that he saw Zein el Mewasif come to him in the garden and embrace him; but presently he awoke and found her not: whereupon he fell into a passion of grief. His reason fled and his eyes ran over with tears; love-longing to the utterest possessed his heart and he recited these verses:

Peace be on her, whose image came to visit me by night
And passion straight in me renewed and longings did excite!
Indeed, from that my dream I rose, distracted with desire,
Fulfilled of love and longing pain for that fair vision's sight.
Do the imbroglios of sleep say sooth of her I love?
Will she let quench my thirst and heal the sickness of my spright?
Anon she spoke with me, anon she strained me to her breast
And now with pleasant speech she soothed my pain and my affright;
And when our lovers' chiding was accomplished in the dream
And in unceasing floods, the tears streamed from mine eyes contrite,
From out her damask lips, for me, as 'twere the best of wine,
Whose scent was as the scent of musk, she poured, that lady bright.
I marvel at what chanced 'twixt us in dreams; for lo! I got
My wish of her and that I sought of solace and delight;
But, when from sleep I woke, no whit of that fair dream found
I Save love-longing and pain; the rest had fled with morning-light.
And since I've looked on her, I'm grown, by day, as I were mad;
Anights I'm drunken without wine, a lone-distracted wight.
O waftings of the zephyr, go, to them I prithee bear
The salutation of my love and longing for their sight,
And say to them, 'Him, whom ye knew, the shifts of sorry
Fate Have given to drink the cup of death, of destiny's despite.'

Then he went out and ceased not to weep till he came to her house and looking on it, saw it deserted. Presently, it seemed to him he saw her image before him, whereupon fires flamed in him and his sorrows redoubled and he fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he recited the following verses:

I snuff the scent of balm from them, wherewith the air is fraught
And fare away, with heart fulfilled of passion, love-distraught.
A miserable slave of love, my longings with the sight
Of dwellings, void of all their charms, to salve in vain I've sought.
It doth but sicken me for woe and severance and desire
And all the past-time with my friends recalleth to my thought.

When he had made an end of these verses, he heard a raven croak beside the house and wept, saying, 'Glory be to God! The raven croaks not save over a ruined house.' Then he sighed and groaned and recited the following verses:

What aileth the raven to croon o'er the house of my love?
As I hear, The fires in my bosom rage high; their burning my entrails doth sear,
For regret for the days of their love, bygone; my heart wanders, for woe,
In the mountains of misery lost, distracted with passion and fear.
I die of love-longing; the flames of desire in my liver still rage,
And letters I write, which, alas! I have none to convey to my dear.
Alas for my body worn waste and my sorrow! My loved one is gone.
Will they ever, I wonder, return, her nights, with their solace and cheer?
O breeze of the East, in the dawn if thou visit the camp of her tribe,
Salute her, I prithee, for me, and stay by her stead thy career.

Now Zein el Mewasif had a sister, by name Nesim, who was looking on him from a high p1ace; and when she saw him in this plight, she wept and sighed and recited these verses:

Harkye! How oft, bewailing the steads, wilt come and go?
Indeed, the house its builder bemoaneth, of its woe.
Gladness, ere they departed who did inhabit here,
Was rife within the dwelling and suns in it did glow.
Where are the full moons vanished, that shone so bright?
The shifts Of fate their lucent beauties have blotted out, I trow
Leave what is past of fair ones, with whom thou didst consort:
Mayhap, the days, returning, them forth again will show:
Except for thee, its dwellers had not departed hence
Nor thou in its high places hadst seen the corby-crow.

When Mesrour heard these verses and apprehended their meaning, he wept sore. Now Nesim knew that which was between him and her sister of love and longing and passion; so she said to him, 'God on thee, O Mesrour, forbear this house, lest any see thee and deem thou comest on my account! Thou hast caused my sister depart and now thou wouldst drive me also away. Thou knowest that, but for thee, the house would not now be void of its inhabitants: so be consoled for her and leave her; for what is past is past.' When he heard this, he said to her, 'O Nesim, if I could, I should fly for longing after her; so how can I be comforted for her?' Quoth she, 'Thou hast nothing for it but patience.' And he said, 'I beseech thee, for God's sake, write me a letter to her, as from thyself, and get me an answer from her, to comfort my heart and quench the fire that rages in my vitals.'

'With all my heart,' answered she and took inkhorn and paper, whilst Mesrour began to set out to her the violence of his longing and what he suffered for the anguish of separation, saying, 'This letter is from the despairing and sorrowful lover, the wretched bereaved one, with whom no peace abides, night nor day, but he still weeps copious tears. Indeed, tears have ulcerated his eyelids and his sorrows have kindled a fire in his liver. His lamentation is prolonged and restlessness is sore on him, as he were

a bird that hath lost its mate, and his death is at hand. Alas, my desolation for the loss of thee and my yearning affliction for thy companionship! Indeed, emaciation hath wasted my body and my tears are become a torrent; mountains and plains are straitened upon me, and of the excess of my passion, I go, saying:

My yearning o'er this stead's eternal and my pain,
And longings for its folk still wax on me amain.
I send to you my tale of love; the cupbearer
Still giveth me the cup of love for you to drain.
And for your faring hence and absence from the lands,
With everstreaming tears my wounded eyelids rain.
O litter-leader, stay; turn back with the belov'd;
For all my heart's afire with flames that never wane.
My greeting to my love bear thou and say to her,
"There's nought but damask lips his sorrows can assain.
Time bore him off and rent his loves apart and cleft
His entrails with a shaft of severance in twain."
Give them to know of all my transport for their loss
And what I bear for love and longing all in vain.
Yea, by the love of you, I swear I will fulfil
The covenant of love, whatever Fate ordain.
I'll never change nor yet forget your love: how shall
Forgetfulness betide the wistful, longing swain?
Peace, salutation-wise, from me, with musk commixt
In letters, be on you again and yet again!'

Nesim marvelled at his eloquence and the goodliness of his speech and the elegance of his verses and was moved to compassion for him. Then she sealed the letter with virgin musk and incensed it with aloes-wood and ambergris, after which she committed it to a merchant, bidding him deliver it not save to Zein el Mewasif or her maid Huboub.

When the letter reached her sister, she knew it for Mesrour's inditing and recognized himself in the grace of its expression. So she kissed it and laid it on her eyes, whilst the tears streamed from her lids and she gave not over weeping, till she fainted. When she came to herself, she called for pen and paper and wrote him the following answer: 'This letter is to my lord and master, the king of my heart and my secret soul. Indeed, wakefulness agitateth me and melancholy increaseth on me and I have no patience to endure thine absence, O thou whose beauty excels the sun and moon! Desire deprives me of rest and passion destroys me; and how should it be otherwise with me, seeing that I am of the number of the perishing? O glory of the world and ornament of life, shall her cup be sweet, whose vital spirits are cut off? For that she is neither with the quick nor with the dead.' And she added these verses:

Thy letter, O Mesrour, hath stirred affliction up in me;
I have no patience for thy loss nor solacement, perdie.
My bowels, when I read the script, yearn and the desert herbs
I water with my tears that flow for ever like a sea.

Were I a bird, I'd fly to thee, upon the wings of night:
I know not, after thee, if wine or sweet or bitter be.
Forbidden unto me is life, since thy departure hence:
I have no power to brook the fire of severance from thee.

Then she sprinkled the letter with powdered musk and ambergris and committed it to a merchant, bidding him deliver it to none save her sister Nesim. When it reached the latter, she sent it to Mesrour, who kissed it and laid it on his eyes and wept till he fainted.

Presently, the Jew heard of their correspondence and began again to travel from place to place with Zein el Mewasif and her damsels, till she said to him, 'Glory to God! How long wilt thou journey with us and carry us afar from our homes?' Quoth he, 'I will fare on with you a year's journey, so no more letters may reach you from Mesrour. I see how you take all my good and give it to him; so all that I miss I shall take from you: and I shall see if Mesrour will profit you or avail to deliver you from my hand.' Then he stripped her and her damsels of their silken apparel and clad them in raiment of hair-cloth; after which he repaired to a blacksmith and bade him make three pairs of iron shackles. When they were ready, he brought the smith in to his wife and said to him, 'Put the shackles on the legs of these three damsels.'

The first that came forward was Zein el Mewasif, and when the blacksmith saw her, his reason forsook him and he bit his fingers and his wit fled forth his head and sore was his transport. So he said to the Jew, 'What is these women's crime?' 'They are my slave-girls,' answered the other, 'and have stolen my good and fled from me.' 'May God disappoint thine expectation!' cried the smith. 'Were this girl before the Chief Cadi, he would not reprove her, though she committed a hundred offences a day. Indeed, she hath no thief's favour and she may not brook the laying of irons on her legs.' And he went on to intercede with him, beseeching him not to fetter her. When she saw this, she said to her husband, 'I conjure thee by Allah, bring me not forth before yonder strange man!' Quoth he, 'Why then camest thou out before Mesrour?' And she made him no reply. Then he accepted the blacksmith's intercession, so far as to allow him to put a light pair of shackles on her legs, for that she had a delicate body, which might not brook harshness, whilst he laid her handmaids in heavy irons, and they ceased not, all three, to wear hair-cloth day and night, till their bodies became wasted and their colour changed.

As for the blacksmith, he returned home in great concern, for that exceeding love was fallen on his heart for Zein el Mewasif; and he fell to reciting the following verses:

Blacksmith, may thy right hand wither, in that it did ill entreat
Yon fair maid by clapping fetters on her ankles and her feet.
Thou hast chained a lovely lady, gentle, soft and delicate:
Of the wonderful'st of wonders was she fashioned and complete.
Not of iron were her anklets, were she justly used, I trow:
Gold, indeed, alone were worthy of that loveling fair and sweet.
If the Cadi of the Cadis saw her charms, he'd pity her
And upon the highest places in her glory would her seat.

Now it chanced that the Chief Cadi passed by the smith's house and heard him repeat these lines; so he sent for him and said to him, 'O blacksmith, who is she on whom thou callest so instantly and with whose love thy heart is occupied?' The smith rose to his feet and kissing the Cadi's hand, answered, 'May God prolong the days of our lord the Cadi and give him ease of his life!' Then he set forth to him Zein el Mewasif's beauty and grace and symmetry and elegance and perfection and how she had a lovely face and a slender waist and heavy buttocks and acquainted him with the sorry plight in which she was for abasement and duresse and lack of victual.

When the Cadi heard this, he said, 'O blacksmith, send her to us, that we may do her justice, for thou art become accountable for her, and except thou guide her to us, God will punish thee at the Day of Resurrection.' 'I hear and obey,' replied the smith and betook himself forthright to Zein el Mewasif's lodging, but found the door locked and heard her reciting the following verses, in a plaintive voice, that came from a sorrowful heart:

In mine own land I was, conjoined with those I hold most dear,
And my belovéd filled me cups of gladness bright and clear.
They passed 'twixt us with what we would of solace and of mirth;
Nor knew we, morn or even, aught of dreariment or fear.
Indeed, a time we did fulfil, that gladdened us whilere
With cup and lute and dulcimer and festival and cheer,
Till fortune and its shifts dissolved our fellowship; my love
Departed and the time of peace with him evanished sheer.
Would that the crow of parting might be caused forbear our stead
And would the dawn of my delight in passion might appear!

When he heard this, he wept like the downpouring of the clouds. Then he knocked at the door and the women said, 'Who is at the door?' 'It is I, the blacksmith,' answered he and told them what the Cadi had said and how he would have them appear before him and make their plaint to him, that he might do them justice on their adversary. 'How can we go to him,' replied Zein el Mewasif, 'seeing the door is locked on us and our feet shackled and the Jew hath the keys?' Quoth the smith, 'I will make keys for the locks and open the door and the shackles therewith.' 'But who will show us the Cadi's house?' asked she; and he said, 'I will describe it to you.' 'But how,' continued she, 'can we appear before him, clad as we are in hair-cloth, smoked with sulphur?' And he answered, 'He will not reproach this to you, considering your case.' So saying, he went forthright and made keys for the locks, wherewith he opened the door and the shackles, and loosing the latter from their legs, carried them forth and directed them to the Cadi's house. Then Huboub did off the hair-cloth garments from her mistress's body and carried her to the bath, where she washed her and clad her in silken raiment, and her colour returned to her.

Now, as luck would have it, her husband was abroad at a bride-feast in the house of one of the merchants; so she adorned herself after the fairest fashion and betook herself to the Cadi, who rose to receive her. She saluted him with dulcet speech and sweet words, transfixing him the while with the arrows of her glances, and said, 'May God prolong the life of our lord the Cadi and strengthen him to do justice!' Then she

acquainted him with the affair of the blacksmith and that which he had done them of kindness and with the heart-confounding torments that the Jew had inflicted on her and her women and how they had been like to perish, nor was there any deliverance found for them [till the smith set them free]. 'O damsel,' said the Cadi, 'what is thy name?' 'My name is Zein el Mewasif,' answered she, 'and this my maid's name is Huboub.' Quoth he, 'Thy name accordeth with its owner and its words conform to its meaning.' Whereupon she smiled and veiled her face, and he said to her, 'O Zein el Mewasif, hast thou a husband or not?' 'I have no husband,' answered she. 'And what is thy faith?' asked he. 'That of Islam,' replied she, 'and the religion of the best of men.' Quoth he, 'Swear to me by the Law, full of instances and admonitions, that thou art a Muslim.' So she swore to him and pronounced the profession of the faith.

Then said he, 'How comes it that thou wastest thy youth with this Jew?' And she answered, 'Know, O Cadi (may God prolong thy days in contentment and bring thee to thy hopes and seal thine acts with benefits!), that my father left me, after his death, fifteen thousand dinars, which he put into the hands of this Jew, that he might trade therewith and share the profit with me, the capital being secured by acknowledgment according to law. When my father died, the Jew coveted me and sought me in marriage of my mother, who said, "How shall I cause her leave her faith and become a Jewess? By Allah, I will denounce thee to the authorities!" He was affrighted at her words and taking the money, fled to the town of Aden. When we heard where he was, we came to Aden in search of him, and when we foregathered with him, he told us that he was trading in stuffs [with the money] and buying goods upon goods. So we believed him and he ceased not to beguile us till he cast us into prison and fettered us and tortured us exceeding sore; and we are strangers and have no helper save God the Most High and our lord the Cadi.'

When the Cadi heard this, he said to Huboub, 'Is this indeed thy mistress and are ye strangers and is she unmarried?' And she answered, 'Yes.' Quoth he, 'Marry her to me and be manumission [of my slaves] and fasting and pilgrimage and almsgiving [of all my estate] incumbent on me, if I do you not justice on this dog and punish him for that which he hath done!' And she answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then said he, 'Go, comfort thy heart and that of thy lady; and to-morrow, if it please God the Most High, I will send for this infidel and do you justice on him and ye shall see wonders of his punishment.' So Huboub called down blessings upon him and went forth from him, [she and her mistress,] leaving him distracted with passion and love-longing and desire. Then they enquired for the house of the second Cadi and presenting themselves before him, told him the same story. On likewise did she with the third and the fourth, till she had made her complaint to all the four Cadis, each of whom lusted after her and besought her to marry him, to which she consented; nor knew any one of the four that which had happened to the others. All this passed without the knowledge of the Jew, who slept the night in the house of the bride-feast.

On the morrow, Huboub clad her mistress in her richest raiment and presented herself with her before the four Cadis in the hall of justice. As soon as she entered, she uncovered her face and saluted the magistrates, who returned her salutation and every one of them knew her. One was writing, and the pen dropped from his hand, another was talking, and his tongue became embarrassed, and a third was reckoning and

blundered in his reckoning; and they said to her, 'O delightsome of attributes and surpassing of loveliness, be not thy heart other than easy, for we will assuredly do thee justice and bring thee to thy desire.' So she called down blessings on them and going forth, proceeded to beseech the notaries and scribes to succour her against that unbelieving miscreant and deliver her from the torment she suffered from him. Then she wrote a letter to Mesrour, setting forth to him all that the Jew had done with her from first to last and ending with the following verses:

Rain down tears, O mine eyes, as the deluge they were,
So perchance in their flood may be quenched my despair.
Once I clad me in raiment of gold-wroughten silk:
Now the raiment of monks and of friars I wear;
Yea, and sulphur's the scent of my clothes; betwixt that
And sweet basil and musk what a difference is there!
Thou wouldst never permit my abasement, Mesrour,
Nor my bondage, if but of my case thou wert ware;
And Huboub too's in fetters with one who denies
The One, the Requiter of foul and of fair.
Lo, the ways of the Jews and their faith I've renounced
And my faith is the noblest of faiths hence fore'er.
To the Clement a Muslim's prostration I make
And to follow the law of Mohammed I swear.
Forget not our loves of old time, O Mesrour,
And keep thou our vows and our troth plight with care.
My faith for thy love and thy sake I have changed
And my secret for passion I'll never declare;
So, if, like to the noble, our love thou've preserved,
Be no laggard, but hasten to us to repair.

Then she folded the letter and gave it to her maid Huboub, saying, 'Keep it in thy pocket, till we send it to Mesrour.'

Presently in came the Jew and seeing them joyous, said to them, 'How comes it that I find you merry? Hath a letter reached you from your friend Mesrour?' 'We have no helper against thee save God, blessed and exalted be He!' replied Zein el Mewasif. 'He will deliver us from thy tyranny, and except thou restore to us our country and home, we will complain of thee to-morrow to the Cadi and governor of this town.' Quoth he, 'Who did off the shackles from your legs? But needs must I let make each of you shackles ten pounds in weight and go round about the city with you.' 'All that thou purposest against us,' replied Huboub, 'thou shalt fall into thyself, so it please God the Most High, by token that thou hast exiled us from our homes, and to-morrow we shall stand, we and thou, before the governor of the city.'

On this wise they passed the night and the next morning the Jew went out to order fresh shackles, whereupon Zein el Mewasif rose and repaired with her women to the court-house, where she found the four Cadis and saluted them. They all returned her salutation and the Chief Cadi said to those about him, 'Verily this damsel is lovely as Ez Zehra and all who see her love her and prostrate themselves to her beauty and

grace.' Then he despatched four sergeants, who were sherifs, to fetch the Jew after the most abject fashion: so, when he returned with the shackles and found none in the house, he was confounded; but, as he abode in perplexity, up came the officers and laying hold of him, beat him soundly and dragged him face, downward, before the Cadi. When the latter saw him, he cried out in his face and said to him, 'Out on thee, O enemy of God, is it come to such a pass with thee that thou dost thus and bringest these women far from their country and stealest their good and wouldst make them Jews? How darest thou seek to pervert Muslims?' 'O my lord,' answered the Jew, 'this woman is my wife.'

When the Cadis heard this, they all cried out, saying, 'Cast this dog on the ground and smite him on the face with your sandals and beat him soundly, for his offence is unpardonable.' So they pulled off his silken clothes and clad him in his wife's raiment of hair-cloth, after which they threw him down and plucked out his beard and belaboured him about the face with sandals. Then they set him on an ass, face to crupper, and causing him take its tail in his hand, paraded him round about the town, after which they brought him back to the Cadis, who all condemned him to have his feet and hands cut off and after be crucified. When the accursed wretch heard this, his wit forsook him and he was confounded and said, 'O my lords the Cadis, what would ye of me?' 'Say,' answered they, "'This damsel is not my wife and the money is her money, and I have transgressed against her and brought her far from her country."' So he confessed to this and the Cadis recorded his confession in legal form and taking the money from him, gave it to Zein el Mewasif, together with their voucher. Then she went away and all who saw her were confounded at her beauty and grace, whilst each of the Cadis looked for her to fall to his share. But, when she came to her lodging, she made ready all that she needed and waited till night. Then she took what was light of carriage and heavy of worth, and setting out with her maids, under cover of the darkness, fared on three days and three nights without stopping.

Meanwhile, the Cadis ordered the Jew to prison and on the morrow they looked for her coming to them, they and their assessors; but she presented herself not to any of them. Then said the Chief Cadi, 'I wish to-day to go a-pleasuring without the town on an occasion I have.' So he mounted his mule and taking his servant with him, went coasting about the streets of the town, searching high and low for Zein el Mewasif, but to no effect.

Presently he came upon the other three Cadis, going about on the same errand, each deeming himself the only one to whom she had pledged herself. He asked them what they did there and they told him their business, whereby he saw that their plight was as his plight and their quest as his quest. So they all four went round about the city, seeking her, but could light on no trace of her and returned to their houses, sick for love, and lay down on the bed of languor. Presently the Chief Cadi bethought himself of the blacksmith; so he sent for him and said to him, 'O blacksmith, knowest thou what is come of the damsel whom thou didst direct to me? By Allah, an thou discover her not to me, I will beat thee with whips.' When the smith heard this, he recited the following verses:

Her, that possesseth me in love, kind
Fortune did endow With beauty all nor aught thereof to others did allow.
The eye of a gazelle she hath; her scent is ambergris;
She shines, a sun, and undulates, a lake, and sways, a bough.

Then said he, 'By Allah, O my lord, since she went out from thy worshipful presence, I have not set eyes on her! Indeed, she took possession of my heart and senses and all my talk and thought is of her. I went to her house, but found her not, nor found I any who could give me news of her, and it is as if she had plunged into the abysses of the sea or been caught up into the sky.'

When the Cadi heard this, he gave a groan, that his soul was like to depart therefor, and said, 'By Allah, it would have been well, had we never seen her!' Then the smith went away, whilst the Cadi fell down on his bed and became sick of languor for her sake, and on like wise fared it with the other three Cadis and the assessors. The physicians paid them frequent visits, but found in them no ailment requiring a leach: so the chief men of the city went in to the Chief Cadi and saluting him, questioned him of his case; whereupon he sighed and discovered to them that which was in his heart, reciting the following verses:

Spare me your blame, for sickness' pains enough on me are keen,
And hold excused the Cadi who doth judge the folk between.
Let him who blameth me for love excuse me and not blame,
For still unblameworthy the slain of passion are, I ween.
Cadi was I and fortune fair raised me to high estate,
By script and pen, and life to me was pleasant and serene,
Till from a girl's looks, who to shed my blood came, with a shaft
I was transfixed, whose deadly stroke no leach might countervene.
A Muslim maid, she came to me, complaining of unright;
Her mouth with teeth like strings of pearls unvalued was beseen.
Under her veil I looked and she a full moon straight displayed
That through the middle dark of night breaks out in all its sheen.
A lustrous visage, sugared lips and smiling, wonder-sweet,
Beauty indeed enveloped her from head to foot, my queen.
'Midst Arabs and barbarians, by Allah, to mine eyes,
To see the like of her fair face hath ne'er vouchsafed been!
Sweet, what didst promise me and saidst, 'O Cadi of the folk,
Whenas I promise, I perform, and what I say I mean.'
This is my case and that wherewith I have afflicted been;
So question me no more, good folk, of this my dole and teen.

Then he wept sore and gave one sob and his soul departed his body. When they saw this, they washed him and shrouded him and prayed over him and buried him, graving the following verses on his tomb:

The traits of lovers were fulfilled in him who comes, by her
He loved and by her rigours slain, unto the sepulchre.
Cadi above the folk was he and him it did rejoice

The sword of justice in its sheath to keep a prisoner.
But Fate against him did decree, nor e'er before his time
Saw we the lord unto his slave abase him and defer.

Then they committed him to the mercy of God and went away to the second Cadi, in company with the physician, but found in him no hurt or ailment requiring a leach. So they questioned him of his case and he told them what ailed him, whereupon they blamed him and chid him for his folly, and he answered them with these verses:

I'm cursed with her, – my like was blameless aye – and dead
I'm shotten with a shaft from hand of archer sped.
A woman unto me there came, Huboub by name,
Complaining of unright and Fortune's drearihead;
And with her came a girl, who showed a face that passed
The full moon's light athwart the middle darkness spread.
Her beauties she displayed and her complaint preferred
What while in floods there ran the tears her eyelids shed.
I hearkened to her speech and looked upon her face
And sore she made me pine with smiling lips and red.
Then with my heart away she fared and left me here,
The hostage of desire. Ah, whither hath she fled?
This then is all my case; have ruth upon my plight
And take my servant here to Cadi in my stead.

Then he gave one sob and his soul departed his body; whereupon they buried him and commending him to the mercy of God, repaired to the third Cadi and the fourth, and there befell them the like of what befell their brethren. Moreover, they found the assessors also sick for love of her, and indeed all who saw her died of her love, or, if they died not, lived, afflicted with the agonies of passion [in vain], may God have mercy on them all!

Meanwhile Zein el Mewasif and her women fared on with all diligence till they came to a convent by the way, in which dwelt a prior called Danis and forty monks. When the prior saw her beauty, he went out to her and invited her to alight, saying, 'Rest with us ten days and after go your ways.' So she and her damsels alighted and entered the convent; and when Danis saw her beauty and grace, she debauched his faith and he was seduced by her: wherefore he fell to sending her love-messages by the monks, one after another, till he had sent all the forty; but each who saw her fell in love with her and plied her with blandishments galore and sought her favours for himself, without naming Danis, whilst she denied herself to them and rebuffed them all with harsh answers.

When Danis's patience was at an end and his passion was sore on him, he said in himself, 'Verily, the proverb says, "Nothing scratches my body but my own nail and nought runs my errands like my own feet."' So he rose and made ready rich meats, and it was the ninth day of her sojourn in the convent. Then he carried them in to her and set them before her, saying, 'In the name of God, favour us [by partaking] of the best of the food at our command.' So she put out her hand, saying, 'In the name of God

the Compassionate, the Merciful!' and ate, she and her maidens. When she had made an end of eating, he said to her, 'O my lady, I wish to recite to you some verses.' 'Say on,' quoth she; and he recited the following:

Thou hast made conquest of my heart by dint of cheek and eye;
In love of thee my prose and verse with one another vie.
Wilt thou forsake a lover sick with passion and desire?
E'en in my dreams 'gainst love I strive, with many a tear and sigh.
With my delights, I have th' affairs of this my convent left:
Leave me not prostrate, love-distraught, to languish and to die.
O lovely one, that holdest right the shedding of my blood
In love, have pity on my case, give ear unto my cry.

When she heard this, she answered him with these verses:

O thou that seek'st of me delight, let not vain hope thy wit
Delude; of thy soliciting I prithee hold me quit.
Let not thy spirit covet that which it may not possess:
Disquietude with covetise was ever straitly knit.

Thereupon he returned to his place, pondering in himself and knowing not how he should do in her affair, and passed the night in very sorry case. But, as soon as it was dark night, Zein el Mewasif arose and said to her maids, 'Come, [let us depart hence], for we cannot avail against forty men, monks, each of whom requireth me of himself.' 'Willingly,' answered they. So they mounted their beasts and issuing forth of the convent gate, under favour of the night, rode on till they overtook a caravan, with which they mingled and found it came from the city of Aden. Presently, Zein el Mewasif heard the people of the caravan discoursing of her own case and telling how the Cadis and assessors were dead of love for her and how the townsfolk had appointed others in their stead and released her husband from prison. Whereupon she turned to her maids and said to them, 'Heard ye that?' And Huboub answered, 'If the monks were ravished with love of thee, whose belief it is that to abstain from women is to do God worship, how should it be with the Cadis, who hold that there is no monkery in Islam? But let us make our way to our own country, whilst our affair is yet undiscovered.' So they journeyed on with all diligence.

On the morrow, as soon as it was day, the monks repaired to Zein el Mewasif's lodging to salute her, but found the place empty, and their hearts sank within them. So the first monk rent his clothes and recited these verses:

Give ear, companions dear, to that I shall to you impart;
For I must say farewell to you full shortly and depart.
The pangs of passion and desire within mine entrails rage
And eke a slayer from the flame of love is in my heart,
By reason of a lovely maid, who came into our land:
The full moon in the height of heaven is as her counterpart.
She went and left me by her charms cast down and done to death,
Slain of a shaft that from her lids death-dealing she did dart.

Then another monk recited the following verses:

O ye that with my soul have fled, on your unhappy swain
Have pity and to his despair your blest returning deign.
They fared away and my repose departed after them;
But still the sweetness of their speech doth in mine ears remain.
They're distant, yea, and distant is their visitation-place:
Would they'd vouchsafe, though but in dreams, their sight to us again!
When they departed hence, they took my heart with them and left
Me all dissolved in floods of tears, that from mine eyes did rain.

A third monk followed with these lines:

Heart, eyes and ears to set thee in the highest room agree;
For, lo, my heart and all of me's a dwelling-place for thee.
Sweeter than honey in my mouth thy name is and thy thought
Runs, as the vital spirit runs, in every rib of me.
Lean as a skewer hast thou made my frame for languishment;
Yea, and thou'st drowned me with my tears in very passion's sea.
Let me but look on thee in sleep; mayhap thy lovely sight
Shall from the torment of my tears avail my cheeks to free.

Then a fourth recited the following verses:

Dumb is my tongue for sorrow; my speech of thee doth fail;
Of passion comes my anguish, my sickness and my bale.
O thou full moon, whose place is in heaven, sore for thee
Love-longing and distraction my spirit do assail.

And a fifth these:

I love a moon, shapely and slim and well-grown;
Her waist of the weight of her buttocks makes moan.
Like the first pressed-out wine are the dews of her mouth
And her lips to mankind for distraction are known.
My heart burns with passion; the lover lies slain,
Midst the dark, whence the moon and its lustre are flown,
And his tears like the rains flow, nor ever run dry,
For a cheek that is red as cornelian-stone.

And a sixth these:

Thou, whose exceeding rigour hath slain me for desire,
O cassia-branch, whose planet mounts ever high and higher,
To thee of my affliction, my passion, I complain,
O thou whose cheeks consume me with roses red as fire!
Is there his like for lover, who damns his soul for thee,
Prayers and prostrations leaving, for all he is a friar?

And a seventh these:

My heart she prisoned and the tears from out mine eyes set free,
My patience rent and love-longing she fortified in me.
Sweet are her attributes, but, ah, how sour her rigour is!
The hearts of all, who light on her, with arrows shooteth she.
O thou who blamest me, desist; repent thee for the past;
For, in the case of passion, thou mayst not believéd be.

And on like wise all the rest of the monks repeated verses and wept. As for Danis, lamentation and weeping redoubled on him, for that he found no way to her enjoyment, and he chanted the following verses:

My patience failed me, when my loves took leave and fared away,
When they, my wish and my desire, forsook me, sooth to say.
Soft with their camels, O thou guide o' the litters!
Haply yet They to my dwelling to return may deign some blessed day.
Slumber forsook my lids the day we parted; my delight
Departed with them and my woes waxed on me for dismay.
To God I make my moan of that I suffer for her love;
My body's wasted sore and she hath caused my strength decay.

Then, despairing of her, they took counsel together and agreed to fashion her image [and set it up] with them, and applied themselves to this till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies.

Meanwhile, Zein el Mewasif fared on, without ceasing, till she reached her own house and opened the doors. Then she entered and sent to her sister Nesim, who rejoiced exceedingly at the news of her return and brought her the furniture and precious stuffs [she had left in her charge]. So she furnished the house and hung up the curtains over the doors and burnt aloes-wood and musk and ambergris and other perfumes, till the whole house reeked with the most delightful fragrance: after which she donned her finest clothes and ornaments and sat talking with her maids, whom she had left behind, and relating to them all that had befallen her. Then she turned to Huboub and giving her money, bade her fetch them something to eat. So she brought meat and drink and when they had made an end of eating and drinking, Zein el Mewasif bade Huboub go and see where Mesrour was and how it fared with him.

Now Mesrour knew not of her return, but abode in sore concern and sorrow that might not be overpast; no peace remained to him nor was patience possible to him. Whenas love and passion and yearning and distraction waxed on him, he would solace himself by reciting verses and go to the house and kiss its walls. It chanced that he went out that day to the place where he had parted from his mistress and repeated the following verses:

That which for thee I suffer I would have hid; but, nay,
'Twould out, and sleep for waking mine eyes have bartered aye.
Since that wanhope doth canker my heart both night and day,
I cry aloud, 'O Fortune, hold back thy hand, I pray,
For lo, my soul is straitened 'twixt peril and dismay.
If but the Lord of passion were just, indeed, to me,

Sure slumber from mine eyelids he had not bidden flee.
Have ruth upon a lover, who languishes for thee,
The great one of people, cast down by Love's decree,
The rich, whom love hath beggared and brought him to decay.
The censors still revile thee; I heed them not, not I,
But stop mine ears against them and give them back the lie.
Still will I keep my troth-plight with her I love.
They cry, 'Thou lovest one departed and gone;' and I reply,
'Enough; when Fate descendeth, the sight is blinded aye.'

Then he returned to his lodging and sat there weeping, till sleep overcame him, when he saw in a dream as if Zein el Mewasif were come to the house, and awoke, weeping. So he set off to go thither, repeating the following verses:

How shall I be consoled for her whose am I, every jot,
When all my heart's aglow with flames than coals of fire more hot?
To Allah of the shifts of Fate, the nights' vicissitudes
And of her absence I complain, whom well I love, God wot.
When shall we meet, O term of heart's desire? O full-moon face,
When shall the favouring Fates to me reunion allot?

As he made an end of his recitation, he found himself in Zein el Mewasif's street and smelt the sweet savour of the perfumes with which she had incensed the house; wherefore his heart fluttered and was like to leave his breast and desire flamed up in him and distraction redoubled upon him, when, behold, up came Huboub, on her way to do her mistress's errand. When she saw him, she went up to him and saluting him, gave him the glad news of her mistress's return, saying, 'She hath sent me to bid thee to her.' Whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and she took him and returned with him to the house.

When Zein el Mewasif saw him, she came down to him from the couch and kissed him and embraced him and he her; nor did they leave kissing and embracing till they swooned away for stress of love and separation. They lay a long while senseless, and when they revived, Zein el Mewasif bade Huboub fetch her a gugglet of sherbet of sugar and another of sherbet of lemons. So she brought what she desired and they sat eating and drinking till nightfall, when they fell to recalling all that had befallen them, first and last. Then she acquainted him with her conversion to Islam, whereat he rejoiced and became a Muslim. On like wise did her women, and they all repented to God the Most High [of their infidelity]. On the morrow she sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and told them that she was a widow and had completed the period of purification and was minded to marry Mesrour. So they drew up the marriage-contract between them and they abode in all delight of life.

Meanwhile, the Jew, when the people of Aden released him from prison, set out homeward and fared on, without stopping, till he came within three days' journey of the city, when Zein el Mewasif heard of his coming and calling Huboub, said to her, 'Go to the Jews' burial-place and there dig a grave and plant on it sweet basil and jessamine and sprinkle water thereabout. If the Jew come and ask thee of me, answer,

"My mistress died twenty days ago of chagrin on thine account." If he say, "Show me her tomb," take him to the [mock] grave and weep over it and make moan and lament before him.' And Huboub answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then they laid up the furniture in the store-closets, and Zein el Mewasif removed to Mesrour's lodging, where he and she abode eating and drinking, till the three days were past; at the end of which time the Jew arrived and knocked at the door of his house. Quoth Huboub, 'Who is at the door?' And he answered, 'Thy master.' So she opened to him and he saw the tears coursing down her cheeks and said to her, 'What ails thee to weep and where is thy mistress?' Quoth she, 'My mistress is dead of chagrin on thine account.' When he heard this, he wept sore and was confounded and said, 'O Huboub, where is her tomb?' So she carried him to the Jews' burial-ground and showed him the grave she had dug; and he wept sore and recited the following verses:

Two things there are, for which if eyes wept tear on tear
Of blood, till they were like, indeed, to disappear,
They never could fulfil the tithe of all their due;
And these are prime of youth and loss of lovelings dear.

Then he wept again and recited these also:

Alas my grief! My fortitude bewrays me for my fair:
Since she I love is gone, I die of misery and despair.
Woe's me for my beloved's loss! How sore it is on me!
And O the rending of my heart for that I did whilere!
Would I my secret in my time had not revealed and eke
The passion in my heart that seethed had still kept hidden there!
I was in all delight of life and solace; now she's gone,
To misery and abjectness, alack! I'm vowed fore'er.
Huboub, thou stirred me to lament with tidings of her death
Who of all creatures was my stay and solace against care.
Zein el Mewasif, would to God that severance had not been!
Would he, through whom my soul forsook my body, had been ne'er!
I do repent me of the breach of vows and blame myself
For my neglect of her on whom my hopes still builded were.

When he had made an end of saying this, he wept and groaned and lamented till he fell down in a swoon, whereupon Huboub made haste to drag him to the grave and throw him in, whilst he was yet insensible. Then she stopped up the grave on him and returning to her mistress, told her what had passed, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and recited the following verses:

Fate swore 'twould plague me without cease nor leave to make me rue:
Thine oath is broken, Fate; so look thou fitting penance do.
The censor's dead and he I love conjoined is with me;
Up then unto the summoner of joys, and quickly too!

Then she and Mesrour abode with each other in eating and drinking and sport and pleasure and good cheer, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies and Slayer of sons and daughters.

Ali Noureddin and the Frank King's Daughter.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the parts of Cairo, a merchant named Tajeddin, who was of the most considerable of the merchants and of the chiefs of the freeborn [of the city]. He was given to travelling to all parts and loved to fare over desert and down and stony waste and to journey to the islands of the sesame in quest of dirhems and dinars: wherefore he had in his time encountered dangers and suffered hardships of gavel, such as would make little children gray. He was possessed of slaves and servants, white and black and male and female, and was the wealthiest of the merchants of his time and the goodliest of them in speech, owning horses and mules and Bactrian and other camels and sacks, great and small, and goods and merchandise and stuffs beyond compare, such as Hems muslins and Baalbek silks and brocades and Merv cottons and Indian stuffs and Baghdad gauzes and Moorish burnouses and Turkish white slaves and Abyssinian eunuchs and Greek slave-girls and Egyptian boys; and the coverings of his bales were of gold-embroidered silk, for he was abundantly wealthy. Moreover he was accomplished in goodliness, stately of Port and pleasant of composition, even as saith of him one of his describers:

A certain merchant once I did espy,
Between whose lovers war raged fierce and high.
Quoth he, 'What ails the folk to clamour thus?'
''Tis for thy sake, O merchant,' answered I.

And saith another in his praise lad sail well and accomplisheth the wish of him:

A merchant came to visit us, whoso eye
Did with its glance my heart still stupefy.
Quoth he, 'What ails thee to be thus amazed?'
'On thine account, O merchant,' answered I.

He had a son called Ali Noureddin, as he were the full moon whenas it waxeth on its fourteenth night, a marvel of beauty and grace, elegant of shape and accomplished in symmetry who was sitting one day in his father's shop, selling and buying and giving and taking, as was his wont, when the sons of the merchants encompassed him about and he was amongst them as the moon among stars, with flower-white forehead and rosy cheeks, covered with tender down, and body like alabaster, even as saith of him the poet:

A fair one said, 'Describe me well;'
And I, 'In grace thou dost excel.
Yea, speaking briefly, all in thee
Is lovely and acceptable.'

And as saith of him one of his describers:

A mole on as cheek he hath, as 'twere a grain
Of ambergris on alabaster plate,

And swordlike glances that proclaim aloud
Against Love's rebels, 'Allah is Most Great.'

The young merchants invited him [to go with them], saying, 'O my lord Noureddin, we wish thee to go this day a-pleasuring with us in such a garden.' And he answered, '[Wait] till I consult my father, for I cannot go without his consent.' As they were talking, up came Tajeddin, and his son turned to him and said, 'O my father, the sons of the merchants have invited me to go a-pleasuring with them in such a garden. Dost thou give me leave to go?' 'Yes, O my son,' answered his father; 'go with them;' and gave him money.

So he mounted a mule and the other young men mounted mules and asses, and they all rode till they came to a garden, wherein was all the soul desireth and that charmeth the eye. It was high walled and had a vaulted gateway, with a portico like a saloon and a sky-blue door, as it were one of the gates of Paradise. Moreover, the name of the door-keeper was Rizwan, and over the gate were trained a hundred trellises of grapes of various colours, the red like coral, the black like negroes' faces and the white like pigeons' eggs, growing in clusters and singly: even as saith of them the poet:

Grapes, as the taste of wine their savour is, I trow:
The black thereof in hue are as the corby-crow,
And shining midst the leaves, like women's fingers dipped
In henna or the like of dye, the white grapes show.

And as saith another:

Grape-clusters, that show, on their stalks as they sway,
Like my body for languishment wasted away.
Like honey and water in vases are they
And their juice becomes wine, after sourness, one day.

Then they entered the arbour [that led into the garden] and saw there the gate-keeper sitting, as he were Rizwan, guardian of Paradise, and on the door were written these verses:

A garden watered was of God, until its clusters leant
And dangled all and for excess of drink, its branches bent.
When in the Eastern zephyr's hand its sapling dance and sway,
The clouds with fresh pearls handsel them for very ravishment.

And within the arbour were written the following verses:

Enter with us, O friend, this garden fair,
That cleanses from the heart its rust of care.
Its zephyrs stumble in their skirts [for haste]
And in their sleeve its flowers laugh everywhere.

So they entered and found within fruits of all kinds and birds of all sorts and colours, such as the ringdove and the nightingale and the curlew and the turtle and the cushat, carolling on the branches. Therein were streams that ran with limpid water and delightsome flowers, and it was even as saith of it the poet:

The zephyr o'er its branches breathes and sways them to and fro, As they were girls that in their skirts still stumble as they go;
And like to swords, whenas the hands of horsemen draw them forth From out their scabbards' enveloped its silver channels show.

And again:

The river passes by and laves the branches with its flood
And still it mirrors in its heart the younglings of the wood;
Which when the zephyr notes, it hastes to them for jealousy
And forces them to bend away from out its neighbourhood.

On the trees of the garden were all manner fruits, each in two kinds, and amongst them the pomegranate, as it were a ball of silver dross, whereof saith the poet and saith well:

Pomegranates, fine-skinned, like the breasts of a maid,
Whenas, rounded and firm, to the sight they're displayed.
When I peel them, appear to us rubies galore,
Such as well may the wit with amazement invade.

And as quoth another:

To him, who seeks to come at its inside, there are displayed
Rubies together pressed and clad in raiment of brocade.
I liken the pomegranate, when I look on it, to domes
Of alabaster or to breasts of unpolluted maid.
Therein is healing for the sick and thereanent to us
A saying of the Prophet pure tradition hath conveyed.
Yea, and a word most eloquent, written in the
Book, thereof God (may His majesty fore'er be magnified!) hath said.

There were apples, sugar and musk and Damani, amazing the beholder, whereof saith the poet:

The apple in itself two hues, that image to the sight
The cheeks of lover and belov'd foregathering, doth unite;
Upon the boughs like two extremes of wonder they appear,
This dark and swarthy to behold, and ruddy that and bright.
Whenas they clipped, a spy appeared and frighted them; so this
Flushed for confusion and that paled for passion and despite.

There also were apricots of various kinds, almond and camphor and Jilani and Antabi, whereof says the poet:

The almond-apricot most like a lover is,
To whom his loved one came and dazed his wit and will.
The traits of passion's slave that mark it are enough;
Its outward's yellow, and its heart is broken still.

And saith another and saith well:

In the apricot's coverage whole gardens there be:
Consider them straitly their brightness thou'll see.
When the boughs bloom in spring-time, it blossoms with them,
Like the soft-shining stars, midst the leaves on the tree.

There likewise were plums and thence: and grapes that heal the sick of [all] diseases and do away giddiness and bile from the head; and figs on the branches, parcel red and green, amazing sight and sense even as saith the poet:

'Tis as the fig, whose whiteness, with mingling green bedight,
Amongst the tree-leaves fruited, appeareth to the sight,
Where Greeks on palace-turrets that keep the ward: the shades
Close o'er them and in darkness they watch the livelong night.

And saith another and saith well:

Hail to the fig! It comes to us On dishes in fair order laid,
As 'twere a table-cloth, drawn up Into a bag, without string's aid.

And saith a third alike well:

Give me the fig, with beauty that's clad and good to eat:
Its outward with its inward accordeth, as is meet.
It fruiteth and thou pluckst it, and when thou eatst thereof,
As camomiles its smell is, its taste as sugar sweet;
And when into its platters 'tis poured, it seemeth balls
Made of green silk and fashioned in goodliness complete.

And how excellent is the saying of one of them:

Quoth they (and I on the fig, forsooth, was wont my fill to feed
And Made no count of the other fruits to which they gave the meed,)
'Why dost thou love the fig?' And I, 'The fig hath its folk,' replied;
'And the sycamore fruit hath folk and folk thereto, in very deed.'

And still goodlier that of another:

The fig to me is pleasing above all fruits that be,
Whenas it's ripe and dangles upon its shining tree.
What while the clouds are raining, for fear of God Most High,
Full many a tear it sheddeth, as 'twere a devotee.

There were also pears of various kinds, Sinai, Aleppo and Greek, growing singly and in clusters, parcel green and parcel yellow, amazing the beholder, as saith of them the poet:

Fair fall thee of a pear, whose hue is grown
Even as a lover pale for love and moan;
Like to a virgin in her harem shut,
Her face by curtains half concealed, Half shown.

And Sultani peaches of various shades of red and yellow whereof saith the poet:

'Tis as the peach, i' the gardens, when with red,
Like unto dragon's blood, 'tis all o'erspread,
Were very balls of yellow gold, whose cheeks
Are dyed with gouts of blood upon them shed.

And green almonds of exceeding sweetness, resembling the heart of the palm-tree, with their kernels hidden within three tunics of the handiwork of the Munificent King, even as is said of them:

A tender body, various of attributes and pent
In tunics three, the handiwork of God Omnipotent.
Duresse envelopes it both night and day and therewithal
It doth, though guiltless of offence, endure imprisonment.

And as well saith another:

Dost thou not see the almonds, when from the parent stem
The gentle hand of a plucker pulls and detaches them?
The peeling of them shows us the kernels therewithin,
As when from one an oyster one pulls the hidden gem.

And as saith a third better than he:

How goodly is the almond green! The smallest fills the hand, I ween.
Its nap is as the down upon A minion's cheeks of satin sheen.
Double and single, as may chance, Its kernels in the husk are seen,
As pearls they were of lucent white, That cased and lapped in beryls been.

And as saith yet another and saith well:

Mine eyes have not looked on the like of the almond
For beauty, with blossoms in spring-time bedight.
Whilst the down on its cheek in the leaf-time yet sprouteth,
Its head is already for hoariness white.

And jujube-plums of various colours, growing singly and in clusters, whereof saith one, describing them:

Look at the jujube-plums, upon the branches all arrayed,
Like wonder-goodly apricots (to dry) on osiers laid.
Such is their brightness that they seem, to the beholder's eye,
As cascabels of gold they were, of purest bullion made.

And as saith another and saith well:

The lote-tree doth itself array
In some fresh beauty every day.
'Tis as the fruit upon it were
(And th' eye so deems it, sooth to say,)
Hawks' bells of vegetable gold
That swing from every branch and spray.

And [blood] oranges, as they were galingale, whereof quoth the poet El Welhan:

Red oranges, that fill the hand, upon the boughs arow,
Shining with loveliness; without they're fire, within they're snow.
Snow, for a marvel, melting not, though joined with firs it be,
And fire that burns not, strange to say, for all its ruddy glow.

And quoth another and quoth well:

Trees of blood oranges, whose fruit, in beauty manifold,
Unto his eye who draweth near, its brightness to behold,
Like unto women's cheeks appears, who have adorned themselves
And decked them out for festival in robe of cloth of gold.

And yet another:

The hills of oranges, what time the zephyrs o'er them glide
And to their touch the branches bend and sway from side to side,
Are like to cheeks, wherein there glows the light of loveliness
And to meet which come other cheeks at salutation-tide.

And a fourth:

One day of a young gazelle that he should praise
Our garden and oranges we did require.
Quoth he, 'Your garden to me is as my face,
And whoso gathers its oranges gathers fire.'

And citrons in colour as virgin gold, dropping from on high and dangling among the branches, as they were ingots of vegetable gold, as saith thereof the poet El Welhan:

Hast thou not seen a fruited wood of citrons, laden all
So heavily that, when they bend, one feareth lest they fall?
When the breeze passed o'er them, as 'twere with ingots of pure gold
It Seemed the bough were laden. cast in many a gleaming ball.

And shaddocks, that hung among their boughs, an they were the breasts of gazelle-like virgins contenting the utmost of desire, as saith of them the poet and saith well:

A shaddock, midst the garden ways, I saw, its leaves between,
On a fresh branch, as a maid's shape with symmetry beseen.
When the wind bent it here and there, its fruits all rolled about,
As balls of gold they were, at end of malls of beryl green.

And the lemon, sweet of savour, which resembles a hen's egg, but yellowness is the ornament of its ripe fruit, and its fragrance heartens him who plucks it, as saith the poet of it:

Beholdst not the lemon, that, whenas on high
It shineth, for brilliancy dazzles the eye?
Meseemeth as if 'twere a hen's egg, indeed,
That the hand of the huckster with saffron doth dye.

Moreover in this garden were all manner sweet-scented herbs and plants and fragrant powers, such as jessamine and henna and water-lilies and spikenard and roses of all kinds and plaintain and myrtle and so forth: and indeed it was without parallel, seeming as it were a piece of Paradise to him who beheld it. If a sick man entered it, he came forth from it like a raging lion, and the tongue availeth not to its description, by reason of that which was therein of wonders and rarities that are not found but in Paradise: and how should it not be thus, when its door- keeper's name was Rizwan? Though widely different were their stations.

When the sons of the merchants had walked about the garden and taken their pleasure therein [awhile], they sat down in one of its pavilions and seated Noureddin in their midst on a rug of leather of Et Taif, embroidered with gold, leaning on a round cushion of minever, stuffed with ostrich down. And they gave him a fan of ostrich feathers whereon were written the following verses:

A fan, whose breath is fragrant; it calleth aye to mind
The days of joy and solace, when fortune still was kind,
And to the face of noble and freeborn youths restore
Their sweetness at all seasons, with its perfumed wind.

Then they laid by their turbans and [upper] clothes and sat talking and contending with one another in discourse, while they all kept their eyes fixed on Noureddin and gazed on his beauty. Presently, up came a slave with a tray on his head, wherein were dishes of china and crystal containing meats of all sorts, whatever walks [the earth] or wings the air or swims the waters, such as grouse and quails and pigeons and mutton and chickens and the most delicate of fish, for one of the young men had given the people of his house a charge of this, before coming forth to the garden. So, the tray being set before them, they fell to and ate their fill; and when they had made an end of eating, they rose from meat and washed their hands with pure water and soap scented with musk, and dried them with napkins embroidered with silk and bugles; but to Noureddin they brought a napkin laced with red gold, on which he wiped his hands.

Then coffee was served up and each drank what he would, after which they sat talking, till presently the keeper of the garden went away and returning with a basket full of roses, said to them, 'What say ye to flowers, O my masters?' Quoth one of them, 'They are welcome, especially roses, which are not to be refused.' 'It is well,' answered the gardener: 'but it is of our wont not to give roses but in exchange for some contribution to the general amusement; so whoso would have aught thereof let him recite some apposite verses.' Now they were ten in number; so one of them said, 'Agreed: give me [of them], and I will recite thee somewhat of verse apt to the case.' So the gardener gave him a bunch of roses and he recited these verses:

The rose I honour over all,
Because its beauties never pall.
All fragrant flowers are troops and it
Their Amir most majestical.
When it's away, they're proud; but if
It come, straightway they own them thrall.

Then he gave another a bunch and he recited the following verses:

Glory to thee my lord the rose! The scent
Of musk recalls the fragrance thou dost shed.
Thou'rt like a maid, on whom her lover looks
And with her sleeves she covers up her head.

Then he gave a third a bunch and he recited these verses:

A precious rose, the heart of man it gladdeneth with its sight;
Its scent the best of ambergris recalleth to the spright.
The branches strain it in its leaves for joyance, e'en as one
Kisseth a mouth that knoweth nought of rigour or despite.

Then he gave a fourth a bunch and he recited these verses:

Seest not the rose-bush in blossom? Each mounted on its cane,
Full many a marvel it holdeth, that ravish heart and brain.
As they were rubies with beryl encompassed about, they show,
And each in the midst of its calyx doth somewhat of gold contain.

Then he gave a bunch to a fifth and he recited these verses:

Wands of green beryl fruit did bear, and when 'twas ripe, behold,
As ingots to the sight it was of vegetable gold.
Ay, and the crystal drops that fell from out the tender leaves,
Meseemed, were like to very tears from languorous eyelids rolled.

Then he gave a sixth a bunch and he recited the following verses:

O rose, thou dost all charms comprise, that may amuse the wit,
And God to thee the pleasantest of secrets doth commit.
Meseems as if a loved one's cheek it were and eke as if
A longing lover with a piece of gold had handselled it.

Then he gave a bunch to a seventh and he recited these verses:

I said to the rose, 'What ails thy thorns to be
So swift to wound and hurt all those that touch thy charms?'
It answered, 'All the flowers my soldiers are, in sooth,
And I their Sultan am and these my thorns my arms.'

And he gave an eighth a bunch and he recited the following:

God watch o'er a rose that's grown yellow and bright,
Resplendent, pure gold as it were to the sight,
And guard the fair boughs that have borne it, to boot,
With the mock yellow suns of its flowerage bedight!

Then he gave a bunch to a ninth and he recited these verses:

The yellow roses stir to gladness uncontrolled
The heart of every slave of passion, young or old.

A shrub that, strange to say, is water given to drink
Of silver and for fruit, bears vegetable gold!

Then he gave a bunch of roses to the tenth and last and he recited the following verses:

Seest not the hosts of the rose, in raiment red
And yellow that glitter from out their blossoming-stead?
I liken the yellow rose, with its thorn therein,
To an emerald lance, through a golden target sped.

Then the gardener brought the wine-service and setting it before them, on a tray of porcelain sprayed with red gold, recited the following verses:

Dawn heraldeth the light; so pour me out, I pray,
Of wine, such wine as makes the faintest-hearted gay.
So pure and bright it is, that whether wine in cup
Or cup in wine be held, i' faith, 'tis hard to say.

Then he filled and drank and the cup went round, till it came to Noureddin's turn, whereupon the gardener filled the cup and handed it to him; but he said, 'I know not this thing nor have I ever drunken thereof, for therein is a great sin and the Almighty Lord hath forbidden it in His book.' 'O my lord Noureddin,' answered the gardener, 'if thou forbear to drink only by reason of the sin, verily God (blessed and exalted be He!) is bountiful, mild, forgiving and compassionate and pardoneth the greatest sins. His mercy embraceth all things and be it upon the poet who says:

Be as thou wilt and banish dread and care,
For God is bountiful and debonair;
So of two things, the doing hurt to men
And giving God a partner, thou beware.'

Then said one of the sons of the merchants, 'My life on thee, O my lord Noureddin, drink of this cup!' And another conjured him by the oath of divorce and yet another stood before him, till he was ashamed and taking the cup from the gardener, drank a mouthful, but spat it out again, saying, 'It is bitter.' 'O my lord Noureddin,' said the gardener, 'knowest thou not that the sweetest things, when taken by way of medicine, are bitter? Were this not bitter, it would lack of the [many] virtues it possesseth; amongst which are that it digesteth food and doth away care and anxiety and dispelleth vapours and clarifieth the blood and cleareth the complexion and enliveneth the body and hearteneth the poltroon and fortifieth the sexual power; but to name all its virtues would be tedious. Quoth one of the poets:

We'll drink, for God His clemency encompasseth the soul
On every side: I medicine my ailments with the bowl;
And nought (for well I know its sin) save God His saw,
'Therein Are for the folk advantages,' doth me thereto cajole.

Then he opened one of the cupboards there and taking out a loaf of reined sugar, broke of a great piece, which he put in Noureddin's cup, saying, 'O my lord, if thou fear to drink wine, because of its bitterness, drink now, for it is sweet.' So he took the

cup and emptied it: whereupon one of his comrades filled him another, saying, 'I am thy slave,' and another [did the like], saying, 'I am one of thy servants,' and a third said, 'For my sake!' and a fourth, 'God on thee, O my lord Noureddin, heal my heart!' And so they plied him with wine, till they had made him drink ten cups.

Now Noureddin's body wag virgin [of wine-bibbing], nor all his life had he drunken wine till then, wherefore its fumes mounted to his brain and drunkenness was stark upon him and he stood up (and indeed his tongue was embarrassed and his speech thick) and said, 'O company, by Allah, ye are fair and your speech and place are goodly, but there needs the hearing of sweet music; for drink without music lacks the chief of its essentials, even as saith the poet:

Pass round the cup to the old and the young man, too,
And take the bowl from the hand of the shining moon,
But without music, I charge you, forbear to drink;
I see even horses drink to a whistled tune.'

Therewith up rose the gardener and mounting one of the young men's mules, was absent awhile, after which he returned with a girl of Cairo, as she were a delicate fat sheep's tail or pure silver or a dinar in a porcelain dish or a gazelle in the desert. She had a face that put to shame the shining sun and bewitching eyes and brows like bended bows and rosy cheeks and pearly teeth and sugared lips and languishing glances and ivory breasts and slender body, full of folds and dimples, and buttocks like stuffed pillows and thighs like columns of Syrian marble, and between them what was like a sachet [of spices] folded in a wrapper. Quoth the poet of her:

A fair one, to idolaters if she herself should show,
They'd leave their idols and her face for only Lord would know.
If in the Eastward she appeared unto a monk, for sure
He'd cease from turning to the West and to the East bend low;
And if into the briny sea one day she chanced to spit,
Assuredly the salt sea's floods straight fresh and sweet would grow.

And quoth another:

More brilliant than the moon at full, with liquid languorous eyes,
She seems an antelope that takes the lion-whelps to prize.
The midnight of her locks lets fall o'er her a tent of hair,
Unfixed of tent-pegs, that protects her beauty from the spies.
The fire, that in th' unfading rose still burneth of her cheek,
Is fed with entrails that consume and hearts and lovers' sighs.
An if the beauties of the time beheld her, unto her,
Saying, 'Unto the precedent the palm,' they would arise.

And how well saith a third:

Three things for ever hinder her to visit us, for fear
Of the intriguing spy and eke the rancorous envier;
Her forehead's lustre and the sound of all her ornaments
And the sweet scent her creases hold of ambergris and myrrh.

Grant with the border of her sleeve she hide her brow and doff
Her ornaments, how shall she do her scent away from her?

She was like the moon, when it appears on its fourteenth night, and was clad in a garment of blue, with a veil of green, over a flower-white forehead, that amazed all wits and confounded those of understanding. And indeed she was possessed of the utmost grace and beauty and symmetry, as it were she of whom the poet would speak when he saith:

She comes in a robe the colour of ultramarine,
Blue as the stainless sky unflecked with white.
I view her with yearning eyes and she seems to me
A moon of the summer set in a winter's night.

And how goodly is the saying of another and how excellent!

She came unto me, straitly veiled, and I to her did say,
'Thy face, the bright, resplendent moon, uncover and display.'
Quoth she, 'I fear reproach,' and I, 'Forbear this idle talk:
Let not the shifts of time and fate affright thee or dismay.'
So from her face she raised the veil that hid her charms and tears
Upon the jewels of her cheeks fell, like a crystal spray.
Indeed, I thought to kiss her cheek, that thereanent to
God She might make moan of me upon the Resurrection Day;
So were we twain the first to plead of lovers, each 'gainst each,
Whenas the dead shall rise, before the Lord whom all obey;
And I, 'Prolong our standing-up and reckoning,' would say,
'That so mine eyes may feed their fill upon my loved one aye.'

Then said the gardener to her, 'O lady of fair ones and mistress of every shining star, know that we sought not, in bringing thee hither, but that thou shouldst entertain this comely youth here, my lord Noureddin, for he hath only come to this place this day.' And she answered, saying, 'Would thou hadst told me, that I might have brought what I have with me!' 'O my lady,' rejoined the gardener, 'I will go and fetch it to thee.' 'As thou wilt,' replied she: and he said, 'Give me a token.' So she gave him a handkerchief and he went away in haste and returned after awhile, bearing a bag of green satin, with cords of gold. She took the bag from him and opening it, shook it, whereupon there fell thereout two-and-thirty pieces of wood, which she fitted, one into another, till they became a polished lute of Indian workmanship.

Then she uncovered her wrist and laying the lute in her lap, bent over it, as the mother bends over her child, and swept the strings with the tips of her fingers; whereupon it moaned and resounded and yearned after its former habitations; and it remembered the waters that gave it to drink [whilst yet in the tree,] and the earth whence it sprang and wherein it grew up and the carpenters who cut it and the polishers who polished it and the merchants who exported it and the ships that carried it; and it cried out and wailed and lamented; and it was as if she questioned it of all these things and it answered her with the tongue of the case, reciting the following verses:

Whilom I was a tree, wherein the nightingales did nest;
Whilst green my head, I swayed for them with longing and unrest.
They made melodious moan on me, and I their plaining learnt,
And so my secret was by this lament made manifest.
The woodman felled me to the earthy though guiltless of offence,
And wrought of me a slender lute, by singers' hands carest;
But, when their fingers sweep my strings, they tell that I am slain,
One with duresse amongst mankind afflicted and oppress;
Wherefore each boon-companion, when he heareth my lament,
Grows mad with love and drunkenness o'ermasters every guest,
And God inclineth unto me their hearts and I indeed
Am to the highest place advanced in every noble breast.
All who in loveliness excel do clip my waist and in
The arms of every languorous-eyed gazelle my form is prest.
May God the Lord ne'er sever us, nor live the loved one aye
Who with estrangement and disdain her lover would molest!

Then she was silent awhile, but presently taking the lute in her lap, bent over it, as the mother bends over her child, and preluded in many different modes; then, returning to the first, she sang the following verses:

An they'd unto the lover incline or visit pay,
From off his back the burden of longing he might lay.
A nightingale o' the branches vies with him, as she were
A lover whose beloved hath lighted far away.
Up and awake! The midnights of love-delight are clear
And bright, With union's splendour, as very break of day.
Behold, to love and joyance the lute-strings summon us
And eke to-day our enviers are heedless of our play.
Seest not that unto pleasance four several things, to wit,
Rose, gilly-flower and myrtle and lights unite alway?
And here today assemble four things, by favouring fate,
Lover, beloved, money and wine, to make us gay.
So seize upon thy fortune i' the world; for its delights
Pass by and but traditions and chronicles do stay.

When Noureddin heard this, he looked on her with eyes of love and could scarce contain himself for the violence of his inclination to her; and on like wise was it with her, because she looked at the company who were present of the sons of the merchants and at Noureddin and saw that he was amongst the rest as the moon among stars; for that he was sweet of speech and full of amorous grace, perfect in beauty and brightness and loveliness and accomplished in symmetry, pure of all defect, blander than the zephyr and more delicate than Tesnim, as saith of him the poet:

By his cheeks' unfading damask and his smiling teeth I swear,
By the arrows that he feathers with the witchery of his air,
By his sides so soft and tender and his glances bright and keen,

By the whiteness of his forehead and the blackness of his hair,
By his arched imperious eyebrows, chasing slumber from my lids
With their yeas and noes that hold me 'twixt rejoicing and despair,
By the scorpions that he launches from his ringlet-clustered brows,
Seeking still to slay his lovers with his rigours unaware,
By the myrtle of his whiskers and the roses of his cheek,
By his lips' incarnate rubies and his teeth's fine pearls and rare,
By the straight and tender sapling of his shape, which for its fruit
Doth the twin pomegranates, shining in his snowy bosom, wear,
By his heavy hips that tremble, both in motion and repose,
And the slender waist above them, all too slight their weight to bear,
By the silk of his apparel and his quick and sprightly wit,
By all attributes of beauty that are fallen to his share;
Lo, the musk exhales its fragrance from his breath, and eke the breeze
From his scent the perfume borrows, that it scatters everywhere.
Yea, the sun in all his splendour cannot with his brightness vie
And the crescent moon's a fragment that he from his nails doth pare.

Her verses pleased him and he swayed from side to side for drunkenness and fell a-praising her and saying:

A luting maiden stole away
Our wits for drunkenness one day.
"Twas God the Lord that gifted us
With speech,' her strings to us did say.

When she heard this, she looked at him with eyes of love and redoubled in passion and desire for him increased upon her, and indeed she marvelled at his beauty and grace and symmetry, so that she could not contain herself but took the lute again and sang the following:

He chides me, if I look on him, and with disdain
Entreats me, though my life is his for weal and bane;
Yea, he repelleth me; yet what is in my heart He knows as if
God's self to him had made it plain.
His likeness have I drawn midmost my palm and charged
Mine eyes make moan for him and over him complain.
Mine eyes will look on none save him, nor will my heart
Aid me his cruelty with patience to sustain.
Wherefore, O thou my heart, I'll tear thee from my breast,
For that thou art of those that envy me the swain.
Whenas I say, 'O heart, be comforted,' 'tis vain;
To turn to any else than him it will not deign.

Noureddin wondered at the beauty of her song and the sweetness of her voice and the eloquence of her speech and his wit fled for stress of love and longing and distraction, so that he could not refrain from her a moment, but bent to her and strained her to his bosom; and she in like manner abandoned herself to his caresses

and kissed him between the eyes. Then he kissed her on the mouth and they played at kisses with one another, after the manner of the billing of doves, till the others were distracted and rose to their feet; whereupon Noureddin was abashed and held his hand from her. Then she took her lute and preluding thereon in many different modes, returned to the first and sang the following verses:

A moon, he draws from out his lids, whenas he turns and sways,
A sword and puts gazelles to shame, whenas he stands at gaze.
A king, his all-surpassing charms his troops are, and for arms,
His shape is like the spear of cane, whose straightness all men praise.
An if his heart were but as soft as is his waist, no more
Would he against his lovers sin nor fright them with affrays.
Alas the hardness of his heart and softness of his waist!
Why is not this to that transferred? Is there no way of ways?
O thou that blam'st me for his love, excuse me rather thou:
Thine be his beauty's part etern and mine that which decays!

When Noureddin heard the sweetness of her voice and the beauty of her verses, he inclined to her for delight and could not contain himself for excess of wonderment; so he recited these lines:

Methought she was the very sun of morning's self, until
She veils her; but the fire she lit flames in my entrails still.
What had it irked her, ho she signed and with her finger-tips
A friendly salutation waved to us? Where were the ill?
The railer saw her face and said (what while her charms that pass
All other beauty did his wit with stupefaction fill,)
'Is this then she for whom thou rav'st with longing for her love?
Indeed, thou hast excuse.' And I, ''Tis she who doth me thrill
With arrows of her looks, nor can my abject, broken case
Of strangerhood to pity move her unrelenting will.'
I am become a slave of love, with heart enchained; I groan
Day long and night long, ay, and weep with tears, as 'twere a rill.

She marvelled at his eloquence and grace and taking her lute, smote thereon after the goodliest of fashions repeating all the melodies, and sang the following verses:

As thy face liveth, O thou the life of my spirit, I swear,
I cannot remove from thy love, if I do or I do not despair.
If, indeed, thou be cruel, in dreams thy phantom is favouring and kind,
And if thou be absent, thy thought is my cheering companion fore'er.
O thou that hast saddened my sight, though thou knowst that I seek not for aught
To cheer me, nor aught but thy love I long for, to solace my care,
Thy cheeks are twin roses, the dews of thy mouth are as wine to the taste;
Wilt thou not then vouchsafe us thereof to drink in this pleasaunce so fair?

Her song moved Noureddin to the utmost wonder and delight and he answered her as follows:

The face o' the sun is not unveiled in the darkness of the night,
But is the far horizon's marge the full moon hides its light,
Nor doth her forehead meet the eye o' the morning, but. outfaced
By contrast, to the break of day for refuge it takes flight.
Take of the currents of my tears, as, chain on chain, they fall,
And on the readiest way of ways, the tale of love recite.
Oft unto her, who shoots at me her arrows, have I said,
'Hold thou thy hand; indeed my heart is cleft in sunder quite.
An if unto the River Nile my tears may likened be,
Meseems the love I bear to thee El Melec should be hight.'
Quoth she, 'Then bring me all thy good.' 'Take it,' said I and she,
'And thy sleep.' '[Take it] from mine eyes,' I answered her forthright.

When she heard Noureddin's words and noted the beauty of his eloquence, she was transported and her wit was dazed and love of him got hold upon her whole heart. So she pressed him to her bosom and fell to kissing him after the manner of doves billing, whilst he returned her caresses; but the vantage is to the first comer. When she had made an end of kissing, she took the lute and recited the following verses:

Ah, woe's us for a blamer, to censure ever prone,
Whether or no of passion to him I make my moan!
O thou that dost reject me, I had not thought that
I Should in thy love abasement meet with, and thou mine own.
I used to rail at lovers for love, and now to those,
Who blame thee, my abasement for thee I have made known.
The votaries of passion whilom I blamed; but now
I do excuse all lovers for passion overthrown;
And if, for thine estrangement, distress be sore on me,
God in thy name, O Ali, I'll pray and thine alone.

And also these:

Quoth his lovers, 'Except of the nectar so rare
Of his mouth he vouchsafe us to drink, debonair,
To the Lord of all creatures we'll make our complaint
And "O Ali!" we'll say with one voice in our prayer.'

Noureddin marvelled at the fluency of her tongue and praised her grace and exceeding seductiveness; whereupon she rose and putting off all that was upon her of [outer] clothes and trinkets, sat down on his knees and kissed him between the eyes and on the mole of his cheek. Then she gave him all she had put off, saying, 'O beloved of my heart, the gift is after the measure of the giver's capacity.' So he accepted this from her and gave it back to her and kissed her on the mouth and cheeks and eyes.

When this was done, (for nought endureth save God, the Living, the Eternal, Provider of the peacock and the owl), Noureddin rose from the place of session and stood upon his feet, for the darkness was now fallen and the stars shone out; whereupon quoth the damsel to him, 'Whither away, O my lord?' And he said, 'To my father's house.' Then the sons of the merchants conjured him to pass the night with

them, but he refused and mounting his mule, rode, without stopping, till he reached his father's house, where his mother met him and said to him, 'O my son, what hath kept thee abroad till this hour? By Allah, thou hast troubled thy father and myself by thine absence from us, and our hearts have been occupied with thee.' Then she came up to him, to kiss him on his mouth, and smelling the fumes of the wine, said, 'O my son, how is this? Art thou, after prayer and worship, become a wine-bibber and a transgressor of His word to whom belong creation and commandment?' But Noureddin threw himself down on the bed and lay there.

Presently in came his father and said:, 'What ails Noureddin to lie thus?' And his mother answered, saying, 'It would seem his head irketh him for the air of the garden.' So Tajeddin went up to his son, to question him of his ailment and salute him, and smelt the wine he had drunk. Now he loved not wine-drinkers; so he said to Noureddin, 'Out on thee, O my son! Is folly come to such a pass with thee, that thou drinkest wine?' When Noureddin heard this, he raised his hand, being yet in his drunkenness, and dealt him a buffet. As fate would leave it, the blow lit on his father's right eye [and struck it out] and it ran down on his cheek; whereupon he fell down in a swoon and lay therein awhile. They sprinkled rose-water on him till he came to himself, when he would have beaten Noureddin; but his wife withheld him, and he swore, by the oath of divorcement from her, that, as soon as it was day, he would assuredly cut off his son's right hand. When she heard her husband's words, her breast was straitened and she feared for her son and ceased not to soothe and appease Tajeddin, till sleep overcame him.

Then she waited till the moon was risen, when she went in to her son, whose drunkenness had now ceased from him, and said to him, 'O Noureddin' what is this foul thing thou hast done with thy father?' 'And what did I with him?' asked he. Quoth she, 'Thou dealtest him a buffet on the right eye and struckest it out; and he hath sworn by the oath of divorcement that, as soon as it is day, he will without fail cut off thy right hand.' Noureddin repented him of that which he had done, whenas repentance profited him nothing, and his mother said to him, 'O my son, this repentance will not profit thee; nor will aught serve thee but that thou arise forthright and seek safety in flight. Go forth the house privily and take refuge with one of thy friends and there await what God shall do, for He changeth case after case.'

Then she opened a chest and taking out a purse of a hundred dinars, said to Noureddin, 'O my son, take these dinars and provide thyself therewith, and when they are at an end, send and give me to know thereof that I may send thee other than these, and at the same time send me news of thyself privily. It may be God will decree thee relief and thou shalt return to thy dwelling.' And she bade him farewell and wept passing sore. Noureddin took the purse and was about to go forth, when he espied a great purse containing a thousand dinars, which his mother had forgotten beside the chest. So he took this also and tying the two purses about his middle, set out before dawn in the direction of Boulac, where he arrived whenas the day broke and all creatures arose, attesting the unity of God the Opener [of the gates of sustenance and mercy] and went forth each upon his several business, to suffer that which God had allotted to him.

He walked on along the river-bank till he saw a ship with her gangway out and her four grapnels made fast to the land. The folk were going up into her and coming down from her, and Noureddin, seeing some sailors standing there, asked them whither they were bound. 'To the city of Rosetta,' answered they; and he said, 'Take me with you.' Quoth they, 'Welcome and fair welcome to thee, O goodly youth!' So he betook himself forthright to the market and buying what he needed of victual and bedding and covering [for the voyage,] returned to the port and went on board the ship, which was ready to sail and tarried with him but a little while before it weighed anchor and fared on, without stopping, till it reached Rosetta, where Noureddin saw a small boat going to Alexandria. So he embarked in it and traversing the [Mehmoudiyeh] canal, fared on till he came to a bridge called El Jami, where he landed and entered Alexandria by the gate called the Gate of the Lote-tree.

God protected him, so that none of those who stood At the gate saw him, and he entered the city, which he found a strongly fortified city, goodly of pleasaunces, delightful to its inhabitants and inviting to abide therein. The season of winter had departed from it with its cold and the season of spring was come to it with its roses: its flowers were in blossom and its trees in full leaf; its fruits were ripe and its waters welled forth. Indeed, it was a city goodly of ordinance and construction; its folk were of the best of men, and when the gate thereof were shut, its people were in safety. And it was even as is said of it in the following verses:

'Describe Alexandria, I pray,'
Quoth I to a comrade one day,
A man of glib speech and quick wit.
''Tis a fair frontier town,' did he say.
Quoth I, 'Is there living therein?'
And he, 'If the wind blow that way.'

Or as saith one of the poets:

Alexandria's a frontier seat; The water of its lips is sweet. How fair the coming to it is, So one therein no raven meet!

Noureddin walked about the city till he came to the merchants' bazaar, whence he passed on to the bazaar of the money-changers and so on in turn to those of the confectioners and fruiterers and druggists, marvelling, as he went at the city, for that its qualities accorded with its name. As he walked in the druggists' bazaar, an old man came down from his shop and saluting him, took him by the hand and carried him to a fair by-street, swept and sprinkled, whereon the zephyr blew and was pleasant and the leaves of the trees overshaded it. Therein stood three houses and at the upper end a mansion, whose foundations were stablished in the water and its roofs rose up to the confines of the sky. The space before it was paved with marble, swept and sprinkled, and those who approached it smelt the fragrance of flowers, borne on the zephyr, which breathed upon the place, an it were one of the gardens of Paradise.

The old man carried Noureddin into the house and set food before him, whereof he ate with him. When they had made an end of eating, the druggist said to him, 'When camest thou hither from Cairo?' And Noureddin old man, 'What is thy name?'

And he replied, 'Ali Noureddin.' 'O my son, O Noureddin,' said the druggist, 'be the triple divorcement incumbent on me, if thou leave me so long as thou abidest in this town; and I will set thee apart a place wherein to dwell.' Quoth Noureddin, 'O my lord, let me know more of thee.' And the other answered, 'Know, O my son, that years ago I came to Cairo with merchandise, which I sold there and bought other, and I had occasion for a thousand dinars. So thy father paid them down for me, for all he had no knowledge of me, and would take no security of me, but had patience with me till I returned hither and sent him the amount by one of my servants, together with a present. I saw thee, whilst thou wast little, and if it please God the Most High, I will repay thee somewhat of the kindness thy father did me.' When Noureddin heard the old man's story, he smiled and showed joy and pulling out the purse of a thousand dinars, gave it to his host and said to him, 'Take charge of this for me, against I buy me therewith somewhat of merchandise whereon to trade.'

Then he abode some days in Alexandria, eating and drinking and making merry and taking his pleasure in its thoroughfares, till he had made an end of the hundred dinars he had kept by way of spending-money; whereupon he repaired to the old druggist, to take of him somewhat of the thousand dinars to spend, but found him not in his shop and sat down there, to await his return. As he sat thus, gazing right and left and amusing himself with watching the merchants and passers-by, there came into the bazaar a Persian riding on a mule and having behind him a damsel, as she were virgin silver or a turbot in a tank or a gazelle in the desert. Her face outvied the shining sun and she had bewitching eyes and breasts of ivory, teeth of pearl, slender body and dimpled sides and legs like fat sheep's tails; and indeed she was perfect in beauty and grace and symmetry, even as saith one, describing her:

As she wished, she was created, after such a wise that lo,
She in beauty's mould was fashioned, perfect, neither less nor mo'.
In her cheeks the roses redden for confusion and the fruit
On the sapling of her figure makes a fair and stately show.
In her face the full moon glitters and the branch is as her shape:
Musk her breath is, nor midst mortals is her equal, high or low.
'Tis as if she had been moulded out of water of pure pearls:
In each member of her beauty is a very moon, I trow.

The Persian lighted down from his mule and making the damsel alight also, called the broker and said to him, 'Take this damsel and cry her for sale in the market.' So he fetched a stool of ebony, inlaid with ivory, and setting it amiddleward the bazaar, seated her thereon. Then he raised her veil and discovered a face as it were a Median targe or a sparkling star: and indeed she was like the full moon, when it appears on its fourteenth night, accomplished to the utmost in surpassing beauty. As saith the poet:

The full moon ignorantly vied in beauty with her face,
But was eclipsed and split in twain for wrath at its disgrace;
And if the willow-wand be fit to even with her shape,
Perish her hands who is become o' the faggot-bearing race!

And how well saith another:

Say to the fair in the muffler laced and wrought with gold,
'Hark ye! What hast thou done with a pious man was like a monk to be?'
The gleam of the veil and the brilliancy of thy visage under it
The hosts of the darkness put to rout and cause them turn and flee;
And when my glance cometh to steal a look at thy cheek so fresh and fair,
Its guardian sprites with a shooting star still cast at them and me.

Then said the broker to the merchants, 'How much do ye bid for the pearl of the diver and prize of the fowler?' Quoth one, 'She is mine for a hundred dinars.' And another said, 'Two hundred,' and a third, 'Three hundred;' and they ceased not to bid, one against another, till they made her price nine hundred and fifty dinars, and there the biddings stopped. Then the broker went up to the Persian and said to him, 'The biddings for this thy slave-girl have reached nine hundred and fifty dinars: wilt thou sell her at that price and take the money?' 'Doth she consent to this?' asked the Persian. 'I desire to consult her wishes, for I fell sick on my journey hither and she tended me with all possible care, wherefore I swore not to sell her but to him of whom she should approve, and I have put her sale in her own hand. So do thou consult her and if she say, "I consent," sell her to whom thou wilt: but if she say "No," sell her not.'

So the broker went up to her and said to her, 'Know, O princess of fair ones, that thy master putteth thy sale in thine own hands, and thy price hath reached nine hundred and fifty dinars; dost thou give me leave to sell thee?' 'Show me him who is minded to buy me,' answered she, 'before thou clinch the bargain.' So he brought her up to one of the merchants, a very old and decrepit man, and she looked at him awhile, then turned to the broker and said to him, 'O broker, art thou mad or afflicted in thy wit?' 'Why dost thou ask me this, O princess of fair ones?' said he. And she answered, 'Is it permitted of God to sell the like of me to yonder decrepit old man, who saith of his wife's case the following verses:

Quoth she to me, – and sore enraged for wounded pride was she,
For she in sooth had bidden me to that which might not be, –
"An if thou swine me not forthright, as one should swive his wife,
If thou be made a cuckold straight, reproach it not to me.
Meseems thy yard is made of wax, for very flaccidness;
For when I rub it with my hand, it softens instantly."

And quoth he likewise of his yard:

I leave a yard that sleeps on base and shameful wise,
Whenever one I love with my desire complies;
But, when I'm by myself, at home, it's all agog
To thrust and ply its lone the amorous exercise.

And again quoth he thereof:

I have an ill yard, passing froward, to wit:
Him who honoureth it, with reproach it doth quit.
If I sleep, it stands up; if I rise, it lies down;
God no ruth have on him who hath ruth upon it!'

When the old merchant heard this scurvy gibing from the damsel, he was exceeding wroth and said to the broker, 'O unluckiest of brokers, thou hast not brought this ill-conditioned wench into the market but to flout me and make mock of me before the merchants.' Then the broker took her aside and said to her, 'O my lady, be not lacking in manners. The old man whom thou didst mock at is the syndic of the bazaar and inspector of weights and measures thereof and one of the council of the merchants.' But she laughed and said:

'It behoveth the folk that bear rule in our time,
Yea, 'tis one of the duties of magistrateship,
To hang up the chief of police o'er his door
And beat the inspector of weights with a whip.

By Allah, O my lord,' added she, 'I will not be sold to yonder old man; so sell me to other than him, for belike he will be abashed at me and sell me again and I shall become a servant and it beseems not that I sully myself with menial service; and indeed thou knowest that the matter of my sale is committed to myself.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and carried her to one of the chief merchants. 'How sayst thou, O my lady?' asked he. hundred and fifty dinars?' She looked at him and seeing him to be an old man, with a dyed beard, said to the broker, 'Art thou mad, that thou wouldst sell me to this worn-out old man? Am I cotton refuse or threadbare rags that thou marchest me about from graybeard to graybeard, each like a wall ready to fall or an Afrit smitten down of a [shooting] star? As for the first, the poet had him in mind when he said:

'I sought of a fair maid to kiss her lips of coral red,
But, "No, by Him who fashioned things from nothingness!" she said.
"Unto the white of hoary hairs I never had a mind,
And shall my mouth be stuffed, forsooth, with cotton, ere I'm dead?"

And how goodly is the saying of the poet:

They say that hoary hair is as a shining light,
The face with venerance and lustre that doth dight;
Yet, till the writ of eld appear upon my crown, I hope
I may not lack o' the colour of the night.
Although the beard of him, who's hoary grown, should be
His book i' the world to come, I would not choose it white.

And yet goodlier is the saying of another:

A guest unhonoured on my head hath stolen by surprise,
With my side-locks the sword than he had dealt on milder wise.
Begone from me, O whiteness foul, wherein no whiteness is!
Indeed, than very darkness' self thou'rt blacker in mine eyes.

As for the other, he is a reprobate and a lewd fellow and a blackener of the face of hoariness; he acts the foulest of lies; and the tongue of his case reciteth the following verses:

Quoth she to me, "I see thou dy'st thy hoariness;" and I,
"I do but hide it from thy sight, O thou mine ear and eye!"
She laughed out mockingly and said, "A wonder 'tis indeed!
Thou so abounded in deceit that even thy hair's a lie."

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:

O thou with black that drest thy hoariness, that so
Lost youth with thee may tarry or come to thee once mo',
Of old my worldly portion was dyed in grain with black;
'Twill never fade, believe me, nor other-coloured grow.'

When the old man with the dyed beard heard this, he was exceeding wroth and said to the broker, 'O most ill-omened of brokers, what aileth thee to bring this crack-brained wench into our market, to gibe at all who are therein, one after other, and flout them with mocking verses and idle jests?' And he came down from his shop and smote the broker on the face. So he took her and carried her away, in a rage, saying to her, 'By Allah, never in my life saw I a more impudent wench than thyself! Thou hast spoilt my trade and thine own this day and all the merchants will bear me a grudge on thine account.'

Then they saw in the way a merchant called Shihabeddin, who bid ten dinars more for her, and the broker asked her leave to sell her to him. Quoth she, 'Let me see him and question him of a certain thing, which if he have in his house, I will be sold to him; and if not, not.' So the broker left her standing there and going up to Shihabeddin, said to him, 'O my lord, know that yonder damsel tells me she hath a mind to ask thee of somewhat, which if thou have in thy house, she will be sold to thee. Now thou hast heard what she said to thy fellows the [other] merchants, and by Allah, I fear to bring her to thee, lest she do with thee like as she did with thy neighbours and so I fall into disgrace with thee: but, if thou bid me bring her to thee, I will do so.' Quoth the merchant, 'Bring her to me.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the broker and fetched the damsel, who looked at him and said, 'O my lord Shihabeddin, hast thou in thy house cushions stuffed with minever parings?' 'Yes, O princess of fair ones,' replied Shihabeddin, 'I have half a score such cushions at home; but I conjure thee by Allah, tell me, what wilt thou do with them?' Quoth she, 'I will wait till thou be asleep, when I will lay them on thy mouth and nose [and press on them] till thou die.'

Then she turned to the broker and said to him, 'O filthiest of brokers, meseemeth thou art mad, for that, this hour past, thou slowest me, first to a pair of graybeards, in each of whom are two faults, and then to my lord Shihabeddin here, in whom are three defects; first, he is short of stature; secondly, he hath a big nose, and thirdly, he hath a long beard. Of him quoth one of the poets:

Ne'er saw we in our lives nor heard of such a wight
Of all that live and be beneath the sun his light:
A beard a cubit long and nose a span he hath,
Whilst he himself is but a finger's breadth in height.

And quoth another poet:

The mosque's minaret from his visage doth spring,
As the ring-finger juts from the round of the ring.
If all it could house were to enter his nose,
The world were soon void of each creature and thing.'

When Shihabeddin heard this, he came down from his shop and seized the broker by the collar, saying, 'O scurviest of brokers, what ails thee to bring us a damsel to flout and make mock of us, one after other, with idle talk and verses?' So the broker took her and carried her away from before him, saying, 'By Allah, all my life long, since I have plied this craft, I never set eyes on the like of thee for unmannerliness nor aught more curst to me than thy star, for thou hast cut off my livelihood this day and I have gained nought by thee save cuffs on the neck and taking by the collar!' Then he brought her to the shop of another merchant, owner of slaves and servants, and stationing her before him, said to her, 'Wilt thou be sold to this my lord Alaeddin?' She looked at him and seeing him to be humpbacked, said, 'This fellow is a hunchback, and quoth the poet of him:

Shoulders drawn in and spine thrust out, 'twould seem as if to find
A tar that Satan promised him, indeed, he had a mind;
Or as the first stroke of a whip he'd tasted of and stood
Still for amaze, whilst of the stroke to come he felt the wind.

And saith another:

Whene'er a hunchback mounts a mule, straightway
A laughing-stock to all mankind are they.
Is he not laughable? So marvel not
If she take fright with him and run away.

And another:

A hunchback often foulness adds to his deformity,
And all men's eyes upon the wight look with antipathy;
As 'twere a dry distorted branch, whose citrons, perched upon
Its back, have bowed it to the ground, for length of days, is he.'

With this the broker hurried up to her and carrying her to another merchant, said to her, 'Wilt thou be sold to this man?' She looked at him and said, 'This man is blue-eyed; how wilt thou sell me to him? Quoth one of the poets of him:

Ophthalmia's disorders him ply; They have broken his strength down well nigh. O people, I rede you arise And look at the mote in his eye.'

Then the broker carried her to another and she looked at him and seeing that he had a long beard, said to the broker, 'Out on thee! This is a ram, whose tail has sprouted from his gullet. Wilt thou sell me to him, O unluckiest of brokers? Hast thou not heard that all long-bearded men are little of wit? Indeed, after the measure of the length of the beard is the lack of understanding; and this is a well-known thing among men of sense. As saith one of the poets:

No man, whose beard is long, although he gain some whit
In gravity of mien and dignity by it,
There lives, but every inch that's added to his beard
In length the like thereof is taken from his wit.

And quoth another:

I have a friend, who hath a beard that
God Caused flourish without profit, till, behold,
'Tis, as it were, to look upon, a night
Of middle winter, long and dark and cold.'

With this the broker took her and turned away with her, and she said to him, 'Whither guest thou with me?' 'Back to thy master the Persian,' answers he; 'it suffices me what hath befallen me because of thee this day; for thou hast spoilt both my trade and his by thine unmannerliness.' Then she looked about the market right and left and front and rear, till, as fate would have it, her eyes fell on Ali Noureddin. So she looked at him and saw him to be a comely youth, fourteen years old, like the moon on the night of its full, surpassing in beauty and loveliness and elegance and amorous grace, smooth- faced and slender-shaped, with flower-white forehead and rosy cheeks, neck like alabaster and teeth like jewels and spittle sweeter than sugar, even as saith of him one of his describers:

Full moons and fawns with him conclusions came to try
In beauty and in grace; but 'Soft!' to them quoth I.
'Forbear, gazelles; indeed, ye are no match for him;
And spare your pains, O moons, 'tis vain with him to vie.

And how well saith another :

A slender one, from his brows and the night of his jetty hair,
Mankind in alternate gloom and splendour of light do fare.
Blame not the mole on his cheek; is an anemone's cup
Perfect, except in its midst an eyelet of black it bear?

When she saw him he interposed between her and her wit; the love of him sat stark hold upon her soul and her heart was taken with passion for him; so she turned to the broker and said to him, 'Will not yonder young merchant in the striped gown bid for me?' 'O lady of fair ones,' replied the broker, 'yonder young man is a stranger from Cairo, where his father is chief of the merchants and hath the pass over all the merchants and notables of the place. He is but lately come to our city and lodgeth with one of his father's friends; but he hath made no bid for thee, more nor less.'

When she heard this, she drew from her finger a ruby ring of price and said to the broker, 'Carry me to yonder youth, and if he buy me, this ring shall be thine, in requital of thy toil with me this day.' The broker rejoiced at this and brought her up to Noureddin, and she considered him straitly and found him like the full moon, accomplished in grace and elegance and symmetry, even as saith of him one of his describers:

The waters of grace in his visage run clear
And his glances cast arrows at all who draw near:
Sweet his favours, but lovers still choke, if he give
Them to drink of the gall of his rigours austere.
His brow is perfection, perfection his shape,
And my love is perfection, so true and sincere.
The folds of his raiment the new moon enclose;
From his collars she Rises, as if from a sphere.
His eyes and his moles and my tears are as nights
Upon nights upon nights, full of blackness and fear;
And his eyebrows and face and my body new moon
On new moon on new moon to the aspect appear.
His eyes fill his lovers a goblet of wine,
Which, though bitter, is sweet to my sorrowful cheer.
With a smile of his mouth, on the day of delights
My thirst he allayed with sweet water and clear.
My slaughter's with him; ay, the shedding my blood
Is thrice lawful to him whom I tender so dear.

Then said she to Noureddin, 'God on thee, O my lord, am I not handsome?' And he answered, 'O princess of fair ones, is there in the world a goodlier than thou?' 'Then why,' rejoined she, 'seest thou the other merchants bid for me and art silent nor sayest a word neither addest one dinar to my price? It would seem I please thee not, O my lord!' Quoth he, 'O my lady, were I in mine own land, I had bought thee with all that my hand possesseth of good.' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'I would not have thee buy me against thy will; yet, didst thou but add somewhat to my price, it would comfort my heart, though thou buy me not, so the merchants may say, "Were not this girl handsome, yonder merchant of Cairo had not bidden for her, for the people of Cairo are connoisseurs in slave- girls."'

Her words abashed Noureddin and he blushed and said to the broker, 'How stand the biddings for her?' 'Her price hath reached nine hundred and sixty dinars,' answered he, 'besides brokerage. As for the Sultan's dues, they fall on the seller.' Quoth Noureddin, 'Let me have her for a thousand dinars, price and brokerage.' And the damsel hastened to leave the broker, saying, 'I sell myself to this handsome young man for a thousand dinars.' Quoth one, 'We sell to him;' and another, 'He deserves her;' and a third, 'Accursed, son of accursed, is he who bids and does not buy!' and a fourth, 'By Allah, they befit one another!' Then, before Noureddin could think, the broker fetched cadis and witnesses, who drew up a contract of sale and purchase, which the broker handed to Noureddin, saying, 'Take thy slave-girl and may God make her a blessing to thee, for she beseemeth none but thee and none but thou beseemeth her.' And he recited the following verses:

Unto him fair fortune all unbidden hies, Drags her skirts to-him-ward on obsequious wise.

None but she befitteth him and none but he Of the maid is worthy, underneath the skies.

Noureddin was abashed before the merchants; so he paid down the thousand dinars, that he had left with his friend the druggist, and taking the girl, carried her to the house in which the latter had lodged him. When she entered and saw nothing but patched carpets and worn- out rugs, she said to him, 'O my lord, have I no value in thine eyes and am I not worthy that thou shouldst carry me to thine own house wherein are thy goods, that thou bringest me into thy servant's lodging? Why dost thou not carry me to thy father's dwelling?' 'By Allah, O princess of fair ones,' answered he, 'this is my house wherein I dwell; but it belongs to an old man, a druggist of this city, who hath set it apart for me and lodged me therein. I told thee that I was a stranger and that I am of the people of Cairo.' 'O my lord,' rejoined she, 'the least of houses will serve till thy return to thy native place; but, God on thee, O my lord, go now and fetch me somewhat of roast meat and wine and fruit and dessert.' 'By Allah, O princess of fair ones,' answered he, 'I had no money with me but the thousand dinars I paid down to thy price! The few dirhems I had I spent yesterday.' Quoth she, 'Hast thou no friend in the town, of whom thou mayst borrow fifty dirhems and bring them to me, that I may tell thee what thou shalt do therewith?' And he said, 'I have no friend but the druggist.'

Then he betook himself forthright to the druggist and said to him, 'Peace be on thee, O uncle!' He returned his salutation and said to him, 'O my son, what hast thou bought for a thousand dinars this day?' 'I have bought a slave-girl,' answered Noureddin. 'O my son,' rejoined the old man, 'art thou mad that thou givest a thousand dinars for one slave-girl? What kind of slave-girl is she?' 'She is a damsel of the children of the Franks,' replied Noureddin and the druggist said, 'O my son, the best of the girls of the Franks are to be had in this town for a hundred dinars, and by Allah, they have put a cheat on thee in the matter of this damsel! However, if thou hast a mind to her, lie with her this night and do thy will of her and to-morrow morning go down with her to the market and sell her, through thou lose two hundred dinars by her, and put it that thou hast been robbed of them or lost them by shipwreck.' 'Thou sayst well, O uncle,' replied Noureddin; 'but thou knowest that I had but the thousand dinars wherewith I bought the damsel, and now I have not a single dirhem left to spend; so I desire of thy favour and goodness that thou lend me fifty dirhems, to provide me withal, till to-morrow, when I will sell her and repay thee out of her price.' 'Willingly, O my son,' said the old man and counted out to him the fifty dirhems.

Then he said to him, 'O my son, thou art young and the damsel is fair, and belike thy heart will be taken with her and it will be grievous to thee to part from her. Now thou hast nothing to live on and the fifty dirhems will [soon] be spent and thou wilt come to me and I shall lend thee once or twice and thrice and so on up to ten times; but, if thou come to me after this, I will not return thee the legal salutation and our friendship with thy father will come to nought.' Noureddin took the fifty dirhems and returned with them to the damsels who said to him, 'O my lord, go straight to the market and fetch me twenty dirhems' worth of silk of five colours and with the other thirty buy meat and bread and wine and fruit and flowers.' So he went to the market and buying her all she sought, returned to her therewith, whereupon she rose and tucking up her sleeves, cooked food after the most skilful fashion, and set it before him. He ate and she ate with him, till they had enough, after which she set on the

wine, and they drank, and she ceased not to ply him with drink and entertain him with talk, till he became drunken and fell asleep: whereupon she arose and taking out of her budget a sachet of Tain leather, opened it and brought out a pair of knitting-pins, with which she fell to work and stinted not, till she had made a beautiful girdle. She cleaned it and ironed it and folding it in a piece of rag, laid it under the pillow.

Then she put off her clothes and lying down beside Noureddin, kneaded him till he awoke and found by his side a girl like virgin silver, softer than silk and more delicate than a fat sheep's tail, more conspicuous than a standard and goodlier than the red camels, low of stature, with swelling breasts, eyes like gazelles' eyes and brows like bended bows and cheeks like blood-red anemones, slender belly, full of dimples, and a navel holding an ounce of benzoin ointment, thighs like bolsters stuffed with ostrich down, and between them what the tongue fails to describe and at mention whereof the tears pour forth. Indeed it seemed as it were she to whom the poet alludes in the following verses:

Her hair is night, her forehead day, her cheeks a blossomed rose
And wine the honeyed dews wherewith her mouth for ever flows.
Heaven in her favours is and hell in her disdain; her teeth
Are very pearls and in her face the moon at full doth glow.

And how excellent is another's saying:

She shineth forth, a moon, and bends, a willow-wand,
And breathes out ambergris and gazes, a gazelle.
Meseems as if grief loved my heart and when from her
Estrangement I abide, possession to it fell.
She hath a face outshines the very Pleiades
And brows whose lustre doth the crescent moon excel.

And quoth a third:

Unveiled, new moons they shine, and all displayed, like moons at full,
They burn: like boughs they sway, and eke like antelopes they turn:
And in their midst's a black-eyed maid, for whose sweet beauty's sake,
To be the earth whereon she treads the Pleiades would yearn.

So he turned to her and pressing her to his bosom, sucked first her under lip and then her upper lip and slid his tongue into her mouth. Then he rose to her and found her an unpierced pearl and a filly that none but he had mounted. So he did away her maidenhead and had of her the amorous delight and there was contracted between them love that might never know breach nor severance. He rained down kisses upon her cheeks, like the falling of pebbles into water, and beset her with stroke upon stroke, like the thrusting of spears in the mellay; for that Noureddin still yearned after clipping of necks and sucking of lips and letting down of tresses and pressing of waists and biting of cheeks and pinching of breasts, with Cairene motitations and Yemani wrigglings and Abyssinian sobbings and Hindi torsions and Nubian lasciviousness and Rifi leg-liftings and Damiettan gruntings and Upper Egyptian heat and Alexandrian languor, and this damsel united in herself all these attributes, together with excess of beauty and amorous grace; and indeed she was even as saith of her the poet:

By Allah, I will never all my life long forget her, my dear,
And those only will I tender who shall bring her to me to draw near!
Now glory to her Maker and Creator be given evermore!
As the full moon of the heavens in her aspect and her gait she doth appear.
Though my sin, indeed, be sore and my offending in loving her be great,
I know repentance not, whilst of her favours a hope to me be clear.
She, indeed, hath made me weariful and wakeful, full of sorrow, sick for love:
Yea, my heart is all confounded at her beauty, dazed for trouble and for fear;
And I go a line of verse for e'er repeating that none knoweth 'mongst the folk
Save the man who rhymes and verses hath recited and studied many a year.
None knoweth of love-longing save he only who hath its pains endured
And none but he can tell the taste of passion, who's Proved its woe and cheer.

So Noureddin lay with the damsel in solace and delight, clad in the strait-linked garments of emplacement, secure against the accidents of night and day, and they passed the night after the goodliest fashion, fearing not, in love-delight, abundance of talk and prate. As says of them the right excellent poet:

Cleave fast to her thou lov'st and let the envious rail amain;
For calumny and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.
Lo, the Compassionate hath made no fairer thing to see
Than when one couch in its embrace enfolders lovers twain,
Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their own delight,
Whilst hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain.
Lo, when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire,
But on cold iron smite the folk that chide at them in vain.
Thou that for loving censurest the votaries of love,
Canst thou assain a mind diseased or heal a cankered brain?
If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true,
I rede thee cast the world away and with that one remain.

When the morning appeared and gave forth its light and shone, Noureddin awoke from sleep and found that she had brought water: so they washed, he and she, and he acquitted that which behoved him of prayer to his Lord, after which she brought him meat and drink, and he ate and drank. Then she put her hand under her pillow and pulling out the girdle, gave it to Noureddin, who said, 'Whence cometh this girdle?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'it is the silk thou boughtest yesterday for twenty dirhems. Rise now and go to the Persian bazaar and give it to the broker, to cry for sale, and sell it not for less than twenty dinars, money down.' 'O princess of fair ones,' said Noureddin, 'how can a thing, that cost twenty dirhems and will sell for as many dinars, be made in a single night?' 'O my lord,' replied she, 'thou knowest not its value; but go to the market and give it to the broker, and when he cries it, its worth will appear to thee.'

So he carried the girdle to the market and gave it to the broker, bidding him cry it, whilst he himself sat down on a bench before a shop. After awhile, the broker returned and said to him, 'O my lord, rise and take the price of thy girdle, for it hath fetched twenty dinars.' When Noureddin heard this, he marvelled exceedingly and

shook with delight. Then he rose, between belief and disbelief to take the money and when he had received it, he spent it all on silk of various colours and returning home, gave the silk to the damsel, saying, 'Make this all into girdles and teach me likewise how to make them, that I may work with thee; for never in my life saw I a goodlier craft than this nor a more abounding in profit. By Allah, it is a thousand times better than the trade of A merchant!' She laughed and said, 'Go to thy friend the druggist and borrow other thirty dirhems of him, and to-morrow pay him the whole eighty from the price of the girdles.'

So he repaired to the druggist and said to him, 'O uncle, lend me other thirty dirhems, and to-morrow, God willing, I will repay thee the whole fourscore.' The old man counted him out thirty dirhems, with which he went to the market and buying meat and bread and dessert and fruit and flowers as before, carried them home to the damsel, whose name was Meryem, the girdle-maker. She rose forthright and making ready rich meats, set them before Noureddin; after which she brought wine, and they drank and plied each other with liquor. When the wine began to sport with their senses, his beauty and grace pleased her and the elegance of his manners, and she recited the following verses:

Unto a slender one, who with a goblet came
With musk from out his breath perfumed, to give it zest.
Quoth I, 'Was't not express from out thy cheeks?'
But 'Nay,' He answered; 'when was wine from roses yet exprest?'

And she ceased not to carouse with him and ply him with wine and require of him that he should fill to her and give her to drink of that which sweetens the spirits, and whenever he laid his hand on her, she drew back from him, out of coquetry. The wine added to her beauty and gee, and Noureddin recited these verses:

A slender one, desiring wine, unto her lover said,
In an assembly, whenas he did sickness for her dread,
'An if thou give me not to drink, I'll banish thee my bed
This night:' wherefore he feared and filled to her the vine-juice red.

They gave not over drinking till drunkenness got the mastery of Noureddin and he slept; whereupon she rose and fell to work upon a girdle, according to her wont. When she had wrought it to end, she wrapped it in paper and putting off her clothes, lay down by his side, and they passed the night in dalliance and delight.

On the morrow, she gave him the girdle and bade him carry it to the market and sell it for twenty dinars, like as he had sold its fellow the day before. So he went to the market and sold the girdle for twenty dinars, after which he repaired to the druggist and paid him back the four- score diadems, thanking him for his bounties and calling down blessings upon him. 'O my son,' said he, 'hast thou sold the damsel?' 'Wouldst thou have me sell the soul out of my body?' answered Noureddin and told him all that had passed, whereat the druggist was mightily pleased and said to him, 'By Allah, O my son, thou rejoicest me! So God please, mayst thou still abide in prosperity! Indeed I wish thee well by reason of my affection for thy father and the continuance of our

friendship.' Then he took leave of him and going to the market, bought meat and fruit and wine and all that he needed, as of wont, and returned therewith to Meryem.

They abode thus a whole year in eating and drinking and sport and merriment and love and good cheer, and every night she made a girdle and he sold it on the morrow for twenty dinars, wherewith he bought what they needed and gave the rest to her, to keep against a time of need. After this, she said to him one day, 'O my lord, when thou sellest the girdle to-morrow, buy me silk of six colours with its price, for I have a mind to make thee a kerchief to wear on thy shoulders, such as never son of merchant, no, nor king's son, ever rejoiced in its fellow.' So next day he brought her what she aught and she wrought at the kerchief a whole week; for, every night, when she had made an end of the girdle, she would work awhile at the kerchief. When it was finished, she gave it to Noureddin, who put it on his shoulders and went out to walk in the market, whilst all the merchants and people and notables of the town crowded about him, to gaze on his beauty and that of the kerchief.

One night, after this, he awoke from sleep and found Meryem weeping passing sore and reciting the following verses:

The severance of friends draws near and nearer aye:
Alas for severance! Alas, the parting day!
My heart is rent in twain, and O my grief for those
The nights of our delight that now are past away!
Needs must the envier look on us with evil eye
And come to his desire of that he doth essay;
For nought can irk us more than envy and the eyes
Of backbiters and spies, nor work us more dismay.

'O my lady Meryem,' said he, 'what ails thee to weep?' 'I weep for the anguish of parting,' answered she; 'for my heart forebodes me thereof.' Quoth he, 'O lady of fair ones, and who shall part us, seeing that I love and tender thee above all creatures?' And she replied, 'And I love thee twice as well as thou me; but [blind] confidence in fortune still causes folk fall into affliction, and right well saith the poet:

Thou thoughtest well of Fate, whilst yet the days for thee were fair,
And fearedst not the unknown ills that destiny might bring.
The nights were calm and safe for thee; thou wast deceived by them;
For in the peace of night betides full many a troublous thing.
Lo, in the skies are many stars, no one can tell their tale;
But to the sun and moon alone eclipse brings darkening.
The earth bears many a pleasant herb and many a plant and tree;
But none is stoned save only that to which the fair fruits cling.
Seest not the sea and how the waifs float up upon the foam?
But in its deepest depths of blue the pearls have sojourning.

O my lord Noureddin,' added she, 'if thou desire to avert separation, be on thy guard against a swart-visaged, bushy-bearded old Frank, blind of the right eye and lame of the left leg; for he it is who will be the cause of our separation. I saw him enter the city [to-day] and methinks he is come hither in quest of me.' 'O lady of fair ones,'

replied Noureddin, 'if my eyes light on him, I will slay him and make an example of him.' 'O my lord,' rejoined she, 'slay him not; but talk not nor trade with him, neither buy nor sell with him nor sit nor walk with him nor speak one word to him, no, not even to make the prescribed answer, and I pray God to keep us from his craft and mischief!'

Next morning, Noureddin carried the girdle to the market, where he sat down on a bench before a shop and talked with the young merchants, till drowsiness overcame him and he lay down on the bench and fell asleep. Presently, up came the Frank whom the damsel had described to him, in company of seven others, and seeing Noureddin lying asleep on the bench, with his head wrapped in the kerchief which Meryem had made him and the end thereof in his hand, sat down by him and took the end of the kerchief in his hand and examined it. This disturbed Noureddin and he awoke and seeing the very man sitting by him of whom Meryem had warned him, cried out at him with a great cry, that startled him. Quoth the Frank, 'What ails thee to cry out thus at us? Have we taken aught from thee?' 'By Allah, O accursed one,' replied Noureddin, 'hadst thou taken aught from me, I would hale thee before the master of police!'

Then said the Frank, 'O Muslim, I conjure thee by thy faith and by that in which thou believest, tell me whence thou hadst that kerchief.' And Noureddin answered, 'It is the handiwork of my mother, who made it for me with her own hand.' 'Wilt thou sell it to me?' asked the Frank. 'By Allah, O accursed one,' replied Noureddin, 'I will not sell it to thee nor to any other, for she made none other than it.' 'Sell it to me,' repeated the Frank, 'and I will give thee to its price eve hundred dinars ready money; and let her who made it make thee another and handsomer.' But Noureddin said, 'I will not sell it at all, for there is not the like of it in this city.' 'O my lord,' insisted the Frank, 'wilt thou sell it for six hundred dinars of fine gold?' And he went on to add to his offer hundred by hundred, till he bid nine hundred dinars; but Noureddin said, 'God will provide me otherwise than by my selling it. I will never sell it, no, not for two thousand dinars nor more than that.'

Then the Frank went on to tempt him with money, till he bid him a thousand dinars, and the merchants present said, 'We sell thee the kerchief at that price: pay down the money.' Quoth Noureddin, 'By Allah, I will not sell it!' But one of the merchants said to him, 'O my son, the worth of this kerchief is a hundred dinars at most and that to an eager purchaser, and if this Frank pay thee down a thousand for it, thy profit will be nine hundred dinars, and what profit canst thou desire greater than that? Wherefore it is my counsel that thou sell him the kerchief at that price and gain nine hundred dinars by this accursed Frank, the enemy of God and of the faith, and bid her who wrought it make thee other or handsomer than it.'

Noureddin was abashed at the merchants and sold the kerchief to the Frank, who, in their presence, paid him down the thousand dinars, with which he would have returned to Meryem, to tell her what had passed; but the stranger said, 'Harkye, O company of merchants, stop my lord Noureddin, for you and he are my guests this night. I have a pitcher of old Greek wine and a fat lamb and fruit and flowers and confections; wherefore needs must ye all cheer me with your company to-night and not one of you tarry behind.' So the merchants said to Noureddin, 'O my lord Noureddin,

we desire that thou be with us on the like of this night, so we may talk together, we and thou, and we pray thee, of thy favour, to bear us company, so we may be, we and thou, the guests of this Frank, for he is a hospitable man.' And they conjured him by the oath of divorce and hindered him by force from going home.

Then they rose forthright and shutting up their shops took Noureddin and went with the Frank, who brought them to a goodly and spacious saloon, wherein were two estrades. Here he made them sit and laid before them [a tray covered with] a scarlet cloth of rare and goodly workmanship, wroughten in gold with figures of breaker and broken, lover and beloved, asker and asked, whereon he set precious vessels of porcelain and crystal, full of the costliest fruits and flowers and confections, and brought them a pitcher of old Greek wine. Then he commanded to slaughter a fat lamb and kindling fare, proceeded to roast of its flesh and feed the merchants therewith and give them to drink of the wine, winking them the while to ply Noureddin with liquor. So they plied him with wine till he became drunken and took leave of his wits, which when the Frank saw, he said to him, 'O my lord Noureddin, thou gladdenest us with thy company to-night: welcome, a thousand times welcome to thee!'

Then he drew near unto him and dissembled with him awhile in talk, till he [found his opportunity and] said to him, 'O my lord, wilt thou sell me thy slave-girl, whom thou boughtest a year ago for a thousand dinars, in presence of these merchants? I will give thee five thousand dinars for her and thou wilt thus make four thousand dinars profit.' Noureddin refused but the Frank ceased not to ply him with meat and drink and tempt him with money, still adding to his offers, till he bid him ten thousand dinars for her; whereupon Noureddin, in his drunkenness, said, in the presence of the merchants, 'I sell her to thee for ten thousand dinars; hand over the money.' At this the Frank rejoiced mightily and took the merchants to witness of the sale.

They passed the night in eating and drinking and making merry, till the morning, when the Frank cried out to his servants, saying, 'Bring me the money.' So they brought it to him and he counted out ten thousand dinars to Noureddin, saying, 'O my lord, take the price of thy slave-girl, whom thou soldest to me last night, in the presence of these Muslim merchants.' 'Thou liest, O accursed one,' replied Noureddin. 'I sold thee nothing and have no slave-girls.' Quoth the Frank, 'Verily thou didst sell her to me and these merchants were witnesses to the bargain.' 'Yes,' said they all, 'thou soldest him thy slave-girl before us for ten thousand dinars, O Noureddin, and we will all bear witness against thee of the sale. Come, take the money and deliver him the girl, and God will give thee a better than she in her stead. Doth it mislike thee, O Noureddin, that thou boughtest the girl for a thousand dinars and hast enjoyed her beauty and grace and taken thy fill of her company and converse night and day for a year and a half, wherein thou hast gained half a score thousand dinars by the sale of the girdle which she made thee every day and thou soldest for twenty dinars, and after all this thou hast sold her again at a profit of nine thousand dinars over and above her original price? And withal thou deniest the sale and belittlest the profit! What gain is greater than this gain and what profit wouldst thou have greater than this? If thou love her, thou hast had thy fill of her all this time: so take the money and buy another handsomer than she; or we will marry thee to one of our daughters lovelier than she, at

a dowry of less than half this price, and the rest of the money will remain in thy hand an capital.' And they ceased not to ply him with persuasion and argument till he took the ten thousand dinars, the price of the damsels and the Frank straightway fetched Cadis and witnesses, who drew up the contract of sale.

Meanwhile, Meryem sat awaiting Noureddin from morning till sundown and from sundown till midnight; and when he returned not, she was troubled and wept sore. The druggist heard her weeping and sent his wife to her, who went in to her and finding her in tears said to her, 'O my lady, what ails thee to weep?' 'O my mother,' answered she, 'I have sat awaiting my lord Noureddin all day; but he cometh not, and I fear lest some one have put a cheat on him, to make him sell me, and he have fallen into the snare and sold me.' 'O my lady Meryem, rejoined the druggist's wife, 'were they to give thy lord this room full of gold to thy price, yet would he not sell thee, for what I know of his love to thee. Belike there be folk come frown his parents at Cairo and he hath made them an entertainment in their lodging, being ashamed to bring them hither, for that the place is overstrain for them or maybe their condition is less than that he should bring them to his own house; or belike he preferred to conceal thine affair from them, so passed the night with them; and if it be the will of God the Most High, to-morrow he will come to thee, safe and well. So burden not thy soul with care nor anxiety, O my lady, for of a certainty this is the cause of his absence from thee and I will abide with thee this night and comfort thee, till thy lord return.'

So she abode with her and cheered her with talk till the morning, when Meryem saw Noureddin enter the street, followed by the Frank and a company of merchants, whereupon she trembled in every nerve and her colour changed and she fell a-shaking, as the ship shakes in mid-ocean for the violence of the winds. When the druggist's wife saw this, she said to her, 'O my lady Meryem, what ails thee that I see thy case changed and thy face grown pale and disfeatured?' 'By Allah, O my mother,' replied she, 'my heart forebodeth me of parting and severance of union!' And she bemoaned herself and sighed heavily, reciting the following verses:

Incline not to parting, I pray;
For bitter its savour is aye.
E'en the sun at his setting turns pale,
To think he must part from the day;
And so, at his rising, for joy
Of reunion, he's radiant and gay.

Then she wept passing sore, making sure of separation, and said to the druggist's wife, 'O my mother, said I not to thee that my lord Noureddin had been tricked into selling me? I doubt not but he hath sold me this night to yonder Frank, albeit I bade him beware of him; but precaution availeth not against destiny. So the truth of my words is made manifest to thee.' Whilst they were talking, in came Noureddin, and she looked at him and saw that his colour was changed and that he trembled and there appeared on his face signs of grief and repentance: so she said to him, 'O my lord Noureddin, meseemeth thou hast sold me.' Whereupon he wept sore and groaned and lamented and recited the following verses:

Twas Fate, and taking thought avails not anything;
If thou err, it errs not in its foreordering.
When God upon a man endowed with hearing, sight
And reasoning, His will in aught to pass would bring,
He stops has ears and blinds his eyes and draws his wit
From him, as one draws out the hairs to paste that cling,
Till, His decrees fulfilled, He gives him back his wit,
That therewithal he may receive admonishing.
Say not of aught that haps, 'How happened it?' For fate
And fortune fore-ordained do order everything.

Then he began to excuse himself to her, saying, 'O my lady Meryem, verily the pen runneth with what God hath decreed. The folk put a cheat on me, to make me sell thee, and I fell into the snare and sold thee. Indeed, I have sorely failed of my duty to thee; but peradventure He who decreed our parting will vouchsafe us reunion.' Quoth she, 'I warned thee against this, for this it was I feared.' Then she strained him to her bosom and kissed him between the eyes, reciting the following verses:

Nay, by your love, I'll ne'er forget the troth betwixt us plight,
Though my life perish for desire and yearning for your sight.
E'en as the ringdove doth lament upon the sandhills' trees,
So will I weep for you and wail all tides of day and night.
My life is troubled after you, beloved: since from me
You're gone, no meeting-place have I nor sojourn of delight.

At this juncture, the Frank came in to them and went up to Meryem, to kiss her hands; but she dealt him a buffet on the cheek, saying, 'Avaunt, O accursed one! Thou hast followed after me without cease, till thou hast tricked my lord into selling me! But please God, all shall yet be well.' The Frank laughed at her speech and wondered at her deed and excused himself to her, saying, 'O my lady Meryem, what is my offence? Thy lord Noureddin here sold thee of his full consent and of his free will. Had he loved thee, by the virtue of the Messiah, he had not transgressed against thee! And had he not accomplished his desire of thee, he had not sold thee. Quoth one of the poets:

Whoso of me is weary, my presence let him flee:
If e'er again I name him, to call me fool thou'rt free.
The world in all its wideness on me is not so strait
That thou shouldst see me languish for who rejecteth me.'

Now this damsel was the daughter of the King of France, the which is a wide and spacious city, abounding in arts and manufactures and rarities and trees and flowers and other plants, and resembleth the city of Constantinople: and for her going forth of her father's city there was an extraordinary cause and thereby hangs a rare story, that we will set out in due order, to divert and delight the reader. She was reared with her father and mother in honour and indulgence and learnt rhetoric and penmanship and arithmetic and martial exercises and all manner crafts both of men and women, such as broidery and sewing and weaving and girdle-making and silk-cord making and enamelling gold on silver and silver on gold, till she became the pearl of her time and

the unique [jewel] of her age and her day. Moreover, God (to whom belong might and majesty) had endowed her with such beauty and grace and elegance and perfection that she excelled therein all the folk of her time, and the kings of the isles sought her in marriage of her father, but he refused to give her to wife to any of her suitors, for that he loved her with an exceeding love and could not brook to be parted from her an hour. Moreover, he had no other daughter than herself albeit he had many sons, but she was dearer to him than they.

It chanced one year that she fell sick of an exceeding sickness and came nigh upon death, wherefore she made a vow that, if she recovered from her sickness, she would make the pilgrimage to a certain monastery, situate in much an island, which was high in repute among the Franks who used to make vows to it and look for a blessing therefrom. When she was whole of her sickness she wished to accomplish her vow and her father despatched her to the convent in a little ship, with sundry knights and daughters of the chief men of the city to wait upon her. As they drew near the island, there came out upon them a ship of the ships of the Muslims, champions of the faith, warring in the way of God, who boarded the vessel and making prize of all who were therein, sold their booty in the city of Cairawan. Meryem herself fell into the hands of a Persian merchant, who was impotent and for whom no woman had ever discovered her nakedness; and he set her to serve him.

Presently he fell ill and sickened well-nigh unto death, and the sickness abode with him two months, during which time she tended him after the goodliest fashion, till God made him whole of his malady, when he recalled her loving-kindness to him and the zeal with which she had tended him and being minded to requite her the good offices she had done him, bade her ask a boon of him. 'O my lord,' said she, 'I ask of thee that thou sell me not but to the man of my choice.' 'So be it,' answered he, 'I grant thee this. By Allah, O Meryem, I will not sell thee but to him of whom thou shalt approve, and I put thy sale in thine own hand!' And she rejoiced mightily in this. Now the Persian had expounded Islam to her and she became a Muslim and learnt of him the tenets and observances of the faith. Moreover, he made her get the Koran by heart and taught her somewhat of the theological sciences and the traditions of the Prophet; after which, he brought her to Alexandria and sold her to Noureddin, as hath been before set out.

Meanwhile, when her father, the King of France, heard what had befallen his daughter and her company, he was sore concerned and despatched after her ships full of knights and champions, horsemen and footmen: but they all returned to him, crying out and saying, 'Alas!' and 'Ruin!' and 'Woe worth the day!' after having searched the islands of the Muslims and come on no tidings of her. The king grieved for her with an exceeding grief and sent after her that one-eyed lameter, for that he was his chief vizier, a stubborn tyrant and a froward devil, full of craft and guile, bidding him make search for her in all the lands of the Muslims and buy her, though with a shipload of gold. So the accursed wretch sought her in all the lands of the seas and all the cities of the Muslims, but found no sign of her till he came to Alexandria, when he discovered that she was with Noureddin Ali of Cairo, being directed to the trace of her by the kerchief aforesaid, [in which he recognized her handiwork,] for that none could have wrought it on such goodly wise but she. Then he bribed the merchants to help

him in getting her from Noureddin and beguiled the latter into selling her, as hath been already related.

When he had her in his possession, she ceased not to weep and lament: so he said to her, 'O my lady Meryem, put away from thee this mourning and weeping and return with me to thy father's city, the seat of thy royalty and the place of thy power and thy home, so thou mayst be among thy servants and attendants and be quit of this abasement and stranglehold. Enough hath betided me of travel and weariness and expense on thine account, for thy father bade me buy thee back though with a shipload of gold; and now I have spent nigh a year and a half in travel and toil and ravishment of wealth.' And he fell to kissing her feet and hands and humbling himself to her; but she only redoubled in wrath against him, for all he could do to appease her, and said to him, 'O Accursed one, may God the Most High not bring thee to thy desire!'

Then his servants brought her a mule with gold- embroidered housings and mounting her thereon, raised over her head a silken canopy, with staves of gold and silver, and the Franks walked about her, till they brought her forth the city by the sea-gate, where they took boat with her and rowing out to a great ship [that lay in the harbour], embarked her therein. Then the vizier cried out to the sailors, saying, 'Up with the mast!' So they set up the mast and spreading the sails and the pendants, manned the sweeps and put out to sea. Meryem continued to gaze upon Alexandria till it disappeared from her eyes, when she fell a-weeping and lamenting passing sore and recited the following verses:

O dwelling of the loved, shall there returning ever be
To thee? But what know I of that which Allah shall decree?
The ships of separation fare with us in haste away:
Mine eyes be blotted out with tears that flow unceasingly,
For severance from a friend, who was the end of my desire,
With whom my sicknesses were healed and pains effaced from me.
Be thou my substitute with him, O God; for that which is
Committed to Thy charge one day shall not be lost with Thee.

The knights came up to her and would have comforted her, but she heeded them not, being distracted with passion and love-longing. And she wept and moaned and complained and recited the following verses:

The tongue of passion in my heart bespeaketh thee of me
And giveth thee to know that I enamoured am of thee.
I have a liver all consumed with passion's coals of fire,
A heart, sore wounded by thy loss, that throbs incessantly.
How shall I hide the love that burns my life away?
My lids Are ulcered and my tears adown my cheeks for ever flee.

In this plight she abode during all the voyage; no peace was left her nor would patience come at her call.

Meanwhile, when the ship had sailed with Meryem, the world was straitened upon Noureddin and he had neither peace nor patience. He returned to the lodging where

they had dwelt he and she, and it appeared black and gloomy in his sight. Then he saw the pins and silk with which she had been wont to make the girdles and her clothes that had been upon her body: so he pressed them to his breast, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes and he recited the following verses:

Will union after severance return to me some day,
After my long-continued tale of sorrow and dismay?
Shall I with my love's company be ever blest again?
Now God forfend that what is past should ne'er return! I say.
I wonder will He yet rebait our separated loves
And will my dear ones keep the troth we plighted, I and they?
And will she yet preserve my love, whom of my ignorance
I lost, and guard our plighted troth and friendship from decay?
Since they departed, as one dead am I: will my belov'd
Consent that he who loves them dear should fall to death a prey?
Alas, my sorrow! But lament the mourner profits not.
For stress of yearning and regret I'm melted all away.
Lost are the days of my delight: will Fortune e'er vouchsafe
To me, I wonder, my desire and so my pains allay?
O heart, redouble in desire and O mine eyes, o'erflow
With tears. till not a tear to weep within mine eyelids stay.
Alas for loved ones far away and patience lost to me!
My helpers fail me and my woes full sorely on me weigh.
To God the Lord of all, that He vouchsafe me the return
Of my belov'd and our delight, as of old time, I pray.

Then he wept passing sore and looking about the place, recited these verses also:

I see their traces and pine for longing pain;
My tears rain down on the empty dwelling-place;
And I pray to God, who willed that we should part
One day to grant us reunion, of His grace.

Then he rose and locking the door of the house, went out, running, to the shore of the sea, where he fixed his eyes on the place of the ship that had carried her off, whilst sighs burst from his breast and he recited the following verses:

Peace be upon thee! Nought to me can compensate for thee:
I'm in two cases, near in thought, yet distant verily.
I long for thee each time and tide, even as a man athirst
Longs for the distant watering-place, that still from him doth flee.
With thee my hearing and my sight, my heart and spirit are:
Thy memory than honey's self is sweeter far to me.
O my despair, whenas your train departed and your ship
Fared from the vision of mine eyes with thee across the sea.

And he wept and wailed and bemoaned himself, crying out and saying, 'O Meryem! O Meryem! Was it but in sleep I saw thee or in the illusions of dreams?' And

by reason of that which waxed on him of regrets, he recited these verses:

Shall mine eyes ever look on thee, after this parting's pain,
And shall I ever hear thy call by house and camp again?
And shall the house our presence cheered once more unite us two?
Shall it my heart's desire and thine be given us to attain?
Take my bones with thee by the way and where thou lightest down,
Bury them near thee, so they may with thee for aye remain.
Had I a pair of hearts, with one I'd make a shift to live
And leave the other to consume for love of thee in vain;
And if, 'What wouldst thou leave of God?' 'twere asked of me, I'd say,
'Th' Almighty's favours first, then hers, my prayer to seek were fain.'

As he was in this case, weeping and crying out, 'O Meryem!' an old man landed from a vessel and coming up to him, saw him weeping and heard him recite these verses:

O Meryem of loveliness, return to me again;
My eyeballs are as clouds that pour with never-ceasing rain.
Do thou but ask, concerning me, of those at me that rail;
They'll tell thee that my lids lie drowned within their fountains twain.

'O my son,' said the old man, 'meseems thou weepest for the damsel who sailed yesterday with the Frank?' When Noureddin heard his words, he fell down in a swoon and lay awhile without life; then, coming to himself, he wept passing sore and recited the following verses:

Is union after severance with her past hoping for
And will the perfectness of cheer return to me no more?
Anguish and love have taken up their lodging in my heart:
The plate and gabble of the spies and railers irks me sore.
I pass the day long in amaze, confounded, and anights
To visit me in dreams of sleep her image I implore.
Never, by God, a moment's space am I for love consoled!
How should it be so, when my heart the envious doth abhor?
A leveling, soft and delicate of sides and slim of waist,
She hath a beaming eye, whose shafts are lodged in my heart's core.
Her shape is as the willow-wand i' the gardens and her grace
For goodliness outshames the sun and shines his splendour o'er.
Feared I not God (extolled be His majesty!) I'd say,
'Extolled be Her. majesty, the fair whom I adore!

The old man looked at him and noting his beauty and grace and symmetry and the eloquence of his tongue and the seductiveness of his charms, took compassion on him and his heart mourned for his case. Now he was the captain of a ship, bound to the damsel's city, and in this ship were a hundred Muslim merchants: so he said to Noureddin, 'Have patience and all shall yet be well; God willing, I will bring thee to her.' 'When shall we set out?' asked Noureddin, and the other said, 'Come but three days more and we will depart in peace and prosperity.' Noureddin was mightily

rejoiced at the captain's words and thanked him for his bounty and kindness. Then he recalled the days of love-delight and union with his slave- girl without peer, and he wept sore and recited the following verses:

Will the Compassionate, indeed, unite us, me and thee,
And shall I win to my desire by favouring Fate's decree?
And shall time's shifts vouchsafe me yet a visit from my fair
And shall mine eyelids seize upon thine image greedily?
Were thine enjoyment to be bought, I'd buy it with my life.
But thy possession is, alack! too dear for me, I see.

Then he went to the market and bought what he needed of victual and other necessaries for the voyage and returned to the captain, who said to him, "O my son, what is that thou hast with thee?' 'My provisions and that whereof I have need for the voyage,' answered Noureddin. 'O my son,' said the old man, laughing, 'art thou going a-pleasuring to Pompey's Pillar? Verily, between thee and that thou seekest is two months' journey, if the wind be favourable and the weather fair.' Then he took of him somewhat of money and going to the market, bought him all that he needed for the voyage and filled him a cask with fresh water. Noureddin abode in the ship three days, till the merchants had made an end of their preparations and embarked, when they set sail and putting out to sea, fared on one-and-fifty days. After this, there came out upon them corsairs, who sacked the ship and taking Noureddin and the rest prisoners, carried them to the city of France and showed them to the king, who bade cast them into prison.

At this moment the galleon arrived with the Princess Meryem and the one-eyed vizier, and when it reached the harbour, the latter landed and going up to the king, gave him the glad news of his daughter's safe return: whereupon they beat the drums for good tidings and decorated the city after the goodliest fashion. Then the king took horse, with all his guards and nobles, and rode down to the sea to meet her. Presently, she landed and the king embraced her and mounting her on a horse, carried her to the palace, where her mother received her with open arms and asked her how she did and whether she was yet a maid. 'O my mother,' replied Meryem, 'how should a girl who has been sold from merchant to merchant in the land of the Muslims, [a slave] commanded, abide a maid ? The merchant who bought me threatened me with beating and forced me and did away my maidenhead, after which he sold me to another and he fain to a third.'

When the queen heard this, the light in her eyes became darkness and she repeated her words to the king, who was sore chagrined thereat and his affair was grievous to him. So he expounded her case to his grandees and patriarchs, who said to him, 'O king, she hath been defiled by the Muslims, and nothing will purify her save the striking off of a hundred of their heads.' Whereupon the king sent for the prisoners and commanded to strike off their heads. So they beheaded them, one after another, beginning with the captain, till there was none left but Noureddin. They tore off a strip of his skirt and binding his eyes therewith, set him on the carpet of blood and were about to cut off his head, when an old woman came up to the king and said, 'O my lord, thou didst vow to bestow upon the church five Muslim captives, to help us in

the service thereof, so God would restore thee thy daughter the Princess Meryem; and now she is restored to thee, so do thou fulfil thy vow.' 'O my mother,' replied the king, 'by the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, there remaineth to me but this one captive, whom they are about to put to death: so take him to help thee in the service of the church, till there come to me [other] prisoners of the Muslims, when I will send thee other four. Hadst thou come earlier, before they cut of the heads of these, I had given thee as many as thou wouldst.'

The old woman thanked him and wished him continuance Of life and glory and prosperity. Then she went up to Noureddin and seeing him to be a comely and elegant youth, with a delicate skin and a face like the moon at her full, carried him to the church, where she said to him, 'O my son, put of these clothes that are upon thee, for they are fit only for the king's service.' So saying, she brought him a gown and cowl of black wool and a broad girdle, in which she clad him, and bade him do the service of the church. Accordingly, he tended the church seven days, at the end of which time the old woman came up to him and said, 'O Muslim, don thy silken clothes and take these ten dirhems and go out forthright and divert thyself abroad this day, and tarry not here a moment, lest thou lose thy life.' Quoth he, 'What is to do, O my mother?' And she answered, 'Know, O my son, that the king's daughter, the Princess Meryem, hath a mind to visit the church today, to seek a blessing thereof and to make oblation thereto, by way of thank-offering for her deliverance from the land of the Muslims and in fulfilment of the vows she made to the Messiah, so he would deliver her. With her are four hundred damsels, not one of whom but is perfect in beauty and grace, and they will be here forthwith, and if their eyes fall on thee, they will hew thee in pieces with swords.'

So Noureddin took the ten dirhems and donning his own clothes, went out to the market and walked about the city, till he knew its highways and gates; after which he returned to the church and saw the Princess Meryem come up, attended by four hundred damsels, high-bosomed maids like moons, amongst whom was the daughter of the one-eyed vizier and those of the amirs and grandees of the realm; and she walked in their midst as she were the moon among the stars. When he saw her, he could not contain himself but cried out from the bottom of his heart, saying, 'O Meryem! O Meryem!' Which when the damsels heard, they ran at him with shining swords like flashes of lightning and would have killed him forthright. But the princess turned and looking on him, knew him but too well and said to her maidens, 'Leave this youth; doubtless he is mad, for the signs of madness appear on his face.'

When Noureddin heard this, he uncovered his head and made signs with his hands and twisted his legs, rolling his eyes and foaming at the mouth. 'Did I not tell you he was mad?' said the princess. 'Bring him to me and stand off from him, that I may hear what he saith; for I know the speech of the Arabs and will look into his case and see if his madness be curable or not.' So they laid hold of him and brought him to her; after which they withdrew to a distance and she said to him, 'Hast thou come hither on my account and ventured thy life and feignest thyself mad?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'hast thou not heard the saying of the poet:

Quoth they, "Thou'rt surely raving mad for her thou lov'st;" and I,
"There is no pleasantness in life but for the mad," reply.
"Compare my madness with herself for whom I rave; if she
Accord therewith, then blame me not for that which I aby."'

'By Allah, O Noureddin,' rejoined she, 'thou hast sinned against thyself, for I warned thee of this before it fell out; yet wouldst thou not hearken to me, but followedst thine own inclinations; albeit that whereof I gave thee to know I learnt not by means of divination nor augury nor dreams, but by eye-witness and very sight; for I saw the one-eyed vizier and knew that he was not come to Alexandria but in quest of me.' 'O my lady Meryem,' replied he, 'we seek refuge with God from the error of the intelligent!' Then his affliction redoubled on him and he recited these verses:

Pardon his fault whose slipping feet caused bite in error fall,
And let the master's clemency embrace his erring thrall.
All that an evildoer can is to repent his fault,
Although too late repentance come to profit him at all.
Lo, by confession I have done what courtesy requires:
Where then is that for which good grace and generous mercy call?

And they ceased not from lovers' chiding, which to set out would be tedious, relating to each other that which had befallen them and reciting verses and making moan, one to the other, of the violence of passion and the pangs of longing and desire, whilst the tears ran down their cheeks like rivers, till there was left them no strength to say a word. Now the princess was clad in a green dress, inwoven with red gold and broidered with pearls and jewels, which added to her beauty and grace; and right well saith the poet of her:

Like the full moon she shineth in garments all of green,
With loosened vest and collars and flowing hair beseen.
'What is thy name?' I asked her, and she replied,
'I'm she Who roasts the hearts of lovers on coals of love and teen.
I am the pure white silver, ay, and the gold wherewith
The bondmen from strait prison and dour released been.'
Quoth I, 'I'm all with rigours consumed;' but 'On a rock,'
Said she, 'such as my heart is, thy plaints are wasted clean.'
'Even if thy heart,' I answered, 'be rock in very deed,
Yet hath God caused fair water well from the rock, I ween.'

They abode thus till the day departed and night darkened on them, when Meryem went up to her women and said to them, 'Have ye locked the door?' And they answered, 'We have locked it.' So she took them and went with them to a place called the Chapel of the Lady Mary the Virgin, Mother of Light, because the Christians pretend that her heart and soul are there. The girls betook themselves to prayer and worship and made the round of all the church; and when they had made an end of their visitation, the princess said to them, 'I desire to pass the night alone in the Virgin's chapel and seek a blessing thereof, for that yearning thereafter hath betided me, by reason of my long absence in the land of the Muslims: and as for you, when ye

have made an end of your visitation, do ye sleep where ye will.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' replied they, and leaving her alone in the chapel, dispersed about the church and slept.

The lady Meryem waited till they were out of sight and hearing, then went in search of Noureddin, whom she found sitting on coals of fire in a corner, awaiting her. He rose and kissed her hands and she sat down and made him sit by her side. Then she pulled off all that was upon her of clothes and ornaments and fine linen and taking Noureddin in her arms, strained him to her bosom. And they ceased not from kissing and clipping and clicketing to the tune of 'In and out,' saying the while, 'How short are the nights of union and how long the nights of separation!' and reciting the following cinquains:

O night of delight and first fruits of fair fate,
Forefront of white nights, with glad fortune elate,
Thou brought'st me the morn in the afternoon late.
Thee as kohl in the eyes of the dawn shall we rate
Or as slumber on eyes of ophthalmiac shed?
The night of estrangement, how lonesome was it!
Its first and its last, one with other, were knit,
As a ring, sans beginning or ending to wit,
And the Day of Uprising broke, ere it would flit;
For estrangement, thereafter, the lover is dead.

As they were in this great delight and engrossing joy, they heard one of the servants of the Saint smite the gong upon the roof, to call the folk to the rites of their worship, and he was even as saith the poet:

I saw him smite upon the gong and unto him did say,
'Who taught the antelope to smite upon the gong, I pray?'
And to my soul, 'Which irks thee most, the smiting of the gongs
Or signal for departure given? Decide betwixt the tway.'

Then she rose forthwith and donned her clothes and ornaments: but this was grievous to Noureddin, and his gladness was troubled; the tears streamed from his eyes and he recited the following verses:

The rose of a soft cheek, all through the livelong night,
I stinted not to kiss and bite with many a bite,
Till, in our middle tide of pleasure, when our spy
Lay down to rest, with eyes in slumber closed outright,
They smote the gongs, as they who smote upon them were
Muezzins that to prayer the faithful do invite.
She rose from me in haste and donned her clothes, for fear
Our watcher's darted star should on our heads alight,
And said, 'O thou my wish and term of all desire,
Behold, the morn is come with visage wan and white.'
I swear, if but a day were given to me of power
And I became a king of puissance and of might,

I'd break the corners down o' the churches, all of them,
And every priest on earth with slaughter I'd requite.

Then she pressed him to her bosom and kissed his cheek and said to him, 'O Noureddin, how long hast thou been in the town?' 'Seven days' answered he. 'Hast thou walked about in it,' asked she, 'and dost thou know its ways and issues and its sea-gales and land-gates?' And he said, 'Yes.' Quoth she, 'Knowest thou the way to the offertory-chest of the church?' 'Yes,' replied he; and she said, 'Since thou knowest all this, as soon as the first watch of the coming night is over, go to the offertory- chest and take thence what thou wilt. Then open the door, that gives upon the passage leading to the sea, and go down to the harbour, where thou wilt find a little ship and ten men therein, and when the captain sees thee, he will put out his hand to thee. Give him thy hand and he will take thee up into the ship, and do thou wait there till I come to thee. But have a care lest sleep overtake thee this night, or thou wilt repent whenas repentance shall avail thee nothing.'

Then she took leave of him and going forth from him, roused her women and the rest of the damsels, with whom she betook herself to the church door and knocked; whereupon the old woman opened to her and she went forth and found the knights and serving-men standing without. They brought her a dapple mule and she mounted: whereupon they raised over her head a canopy with curtains of silk, and the knights took hold of the mule's halter. Then the guards encompassed her about with drawn swords in their hands and fared on with her, followed by her maidens, till they brought her to the palace of the king her father.

Meanwhile, Noureddin abode concealed behind the curtain, under cover of which Meryem and he had passed the night, till it was high day, when the [great] door was opened and the church became full of people. Then he mingled with the folk and accosted the old woman, who said to him, 'Where didst thou lie last night?' 'In the town,' answered he, 'as thou badest me.' 'O my son,' answered she, 'thou didst well; for, hadst thou passed the night in the church, she had slain thee on the foulest wise.' And he said, 'Praised be God who hath delivered me from the peril of this night!' Then he busied himself with the service of the church, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness, when be opened the offertory-chest and took thence of jewels what was light of weight and great of worth.

Then he waited till the first watch of the night was past, when he made his way to the postern and opening it, went forth, calling on God for protection, and fared on, till he came to the sea. Here he found the vessel moored to the shore, near the gate, with her captain, a tall old man of comely aspect, with a long beard, standing in the waist, surrounded by his ten men. Noureddin gave him his hand, as Meryem had bidden him, and the captain took it and pulling him on board, cried out to his crew, saying, 'Cast off the moorings and put out to sea with us, ere the day break.' 'O my lord the captain,' said one of the sailors, 'how shall we put out now when the king hath notified us that to-morrow he will embark in this ship and go round about this sea, being fearful for his daughter Meryem from the Muslim thieves?' But the captain cried out at them, saying, 'Woe to you, O accursed ones! Dare ye gainsay me and bandy words with me?' So saying, he drew his sword and dealt the sailor who had spoken a thrust in the

throat, that the steel came out gleaming from his nape, and quoth another of the sailors, 'What crime hath our comrade committed, that thou shouldst cut off his head?' The captain replied by putting his hand to his sword and striking off the speaker's head, nor did he leave smiting the rest of the sailors, till he had slain them all and cast their bodies ashore. Then he turned to Noureddin and cried out at him with a terrible great cry, that made him tremble, saying, 'Go down and pull up the mooring-stake.' Noureddin feared lest he should strike him also with the sword; so he leapt ashore and pulling up the stake, sprang aboard again, swiftlier than the dazzling lightning. The captain ceased not to bid him do this and do that and tack and wear and look at the stare and Noureddin did all that he bade him, with heart a-tremble for fear; whilst he himself spread the sails and the ship stretched out with them with a fair wind into the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows. Noureddin held on to the tackle, drowned in the sea of solicitude and knowing not what was hidden for him in the future; and whenever he looked at the captain, his heart quaked and he knew not whither he went with him.

He abode thus, distraught with concern and inquietude, till it was broad day, when he looked at the captain and saw him take hold of his beard and pull at it, whereupon it came off in his hand and Noureddin, examining it, saw that it was but a false beard stuck on. So he considered the captain straitly, and behold, it was the Princess Meryem, his mistress and the beloved of his heart, who had waylaid the captain and killed him and skinned off his beard, which she had clapped on to her own face. At this Noureddin was transported for joy and his breast dilated and he marvelled at her valour and prowess and the stoutness of her heart and said to her, 'Welcome, O thou my hope and my desire and the end of all my wishes!' Then desire and gladness agitated him and he made sure of attaining his hope and his wish ; wherefore he broke out into carol and sang the following verses:

Say to those who know nought of my transport and heat
For a loved one, whose favours they never may meet,
'Ask my folk of my passion: my verses are sweet
And dainty the ditties of love I repeat
On a people whose thought in my heart hath its seat.'
Their mention with me chaseth sickness away
From my bosom and heals me of pain and dismay;
My love and my longing increase on me aye
And my heart is distracted with ecstasy; yea,
I'm a byword become 'mongst the folk in the street.
I will not accept aught of blame on their part
Nor seek solace in other than them for love's smart.
Love hath pierced me, for grief and regret, with a dart
And hath kindled a brazier therefrom in my heart;
Yea, still in my liver there rageth its heat.
My sickness the folk for a wonderment cite
And my wakefulness all through the darkness of night.
What ailed them my weakness with rigour to smite?
In passion the shedding my blood they deem right;

Yet justly they me with injustice entreat.
I wonder who charged you to drive to despair
A youth who still loves and will love you fore'er?
By my life and by Him your Creator I swear,
If a saying of you should the backbiters bear,
By Allah, they lie in the tale they repeat!
May God not dispel from me sickness and pain
Nor my heart of its thirst and its longing assain,
Of your love for satiety when I complain!
Indeed, to none other that you am I fain.
Wring my heart or show favour, as seems to you meet.
My heart to your mem'ry shall ever be true,
Though your rigours should rack it and cause it to rue;
Rejection abides and acceptance with you:
So whatever you will with your bondman, that do;
He'll grudge not his life to lay down at your feet.

The princess marvelled at his song and thanked him therefor, saying, 'Him whose case is thus it behoveth to walk the ways of men and eschew the fashion of losers and poltroons.' Now she was stout of heart and versed in the sailing of ships over the salt sea, and she knew all the winds and their changes and all the courses of the sea. 'O my lady,' said Noureddin, 'hadst thou prolonged this case on me, I had surely died for excess of fear and chagrin, more by token of the fire of passion and love- longing and the cruel anguish of separation.' She laughed at his speech and presently rising, brought out somewhat of meat and drink; and they ate and drank and made merry. Then she brought out rubies and other gems and precious stones and trinkets of gold and silver and all manner things of price, light of carriage and great of worth, that she had taken from the palace of her father and his treasuries, and showed them to Noureddin, who rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy.

Meanwhile the wind blew fair for them and they sailed on, without hindrance, till they drew near the city of Alexandria and sighted its landmarks, old and new, and Pompey's Pillar. When they reached the port, Noureddin landed and making the ship fast to one of the Fulling- Stones, took somewhat of the treasures that Meryem had brought with her, and said to her, 'O my lady, abide in the ship against I [return and] carry thee up into the city on such wise as I should wish.' Quoth she, 'It behoves that this be done quickly, for tardiness in affairs engenders repentance.' 'There is no tardiness in me,' answered he and leaving her in the ship, went up into the city to the druggist's house, to borrow of his wife for Meryem veil and muffler and mantle and walking boots, after the usage of the women of Alexandria, knowing not that there was appointed to betide him of the vicissitudes of time, the father of wonders, that which was not in his reckoning.

Meanwhile, when the King of France arose in the morning, he missed his daughter and questioned her eunuchs and women of her. 'O our lord,' answered they, 'she went out last night, to go to the church, and after that we know nothing of her.' But, as the king talked with them, there arose a great clamour of cries without the

palace, that the place rang thereto, and he said, .What is to do?' 'O king,' answered the folk, 'we have found ten men slain on the sea-shore, and thy ship is missing. Moreover, we found the postern of the church, that gives upon the alley leading to the sea, open and the Muslim prisoner, who serves in the church, missing.' Quoth the king, 'If my ship be missing, without doubt my daughter is in it.' So he summoned the captain of the port and cried out at him, saying, 'By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, except thou overtake my ship forthright with troops and bring it back to me, with those who are therein, I will put thee to death after the foulest fashion and make an example of thee!'

The captain went out from before him, trembling, and betook himself to the old woman of the church, to whom said he, 'Heardest thou aught from the captive, that was with thee, concerning his native land and what countryman he was?' And she answered, 'He used to say, "I come from the town of Alexandria."' When the captain heard this, he returned forthright to the port and cried out to the sailors to make sail. So they did his bidding and straightway putting out to sea, sailed night and day till they came in sight of the city of Alexandria, what time Noureddin landed, leaving the princess in the ship. They soon espied the king's bark and knew it; so they moored their own vessel at a distance therefrom and putting off in a little ship they had with them, which drew but three feet of water and in which were a hundred fighting-men, amongst them the one-eyed vizier (for that he was a stubborn tyrant and a froward devil and a wily thief, none could avail against his craft, as he were Abou Mohammed el Bettal) rowed up to the bark and boarding her, all at once, found none therein save the Princess Meryem. So they took her and the ship, and returning to their own vessel, after they had landed and waited a long while, set sail forthright for the land of the Franks, having accomplished their errand, without drawing sword.

The wind blew fair for them and they sailed on, without hindrance, till they reached the city of France and landing with the princess, carried her to her father, who received her, seated on the throne of his kingship. As soon as he saw her, he said to her, 'Out on thee, O traitress! What ailed thee to leave the faith of thy forefathers and the safeguard of the Messiah, on whom is our reliance, and follow after the faith of the vagabonds, to wit, the faith of Islam, the which arose with the sword against the Cross and the Images?' 'I am not at fault,' replied Meryem. 'I went out by night to the church, to visit the Lady Mary and seek a blessing of her, when there fell upon me, at unawares, a band of Muslim robbers, who gagged me and bound me fast and carrying me on board the bark, set sail with me for their own country. However, I beguiled them and talked with them of their religion, till they loosed my bonds; and before I knew what was toward, thy men overtook me and delivered me. And by the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith and the Cross and Him who was crucified thereof I rejoiced with an exceeding joy in my release from them and my bosom expanded and I was glad fob my deliverance from the bondage of the Muslims!' 'Thou liest, O shameless baggage!' rejoined the king. 'By the virtue of that which is revealed of prohibition and allowance in the manifest evangel, I will assuredly slay thee after the foulest fashion and make of thee the vilest of examples! Did it not suffice thee to do as thou didst the first time and put off thy lies upon us, but thou must return upon us with thy falsehoods?'

Then he commanded to slay her and crucify her over the gate of the palace: but the one-eyed vizier, who had long been enamoured of the princess, came in to him and said, 'Slay her not, but give her to me to wife, and I will watch over her with the utmost vigilance, nor will I go in to her, till I have built her a palace of solid stone, exceeding high of fashion, so no thieves may avail to climb up to its roof; and when I have made an end of building it, I will sacrifice thirty Muslims before the gate thereof, as an expiatory offering to the Messiah for her and for myself.' The king granted his request and bade the priests and monks and patriarchs marry the princess to him; so they did his bidding, whereupon he gave commandment to set about building a strong and lofty palace, befitting her, and the workmen fell to work upon it.

To return to Noureddin. When he came back with the veils and what not else he had borrowed of the druggist's wife, he 'found the air empty and the place of visitation distant;' whereupon his heart sank within him and he wept floods of tears and recited the following verses:

The phantom of Saada came to me by night, near the break of day,
And roused me, whenas my comrades all in the desert sleeping lay:
But, when I awoke to the dream of the night, that came to visit me,
I found the air void and the wonted place of our rendezvous far away.

Then he walked on along the beach and turned right and left, till he saw people gathered together on the beach and heard them say, 'O Muslims, there abideth no sanctity in the city of Alexandria, since the Franks enter it and snatch away those who are therein and return to their own land at their leisure, unpursued of any of the Muslims or men-of-war!' Quoth Noureddin to them, 'What is to do?' And they answered, 'O my son, one of the ships of the Franks, full of armed men, came down but now upon the harbour and carried off a ship that was moored here, with her who was therein, and made for their own land unhindered.' Noureddin fell down in a swoon, on hearing these words; and when he came to himself, they questioned him of his case and he told them all that had befallen him; whereupon they all fell to blaming him and railing at him, saying, 'Why couldst thou not bring her up into the town without veil and muffler?' And each gave him some grievous word, berating him with sharp speech, and shot at him each his shaft of reproach, albeit some said, 'Let him be; that which hath befallen him sufficeth him,' till he again fell down in a swoon.

At this moment, up came the old druggist, who, seeing the folk gathered together, drew near to learn what was the matter and found Noureddin lying aswoon in their midst. So he sat down at his head and arousing him, said to him, 'O my son, what is this case in which I see thee?' 'O uncle,' replied Noureddin, 'I had brought back my slave-girl, whom I lost, from her father's city, after suffering all manner of perils and hardships; and when I came hither with her, I made the vessel fast to the shore and leaving her therein, repaired to thy dwelling and took of thy wife what was needful for her, that I might bring her up into the city; but the Franks came and taking the ship and the damsel therein, made off unhindered, and returned to their own land.'

When the druggist heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and he grieved sore for Noureddin and said to him, 'O my son, why didst thou not bring her out of the ship into the city without a veil? But talk availeth not at this season; so rise,

O my son, and come up with me to the city; it may be God will vouchsafe thee a girl fairer than she, who shall console thee for her. Praised be God who hath not made thee lose aught by her! Nay, thou hast gained by her. And bethink thee, O my son, that union and separation are in the hands of the Most High King.' 'By Allah, O uncle,' replied Noureddin, 'I can never be consoled for her loss nor will I ever leave seeking her, though I drink the cup of death on her account!' 'O my son,' rejoined the druggist, 'and what dost thou purpose to do?' Quoth Noureddin, 'I purpose to return to the land of the Franks and enter the city of France and venture myself there, come what may.' 'O my son,' said the druggist, 'quoth the current byword, "Not always comes the pitcher off unbroken;" and if they did thee no hurt before, belike they will slay thee this time, more by token that they know thee now but too well.' 'O my uncle,' replied Noureddin, 'let me set out and be slain presently for the love of her, and not die slowly of despair for her loss.'

Now, as fate would have it, there was then a ship in the port ready to sail, for its passengers had made an end of their affairs and the sailors had pulled up the mooring-stakes, when Noureddin embarked in her. So they put out to sea and sailed many days, with fair wind and weather, till they fell in with certain of the Frank cruisers, that were scouring those waters and seizing upon all ships they saw, in their fear for the king's daughter from the Muslim corsairs: and as often as they made prize of a Muslim ship, they carried all her people to the King of France, who put them to death in accomplishment of the vow he had made on account of his daughter Meryem. So they boarded the ship in which was Noureddin and taking him and the rest of the company prisoners, to the number of a hundred Muslims, carried them to the king, who bade cut their throats. So they slaughtered them all, one after another, till there was none left but Noureddin, whom the headsman had left till the last, in pity of his tender age and slender shape.

When the king saw him, he knew him right well and said to him, 'Art thou not Noureddin, that was with us before?' 'I was never with thee,' answered he; 'and my name is not Noureddin, but Ibrahim.' 'Thou liest,' rejoined the king; 'thou art Noureddin, he whom I gave to the old woman, the prioress, to help her in the service of the church.' But Noureddin said, 'O my lord, my name is Ibrahim.' Quoth the king, 'Wait awhile,' and bade his knights fetch the old woman forthright, saying, 'When she comes and sees thee, she will know if thou be Noureddin or not.' At this juncture, in came the one- eyed vizier and kissing the earth before the king, said to him, 'Know, O king, that the palace is finished; and thou knoweth that I vowed to the Messiah that, when I had made an end of building it, I would slaughter thirty Muslims before its gate; wherefore I am come to get them of thee, that I may sacrifice them and so fulfil my vow to the Messiah. They shall be at my charge, by way of loan and whenas there come prisoners to my hands, I will give thee other thirty in their stead.' 'By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith,' replied the king, 'I have but this one captive left!' And he pointed to Noureddin. 'Take him and slaughter him now, and the rest I will send thee, whenas there come to my hands [other] prisoners of the Muslims.'

So the vizier took Noureddin and carried him to his palace, thinking to slaughter him on the threshold of the gate; but the painters said to him, 'O my lord, we have two days' painting yet to do; so have patience with us and delay to slaughter this captive, till

we have made an end of our work; belike by that time the rest of the thirty will come, so thou mayst despatch them all at one but and accomplish thy vow in one day.' So the vizier bade imprison him and they carried him to the stables and left him there in chains, hungering and thirsting and making moan for himself; for indeed he saw death face to face.

Now it chanced, by the ordinance of destiny and fore-ordered fated that the king had two chargers, own brothers, such as the kings of the Chosroes might sigh in vain to possess themselves of one of them; they were called Sabic and Lahic and one of them was pure white and the other black as the darksome night. And all the kings of the isles had said, 'Whoso stealeth us one of these horses, we will give him all he seeketh of red gold and pearls and jewels;' but none could avail unto this. Now one of them fell sick of a jaundice and there came a whiteness over his eyes; whereupon the king sent for all the farriers in the city to treat him; but they all failed of his cure. Presently the vizier came in to the king and finding him troubled, because of the horse, thought to do away his concern and said to him, 'O king, give me the horse and I will cure him.' The king consented and caused carry the horse to the stable wherein was Noureddin; but, when he missed his brother, he cried out with an exceeding great cry and neighed, so that he affrighted all the folk. The vizier, seeing that he did thus but because of his separation from his brother, sent to tell the king, who said, 'If this, which is but a beast, cannot brook to be parted from his brother, how should it be with those that have reason?' And he bade his grooms take the other horse and put him with his brother in the vizier's stable, saying, 'Tell the vizier that the two horses are a present from me to him, for the sake of my daughter Meryem.'

Noureddin was lying in the stable, chained and shackled, when they brought the horses, and saw that one of them had a web in his eyes. Now he had some knowledge of horses and of the treatment of their diseases; so he said in himself, 'By Allah, this is my opportunity! I will go to the vizier and lie to him, saying, "I will cure thee this horse:" then will I do with him somewhat that will destroy his eyes; and he will kill me and I shall be at rest from this wretched life.' So he waited till the vizier entered the stable, to look upon the horse, and said to him, 'O my lord, what wilt thou give me, if I cure this horse, and make his eyes whole again?' 'As my bead liveth,' replied the vizier, 'an thou cure him, I will spare thy life and give thee leave to ask a boon of me!' And Noureddin said, 'O my lord, command my hands to be unbound.' So the vizier bade unbind him and he rose and taking virgin glass brayed it and mixed it with unslaked lime and onion-juice. Then he applied the whole to the horse's eyes and bound them up, saying in himself: 'Now will his eyes be put out and they will kill me and I shall be at rest from this wretched life.' And he passed the night with a heart free of care and trouble, humbling himself to God the Most High and saying, 'O Lord, in Thy knowledge is that which dispenseth with asking!'

When the day came and the sun shone out upon the hills and valleys, the vizier came to the stable and loosing the bandage from the horse's eyes, found them [altogether cured and] handsomer than ever, by the ordinance of the King who openeth [unto His servants the fates of sustenance and mercy]. So he said to Noureddin, 'O Muslim, never in the world saw I the like of thee for the excellence of thy skill. By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, thou fillest me with wonder,

for all the farriers of our land have failed to heal this horse's eyes!' Then he did off his shackles with his own hand and clad him in a costly dress and made him his master of the horse. Moreover, he appointed him stipends and allowances and lodged him in an apartment over the stables. So Noureddin abode awhile, eating and drinking and making merry and commanding and forbidding those who tended the horses; and whoso neglected them or failed to fodder those tied up in the stable wherein was his service, he would throw down and beat grievously and lay him by the legs in shackles of iron. Moreover, he used every day to go down to the two chargers and rub them down with his own hand, by reason of that which he knew of their value in the vizier's eyes and his love for them; wherefore the latter rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and his breast dilated and he was glad, unknowing what was to be the issue of his affair.

Now in the new palace, that he had built for the Princess Meryem, was a lattice window overlooking his old house and Noureddin's lodging. The vizier had a daughter, a virgin of extreme beauty, as she were a fleeing gazelle or a bending branch, and it chanced that she sat one day at the lattice aforesaid and heard Noureddin singing and solacing himself under his afflictions by reciting the following verses:

O censor of love, thou that wast fortunate aye,
Bright with the sheen of thy joys as the blossomed spray:
If Fate with its plagues should bite on thee one day,
Then of the taste of its bitter cup thou'lt say,
'Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.'

But to-day thou art safe as yet from his cruel spite
And his perfidy irks thee not and his fell unright;
Yet blame not, I prithee the love-distracted wight
Who cries, for the stress of the passion to which he's prey,
'Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.'

Be not of those that look on love with disdain,
But rather excuse and pity the lovers' pain,
Lest thou one day be bound in the self-same chain
And drink of the self-same bitter draught as they.
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

I too of old was empty of heart like thee
And lay down to rest in peace and passion free;
The taste of the sleepless nights was strange to me
Until he called me to dwell beneath his sway.
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

Yea, none can tell of Love and its sore duresse
But he who is sick and weak for its lonesomeness,

He who hath lost his reason for love-distress,
Whose drink is the bitter dregs of his own dismay.
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

How many a lover watches the darksome night,
His eye forbidden the taste of sleep's delight!
How many, whose tears like rivers down a height
Course down their cheeks for passion both night and day!
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

How many a mortal is maddened for love-despair,
Wakeful, for void of sleep is the dusky air!
Languor and pain are the weeds that he doth wear
And even his dreams from him are banished aye.
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

How often my patience fails and my bones do waste
And my tears, like a fount of blood, stream down in haste!
For my life, that of old was pleasant and sweet of taste,
A slender maiden hath bittered this many a day.
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

Alack for the man among men who loves like me,
Whose eyes through the hours of the darkness sleepless be,
Who drowns in his own despair, as it were a sea,
And cries, for the stress of an anguish without allay,
'Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.'

Whom hath not Love stricken and wounded indeed?
Who was there aye from his easy springes freed?
Whose life is empty of him and who succeed
In winning to his delights without affray?
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

Be Thou his helper, O Lord, who's sick at heart;
Protect him, Thou that the best protector art.
To him fair patience to bear his woes impart;
In all his trouble be Thou his help and stay.
Alas for Love and out on his whole array!
My heart with his flaming fires is burnt away.

Quoth the vizier's daughter to herself, 'By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, but this Muslim is a handsome youth! Doubtless, he is a lover separated from

his mistress. I wonder if his beloved is fair like unto him and if she pines for him as he for her! If she be comely as he is, it behoveth him to pour forth tears and make moan of passion; but, if she be other than fair, his life is wasted in vain regrets and he is denied the taste of delights.'

Now the Princess Meryem had removed to the [new] palace the day before and the vizier's daughter knew that she was heavy at heart; so she bethought herself to go to her and talk with her and tell her of the young man and the verses she had heard him recite; but, before she could do this, the princess sent for her to cheer her with her converse. So she went to her and found her breast straitened and her tears coursing down her cheeks; and she was weeping sore and reciting the following verses:

My life is spent; but love lives yet, that nought may kill,
And for my longing's stress my breast is straitened still.
My heart is all consumed for separation's ill,
Yet hopes that after all the days of union will
Return and love-delight its ordered course fulfil.
Be sparing of your blame to one enslaved of heart,
Whose body's worn with love and disappointment's smart,
Nor at his passion launch reproach's poisoned dart,
For none more wretched is than lovers torn apart.
Yet is love's bitter sweet of savour, will or nill.

Quoth the vizier's daughter to her, 'What ails thee, O princess, to be sick at heart and melancholy?' Whereupon Meryem recalled the greatness of the delights that were past and recited the following verses:

Will th' estrangement of my love with fortitude abide,
Whilst down my cheeks the pearls of tears in chains unending glide;
So haply God shall succour me with solace; for indeed
He doth all solace neath the ribs of difficulty hide.

'O princess,' said the vizier's daughter, 'let not thy breast be straitened, but come with me straightway to the lattice; for there is with us in the stable a comely young man, slender of shape and sweet of speech, and meseemeth he is a lover separated [from his beloved].' 'And by what sign knowest thou that he is a separated lover?' asked Meryem. And she answered, 'O queen, I know it by his reciting odes and verses all tides of the day and watches of the night.' Quoth the princess in herself, 'If what the vizier's daughter says be true, these are the traits of the wretched, the afflicted Ali Noureddin. Can it indeed be he of whom she speaketh?' At this thought love-longing and distraction redoubled on her and she rose at once and going with the maiden to the lattice, looked down upon the stables, where she saw her love and lord Noureddin and fixing her eyes on him, knew him but too well, albeit he was sick, of the greatness of his love for her and of the fire of passion and the anguish of separation and yearning and distraction. Emaciation was sore upon him and he was reciting and saying as follows:

My heart a bondslave is; mine eyes rain tears for e'er:
With them, is pouring forth, no rain-cloud can compare.

My weeping's manifest, my passion and lament,
My wakefulness and woe and mourning for my fair.
Alas, my raging heat, my transport and regret!
Eight plagues beset my heart and have their lodging there.
And five and five to boot thereafter follow on:
Tarry and list, whilst I their names to thee declare.
Memory, solicitude, sighing and languishment,
Love-longing in excess and all-engrossing care,
Affliction, strangerhood and passion and lament
And griefs that never cease to stir me to despair.
Patience and fortitude desert me for desire,
Whose hosts, when patience fails, beset me everywhere.
Yea, passion's troubles wax for ever on my heart.
O thou that ask'st what is the fire at heart I bear,
What ails my tears a flame to kindle in my blood?
The fires within my heart still burn and never spare.
Drowned am I in the flood of my unceasing tears
And in hell-fire I flame with love-longing fore'er.

When the Princess Meryem heard the eloquence of his verses and the excellence of his sketch, she was assured that it was indeed her lord Noureddin; but she dissembled with the vizier's daughter and said to her, 'By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith I thought not thou knewest of my sadness!' Then she withdrew from the window and returned to her own place, whilst the vizier's daughter went about her occasions. The princess waited awhile, then returned to the window and sat there, gazing upon her beloved Noureddin and feasting her eyes on his beauty and grace. And indeed, she saw that he was like unto the moon at its full; but he was ever sighing and pouring forth tears, for that he recalled what was past. Then he recited the following verses:

Union with my beloved for ever I await,
But gain not; whilst life's bitter for ever is my mate.
My tears are like the ocean in their unending flow;
But, when I meet my censors I force them still abate.
Out upon him who cursed us with parting by his spells!
Could I but win to meet him, I'd tear his tongue out straight.
To blame the days availeth no whit, for that they've wrought:
With bitterness unmingled they've blent my cup of fate.
To whom shall I address me but you, to whom repair,
Since in your courts, a hostage, I left my heart of late?
Who'll quit me of a despot, a tyrant in unright,
Who waxes, when I plain me for justice as his gate?
King o'er my soul I made him, his realm to keep; but me
He ruined and his kingdom laid waste and desolate.
My life I have expended for love of him, alas!
Would God I were requited for that my spent estate!
O fawn that in my bosom hast made thy nest, let that

I've tasted of estrangement suffice thy wrath to sate.
Thou'rt he whose face uniteth all charms, on whose account
I've parted with my patience and am disconsolate.
Within my heart I lodged him; woe on it fell, and
I To that which I permitted submit without debate.
My tears flow on for ever, like to a swollen sea:
Knew I the road to solace, I would ensue it straight.
I fear to die of sorrow, for he still 'scapes from me,
Oft as I think to reach him, ah me unfortunate!

When Meryem heard her lover's verses, they kindled a fire in her entrails and she recited the following, whilst her eyes ran over with tears:

I longed for him I love; but when I saw him, for surprise
I was amazed and had no power to move or tongue or eyes.
Volumes of chiding and reproach I had prepared; but when
We met, no syllable thereof unto my lips would rise.

When Noureddin heard her voice, he knew it and wept sore, saying, 'By Allah, this is assuredly the voice of the Princess Meryem! I wonder if my thought be true and if it be indeed she herself or another!' And regrets redoubled upon him and he bemoaned himself and recited the following verses:

When my blamer for love saw me meet with my dear
In a place wide and open to eye and to ear
And I said not at meeting a word of reproach
Though reproach to the sad oft brings solace and cheer,
'What manner of silence is this that prevents
Thee from making due answer?' he said with a sneer.
'Misbeliever,' quoth I, 'that ignorest the case
Of the people of passion, a word in thine ear;
The sign of the lover whose love is sincere
Is his silence when she whom he loveth draws near.'

When he had made an end of these verses, the princess fetched inkhorn and paper and wrote the following letter. 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful! The peace of God be upon thee and His mercy and Blessings! Thy slave-girl Meryem salutes thee, who longeth sore for thee; and this is her message to thee. As soon as this letter falls into thy hands, do thou arise and apply thyself with all diligence to that she would have of thee, and beware with all wariness of transgressing her commandment and of sleeping. When the first watch of the night is past, (for that hour is of the most favourable of times,) saddle the two horses [that the vizier had of the king] and go forth with them to the Sultan's Gate, [where do thou await me]. If any ask thee whither thou goest, answer, "I am going to exercise them," and none will hinder thee; for the folk of this city trust to the locking of the gates.'

Then she folded the letter in a silken handkerchief and threw it out of the window to Noureddin, who took it and reading it, knew it for the handwriting of the Indy Meryem. So he kissed the letter and laid it between his eyes; then, calling to mind that

which had betided him with her of the sweets of love-delight, he recited the following verses, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes:

A letter came to me from thee by favour of the night:
At once It healed me and in me love-longing did excite.
It minds me of the life I lived with thee in days of yore.
Glory to Him who did us twain with separation smite!

As soon as it was dark he busied himself with making ready the horses and waited till the first watch of the night was past, when he saddled them with saddles of the goodliest, and leading them forth of the stable, locked the door after him and repaired with them to the city-gate, where he sat down to await the princess's coming.

Meanwhile, Meryem returned to her apartment, where she found the one-eyed vizier seated, leaning upon a cushion stuffed with ostrich-down; but he was ashamed to put out his hand to her or bespeak her. When she saw him, she appealed to God in her heart, saying, 'O my God, bring him not to his will of me neither decree Thou to me defilement after purity!' Then she went up to him and made a show of affection for him and sat down by his side and caressed him, saying, 'O my lord, what is this aversion thou discovereth to me? Is it pride or coquetry on thy part? But the current byword saith, "If the salutation be little in demand, the sitters salute the standers." So I, O my lord, thou come not to me neither accost me, I will go to thee and accost thee.' 'To thee belong favour and kindness, O queen of the earth in its length and breadth,' answered he, 'nor am I but one of thy slaves and the least of thy servants. Indeed, I was ashamed to intrude upon thine illustrious presence, O unique pearl, and my face is in the dust at thy feet.' 'Leave this talk,' rejoined she, 'and bring us to eat and drink.'

So he called to his eunuchs and women to bring food, and they set before them a tray containing birds of all kinds that walk and fly and couple in the nests, such as grouse and quails and pigeons and lambs and fat geese and fricasseed fowls and other dishes of all sorts and colours. The princess put out her hand to the tray and began to eat and feed the vizier and kiss him on the mouth. They ate till they had enough and washed their hands, after which the servants removed the table of food and set on the table of wine. So the princess filled the cup and drank and gave the vizier to drink and served him with the utmost assiduity, so that he was transported for joy and his breast expanded and he was glad.

When she saw that the wine had gotten the mastery of his senses, she brought out of her bosom a pastille of Moorish henbane, which she had provided against this oration, whereof if an elephant smelt the least whiff, he would sleep from year to year. She took him at unawares and crumbled the henbane into the cup, then, filling it up, handed it to the vizier, who could hardly credit his senses for joy. So he took it and kissing her hand, drank it off; but hardly had it reached his stomach when he fell prostrate on the earth. Then she rose and filling two great pairs of saddle-bags with what was light of carriage and great of price of jewels and jacinths and precious stones, together with somewhat of meat and drink, donned harness of war and armed herself for battle. Moreover, she took with her for Noureddin what should rejoice him of rich and royal apparel and splendid arms and armour, and shouldering the bags, (for indeed she was both strong and valiant), went forth of the palace to join her lover.

Meanwhile the latter sat at the city-gate, with the horses' halters in his hand, till God (to whom belong might and majesty) sent a sleep upon him and he slept, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! Now, in those days, the Kings of the Islands had spent much measure in bribing folk to steal the two horses or one of them; and there was a black slaver who had been reared in the islands and was skilled in horse-stealing; wherefore the kings of the Franks bribed him with wealth galore to steal one of the chargers and promised him, if he could avail to steal the two that they would give him a whole island and invest him with a splendid dress of honour. He had long gone about the city of France in disguise, but availed not to take the horses, whilst they were with the king; but, when he gave them to the vizier and the latter carried them to his own stable, the thief rejoiced with an exceeding joy and made sure of success, saying in himself, 'By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, I will certainly steal them!'

Now he had gone out that very night, intending for the stable, to steal them, but, as he went along, he came upon Noureddin lying asleep, with the halters in his hands. So he went up to the horses and loosing the halters from their heads, was about to mount one of them and drive the other before him, when up came the Princess Meryem, carrying the two pairs of saddle-bags. She took the black for Noureddin and handed him one pair of bags, which he laid on one of the horses: after which she gave him the other pair and he laid it on the other horse, without word said. Then they mounted and rode out of the gate in silence. 'O my lord Noureddin,' quoth she, 'what aileth thee to be silent?' Whereupon the black turned to her and said angrily, 'What sayst thou, O damsel?' When she heard his outlandish speech, she knew that he was not Noureddin: so she looked at him and saw that he was a black slave, snub-nosed and wide-mouthed, with nostrils like ewers; whereupon the light in her eyes became darkness and she said to him, 'Who art thou, O sheikh of the sons of Ham and what is thy name among men?' 'O daughter of the base,' replied he, 'my name is Mesoud, and I steal horses, when folk are asleep.' She made him no answer, but drawing her sabre forthright, smote him on the nape and the blade came out, gleaming, from the tendons of his throat, whereupon he fell to the ground, weltering in his blood, and God hurried his soul to the fire and ill is the abiding- place [to which he went].

Then she took the other horse by the bridle and retraced her steps in search of Noureddin, whom she found lying, asleep and snoring, in the place where she had appointed him to meet her, with the halters in his hand and knowing not his hands from his feet. So she dismounted and gave him a cuff, whereupon he awoke in affright and said to her, 'O my lady, praised be God for thy safe coming!' 'Rise,' answered she, 'and mount this steed and speak not.' So he rose and mounted one of the horses, whilst she bestrode the other, and they went forth the city and rode on awhile in silence. Then said she to him, 'Did I not bid thee beware of sleeping? Verily, he prospers not who sleeps.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I slept not but because of the solacement of my heart by reason of thy promise. But what hath happened, O my lady?' So she told him her adventure with the black, and he said, 'Praised be God for safety!'

Then they fared on at full speed, committing their affair to the Subtle, the All-wise and conversing as they went, till they came to the place where the black lay prostrate in the dusty as he were an Afrit, and Meryem said to Noureddin, 'Dismount;

strip him of his clothes and take his arms.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered he, 'I dare not dismount nor approach him.' And indeed he marvelled at the black's stature and at the valour and stout-heartedness of the princess and praised her for her deed. They fared on loftily all that night and halted not till the day broke and the sun shone out upon the hills and plains, when they came to a wide champaign, abounding in herbs and fruits of all kinds. Therein were gazelles frisking and birds singing lustily on the branches: its slopes for flowers were like serpents' bellies and many and various were its channels of running water. And indeed it was as saith the poet and saith well and accomplisheth desire:

As 'twere a sun-scorched tract, a valley ruddy red,
With twice the common tale of herbs and flowers o'erspread.
We halted midst its groves, and it above us bent,
As o'er a weanling child the nurses bend the head;
And limpid water sweet, more pleasant than old wine
To boon-companion is, to quench our thirst it shed.
It still shut out the sun, from whatsoever side
It smote us, but let in the breeze to cool our bed.
Its pebbles fragrant were as maids with trinkets decked
And seemed unto the touch like heaps of pearl a-thread.

And as saith another:

When its birds sing in the dawn o'er its limpid lake,
El Welhan longs for its sight ere morning break;
For as at were Paradise 'tis with its fragrant gales
And its fruit and its streams that run through its shady brake.

Here the two lovers alighted to rest and turning the horses loose to pasture in the valley, ate of its fruits and drank of its streams; after which they sat talking and recalling all that had befallen them and complaining one to the other of the anguish of separation and of that which they had suffered for estrangement and love-longing. As they were thus engaged, there arose in the distance a cloud of dust, which spread till it walled the world, and they heard the neighing of horses and clank of arms.

Now the reason of this was, that the king had gone forth at daybreak, to give the vizier and his daughter good morrow, after the custom of kings with their daughter [on the morrow of their wedding-night,] taking with him silken stuffs [as a present] and scattering gold and silver among the eunuchs and tire-women, that they might scramble for it: but when he came to the new palace, he and one of his pages, he found the vizier prostrate on the carpet, knowing not his head from his feet, and searched the palace right and left for his daughter, but found her not; whereat he was sore troubled and concerned and his wit forsook him.

Then he called for hot water and frankincense and virgin vinegar and mingling them together, blew the mixture into the vizier's nostrils and shook him, whereupon he cast the henbane forth of his stomach, as it were a piece of cheese. He repeated the injection, whereupon the vizier came to himself and the king questioned him of his case and that of his daughter. 'O mighty king,' answered the vizier, 'I have no

knowledge of her save that she poured me out a cup of wine with her own hand; and from that moment to this I have no recollection of aught nor know I what is come of her.' When the king heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness, and he drew his sword and smote the vizier on the head, that the steel came out gleaming from between his teeth. Then he called the grooms and stable-men and demanded the two horses of them; but they said, 'O king, when we awoke in the morning, we found all the doors open and the two chargers missing; and our chief, the master of the horse, is also missing.' Quoth the king, 'By my faith and all wherein my belief is stablished, none but my daughter hath taken the horses, she and the Muslim captive that used to tend the church and who took her aforetime! Indeed I knew him right well and none delivered him from my hand save this one-eyed vizier; but now is he requited his deed.'

Then he called his three sons, who were three doughty champions, each of whom could cope with a thousand horse in the field and the stead of strife, and bade them mount. So they took horse forthwith and the King and the flower of his knights and nobles and officers mounted with them and followed in the track of the fugitives till they came up with them in the valley aforesaid. When Meryem saw them, she mounted her horse and girt on her sword and took her arms. Then she said to Noureddin, 'How is it with thee and how is thy stomach for battle and strife and contention?' Quoth he, 'Verily, my steadfastness in battle is as the steadfastness of the stake in bran.' And he recited the following verses:

I prithee, Meryem, spare me reproaches and despite
And do not thou my slaughter or torment long invite.
I whom a raven's croaking affeareth passing sore,
How should I be a warrior or have a mind to fight?
Lo, if I but set eyes on a mouse, I quake for fear;
Yea, I bepiss my hosen for terror and affright.
Indeed, I love not thrusting except in bed it be!
The kaze my pintle's prowess ignoreth not by night.
This is the way of thinking of every prudent man,
And who deems not as I do deems otherwise than right.

When she heard his speech and his verses, she laughed and said, 'O my lord Noureddin, abide in thy place and I will keep thee from their mischief, though they be as the sands of the sea in number. But mount and be behind me, and if we be defeated and put to flight, beware of falling, for none can overtake thy charger.' So saying, she couched her lance and gave her horse the rein, whereupon he darted off with her, like the storm wind or like water poured forth of the strictness of the pipes. Now Meryem was the doughtiest of the folk of her time and the unique pearl of her age; for her father had taught her, whilst she was yet little, to ride on horseback and plunge auto the ocean of battle in the darkness of the night.

When the King saw her pricking towards them, he knew her but too well and said to his eldest son, 'O Bertaut, thou who art surnamed Ras el Killaut, this is certainly thy sister Meryem who charges upon us, and she seeks to do battle and wage war with us. So go thou out to her and give her battle: and I charge thee by the Messiah and the True Faith, if thou get the better of her, kill her not till thou have propounded to her

the Nazarene faith. If she return to her old faith, bring her to me prisoner, but if she refuse, slay her after the foulest fashion and make of her the vilest of examples, as well as of the accursed wretch who is with her.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Bertaut and pricking out forthright to meet his sister, said to her, 'O Meryem, doth not what hath already befallen on thine account suffice thee, but thou must leave the faith of thy fathers and forefathers and follow after the faith of the rovers in the lands, that is to say, the faith of Islam? By the virtue of the Messiah and the True Faith, except thou return to the faith of the kings thy forefathers and walk therein after the goodliest wise, I will put thee to an ill death and make of thee the most shameful of examples!'

She laughed at his speech and replied, 'Avaunt! God forbid that the past should return or that he who is dead should live again! I will make thee drink the sorest of regrets! By Allah, I will not forsake the faith of Mohammed the son of Abdallah, who directed all peoples into the right road, for it is the true faith; nor will I leave the way of righteousness, though I drink the cup of perdition!' When the accursed Bertaut heard this, the light in his eye became darkness and there befell a sore battle between them. They swayed to and fro, lighting, throughout the length and breadth of the valley, whilst all eyes were fixed upon them in admiration: after which they wheeled about and foiled and feinted a great while, and as often as Bertaut opened on his sister a gate of war, she parried his attack and put it to nought, of the goodliness of her fashion and her strength and skill in horsemanship and the use of arms.

They abode on this wise till the dust hung vaulted over their heads and they were hidden from men's eyes; and she ceased not to baffle Bertaut and stop the way upon him, till he was weary and his courage ebbed and his resolution was broken and his strength weakened; whereupon she smote him on the nape, that the sword came out gleaming from the tendons of his throat and God hurried his soul to the fire and ill is the abiding-place [to which he went]. Then Meryem wheeled about in the mid-field and the stead of strife and offered battle, crying out and saying, 'Who is for fighting? Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard or weakling come forth to me to-day; ay, let none come forth to me but the champions of the enemies of the Faith, that I may give them to drink the cup of ignominious punishment. O worshippers of idols, O misbelievers, O froward folk, verily this day shall the faces of the people of the True Faith be whitened and theirs be blackened who deny the Compassionate One!'

When the king saw his eldest son slain, he smote his face and rent his clothes and called out to his second son, saying, 'O Bertous, thou who art surnamed Khura es Sous, go forth, O my son, in haste and do battle with thy sister Meryem; avenge me thy brother's death on her and bring her to me a prisoner, abject and humiliated!' 'I hear and obey, O my father,' answered he and setting spurs to his horse, drove at his sister, who met him in mid-career, and they fought, he and she, a sore battle, yet sorer than the first. Bertous soon found himself unable to cope with her and would have sought safety in flight, but could not avail unto this, of the greatness of her prowess; for, as often as he turned to flee, she drove after him and still clave to him and pressed him hard, till presently she smote him with the sword in his throat, that it issued gleaming from his nape, and sent him after his brother. Then she wheeled about in the mid-field, crying out and saying, 'Where are the horsemen? Where are the braves? Where is the one-eyed vizier, the cripple, the man of the crooked faith?'

Thereupon the king her father cried out with a bleeding heart and eyes ulcerated with tears, saying, 'By the virtue of the Messiah and the true faith, she hath killed my second son!' And he cried out to his youngest son, saying, 'O Fusyan, surnamed Selh es Subyan, go forth, O my son, to do battle with thy sister and take of her the blood-revenge for thy brothers and fall on her, come what may; and if thou conquer her, kill her without mercy!' So he pricked out to Meryem, who ran at him with the best of her skill and courage and prowess and said to him, 'O accursed one, O enemy of God and the Muslims, I will assuredly send thee after thy brothers, and woeful is the abiding-place of the unbelievers!' So saying, she drew her sword and smote him and cut off his head and arms and sent him after his brothers and God hurried his soul to the fire and ill is the abiding-place [to which he went].

When the knights and horsemen who rode with her father saw his three sons slain, who were the doughtiest of the folk of their day, there fell on their hearts terror of the Princess Meryem and they bowed their heads in affright and confusion and made sure of destruction. So they turned their backs and addressed themselves to flight. When the king saw his sons slain and his troops in full flight, there fell on him dismay and bewilderment and his heart was on fire. 'Verily,' quoth he, 'the Princess Meryem hath the better of us; and if I venture myself and go out against her alone, most like she will overcome me and slay me without pity, even as she slew her brothers, and make of me the foulest of examples; for she hath no longer any desire for us nor have we any hope of her return. Wherefore, meseemeth I were better guard my honour and return to my capital city.' So he gave reins to his horse and returned to the city.

When he found himself in his palace, fire was loosed in his heart for rage and chagrin for the death of his sons and the defeat of his troops and the violation of his honour; nor did he abide half an hour before he summoned his grandees and officers of state and complained to them of that which his daughter had done with him of the slaughter of her brothers and all he suffered of grief and chagrin therefrom, and sought counsel of them. They all counselled him to write to the Vicar of God in His earth, the Commander of the Faithful, Haroun er Reshid, and acquaint him with the case. So he wrote a letter to the Khalif containing, after the usual salutations, the following words: 'Know that we have a daughter called Meryem, and a Muslim captive, by name Noureddin Ali, son of the merchant Tajeddin of Cairo, hath debauched her from us and taken her by night and gone forth with her to his own country: wherefore I beg of the favour of our lord the Commander of the Faithful that he write to all the lands of the Muslims to seize her and send her back to us by a trusty messenger of the servants of His Highness. And in requital of thy help in this matter, we will appoint to thee half of the city of Rome the Great, that thou mayst build therein mosques for the Muslims, and the tribute thereof shall be sent to thee.'

Then he folded the letter and calling his vizier, whom he bad appointed in the stead of the one-eyed vizier, bade him seal it with the seal of the kingdom, and the officers of state also set their hands and seals thereto; after which the king bade the vizier carry the letter to Baghdad, the abode of peace, and deliver it into the Khalif's own hand, saying, 'If thou bring her back, thou shalt have of me the fiefs of two Amirs and I will bestow on thee a robe of honour with fringes [of gold].' The vizier set out with the letter and fared on over hill and dale, till he came to the city of Baghdad,

where he abode three days, till he was rested, when he sought out the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and craved an audience of him. The Khalif bade admit him; so he entered and kissing the ground before him, presented him with the letter of the King of France, together with rich and rare gifts beseeming the Commander of the Faithful.

When the Khalif read the letter and apprehended its purport, he commanded his viziers to write despatches to all the lands of the Muslims, setting out the name and favour of Noureddin and the princess and bidding all who found them lay hands on them and send them to the Commander of the Faithful, and warning them to use no delay or neglect in that manner. So the viziers wrote the letters and sealing them, despatched them by couriers to the different governors, who hastened to obey the Khalif's commandment and addressed themselves to make search in all the lands for the persons in question.

Meanwhile, Noureddin and Meryem fared on and [God] the Protector protected them, till they came to the land of Syria and entered the city of Damascus. Now the Khalif's messengers had foregone them thither by a day and the governor of Damascus knew that he was commanded to lay hands on them; so, when they entered the city, the police accosted them and asked them their names. They told them the truth and acquainted them with their story, whereupon they knew them for those of whom they were in search and seizing them, carried them before the governor of the city. He despatched them to the city of Baghdad [under escort of some of his officers], who, when they came thither, sought an audience of the Khalif and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, this is Meryem, daughter of the King of France, and this is the captive Noureddin, son of the merchant Tajeddin of Cairo, who debauched her from her father and fled with her to Damascus, where we came upon them, as they entered the city, and questioned them. They told us the truth of their case: so we laid hands on them and brought them to thee.'

The Khalif looked at Meryem and saw that she was slender and elegant of form and figure, the handsomest of the folk of her day and the unique pearl of her age and her time. Moreover, [he spoke with her and found her] sweet of speech and fluent of tongue, stable of soul and stout of heart. So she kissed the earth before him and wished him continuance of glory and prosperity and cease of evil and enmity. He was charmed with the beauty of her shape and the sweetness of her voice and the quickness of her answers and said to her, 'Art thou Meryem, daughter of the King of France?' 'Yes,' answered she, 'O Commander of the Faithful and High Priest of those that believe in the Unity of God and Defender of the Faith and Cousin of the Prince of Apostles!'

Then the Khalif turned to Noureddin and seeing him to be a comely youth, as he were the shining full moon on its fourteenth night, said to him, 'And thou, art thou Ali Noureddin, son of the merchant Tajeddin of Cairo?' 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful and stay of those who seek [after righteousness]!' replied he. 'How comes it,' asked the Khalif, 'that thou hast taken this young lady and fled forth with her of her father's kingdom?' So Noureddin proceeded to relate to the Commander of the Faithful all that had befallen him, first and last; whereat the latter was beyond measure astonished and diverted and exclaimed, 'How manifold are the things that men suffer!'

Then he turned to the princess and said to her, 'Know, O Meryem, that thy father, the King of France, hath written to me, concerning thee. What sayst thou?' 'O Vicar of God in His earth,' replied she, 'and Executor of His ordinances and the precepts of His prophet, may He vouchsafe thee eternal happiness and preserve thee from evil and enmity! Thou art Vicar of God in His earth and I have entered thy faith, for that it is the true and righteous one, and have left the religion of the infidels, who make the Messiah a liar and I am become a true believer in God the Bountiful and in the revelation of His compassionate Apostle. I serve God (blessed and exalted be He!) and acknowledge Him to be the One God and prostrate myself humbly before Him and glorify Him; and I say before the Khalif, 'Verily, I testify that there is no god but God and I testify that Mohammed is the apostle of God, whom He sent with guidance [into the right way] and the true faith. that he might cause it to prevail over faiths, all of them, in despite of the idolaters." Is it, therefore, permitted to thee, O Commander of the Faithful, to comply with the letter of the king of the heretics and send me back to the land of those who deny the Faith and give partners to the All-wise King, who magnify the Cross and believe in the divinity of Jesus, for all he was [but] a creature? If thou deal thus with me, O Vicegerent of God, I will lay hold upon thy skirts on the day of appearing before God and make my complaint of thee to thy cousin the Apostle of Allah (whom God bless and preserve!) on the day when wealth availeth not neither children [nor aught], except one come unto God with a whole heart.'

'O Meryem,' answered the Khalif, 'God forbid that I should do this ever! How can I send back a Muslim woman and a true believer in the unity of God and in His Apostle to that which they have forbidden?' Quoth she, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His Apostle!' 'O Meryem,' rejoined the Khalif, 'may God bless and stablish thee in the way of righteousness! Since thou art a Muslim and a believer in the unity of God, I owe thee an imperative duty, and it is that I should never transgress against thee nor forsake thee, though the world full of gold and jewels be lavished unto me on thine account. So be of good heart and cheerful eye and be thy breast dilated and thy mind at ease. Art thou willing that this youth Ali of Cairo should be thy husband and thou his wife?' 'How should I be other than willing,' replied Meryem, 'seeing that he bought me with his money and hath entreated me with the utmost kindness and for crown of his good offices, he hath ventured his life many times for my sake?'

So the Khalif summoned the Cadi and the witnesses and married her to him. Moreover, he assigned her a dowry and caused the grandees of his realm be present at their marriage, and it was a notable day. Then he turned to the French king's vizier, who was present, and said to him, 'Hast thou heard her words? How can I send her back to her father the infidel, seeing that she is a Muslim and a believer in the Unity of God? Belike he will evil entreat her and deal harshly with her, more by token that she hath slain his sons, and I shall be accountable to her therefor on the Day of Resurrection. And indeed quoth God the Most High, "God shall in nowise give the infidels power over the true-believers.' So return to thy king and say to him, "Turn from this thing and hope not to come at thy desire thereof."'

Now this vizier was a fool: so he said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, by the virtue of the Messiah and the true faith, were she forty times a Muslim

and forty times thereto, I may not depart from thee without Meryem! And if thou send her not back with me of free will, I will return to her father and cause him despatch thee an army, wherewith I will come upon you from the landward and the seaward and the van whereof shall be at your capital city, whilst the rear is yet on the Euphrates, and they shall lay waste thy dominions.' When the Khalif heard these words from the vizier of the King of France, the light in his face became darkness and he was exceeding wroth at his speech and said to him, 'O accursed one, O dog of the Nazarenes, who art thou that thou shouldst dare to come out against me with the King of the Franks?' [Then to his guards,] 'Take this accursed fellow and put him to death;' and he repeated the following verse:

This is the recompense of those Who their superiors' will oppose.

Then he commanded to cut off the vizier's head and burn his body; but Meryem said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, defile not thy sword with the blood of this accursed wretch.' So saying, she drew her sword and smote him and made his head fly from his body, and he went to the house of perdition; his abode was Gehenna and evil is the abiding-place [to which he went]. The Khalif marvelled at the power of her arm and the strength of her mind, and they carried the dead vizier forth of the palace and burnt him. Then the Commander of the Faithful bestowed upon Noureddin a splendid dress of honour and assigned them a lodging in his palace. Moreover, he appointed them stipends and allowances and commanded to supply them with all that they needed of raiment and furniture and vessels of price.

They sojourned awhile in Baghdad in all delight and solace of life, till Noureddin longed for his mother and father. So he expounded the matter to the Khalif and sought his permission to repair to his native land and visit his kinsfolk, and he granted him the leave he sought and calling for Meryem, commended them to each other. Moreover, he loaded them with costly presents and rarities and bade write letters to the amirs and scribes and notables of Cairo the [God-]guarded, commending Noureddin and his wife and parents to their care and charging them entreat them with the utmost honour.

When the news reached Cairo, the merchant Tajeddin rejoiced in the return of his son and Noureddin's mother likewise rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy. The amirs and notables of the city went forth to meet him, in obedience to the Khalif's injunction, and indeed it was for them a notable day, wherein the lover and the beloved foregathered and the seeker attained the sought. Moreover, all the amirs made them bride-feasts, each on his own day, and rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy and vied with each other in doing them honour. When Noureddin foregathered with his father and mother, they rejoiced in each other with the utmost joy and care and affliction ceased from them, whilst his parents rejoiced no less in the Princess Meryem and entreated her with the utmost honour. Every day, there came to them presents from all the amirs and great merchants, and they were daily in new delight and gladness exceeding the gladness of festival. Then they abode in joy and pleasance and good cheer and abounding prosperity, eating and drinking and making merry, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, he who layeth waste houses and palaces and peopleth the bellies of the tombs. So they were removed

from the world and became of the number of the dead; and glory be to the Living One, who dieth not and in whose hand are the keys of the Seen and the Unseen!

The Man of Upper Egypt and His Frank Wife.

(QUOTH the Amir Shijaeddin, Prefect of New Cairo) We lay one night in the house of a man of Upper Egypt, and he entertained us and entreated us with the utmost hospitality. Now he was an old man, exceeding swarthy of favour, and he had little children, who were white, of a white mingled with red. So we said to him, 'Harkye, such an one, how comes it that these thy children are white, whilst thou thyself art exceeding swarthy?' Quoth he, 'Their mother was a Frank woman, whom I took in the days of El Melik en Nasir Selaheddin, after the battle of Hittin, when I was a young man.' 'And how gottest thou her?' asked we, and he said, 'I had a rare adventure with her.' Quoth we, 'Favour us with it;' and he answered, 'With all my heart.

Know that I once sowed a crop of flax in these parts and pulled it and scutched it and spent five hundred dinars on it; after which I would have sold it, but could get no more than this [that I had spent] for it, and the folk said to me, "Carry it to Acre: for there thou wilt assuredly make a good profit by it." Now Acre was then in the hands of the Franks; so I carried my flax thither and sold part of it at six months' credit. One day, as I was selling, there came up a Frankish woman, (now it is the custom of the women of the Franks to go about the market-place [and the streets] with unveiled faces,) to buy flax of me, and I saw of her beauty what dazzled my wit. So I sold her somewhat of flax and was easy with her concerning the price; and she took it and went away. Some days after, she returned and bought more flax of me and I was yet easier with her about the price; and she repeated her visits to me, seeing that I was in love with her.

Now she was used to go in company of an old woman ; so I said to the latter, "I am sore enamoured of thy mistress. Canst thou contrive to bring me to enjoy her?" Quoth she, "I will contrive this for thee; but the secret must not go beyond us three, and needs must thou be lavish with money, to boot." And I answered, "Though my life were the price of her favours, it were no great matter." So it was agreed that I should pay her fifty dinars and that she should come to me; whereupon I procured the money and gave it to the old woman. She took it and said, "Make ready a place for her in thy house, and she will come to thee this night." So I went home and made ready what I could of meat and drink and wax candles and sweet- meats. Now my house overlooked the sea and it was the season of summer; so I spread the bed on the roof of the house.

Presently, the Frank woman came and we ate and drank and the night fell down. We lay down under the sky, with the moon shining on us, and fell to watching the reflection of the stars in the sea: and I said to myself, "Art thou not ashamed before God (to whom belong might and majesty!) and thou a stranger, under the heavens and in presence of the sea, to disobey Him with a Nazarene woman and merit the fiery torment?" Then said I, "O my God, I call thee to witness that I abstain from this Christian woman this night, of shamefastness before Thee and fear of Thy wrath!" So I slept till the morning, and she arose at peep of day and went away, full of anger. I went to my shop and sat there; and presently she passed, as she were the moon, followed by the old woman, who was angry; whereat my heart sank within me and I said to myself,

"Who art thou that thou shouldst forbear yonder damsel? Art thou Seri es Seketi or Bishr Barefoot or Junaid of Baghdad or Fuzail ben Iyaz?"

Then I ran after the old woman and said to her, "Bring her to me again." "By the virtue of the Messiah," answered she, "she will not return to thee but for a hundred dinars!" Quoth I, "I will give thee a hundred dinars." So I paid her the money and the damsel came to me a second time; but no sooner was she with me than I returned to my former way of thinking and abstained from her and forbore her for the sake of God the Most High. So she went away and I betook me to my shop, and presently the old woman came up, in a rage. Quoth I to her, "Bring her to me again." And she answered, "By the virtue of the Messiah, thou shalt never again rejoice in her presence with thee, except for five hundred dinars, and thou shalt perish miserably!" At this I trembled and resolved to sacrifice the whole price of my flax and ransom myself therewith. But, before I could think, I heard the crier proclaiming and saying, "Ho, all ye Muslims, the truce that was between us and you is expired, and we give all of you who are here a week from this time to make an end of your business and depart to your own country."

So her visits were cut off from me and I betook myself to getting in the price of my flax, that I had sold upon credit, and bartering what remained in my hands for other commodities. Then I took with me goodly mer- chandise and departing Acre, full of love and longing for the Frankish woman, for that she had taken my heart and my money, repaired to Damascus, where I sold my merchandise, that I had brought from Acre, at a great price, because of the cutting off of communication by reason of the expiry of the truce; and God (blessed and exalted be He!) vouchsafed me a good profit. Then I fell to trafficking in captive slave-girls, thinking thus to ease my heart of its longing for the Frankish woman, and on this wise I abode three years, till there befell between El Melik en Nasir and the Franks what befell of the battle of Hittin and other encounters and God gave him the victory over them, so that he took all their kings prisoners and opened the cities of the coast by His leave.

One day, after this, there came a man to me and sought of me a slave-girl for El Melik en Nasir. Now I had a handsome girl; so I showed her to him and he bought her of me for a hundred dinars and gave me ninety thereof, leaving ten still due to me, for that there was no more found with the king that day, because he had expended all his treasures in waging war against the Franks. So they took counsel with him and he said, "Carry him to the tent where are the captives and give him his choice among the damsels of the Franks, so he may take one of them for the ten dinars that are due to him." So they brought me to the prisoners' lodging and showed me all who were therein, and I saw amongst them the Frank damsel with whom I had fallen in love at Acre and knew her right well.

Now she was the wife of one of the cavaliers of the Franks. So I said, "Give me this one," and carrying her to my tent, said to her, "Dost thou know me?" She answered "No;" and I said, "I am the flax- merchant with whom thou hadst to do at Acre. Thou tookst money of me and saidst, 'Thou shalt never again see me but for five hundred dinars.' And now thou art become my property for ten dinars." Quoth she, "This is a mystery. Thy faith is the true one, and I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!" And she made hearty profession of Islam.

Then said I to myself, "By Allah, I will not go in to her till I have set her free and acquainted the Cadi, [so he may marry us!]" So I betook myself to Ibn Sheddad and told him what had passed and he married me to her. Then I lay with her that night and she conceived; after which the troops departed and we returned to Damascus.

Presently there came an ambassador from the king of the Franks, to seek the prisoners, according to the treaty between the kings. So El Melik en Nasir restored all the men and women he held in captivity, till there remained but the woman who was with me and the Franks said, "The wife of such an one the knight is not here." So they enquired after her and making instant search for her, found that she was with me; whereupon they demanded her of me and I went in to her, pale and sore concerned; and she said to me, "What ails thee and what hath befallen thee?" Quoth I, "A messenger is come from the king to take all the captives, and they demand thee of me." "Have no fear," answered she; "bring me to the king and I know what to say to him." So I carried her before the Sultan El Melik en Nasir, who was seated, with the ambassador of the king of the Franks on his right hand, and said to him, "This is the woman that is with me."

Then said the king and the ambassador to her, "Wilt thou go to thy country or to thy husband? For God hath loosed thy bonds and those of thy fellows in cap- tivity." Quoth she, "I am become a Muslim and am great with child, as ye may see, and the Franks shall have no more profit of me." "Whether is dearer to thee," asked the ambassador, "this Muslim or thy husband the knight such an one?" And she answered him even as she had answered the Sultan. Then said he to the Franks with him, "Heard ye her words? " They answered, "Yes." And he said to me, "Take thy wife and depart with her." So I took her and went away; but the ambassador sent after me in haste and said, "Her mother sent her a charge by me, saying, 'My daughter is a captive and naked: and I would have thee carry her this chest.' So take it thou and deliver it to her."

Accordingly I carried the chest home and gave it to her. She opened it and found in it all her clothes, and therein I saw the two purses of fifty and a hundred dinars, that I had given her, untouched and tied up with my own tying, wherefore I praised God the Most High. These are my children by her and she is yet alive and it was she dressed you this food.' And we marvelled at his story and at that which had befallen him of good fortune, and God [alone] is [All-]knowing.

The Ruined Man of Baghdad and His Slave-girl.

THERE was once at Baghdad, of old time, a man of condition, who had inherited wealth galore from his father. He fell in love with a slave-girl; so he bought her and she loved him as he loved her; and he ceased not to spend upon her, till all his wealth was gone and naught remained thereof; wherefore he sought a means of getting his livelihood, but availed not thereunto. Now he had been used, in the days of his wealth, to frequent the assemblies of those who were versed in the art of singing and had thus attained to the utmost skill therein.

So he took counsel with one of his friends, who said to him, 'Meseems thou canst not do better than sing, thou and thy slave-girl, [for your living] ; for on this wise thou wilt get money in plenty and wilt eat and drink.' But he misliked this, he and the damsel, and she said to him, 'I have bethought me of a means of relief for thee.' 'What is it?' asked he and she said, 'Do thou sell me; so shall we win quit of this strait, thou and I, and I shall be in affluence; for none will buy the like of me save a man of fortune, and with this I will contrive for my return to thee.'

So he carried her to the market and the first who saw her was a Hashimi of Bassora, a man of taste and breeding and generosity, who bought her for fifteen hundred dinars. (Quoth the young man, the girl's owner). When I had received the price, I repented me and wept, I and the damsel; and I sought to cancel the sale; but the purchaser would not consent. So I took the money in a bag, knowing not whither I should go, now my house was desolate of her, and buffeted my face and wept and wailed as I had never done. Then I entered a mosque and sat weeping, till I was stupefied and losing my senses, fell asleep, with the bag of money under my head for a pillow. Presently, before I could be ware, a man pulled the bag from under my head and ran off with it: whereupon I started up in affright and would have run after him; but lo, my feet were bound with a rope and I fell on my face. So I fell a-weeping and buffeting myself, saying, 'Thy soul hath left thee and thy wealth is lost!' Then, of the excess of my chagrin, I betook myself to the Tigris and wrapping my face in my gown, cast myself into the river.

The bystanders saw me and said, 'Sure, [he hath done] this because of some great trouble that hath betided him.' So they cast themselves in after me and bringing me ashore, questioned me of my case. I told them what had befallen me and they condoled with me. Then an old man of them came to me and said, 'Thou hast lost thy money, but why goest thou about to do away thy life and become of the people of the fire? Arise, come with me, that I may see thine abode.' So I went with him to my house and he sat with me awhile, till I became calmer, when I thanked him and he went away. When he was gone, I was like to kill myself, but bethought me of the life to come and the fire; so I fled forth my house to one of my friends and told him what had befallen me. He wept for pity of me and gave me fifty dinars, saying, 'Take my advice and go out forthright from Baghdad and let this provide thee till thy heart be diverted from the love of her and thou forget her. Thou art a man of letters and clerkship and thy handwriting is good and thy breeding excellent: seek out, then, whom thou wilt of the

viceroys and throw thyself on his bounty. It may be God will reunite thee with thy slave-girl.'

I hearkened to his words (and indeed my mind was fortified and I was somewhat comforted) and resolved to betake myself to Wasit, where I had kinsfolk. So I went down to the riverside, where I saw a ship moored and the sailors carrying goods and rich stuffs on board. I asked them to take me with them and carry me to Wasit; but they replied, 'We cannot do that, for the ship belongs to a Hashimi.' However, I tempted them with [promise of] reward, and they said, 'We cannot take thee on this fashion; if it must be, put off those fine clothes of thine and don sailors' clothes and sit with us, as thou wert one of us.' So I went away and buying sailors' clothes, put them on; after which I bought me somewhat of victual [for the voyage] and returning to the vessel, which was bound for Bassora, embarked with the crew.

Before long I saw my slave-girl herself [come on board] , attended by two waiting-women; whereupon my chagrin subsided and I said in myself 'Now shall I see her and hear her singing, till we come to Bassora.' Soon after, up rode the Hashimi, with a party of folk, and they embarked in the ship, which dropped down the river with them. Presently the Hashimi brought out food and ate with the damsel, whilst the rest ate amidships. Then said he to her, 'How long wilt thou abstain from singing and persist in this mourning and weeping? Thou art not the first that hath been parted from a beloved one.' Wherefore I knew what she suffered for love of me. Then he hung a curtain before her in the side of the ship and calling those who ate apart, sat down with them without the curtain; and I enquired concerning them and behold, they were his brethren. Then he set before them what they needed of wine and dessert, and they ceased not to press the damsel to sing, till she called for the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

The company have passed away with those whom I adore;
By night they went nor to depart with my desire forbore.
And since their caravan fared hence, live coals of tamarisk-wood
Within the lover's heart rage high and higher evermore.

Then weeping overpowered her and she threw down the lute and left singing; whereat the folk were troubled and I fell down in a swoon. They thought I was possessed and one of them fell to reciting exorcisms in my ear; nor did they cease to comfort her and beseech her to sing, till she tuned the lute again and sang these verses:

I stand lamenting travelers who bound their burdens on;
Within my heart their dwelling is, though far away they're gone
Hard by the ruined camp I stand and question it of them:
Waste is the camping-place and void the dwellings thereupon.

Then she fell down in a swoon and weeping arose amongst the folk; and I also cried out and fainted away. The sailors were vexed with me and one of the Hashimi's servants said to them, 'How came ye to take this madman on board?' So they said to each other, 'When we come to the next village, we will put him ashore and rid us of him.' When I heard this, I was sore troubled and summoned up all my courage, saying

to myself, 'Nothing will serve me to deliver myself from their hands, except I make shift to acquaint her with my presence in the ship, so she may prevent my putting out.'

Then we sailed on till eventide, when we came to a hamlet and the captain said, 'Come, let us go ashore.' So they all landed, [leaving me in the ship] : whereupon I rose and going behind the curtain took the lute and changed its accord, course by course, and tuning it after a fashion of my own, that she had learnt of me, returned to my place in the ship. Presently, they came on board again and the moon shone out upon the river and bank. Then said the Hashimi to the damsel, 'God upon thee, trouble not our lives!' So she took the lute, and touching it with her hand, gave a sob, that they thought her soul had departed [her body] , and said, 'By Allah, my master is with us in the ship!' 'By Allah,' answered the Hashimi, 'were this so, I would not forbid him our company! Haply he would lighten thy chagrin, so we might enjoy thy singing: but it cannot be that he is on board.' But she said, 'I cannot sing nor play whilst my lord is with us.' Quoth the Hashimi, 'Let us ask the sailors.' And she said, 'Do so.' So he questioned them, saying, 'Have ye carried any one with you?' And they said, 'No.'

Then I feared lest the enquiry should end there; so I laughed and said, 'Yes; I am her master and taught her, when I was her lord.' 'By Allah,' said she, 'that is my lord's voice!' So the servants carried me to the Hashimi, who knew me at once and said to me, 'Out on thee! What plight is this in which I see thee and what has brought thee to this pass?' So I told him all that had befallen of my affair, weeping the while, and the damsel wailed aloud from behind the curtain. The Hashimi wept sore, he and his brethren, for pity of me, and he said, 'By Allah, I have not drawn near the damsel nor lain with her, nor have I even heard her sing till this day! I am a man to whom God hath been bountiful and I came to Baghdad but to hear singing and seek my allowances of the Commander of the Faithful. I accomplished both my occasions and being about to return home, said to myself, "Let us hear somewhat of the singing of Baghdad." Wherefore I bought this damsel, knowing not how it was with you both; and I take God to witness that, when I reach Bassora, I will free her and marry her to thee and assign you what shall suffice you, and more: but on condition that, whenever I have a mind to hear music, a curtain shall be hung for her and she shall sing to me from behind it, and thou shalt be of the number of my brethren and boon-companions.'

At this I rejoiced and he put his head within the curtain and said to her, 'Will that content thee?' Whereupon she fell to blessing and thanking him. Then he called a servant and said to him, 'Take this young man and do off his clothes and clothe him in costly raiment and incense him and bring him back to us.' So the servant did with me as his master bade him and brought me back to him, and he set wine before me, even as before the rest of the company. Then the damsel fell to singing after the goodliest fashion and chanted these verses:

They rail at me because, upon the parting day,
I wept, when my belov'd farewell to me did say.
They never knew the taste of severance nor felt
The fire that in my breast for sorrow rageth aye.

Only th' afflicted one of passion knoweth, he
Whose heart amongst these steads is lost and gone astray.

The folk rejoiced in her song with an exceeding joy and my gladness redoubled, so that I took the lute from her and preluding after the most melodious fashion, sang the following verses:

Ask favours, if thou needs must ask,
Of generous men, Who affluence all their lives have known and happy fate.
O' the generous to ask brings honour, but upon
The asking from a churl blame and dishonour wait.
When thou must needs abase thyself, if thou must ask,
I rede thee still abase thyself unto the great
The generous to exalt no true abasement is ;
To magnify the mean doth men humiliate.

The company rejoiced in me with an exceeding joy and they ceased not from pleasure and delight, whilst anon I sang and anon the damsel, till we came to one of the landing-places, where the vessel moored and all on board went ashore and I with them. Now I was drunken with wine and squatted down to make water; but drowsiness overcame me and I slept, and the folk returned to the ship, without missing me, for that they also were drunken, and continued their voyage till they reached Bassora. As for me, I slept on till the heat of the sun aroused me, when I arose and looked about me, but saw no one. Now I had given my spending-money to the damsel and had not a rap left. Moreover, I had forgotten to ask the Hashimi his name and titles and where his house was at Bassora; so I was confounded and it was as if my joy at meeting the damsel had been but a dream; and I abode in perplexity till there came up a great vessel, in which I embarked and she carried me to Bassora.

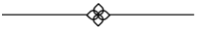
Now I had never entered the place and knew none there; so I accosted a grocer and taking of him inkhorn and paper, sat down to write. He admired my handwriting and seeing my dress soiled, questioned me of my case, to which I replied that I was a stranger and poor. Quoth he, 'Wilt thou abide with me and order the accounts of my shop and I will give thee thy food and clothing and half a dirhem a day?' 'It is well,' answered I and abode with him and kept his accounts and ordered his incomings and outgoings for a month, at the end of which time he found his receipts increased and his expenses lessened; wherefore he thanked me and made my wage a dirhem a day. When the year was out, he proposed to me to marry his daughter and become his partner in the shop. I agreed to this and went in to my wife and applied me to the shop. But I was broken in heart and spirit, and grief was apparent upon me; and the grocer used to drink and invite me thereto, but I refused for melancholy.

On this wise I abode two years, till, one day, as I sat in the shop, there passed by a company of people with meat and drink, and I asked the grocer what was to do. Quoth he, 'This is the day of the pleasure-makers, when all the musicians and dancers of the town go forth with the young men of fortune to the banks of the Ubulleh river and eat and drink among the trees there. My heart prompted me to divert myself with the sight of this thing and I said in myself, 'Belike, I may foregather with her I love among these people.' So I told the grocer that I had a mind to this and he said, 'Up and go with

them.' And he made me ready meat and drink and I went till I came to the Ubulleh river, when, behold, the folk were going away.

I was about to follow, when I espied the very bark in which the Hashimi had been with the damsel going along the river and the captain in her. So I cried out to him and he and his company knew me and took me on board with them and said to me, 'Art thou yet alive?' And they embraced me and questioned me of my case. So I told them my story and they said, 'Indeed, we thought that drunkenness had gotten the mastery of thee and that thou [hadst fallen into the water and] wast drowned.' Then I asked them of the damsel, and they answered, 'When she came to know of thy loss, she rent her clothes and burnt the lute and fell to buffeting herself and lamenting, till we reached Bassora, when we said to her, 'Leave this weeping and sorrowing.' Quoth she, 'I will don black and make me a tomb beside the house and abide thereby and repent from singing.' So we suffered her to do this and on this wise she abideth to this day.'

Then they carried me to the Hashimi's house, where I saw the damsel as they had said. When she saw me, she gave a great cry, methought she had died, and I embraced her with a long embrace. Then said the Hashimi to me, 'Take her.' And I answered, 'It is well but do thou free her and marry her to me, according to thy promise.' So he did this and gave us costly goods and store of raiment and furniture and five hundred dinars, saying, 'This is the amount of that which I purpose to allow you monthly, but on condition that thou be my boon-companion and that I hear the girl sing [when I will] .' Moreover, he assigned us a house and bade transport thither all that we needed; so, when I went to the house, I found it full of furniture and stuffs and carried the damsel thither. Then I betook me to the grocer and told him all that had befallen me, begging him to hold me excused for putting away his daughter, without offence on her part; and I paid her her dowry and what else behoved me. I abode with the Hashimi on this wise two years and became a man of great wealth and was restored well-nigh to the former estate of prosperity wherein I had been at Baghdad, I and the damsel. And indeed God the Bountiful put an end to our troubles and vouchsafed us abundant good fortune and caused our patience to issue in the attainment of our desire: wherefore to Him be the praise in this world and the next.



King Jelyaad Of Hind and His Vizier Shimas; Whereafter Ensueth the History of King Wird Khan, Son of King Jelyaad, With His Women and Viziers.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the land of Hind, a mighty king, tall and goodly of parts and presence, noble and generous of nature, beneficent to the poor and loving the tillers of the soil and all the people of his kingdom. His name was Jelyaad and under his hand were two-and-seventy [vassal] kings and in his cities three hundred and fifty Cadis. He had threescore and ten viziers and over every ten of them he set a chief. The chiefest of all his viziers was a man called Shimas, who was then two-and-twenty years old, a man of comely presence and noble nature, pleasant of speech and quick in reply. Moreover, he was shrewd and skilful in all manner of business, for all his tender age, sagacious, a man of good counsel and government, versed in all arts and sciences and accomplishments; and the king loved him with an exceeding love and cherished him by reason of his proficiency in eloquence and rhetoric and the art of government and for that which God had given him of compassion and tender solicitude for the people; for he was a king just in his governance and a protector of his subjects, constant in beneficence to great and small and giving them that which befitted them of good governance and bounty and protection and security and a lightener of their burdens. And indeed he was loving to them all, high and low, entreating them with kindness and clemency and governing them on such goodly wise as none had done before him. But, with all this, God the Most High had not blessed him with a child, and this was grievous to him and to the people of his kingdom.

It chanced, one night, as the king lay in his bed, occupied with anxious thought of the issue of the affair of his kingdom, that sleep overcame him and he dreamt that he poured water upon the roots of a tree, about which were many other trees; and behold there came fire out of this tree and burnt up all that encompassed it; whereupon Jelyaad awoke, affrighted and trembling, and calling one of his servants, bade him fetch the Vizier Shimas in all haste. So he betook himself to Shimas and said to him, 'The king calls for thee, for he hath awoke from his sleep in affright and hath sent me to bring thee to him in haste.'

When Shimas heard this, he arose forthright and going in to the king, found him seated on his bed. So he prostrated himself before him, wishing him continuance of glory and prosperity, and said, 'May God not cause thee grieve, O king! What hath troubled thee this night, and what is the cause of thy seeking me thus in haste?' The king bade him be seated and said to him, 'I have dreamt this night a dream that terrified me, and it was, that methought I poured water upon the roots of a tree and as I was thus engaged, behold, fire issued therefrom and burnt up all the trees that were about it; wherefore I was affrighted and fear took me. Then I awoke and sent to bid thee to me, because of thy much knowledge and skill in the interpretation of dreams and of that which I know of the extent of thy wisdom and the greatness of thine understanding.'

The vizier bowed his head awhile and presently raising it, smiled; whereupon the king said to him, 'What deemest thou, O Shimas? Tell me the truth of the matter and hide nothing from me.' 'O king,' answered Shimas, 'verily God the Most High granteth thee thy wish and solaceth thine eyes; for the matter of this dream presageth all good, to wit, that God will bless thee with a son, who shall inherit the kingdom from thee, after thy long life. But there is somewhat else that I desire not to expound at this present, seeing that the time is not favourable for its exposition.' The king rejoiced in this with an exceeding joy and great was his contentment; his trouble ceased from him and he said, 'If the case be thus of the happy presage of my dream, do thou complete to me its interpretation, when the fitting time cometh: for that which it behoveth not to expound to me now, it behoveth that thou expound to me, when its time cometh, so my joy may be fulfilled, because I seek nought in this but the approof of God, blessed and exalted be He!'

When the vizier saw that the king was urgent to have the rest of the exposition, he put him off with a pretext; but Jelyaad assembled all the astrologers and interpreters of dreams of his realm and related to them his dream, saying, 'I desire you to tell me the true interpretation of this.' Whereupon one of them came forward and craved the king's leave to speak, which being granted, he said, 'Know, O king, that thy Vizier Shimas is nowise unable to the interpretation of this thy dream; but he shrank from troubling thy repose: wherefore he expounded not unto thee the whole thereof: but, if thou bid me speak, I will acquaint thee with that which he hid from thee.' 'Speak without fear, O interpreter,' replied Jelyaad, 'and be truthful in thy speech.' 'Know then, O king,' said the interpreter, 'that there will be born to thee a son who shall inherit the kingship from thee, after thy long life; but he shall not order himself towards the folk after thy fashion, but shall transgress thine ordinances and oppress thy subjects, and there shall befall him what befell the mouse with the cat.' 'I seek refuge with God the Most High!' exclaimed the king. 'But what is the story of the cat and the mouse?' 'May God prolong the king's life!' replied the interpreter. 'It is related that

The Cat and the Mouse

A GRIMALKIN, that is to say, a cat, went out one night to a certain garden, in quest of what she might devour, but found nothing and became weak for the excess of cold and rain that prevailed that night. As she prowled about in search of prey, she espied a nest at the foot of a tree, and drawing near unto it, sniffed and purred about it till she scented a mouse within and went round about it, seeking to enter and take the mouse. When the latter smelt the cat, it turned its back to her and scraped up the earth with its paws, to stop the door against her; whereupon she counterfeited a weak voice and said, "Why dost thou thus, O my brother? I come to seek refuge with thee, hoping that thou wilt take pity on me and shelter me in thy nest this night; for I am weak, because of the greatness of my age and the loss of my strength, and can hardly move. I have ventured into this garden to-night, and how many a time have I prayed for death, that I might be at rest from this misery! Behold, here am I at thy door, prostrate for cold and wet, and I beseech thee, by Allah, take my hand of thy charity and bring me in with thee and give me shelter in the vestibule of thy nest; for I am a stranger and wretched and it is said, 'Whoso shelters a stranger and a wretched one in his dwelling, his shelter shall be Paradise on the Day of Reckoning.' And thou, O my brother, it behoves thee to earn a recompense [from God] by succouring me and suffering me abide with thee this night till the morning, when I will go my way." "How shall I suffer thee enter my nest," answered the mouse, "seeing that thou art my natural enemy and thy food is of my flesh? Indeed I fear lest thou play me false, for that is of thy nature and there is no faith in thee, and the byword says, 'It befits not to entrust a whoremonger with a fair woman nor a needy man with money nor fire with firewood.' Neither doth it behove me to entrust myself to thee; and it is said, 'Enmity of kind grows stronger, as the enemy himself grows weaker.'"

The cat made answer in a very faint voice, as she were in the most piteous case, saying, "What thou sayest of admonitory instances is the truth and I deny not my offences against thee; but I beseech thee to forgive that which is past of the enmity of kind between thee and me; for it is said, 'Whoso forgiveth a creature like himself, his Creator will forgive him his sins.' It is true that I was thy sometime enemy, but today I am a suitor for thy friendship, and it is said, 'If thou wilt have thine enemy be thy friend, do with him good.' O my brother, I swear to thee by Allah and make a binding covenant with thee that I will never do thee hurt, more by token that I have no power unto this; wherefore do thou trust in God and do good and accept my oath and covenant." "How can I accept the covenant of one between whom and me there is a rooted enmity," rejoined the mouse, "and whose wont it is to deal treacherously by me? Were the feud between us aught but one of blood, this were easy to me; but it is an enmity of kind between souls, and it is said, 'He who trusts himself to his enemy is as one who puts his hand into a viper's mouth.'" Quoth the cat, full of wrath, "My breast is straitened and my soul faints within me: indeed I am in extremity and ere long I shall die at thy door and my blood will be on thy head, for that thou hadst it in thy power to save me: and this is my last word to thee."

With this the fear of God the Most High overcame the mouse and pity took hold upon his heart and he said in himself, "Whoso would have the succour of God the Most High against his enemy, let him entreat him with compassion and kindness. I commit myself to God in this matter and will deliver this cat from this her strait and earn the reward [of God] for her." So he went forth and dragged the cat into his nest, where she abode till she was rested and somewhat restored, when she began to bewail her weakness and loss of strength and lack of friends. The mouse entreated her friendly and comforted her and busied himself with her service; but she crept along till she got command of the issue of the nest, lest the mouse should escape. So, when the latter would have gone out, after his wont, he drew near the cat; whereupon she seized him and taking him in her claws, began to bite him and shake him and take him in her mouth and lift him up and throw him down and run after him and crunch him and torture him.

The mouse cried out for help, beseeching God of deliverance, and began to upbraid the cat, saying, "Where is the covenant thou madest with me and where are the oaths thou sworest to me? Is this my reward from thee? I brought thee into my nest and trusted myself to thee: but he speaks sooth who says, 'He who relies on his enemy's promise desireth not salvation for himself.' And again, 'Whoso trusts himself to his enemy merits his own destruction.' Yet do I put my trust in my Creator, for He will deliver me from thee.' The cat was about to pounce on him and devour him, when up came a huntsman, with hunting dogs trained to the chase. One of the dogs passed by the mouth of the nest and hearing a great scuffing within, thought there was a fox there, tearing somewhat; so he thrust into the hole, to get at him, and coming upon the cat, seized on her. When she found herself in the dog's clutches, she was forced to take thought to herself and loosed the mouse alive and whole of wound. Then the dog broke her neck and dragging her forth of the hole, threw her down dead: and thus was exemplified the truth of the saying, "He who hath compassion, compassion shall be shown him at the last; and he who oppresseth shall presently be oppressed."

This, then, O king,' added the interpreter, 'is what befell the cat and the mouse and teaches that none should break faith with those who put trust in him; for whoso doth perfidy and treason, there shall befall him the like of that which befell the cat. As a man meteth, so shall it be meted unto him, and he who betaketh himself unto good shall gain his reward [in the world to come]. But grieve thou not, neither let this trouble thee, O king, for that most like thy son, after his tyranny and oppression, will return to the goodliness of thy policy. And I would that learned man, thy Vizier Shimas, had concealed from thee nought in that which he expounded unto thee; and this had been well-advised of him, for it is said, "Those of the folk who most abound in fear are the amplest of them in knowledge and the most emulous of good."'

The king received the interpreter's speech with submission and dismissing him and his fellow with rich presents, withdrew to his own apartments and fell to musing over the issue of his affair. When the night came, he went in to one of his women, who was most in favour with him and dearest to him of them all, and lay with her: and before four months had passed over her, the child stirred in her belly, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy and told the king. Quoth he, 'My dream said sooth, by God the Helper!' And he lodged her in the goodliest of lodgings and bestowed on her

store of rich gifts and entreated her with all honour. Then he sent for his Vizier Shimas and told him what had betided, rejoicing and saying, 'My dream is come true and I have attained my hope. It may be this child will be a son and inherit the kingship after me; what sayst thou of this, O Shimas?' But he was silent and made no reply. Quoth the king, 'What ails thee that thou rejoicest not in my joy and returnest me no answer? Doth the thing mislike thee, O Shimas?'

Thereupon the vizier prostrated himself before him and said, 'O king, may God prolong thy life! What availeth it to sit under the shade of a tree, if there issue fire therefrom, and what is the delight of one who drinketh pure wine, if he be choked withal, and what doth it profit to quench one's thirst with sweet cool water, if one be drowned therein? I am God's servant and thine, O king; but there are three things whereof it beats not the understanding to speak till they be accomplished; to wit, the traveller, till he return from his journey: the man who is at war, till he have overcome his enemy, and the pregnant woman, till she have cast her burden. For know, O king, that he, who speaks of aught before it be accomplished, is like the fakir and the pot of butter.' 'What is the story of the fakir,' asked the king, 'and what happened to him?' 'O king,' answered the vizier,

The Fakir and His Pot of Butter.

A FAKIR abode once with one of the nobles of a certain town, who made him a daily allowance of three cakes of bread and a little butter and honey. Now butter was dear in those parts and the fakir laid all that came to him together in a pot he had, till he filled it and hung it up over his head for safe keeping. One night, as he sat on his bed, with his staff in his hand, he fell a-musing upon the butter and the greatness of its price and said in himself, "Needs must I sell all this butter I have and buy an ewe with the price and take to partner therein a husbandman who has a ram. The first year she will bear a male lamb and a female and the second the like, and these in their turn will bear others, nor will they give over bearing males and females, till they become a great matter. The males I will sell and buy with them bulls and cows, which will also engender and multiply and become many.

Then will I take my share and sell thereof what I will and buy such a piece of land and plant a garden therein and build thereon a great palace. Moreover, I will get me clothes and raiment and slaves and slave-girls and take me to wife the daughter of such a merchant and hold a wedding the like whereof was never seen. I will slaughter cattle and make rich meats and sweetmeats and confections and provide flowers and perfumes and all manner sweet herbs and assemble all the musicians and mimes and mountebanks and player-folk. Then will I bid rich and poor and the learned and captains and grandees, and whoso asks for aught, I will cause it to be brought him. Moreover, I will make ready all manner of meat and drink and send out a crier to cry aloud and say, 'Whoso seeketh aught, let him [come] and get it.' Then will I go in to my bride, after they have unveiled her before me, and enjoy her beauty and grace; and I will eat and drink and make merry and say to myself, 'Now hast thou attained thy desire,' and will rest from devotion and asceticism.

In due time my wife will bear me a boy, and I shall rejoice in him and make banquets in his honour and rear him delicately and teach him philosophy and mathematics and polite letters. So shall I make his name renowned among the folk and glory in him among the assemblies of the learned. I will enjoin him to do good and he shall not gainsay me, and I will forbid him from lewdness and iniquity and exhort him to the fear of God and the practice of righteousness. Moreover, I will bestow on him rich and goodly gifts, and if I see him assiduous in obedience, I will redouble in my bounties towards him: but, if I see him incline unto disobedience, I will come down on him with his staff.' So saying, he raised his dand, to beat his son, but the staff struck the pot of butter, that hung over his head, and broke it; whereupon the potsherds fell upon him and the butter ran down upon his head and beard. So his clothes and bed were spoiled and he became an admonition to whoso will profit by admonition. Wherefore, O king,' added the vizier, 'it behoves not a man to speak of aught ere it come to pass.' 'Thou sayst sooth,' answered the king, 'fair fall thee for a vizier! For thou speakest the truth and counsellest righteousness. Verily, thy rank with me is such as thou couldst wish and thou shalt never cease to have acceptance with me.'

The vizier prostrated himself before the king and wished him continuance of prosperity, saying, 'May God prolong thy days and exalt thy dignity! Know that I

conceal from thee nought, neither in private nor in public; thy pleasure is my pleasure, and thy wrath my wrath. There is no joy for me but in thy joyance and I cannot sleep, if thou be angered against me, for that God the Most High hath vouchsafed me all good through thy bounties to me; wherefore I beseech Him to guard thee with His angels and make fair thy rewards whenas thou meetest Him.' The king rejoiced in this, and Shimas arose and went out from before him.

In due time the king's wife gave birth to a male child, and the messengers hastened to bear the glad tidings to the king, who rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and offered up abundant thanks to God, saying, 'Praised be God who hath vouchsafed me a son, after I had despaired! For He is pitiful and tenderly solicitous over His servants.' Then he wrote to all the people of his dominions, acquainting them with the good news and bidding them to his capital; and great were the rejoicings and festivities in all the kingdom. So there came amirs and captains and grandees and sages and men of learning and philosophers from all quarters to the palace and presenting themselves before the king, company after company, according to their several ranks, gave him joy, and he bestowed largesse upon them. Then he signed to the seven chief viziers, whose head was Shimas, to speak, each after the measure of his knowledge, upon the matter in question.

So the Grand Vizier Shimas began and sought leave of the king to speak, which being granted, he spoke as follows. 'Praised be God who brought us forth of nothingness into being and who favoureth His servant with kings who observe justice and equity in that wherewith He hath invested them of dominion and deal righteously with that which He appointeth at their hands of provision for their subjects; and especially our king, by whom He hath quickened the deadness of our land, with that which He hath conferred upon us of bounties, and hath blessed us, of His protection, with ease of life and tranquillity and justice! What king did ever with his people that which this king hath done with us in making provision for our needs and giving us our dues and doing us justice, each of the other, and in unfailing carefulness over us and redress of our grievances? Indeed, it is of the bounty of God to the people that their king be assiduous in ordering their affairs and in defending them from their enemies; for the end of the enemy's intent is to subdue his enemy and hold him in his hand; and many peoples bring their sons unto kings, servant-wise, and they become with them in the stead of slaves, to the intent that they may repel enemies from them. As for us, no enemy hath sodden our soil in our king's time, by reason of this great good fortune and exceeding happiness, that none may avail to describe, for indeed it passeth description. And verily, O king, thou art worthy of this exceeding happiness, and we are under thy safeguard and in the shadow of thy wings, may God make fair thy reward and prolong thy life!

Indeed, we have long been diligent in supplication to God the Most High that He would vouchsafe an answer to our prayers and continue thee to us and grant thee a virtuous son, to be the solace of thine eyes: and now God (blessed and exalted be He!) hath accepted of us and answered our prayer and brought us speedy relief, even as He did to the fishes in the pond of water.' 'And how was that?' asked the king. 'Know, O king,' answered Shimas, 'that

The Fishes and the Crab.

THERE was once a pond of water, wherein dwelt a number of fish, and it befell that the water of the pond dwindled and shrank away, till there remained barely enough to suffice them and they were nigh upon death and said, "What will become of us? How shall we do and of whom shall we seek counsel for our deliverance?" Quoth one of them, who was the chiefest of them in wit and age, "There is nothing will serve us but that we seek deliverance of God; but, come, let us go to the crab and seek his counsel, for indeed he is the chiefest and wisest of us all." They all approved of the fish's advice and betook themselves to the crab, whom they found squatted in his hole, without news or knowledge of their strait. So they saluted him and said to him, "O our lord, doth not our affair concern thee, who art our ruler and our chief?" The crab returned their salutation, saying, "And on you be peace! What aileth you and what is your want?" So they told him the strait in which they were by reason of the shrinking of the water, and that, when it should be altogether dried up, destruction would betide them. "Wherefore," added they, "we come to thee, expecting thy counsel, so haply deliverance may be therein, for thou art the chiefest and most experienced of us."

The crab bowed his head awhile and said, "Doubtless ye lack understanding, in that ye despair of the mercy of God the Most High and His care for the provision of all His creatures. Know ye not that God (blessed and exalted be He!) provideth all his creatures without stint and that He fore-ordained their means of livelihood ere He created aught and appointed to each of His creatures a fixed term of life and an allotted provision, of His divine providence? How then shall we burden ourselves with concern for a thing that is written in His secret purpose? Wherefore, it is my judgment that ye can do no better than to seek aid of God the Most High, and it behoveth each of us to make clean his conscience with his Lord, both in public and private, and pray Him to succour us and deliver us from our strait; for God the Most High disappointeth not the expectation of those who put their trust in Him and rejecteth not the suit of those who supplicate Him. When we have mended our ways, our affairs will prosper and all will be well with us, and when the winter cometh and our land is deluged, by means of our effectual prayer, He will not undo the good He hath built up. So it is my counsel that we take patience and await what God shall do with us. If death come to us, we shall be at rest, and if there befall us aught that calleth for fight, we will flee and depart our land whither God will."

"Thou sayst sooth, O our lord," answered all the fish with one voice. "May God requite thee for us with good!" Then each returned to his place, and in a few days, God sent them a violent rain and the place of the pond was filled fuller than before. On like wise, O king,' continued Shimas, 'we despaired of a child being born to thee, and now that God hath vouchsafed unto us and unto thee this blessed son, we implore Him to make him indeed blessed and render him the solace of thine eyes and a worthy successor to thee and grant us of him the like of that which He hath granted us of thee; for God the Most High disappointeth not those that seek Him and it behoveth none to despair of His mercy.'

Then the second vizier rose and saluting the king, spoke as follows: 'Verily, a king is not called a king, save he give gifts and do justice and rule with equity and munificence and govern his subjects wisely, maintaining the established law and usages among them and justifying them, one against another, and sparing their blood and warding off hurt from them; and of his qualities should be that he be never unmindful of the poor and that he succour the highest and lowest of them and give them each his due, so that they all bless him and are obedient to his commandment. Without doubt, a king who is after this wise is beloved of his people and gaineth of this world eminence and of the next glory and the favour of the Creator of both worlds. And we thy subjects acknowledge in thee, O king, all the attributes of kingship I have set out, even as it is said, "The best of things is that the king of a people be just and their physician skilful and their teacher experienced, doing according to his knowledge." Now we enjoy this happiness, after we had despaired of the birth of a son to thee, to inherit thy crown; but God (magnified be His name!) hath not disappointed thine expectation, but hath granted thy prayer, by reason of the goodliness of thy trust in Him and thy submission of thine affairs to Him, and there hath betided thee that which betided the crow with the serpent.' 'What was that?' asked the king. 'Know, O king,' replied the vizier, 'that

The Crow and the Serpent.

A CROW and his wife once dwelt in a tree, in all delight of life, till they came to the time of the hatching of their young, to wit, the season of midsummer, when a serpent issued from his hole and crawled up the tree, till it came to the crows' nest, where it coiled itself up and there abode all the days of the summer, whilst the crow was driven away and found no place wherein to lie. When the days of heat were past, the serpent went away to its own place and the crow said to his wife, "Let us thank God the Most High, who hath preserved us and delivered us from this serpent, albeit we are forbidden from increase this year. Yet God will not cut off our hope; so let us thank Him for having vouchsafed us safety and bodily weal, for we have none other in whom to trust, and if He will and we live till next year, He will give us other young in the stead of those we have lost this year."

Next year the serpent again sallied forth from its place at the same time and made for the crows' nest: but, as it climbed up the tree, a kite swooped down on it and struck his claws into its head and tore it, whereupon it fell to the ground, senseless, and the ants came out upon it and devoured it. So the crow and his wife abode in peace and quiet and reared a numerous brood and thanked God for their safety and for the young that were born to them. In like manner, O king,' continued the vizier, 'it behoveth us to thank God for that wherewith He hath favoured us and thee in vouchsafing us this happy and blessed child, after despair and hope cut off. May He make fair thy reward and the issue of thine affair!'

Then rose the third vizier and said, 'Rejoice, O just king, in the assurance of present prosperity and future felicity; for him, whom the people of the earth love, the people of heaven love also; and indeed God the Most High hath made love to be thy portion and hath stablished it in the hearts of the people of thy kingdom; wherefore to Him be thanks and praise from us and from thee, so He may redouble in His bounty to thee and to us in thee! For know, O king, that man can nought but by commandment of God the Most High and that He is the Giver and all good that befalleth a creature hath its [origin and] issue in Him. He allotteth His favours to His creatures, as it liketh Him; to some He giveth store of gifts and others may hardly get their daily bread. Some He maketh lords and captains, and others recluses, who abstain from the world and aspire but to Him, for He it is who saith, "I am He who harmeth and who advantageth; I make whole and make sick, I enrich and impoverish, I slay and quicken; in my hand is everything and all things have their issue in Me." Wherefore it behoveth all folk to praise Him.

Thou, O king, art of the fortunate pious men of whom it is said, "The happiest of the just is he for whom God uniteth the goods of this world and the next, who is content with that which God allotted to him and giveth Him thanks for that which He hath established." And indeed he who is froward and seeketh other than that which God hath decreed unto him and for him resembleth the fox [and shall fare as he did] with the wild ass.' 'And what is the story of the fox and the wild ass?' asked the king. 'Know, O king,' replied the vizier, 'that

The Fox and the Wild Ass.

A CERTAIN fox was wont every day to leave his earth and go forth in quest of prey. One day, as he was in a certain mountain, the night overtook him and he set out to return. On his way, be fell in with another fox, and each began to tell the other of the prey he had gotten. Quoth the newcomer, "The other day I chanced upon a wild ass and rejoiced in this and thanked God the Most High for bringing him into my power, for that I was anhungred and it was three days since I had eaten. So I tore out his heart and ate it and was full and returned to my earth. That was three days ago and since then I have found nothing to eat, yet am I still full of meat.' When the other fox heard his fellow's story, he envied him his fulness and said in himself, "Needs must I eat a wild ass's heart." So he left eating some days, till he became emaciated and nigh upon death and bestirred not himself neither did his endeavour [to get food], but lay coiled up in his earth.

One day there came out two hunters in quest of prey and started a wild ass. They followed in his track all day, till at last one of them shot at him a barbed arrow, which pierced his heart and killed him, and he fell down before the fox's hole. Then the hunters come up and finding him dead, pulled out the arrow from his heart but only the shaft came away and the barbed head abode in the wound. So they left him where he lay, expecting that others of the wild beasts would flock to him; but, when it was night and nothing fell to them, they returned to their abiding-places. The fox, hearing the commotion at the mouth of his hole, lay quiet till nightfall, when he came forth of his earth, groaning for weakness and hunger, and seeing the dead ass lying at his door, was like to fly for joy and said, "Praised be God who hath made my desire easy to me without toil! Verily, I had lost hope of coming at a wild ass or aught else; and assuredly God hath sent him to me and made him fall in my place."

Then he sprang on the dead ass and tearing open its belly, thrust in his head and routed about in its guts, till he found the heart and tearing it out, swallowed it: but the barbed head of the arrow stuck in his gullet and he could neither get it down into his belly nor bring it forth of his throat. So he made sure of destruction and said, "Of a truth it beseemeth not the creature to seek [aught] over and above that which God hath allotted to him. Had I been content with what He allotted me, I had not come to destruction." Wherefore, O king,' added the vizier, 'it behoveth man to be content with that which God hath allotted him and thank Him for His bounties to him and despair not of his Lord. And behold, O king, because of the purity of thine intent and the multitude of thy good works, God hath blessed thee with a son, after despair: wherefore we pray the Most High to vouchsafe him long life and abiding happiness and make him a blessed successor, faithful in the observance of thy covenant, after thy long life.'

Then arose the fourth vizier and said, 'Verily, if the king be a man of understanding, versed in the canons of science and government and policy, upright in purpose and just to his subjects, honouring and revering those to whom honour and veneration are due, using clemency, whenas it behoveth, in the exercise of his power and protecting both governors and governed, lightening their burdens and bestowing

largesse on them, sparing their blood and covering their nakedness and fulfilling his covenant with them, he is worthy of felicity both in this world and the next: and this is of that which protecteth him from them and helpeth him to the stablishing of his kingdom and the victory over his enemies and the accomplishment of his desire, together with increase of God's bounty to him and His favouring him for his praise of Him and the attainment of His protection. But the king who is the contrary of this ceaseth never from misfortunes and calamities, he and the people of his realm; for that his oppression embraceth both stranger and kinsman, and there cometh to pass with him that which befell the unjust king with the pilgrim prince.' 'And how was that?' asked King Jelyaad. 'Know, O king,' answered the vizier, 'that

The Unjust King and the Pilgrim Prince

THERE was once, in the land of the West, a king who was unjust in his rule, tyrannous, violent and capricious, having no regard to the welfare or protection of his subjects nor of those who entered his kingdom; and from every one who came within his realm his officers took four-fifths of his good and left him one-fifth, and no more. God the Most High decreed that he should have a son, who was fortunate and favoured and seeing the things of the world to be unrighteous, renounced them in his youth and put away from him the world and that which is therein and went forth, a pilgrim, serving God the Most High, wandering over deserts and wastes and [bytimes] entering cities.

One day, he came to his father's capital and the guards laid hands on him and searched him, but found nothing upon him but two gowns, one old and the other new. So they stripped the new one from him and left him the old, after they had passing scurvily entreated him; whereat he complained and said, "Out on you, O oppressors! I am a poor man and a pilgrim, and what shall this gown profit you? Except ye restore it to me, I will go to the king and complain to him of you." "We do this by the king's commandment," answered they. "So do what seemeth good to thee."

So he betook himself to the king's palace; but the chamberlains denied him admittance, and he turned away, saying in himself, "There is nothing for me but to watch for his coming out and complain to him of my case and that which hath betided me." Accordingly, he waited till he heard one of the guards announce the king's coming forth; whereupon he crept up, little by little, till he stood before the gate; and when the king come out, he threw himself in his way and made his complaint to him, giving him to know that he was a man of the people of God, who had renounced the world and went wandering over the earth, seeking acceptance of God and entering every city and hamlet, whilst all the folk he met gave him alms according to their power. "I entered this thy city,' continued he, "hoping that the folk would deal with me as with others of my condition; but thy men stopped me and stripped me of one of my gowns and loaded me with blows. Wherefore do thou look into my case and take me by the hand and get me back my gown and I will not abide in thy city an hour." Quoth the unjust king, "Who counselled thee to enter this city, unknowing the custom of its king?" And the pilgrim answered, "Give me back my gown and do with me what thou wilt."

When the king heard this, he fell into a rage and said, "O fool, we stripped thee of thy gown, so thou mightest humble thyself [to us]; but since thou troublest us with this clamour, we will strip thy soul from thee." Then he commanded to cast him into prison, where he began to repent of having answered the king and reproached himself for not having left him the gown and made off with his life. When it was the middle of the night, he rose to his feet and prayed long and fervently, saying, "O God, Thou art the Righteous Judge; Thou knowest my case and that which hath befallen me with this unjust king, and I, Thine oppressed servant, beseech Thee, of the fulness of Thy mercy, to deliver me from the hand of this unjust king and send down on him Thy vengeance; for Thou art not unmindful of the upright of every oppressor. Wherefore, if Thou

know that he hath oppressed me, loose on him Thy vengeance this night and send down on him Thy punishment; for Thy rule is just and Thou art the Helper of every afflicted one, O Thou to whom belong the power and the glory to the end of time!"

When the gaoler heard the prisoner's prayer, he trembled in every limb, and behold, a fire broke out in the king's palace and consumed the city and all that were therein, even to the door of the prison, and none was spared save the gaoler and the pilgrim. When the gaoler saw this he knew that it had not befallen save bemuse of the pilgrim's prayer; so he loosed him and fleeing with him forth of the burning, betook himself, he and the prince, to another city. So was the unjust king consumed, he and his city, by reason of his injustice, and he lost the goods both of this world and the next.

As for us, O august king,' continued the vizier, 'we neither lie down nor rise up without praying for thee and thanking God the Most High for His goodness in giving thee to us, tranquil in reliance on thy justice and the excellence of thy governance; and indeed we were sore concerned for thy lack of a son to inherit thy kingdom, fearing lest there betide us, after thee, a king unlike thee; but now God hath bestowed His favours upon us and done away our concern and brought us gladness in the birth of this blessed child; wherefore we beseech the Most High to make him a worthy successor [to thee] and endow him with eternal glory and felicity and abiding good.'

Then rose the fifth vizier and said, 'Blessed be the Most High God, Giver of [all] good gifts! We are well assured that God favours those who are grateful to Him and mindful of His faith; and thou, O august king, art renowned for these illustrious virtues and for just dealing and equity among thy subjects, in that which is acceptable to God the Most High. By reason of this hath God exalted thy dignity and made thy days happy and bestowed on thee the good gift of this happy child, after thou hadst despaired, wherefrom there hath betided up abiding gladness and joyance that may not be cut off; for before this we were in exceeding anxiety and sore concern because of thy lack of issue, and full of care, bethinking us of all thy justice and gentle dealing with us and fearful lest God decree death to thee and there be none to succeed thee and inherit the kingdom after thee, and so we be divided in our counsels and dissensions arise between us and there befall us what befell the crows.' 'And what befell the crows?' asked the king. 'Know, O august king,' replied the vizier, 'that

The Crows and the Hawk.

THERE was once, in a certain desert, a spacious valley, full of streams and trees and fruits and birds singing the praises of God, the One, the All-powerful, Creator of day and night; and among them was a troop of crows, which led the goodliest of lives under the governance of one of their number, who ruled them with mildness and benignity, so that they were with him in peace and security; and by reason of their wise ordinance of their affairs, none of the other birds could avail against them. In course of time there befell their chief that which is irrevocably appointed to all creatures and he died; whereupon the others mourned sore for him, and what added to their grief was that there was not amongst them one like unto him. who should fill his place. So they all assembled and took counsel together of whom it befitted to set over them: and some of them chose one crow, saying, "It beseemeth that this one be king over us;" whilst others objected to him and would none of him; and thus there arose division and dissension among them and the strife waxed hot between them.

At last they agreed to sleep the night upon it and that none should go forth at peep of dawn next morning to seek his living, [as of wont], but that all should wait till daybreak, when they should meet all in one place. "Then," said they, "we will all take flight at once and whichsoever soars above the rest in his flying, we will make king over us." So they did as they had agreed and took flight all, but each of them deemed himself higher than his fellow; wherefore quoth this one, "I am highest," and that, "Nay; that am I." Then said the lowest of them , "Look up, all of you, and whomsoever ye find the highest of you, let him be your chief." So they raised their eyes and seeing the hawk soaring over them, said to each other, "We agreed that which bird soever should be the highest of us should be king over us, and behold, the hawk is the highest of us: what say ye to him?" And they all cried out, saying, "We accept of him."

So they called the hawk and said to him, "O father of good, we have chosen thee governor over us, that thou mayst look into our affair." The hawk consented, saying, "God willing, ye shall have of me great good." But, after awhile, he fell to taking a company of them and betaking himself with them afar off to one of the caves, where he struck them down and eating their eyes and brains, threw their bodies into the river. Thus he did every day, it being his intent to destroy them all, [one after another], till, seeing that their number diminished daily, the crows flocked to him and said, "O our king, we complain to thee for that, since the day we made thee king and ruler over us, we are in the sorriest case and every day a company of us is missing and we know not the cause of this, more by token that the most part thereof are of those in attendance on thee."

Thereupon the hawk waxed wroth with them and said to them, "Verily it is ye who have slain them, and ye forestall me [with accusation]." So saying, he pounced upon them and tearing half a score of their chiefs [in pieces] before the rest, threatened them and drove them out from before him with blows and buffets. So they repented them of that which they had done and said, "We have known no good since the death of our first king, especially in the deed of this stranger in kind; but we deserve [all we

suffer], even had he destroyed us to the last of us, and there is exemplified in us the saying of Him who saith, 'He who submitteth not himself to the rule of his own people, the enemy hath dominion over him, of his ignorance.' And now there is nothing for it but to flee for our lives, else shall we perish." So they took flight and dispersed to various places.

And we, O king,' continued the vizier, 'we feared lest the like of this befall us and a king become ruler over us, other than thyself; but God hath vouchsafed us this boon and hath sent us this blessed child, and now we are assured of peace and union and security and prosperity in the land. So blessed be God the Great and to Him be thanks and praise and fair honour! And may He bless the king and us all his subjects and vouchsafe unto us and him the utmost felicity and make his life happy and his fortune constant!'

Then arose the sixth vizier and said, 'God grant thee all felicity, O king, in this world and the next! Verily, the ancients say, "He who prayeth and fasteth and giveth parents their due and is just in his rule meeteth his Lord and He is well pleased with him." Thou hast been set over us and hast ruled us justly and thine endeavour in this hath been blessed; wherefore we beseech God the Most High to make great thy reward and requite thee thy goodness. I have heard what this wise man hath said respecting our fear for the loss of our prosperity, by reason of the death of the king or the advent of another who should not be like him, and how after him dissensions would be rife among us and calamity betide thereupon, and how it behoved up therefore to be instant in prayer to God the Most High, so haply He might vouchsafe the king a happy son, to inherit the kingship after him. But, after all, the issue of that which man desireth of the goods of the world and after which he lusteth is unknown unto him, and it behoveth him to ask not of his Lord a thing whose issue he knoweth not; for that belike the hurt of the thing is nearer to him than its profit and his destruction may be in that he seeketh and there may befall him what befell the serpent-charmer's wife and children and the people of his house.' 'What was that?' asked the king. 'Know, O king,' replied the vizier, 'that

The Serpent-charmer and His Wife.

THERE was once a man, a serpent-charmer, who used to [catch and] train serpents, and this was his trade; and he had a great basket, in which were three snakes; but the people of his house knew this not. Every day he used to take the basket and go round about the town with it, gaining his living and that of his family [by exhibiting the snakes], and at eventide he returned to his house and clapped them back into the basket privily. One day, when he came home, as of wont, his wife asked him what was in the basket and he said, "What wouldst thou with it? Is not victual plentiful with you? Be content with that which God hath allotted to thee and enquire not of aught else." With this she held her peace; but she said in herself, "Needs must I search the basket and know what is therein." So she egged on her children to ask him of the basket and importune him, till he should tell them what was therein. They concluded that it contained something to eat and sought every day of their father that he should show them what was in it; and he still put them off and forbade them from asking this.

On this wise they abode awhile, till they agreed with their mother that they would neither eat nor drink with their father, till he granted them their prayer and opened the basket to them. One night, the serpent-charmer came home with great plenty of meat and drink and called them to eat with him; but they refused and showed him anger; whereupon he began to coax them with fair words, saying, "Tell me what you would have, that I may bring it you, be it meat or drink or clothes." "O our father," answered they, "we want nothing of thee but that thou open this basket and show us what is therein: else we will kill ourselves." "O my children," rejoined he, "there is nothing good for you therein and indeed the opening of it will be hurtful to you." They only redoubled in despite for all he could say, which when he saw, he began to berate them and threaten them with beating, except they left this; but they redoubled in anger and persistence in asking, till at last he waxed wroth and took a stick to beat them, and they fled from him within the house.

Now the basket was present and he had not hidden it anywhere; so his wife left him occupied with the children and opened the basket in haste, that she might see what was therein; whereupon the serpents came out and bit her and killed her. Then they went round about the house and killed all, great and small, who were therein, except the serpent-charmer, who left the place and went away. If then, O august king,' continued the vizier, 'thou consider this, thou wilt know that it is not for a man to desire aught but that which God the Most High refuseth not to him; nay, he should be content with what He willeth. And thou, O king, for the abundance of thy wisdom and the excellence of thine understanding, God hath solaced thine eyes with the advent of this thy son, after despair, and hath comforted thine heart; wherefore we pray God to make him of the just kings, acceptable to Himself and to his subjects.'

Then rose the seventh vizier and said, 'O king, I know and endorse all that my brethren, these wise and learned viziers, have said of thy justice and the goodness of thy policy and how thou art distinguished in this from all other kings; wherefore they gave thee the preference over them. Indeed, this is of that which is incumbent on us, O

king, and I say, "Praised be God for that He hath guerdoned thee with His bounty and vouchsafed thee, of His mercy, the welfare of the realm and succoured us and thee, on condition that we abound in gratitude to Him; and all this no otherwise than by thine existence!" What while thou remainest to us, we fear not oppression neither dread unright, nor can any take advantage of our weakness; and indeed it is said, "The greatest good of a a people is a just king and their greatest evil an unjust one;" and again, "Better dwell with devouring lions than with an unjust Sultan." So praised be God the Most High with eternal praise for that He hath blessed us with thy life and vouchsafed thee this blessed child, whenas thou wast stricken in years and hadst despaired of issue! For the goodliest of the gifts of the world is a virtuous child, and it is said, "He who hath no child, [his life] is without result and he hath no remembrance."

As for thee, because of the righteousness of thy justice and thy pious confidence in God the Most High, thou hast been vouchsafed this happy son; yea, this blessed child cometh as a gift from the Most High God to us and to thee, for the excellence of thy governance and the goodliness of thy patience; and in this thou hast fared even as fared the spider with the wind.' 'And what is the story of the spider and the wind?' asked the king. 'Know, O king,' answered the vizier, 'that

The Spider and the Wind.

A SPIDER once took up her abode on a high retired gate and span her web there and dwelt therein in peace, giving thanks to God the Most High, who had made this dwelling-place easy to her and had set her in safety from noxious reptiles. On this wise she abode awhile, still giving thanks to God for her ease and sustenance, till the Creator bethought Him to try her and make essay of her gratitude and patience. So he sent upon her a strong north-east wind, which carried her away, web and all, and cast her into the sea. The waves bore her ashore and she thanked God for safety and began to upbraid the wind, saying, "O wind, why hast thou dealt thus with me and what good hast thou gotten by carrying me hither from my abiding-place, where indeed I was in safety, secure in my house on the top of the gate?' 'Leave thy chiding," replied the wind, "for I will carry thee back and restore thee to thy place, as thou wast aforetime."

So the spider waited patiently, till the north-east wind left blowing and there arose a south-west wind, which caught her up and flew with her towards her dwelling- place; and when she came to her abode, she knew it and clung to it. And we,' continued the vizier, 'beseech God (who hath rewarded the king for his singleness of heart and patience and hath taken pity on his subjects and blessed them with His favour and hath vouchsafed the king this son in his old age, after he had despaired [of issue] and removed him not from the world, till He had granted him the solace of his eyes and bestowed on him what he hath bestowed of kingship and empire), to vouchsafe unto thy son that which He hath vouchsafed unto thee of kingship and dominion and glory! Amen.'

Then said the king, 'Praised be God over all praise and thanks be to Him over all thanks! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things, by the light of whose signs we know the glory of His greatness and who giveth kingship and dominion over his own country to whom He willeth of His servants! He chooseth of them whom He will to make him His vicegerent and steward over His creatures and commandeth him to just and equal dealing with them and the maintenance of laws and observances and the practice of right and constancy in ordering their affairs to that which is most acceptable to Him and to them. He who doth thus and obeyeth the commandment of his Lord, attaineth his desire, and God preserveth him from the perils of this world and maketh fair his recompense in the world to come; for indeed He neglecteth not the reward of the just: and whoso doth otherwise than as God bidders him sinneth grievously and disobeyeth his Lord, preferring his temporal above his spiritual weal. He hath no trace in this world and no part in the next: for God spareth not the unjust and the corrupt, nor doth He forsake any of His servants.

These our viziers have set forth how, by reason of our just dealing with our subjects and our wise governance of their affairs, God hath vouchsafed us and them His grace, for which it behoveth us to thank Him, because of the abundance of His mercies. Moreover, each of them hath spoken that wherewith God inspired him concerning this matter, and they have vied with each other in rendering thanks to God the Most High and praising Him for His favours and bounties. I also render thanks to

God, for that I am but a slave commanded; my heart is in His hand and my tongue obedient to Him, accepting that which He adjudgeth to me and to them, come what may.

Each one of them hath said what came to his thought on the subject of this boy and hath set forth that which was of the renewal of [God's] favour to us, after I had reached the age when despair is uppermost and hope faileth. So praised be God who hath saved us from disappointment and from the alternation of rulers, like to the alternation of night and day! For verily, this was a great boon both to us and to them; wherefore we praise God the Most High who hath given a ready answer to our prayer and hath blessed us with this boy and set him in high place, as the inheritor of the kingship. And we entreat Him, of His bounty and clemency, to make him happy in his actions, apt to good works, so he may become a king and a sultan governing his people with justice and equity, guarding them from the perils of error and frowardness of His bounty and grace and goodness!'

When the king had made an end of his speech, the sages and learned men rose and prostrated themselves before God and thanked the king, after which they kissed his hands and departed, each to his own house, whilst the king withdrew into his palace, where he looked upon the new-born child and offered up prayers for him and named him Wird Khan. The boy grew up till he attained the age of twelve, when the king, being minded to have him taught the various branches of knowledge, built him a palace amiddleward the city, wherein were three hundred and threescore rooms, and lodged him therein. Then he assigned him three learned men and bade them relax not from teaching him day and night and look that there was no kind of knowledge but they instructed him therein, so he might become versed in all sciences. Moreover, he commanded them to sit with him one day in each of the rooms in turn and write on the door thereof that which they had aught him therein of various kinds of knowledge and report to himself every seven days what he had learnt. So they went in to the prince and stinted not from teaching him day nor night, withholding from him nought of that which they knew; and there was manifest in him quickness of wit and excellence of apprehension and aptness to receive instruction such as none had shown before him. Every seventh day his governors reported to the king what his son had learnt and mastered, whereby Jelyaad became proficient in goodly learning and fair culture; and they said to him, 'Never saw we one so richly gifted with understanding as is this boy, may God bless thee in him and give thee joy of his life!'

When the prince had completed his twelfth year, he knew the better part of all sciences and excelled all the sages and learned men of his day. So his governors brought him to his father and said to him, 'God solace thine eyes, O king, with this happy youth! We bring him to thee, after he hath learnt all manner of knowledge, and there is not one of the learned men of the time who hath attained to that whereto he hath attained [of proficiency].' The king rejoiced in this with an exceeding joy and prostrated himself in gratitude to God (to whom belong might and majesty), saying, 'Praised be God for His mercies that may not be told!' Then he called his chief vizier and said to him, 'Know, O Shimas, that the governors of my son are come to tell me that he hath mastered all kinds of knowledge and there is nothing but they have

instructed him therein, so that he surpasseth all who have foregone him in this. What sayst thou, O Shimas?'

The vizier prostrated himself before God (to whom belong might and majesty) and kissed the king's hand, saying, 'The ruby, though it be embedded in the solid rock, cannot but shine as a lamp, and this thy son is such a jewel; his tender age hath not hindered him from becoming a sage and praised be God for that which He hath bestowed on him! But to-morrow I will call an assembly of the flower of the amirs and men of learning and examine the prince and cause him speak forth that which is with him in their presence.'

So the king commanded the attendance of the keenest-witted and most accomplished of the erudite and learned and sages of his dominions, and they all presented themselves on the morrow at the door of the palace, whereupon the king bade admit them. Then entered Shimas and kissed the hands of the prince, who rose and prostrated himself to him: but Shimas said, 'It behoveth not the lion-whelp to prostrate himself to any of the beasts, nor is it seemly that light prostrate itself to darkness.' Quoth the prince, 'When the lion-whelp sees the leopard, he prostrates himself to him, because of his wisdom, and light prostrates itself to darkness for the purpose of showing forth that which is therewithin.' Quoth Shimas, 'True, O my lord; but I would have thee answer me that whereof I shall ask thee, by leave of his highness and his folk.' And the youth said, 'With [my father's] permission, I will answer thee.'

So Shimas began and said, 'What is the Eternal, the Absolute, and what are the two essences thereof and whether of the two is the abiding one?' 'God,' answered the prince, '(to whom belong might and majesty,) is the Eternal, the Absolute, for that He is the first, without beginning, and the last, without end. His two essences are this world and the next; and the abiding one of the two is the world to come.' (Q.) 'Thou sayst truly: but tell me, how knowest thou that one of God's essences is this world and the other the world to come?' (A.) '[I know this] because this world was created from nothingness and had not its being from any existing thing; wherefore its affair is referable to the first essence. Moreover, it if a commodity swift of ceasing, the works whereof call for requital, and this presumes the reproduction of that which passes away: so the next world is the second essence.' (Q.) 'How knowest thou that the world to come is the abiding one of the two states?' (A.) 'Because it is the stead of requital for deeds done in this world, prepared by the Eternal without cease.' (Q.) 'Who are the people of this world most to be praised for their practice?' (A.) 'Those who prefer their weal in the world to come to their weal in this world.' (Q.) 'And who is he that prefers his future to his present weal?' (A.) 'He who knows that he dwells in a perishing house, that he was created but to pass away and that, after passing away, he will be called to account; and indeed, were there in this world one abiding for ever, he would not prefer it to the next world.' (Q.) 'Can the future life subsist without the present?' (A.) 'He who hath no present life hath no future life: and indeed I liken the people of this world and the goal to which they fare to certain handicraftsmen, for whom an amir builds a narrow house and lodges them therein, commanding each of them to do a certain work and assigning to him a set term and appointing one to act as steward over them. Whoso doth the work appointed unto him, the steward brings him forth of that straitness; but whoso doth it not is punished. After awhile, they find honey exuding

from the chinks of the house, and when they have eaten thereof and tasted its sweetness, they slacken in their appointed task and cast it behind their backs. So they endure the straitness and anxiety in which they are, with what they know of the punishment to which they are going, and are content with this trifling sweetness: and the steward leaves not to fetch every one of them forth of the house, [for punishment or reward,] when his appointed term is expired. Now we know the world to be a dwelling, wherein all eyes are dazed, and that each of its folk hath his appointed term; and he who finds the little sweetness that is in the world and occupies himself therewith is of the number of the lost, since he prefers the things of this world to those of the next: but he who pays no heed to this paltry sweetness and prefers the things of the world to come to those of this world, is of those who are saved.' (Q.) 'I accept what thou sayest of this world and the next: but I see they are as two set in authority over man; needs must he content them both, and they are contrary to one another. So, if the creature set himself to seek his livelihood, it is harmful to his soul in the world to come; and if he devote himself to [preparation for] the next world, it is hurtful to his body; and there is no way for him of pleasing both these contraries at once.' (A.) 'Indeed, the quest of one's worldly livelihood with a [pure] intent and on lawful wise is a provision for the quest of the [goods of the] world to come, if a man spend a part of his day in seeking his livelihood in this world, for the sustenance of his body, and devote the rest of his day to seeking [the goods of] the next world, for the repose of his soul and the warding off of hurt therefrom; and indeed I see this world and the next as they were two kings, a just and an unjust.' 'How so?' asked Shimas, and the youth said,

The Two Kings.

THERE were once two kings, a just and an unjust. The latter's country abounded in trees and fruits and herbs; but he let no merchant pass without robbing him of his goods and his merchandise, and the merchants endured this with patience, by reason of their gain from the fatness of the land in the means of life and its pleasantness, more by token that it was renowned for its richness in precious stones and jewels. Now the just king, who loved jewels, heard of this land and sent one of his subjects thither, giving him much money and bidding him buy jewels therewith from that country. So he went thither and it being told to the unjust king that a merchant was come to his realm, with much money to buy jewels withal, he sent for him and asked him whence and what he was and what was his errand. Quoth the merchant, "I am of such a country, and the king of the land gave me money and bade me buy therewith jewels from this country; so I obeyed him and came." "Out on thee!" cried the unjust king. "Knowst thou not my fashion of dealing with the people of my realm and how each day I take their good? How then comest thou to my country? And behold, thou hast been a sojourner here since such a Time!" "The money is not mine," answered the stranger; "not a doit of it; nay, it is a trust in my hands, till I bring it to its owner." But the king said, "I will not let thee take thy livelihood of my country or go out therefrom, except thou ransom thyself with this money, all of it; else shalt thou die."

So the man said in himself, "I am fallen between two kings, and I know that the oppression of this one embraceth all who abide in his dominions: and if I content him not, I shall lose both life and money and shall fail of my errand; whilst, on the other hand, if I give him all the money, it will assuredly prove my ruin with the other king, its owner: wherefore nothing will serve me but that I give this one a small part thereof and content him therewith and avert perdition from myself and from the money. Thus shall I get my livelihood of the fatness of this land, till I buy that which I desire of jewels and return to the owner of the money with his need, trusting in his justice and indulgence and fearing not that he will punish me for that which this unjust king taketh of the money, especially if it be but a little."

Then he called down blessings on the unjust king and said to him, "O king, I will ransom myself and this money with a small portion thereof, from the time of my entering thy country to that of my going forth therefrom." The king agreed to this and left him at peace for a year, till he bought jewels with all [the rest of] the money and returned therewith to his master, to whom he made his excuses, confessing to having rescued himself from the unjust king as before related. The just king accepted his excuse and praised him for his wise ordinance and set him on his right hand in his divan and appointed him in his kingdom an abiding inheritance and a happy life.

Now the just king is the similitude of the next world and the unjust king that of this world; the jewels that be in the latter's dominions are good deeds and pious works. The merchant is man and the money he hath with him is the provision appointed him of God. When I consider this, I know that it behoves him who seeks his livelihood in this world to leave not a day without seeking the goods of the world to come, so shall

he content this world with that which he gains of the fatness of the earth and the next with that which he spends of his life in seeking after it.' (Q.) 'Are the soul and the body alike in reward and punishment or is the [body as the] luster of lusts and doer of sins, alone affected with punishment?' (A.) 'The inclination unto lusts and sins may be the cause of earning reward by the withholding of the soul therefrom and the repenting thereof; but the affair is in the hand of Him who doth what He will, and by their contraries are things distinguished. Thus subsistence is necessary to the body, but there is no body without soul; and the purification of the soul is in making clean the intent in this world and taking thought to that which shall profit in the world to come. Indeed, soul and body are like two horses running for a wager or two foster-brothers or two partners in affairs. By the intent are good deeds distinguished and thus the body and soul are partners in actions and in reward and punishment, and in this they are like the blind man and the cripple with the overseer of the garden.' 'How so?' asked Shimas, and the prince said,

The Blind Man and the Cripple.

A BLIND man and a cripple were travelling-companions and used to beg in company. One day they sought admission into the garden of some one of the benevolent, and a kind-hearted man hearing their talk, took compassion on them and carried them into his garden, where he left them and went away, bidding them do no waste nor damage therein. When the fruits became ripe, the cripple said to the blind man, "Harkye, I see ripe fruits and long for them; but I cannot rise to theme to eat thereof; so go thou, for thou art sound of limb, and fetch us thereof, that we may eat." "Out on thee!" replied the blind man. "I had no thought of them, but now that thou callest them to my mind, I long to eat of them and I cannot avail unto this, being unable to see them; so how shall we do to get at them?" At this moment, up came the overseer of the garden, who was a man of understanding, and the cripple said to him, "Harkye, overseer! I long for some of those fruits; but we are as thou seest; I am a cripple and my mate here is stone-blind: so what shall we do?" "Out on ye!" replied the overseer. "Have ye forgotten that the master of the garden stipulated with you that ye should do no waste nor damage therein? Take warning then and abstain from this." But they answered, "Needs must we get at these fruits, that we may eat thereof: so tell us how we shall contrive this."

When the overseer saw that they were not to be turned from their purpose, he said, "O cripple, let the blind man take thee on his back and carry thee to the tree whose fruit pleaseth thee, so thou mayst pluck what thou canst reach thereof." So the blind man took the cripple on his back and the latter guided him, till he brought him to a tree, and he fell to plucking from it what he would and tearing at its branches, till he had despoiled it; after which they went round about the garden and wasted it with their hands and feet; nor did they cease from this fashion, till they had stripped all the trees in the garden.

Then they returned to their place and presently up came the master of the garden, who, seeing it in this plight, was sore angered and said to them, "Out on ye! What fashion is this? Did I not stipulate with you that ye should do no waste in the garden?" Quoth they, "Thou knowest that we cannot avail to come at any of the fruit, for that one of us is a cripple and cannot rise and the other is blind and cannot see that which is before him: so what is our offence?" But the master answered, saying, "Think ye I know not how ye wrought and how ye have gone about to do waste in my garden? I know, as if I had been with thee, O blind man, that thou tookest the cripple on thy back and he guided thee, till thou borest him to the trees." Then he punished them grievously and put them out of the garden. Now the blind man is the similitude of the body, and the cripple that of the soul, for that it hath no power of motion but by the body; the garden is the works, for which the creature is rewarded or punished, and the overseer is the reason, which commandeth to good and forbiddeth from evil. Thus the body and the soul are partners in reward and punishment.' (Q.) 'Which of the learned men is most worthy of praise, according to thee?' (A.) 'He who is learned in the knowledge of God and whose knowledge profiteth him.' (Q.) 'And who is this?' (A.) 'He who is instant in seeking to please his Lord and avoid His wrath.' (Q.) 'And which

of them is the most excellent?' (A.) 'He who is most learned in the knowledge of God.' (Q.) 'And which is the most experienced of them?' (A.) 'He who is most constant in doing according to his knowledge.' (Q.) 'And which is the purest-hearted of them?' (A.) 'He who is most assiduous in preparing for death and praising God and least of them in hope, and indeed he who familiarizes his soul with the terrors of death is as one who looks into a clear mirror, for that he knows the truth, and the mirror still increases in clearness and brilliance.' (Q.) 'What are the goodliest of treasures?' (A.) 'The treasures of heaven.' (Q.) 'Which is the goodliest of the treasures of heaven?' (A.) 'The praise and magnification of God.' (Q.) 'Which is the most excellent of the treasures of earth?' (A.) 'The practice of kindness.' (Q.) 'Tell me of three different things, knowledge and judgment and wit, and of that which unites them.' (A.) 'Knowledge comes of learning, judgment of experience and wit of refection, and they are all stablished and united in reason. He in whom these three qualities combine is perfect, and he who adds thereto the fear of God is in the right course.' (Q.) 'Tell me, is it possible, in the case of a man of learning and wisdom, endowed with sound judgment, lucid intelligence and keen and excelling wit, for desire and lust to change these his qualities?' (A.) '[Yes]; for these passions, when they enter into a man, affect his wisdom and understanding and judgment and wit and he is like the eagle, which abode in the upper air of the excess of his subtlety and precaution against the hunters; but, as he was thus, he saw a fowler set up his nets and bait them with a piece of meat; which when he beheld, desire and lust thereof overcame him and he forgot that which he had seen of nets and of the sorry case of all birds that fell into them. So he swooped down from the sky and pouncing upon the piece of meat, was caught in the same snare and could not win free. When the fowler came up and saw the eagle taken in his net, he marvelled exceedingly and said, "I set up my nets, thinking to take therein pigeons and the like of small birds; how came this eagle to fall into it?" It is said that when desire and lust incite a man of understanding to aught, he considers the issue thereof and refrains from that which they make fair and overcomes his passions with his reason; for, when they urge him to aught, it behoves him to make his reason like unto a skilled horseman, who, mounting a skittish horse, curbs him with a sharp bit, so that he goes aright with him and carries him whither he will. As for the ignorant man, who has neither knowledge nor judgment and things are obscure to him and desire and lust lord it over him, verily he does according to his desire and his lust and is of the number of those that perish; nor is there among men one in sorrier case than he.' (Q.) 'When is knowledge profitable and when availeth reason to ward off the ill effects of desire and lust?' (A.) 'When their possessor uses them in quest of the goods of the next world, for reason and knowledge are altogether profitable; but it behoves their owner to expend them not in the quest of the goods of this world, save in so far as may be needful for gaining his livelihood and defending himself from its mischief.' (Q.) 'What is most worthy that a man should apply himself thereto and occupy his heart withal?' (A.) 'Good works.' (Q.) 'If a man do this, it diverts him from gaining his living: how then shall he do for his livelihood, which he cannot dispense withal?' (A.) 'A man's day is four- and-twenty hours, and it behoves him to employ one [third] part thereof in seeking his living, another in prayer and rest and the remainder in the pursuit of knowledge; for a reasonable man without knowledge is as a barren land, wherein is place for neither tillage nor tree-planting nor grass. Except it be prepared for tillage and

planted, no fruit will profit therein; but, if it be tilled and planted, it brings forth goodly fruits. So with the ignorant man: there is no profit in him till knowledge be planted in him: then doth he bear fruit.' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of knowledge without understanding?' (A.) 'It is as the knowledge of a brute, which hath learnt the hours of its feeding and watering and waking, but hath no reason.' (Q.) 'Thou hast been brief in thine answer concerning this; but I accept thy reply. Tell me, how shall I guard myself against the Sultan?' (A.) 'By giving him no hold over thee.' (Q.) 'And how can I but give him hold over me, seeing that he is set in dominion over me and that the rein of my affair is in his hand?' (A.) 'His dominion over thee lies in the duties thou owest him; so, if thou give him his due, he hath no [farther] dominion over thee.' (Q.) 'What are a vizier's duties to his king?' (A.) 'Good counsel and zealous service both in public and private, right judgment, the keeping of his secrets and that he conceal from him nought of that which he hath a right to know, lack of neglect of aught of his occasions, with whose accomplishment he charges him, the seeking his approof on every wise and the avoidance of his wrath.' (Q.) 'How should the vizier do with the king?' (A.) 'If thou be vizier to the king and wouldst be safe from him, let thy hearing and thy speech to him overpass his expectation of thee and be thy seeking of thy need from him after the measure of thy rank in his esteem, and beware lest thou advance thyself to a dignity whereof he shall not judge thee worthy, for this would be like to presumption in thee against him. So, if thou presume upon his mildness and assume a rank beyond that which he deemeth thy due, thou wilt be like the hunter, who used to trap wild beasts for their skins and throw the flesh away. Now a lion used to come to the place [where the hunter skinned his prey] and eat of the carrion; and in course of time, he clapped up an acquaintance with the hunter, who would throw [meat] to him and wipe his hands on his back, whilst the lion wagged his tail. When the hunter saw his tameness and gentleness and submissiveness to him, he said in himself, "Verily this lion humbleth himself to me and I am master of him, and I see not why I should not mount him and strip off his hide, as with the other wild beasts." So he sprang on the lion's back, presuming on his mildness and deeming himself sure of him; which when the lion saw, he was exceeding wroth and raising his paw, smote the hunter, that he drove his claws into his guts; after which he cast him under his feet and tore him in pieces and devoured him. By this thou mayst know that it behoves the vizier to bear himself towards the king according to that which he seeth of his condition and not to presume upon the superiority of his own judgment, lest the king become jealous of him.' (Q.) 'How shall the vizier grace himself in the king's sight?' (A.) 'By the performance of the trust of loyal counsel and sound judgment committed to him and the execution of his commandments.' (Q.) 'As for that which thou sayst of the vizier's duty to avoid the king's wrath and perform his wishes and apply himself diligently to the due execution of that wherewith he charges him, that is a matter of course: but how, if the king's whole pleasure be in tyranny and the practice of oppression and extortion, and what shall the vizier do if he be afflicted with the frequentation of this unjust king? If he strive to turn him from his lust and his desire, he cannot avail unto this, and if he follow him in his lusts and flatter him with false counsel, he assumes the responsibility of this and becomes an enemy to the people. What sayst thou of this?' (A.) 'What thou sayst, O vizier, of his responsibility and sin, arises only in the case of his abetting the king in his wrong-doing; but it behoves the vizier, when the king takes

counsel with him of the like of this, to show forth to him the way of justice and equity and caution him against tyranny and oppression and expound to him the principles of good government, alluring him with the reward that pertains to this and restraining him with warning of the punishment that he incurs [in following his perverse inclinations]. If the king incline to his words, his end is gained, and if not, there is nothing for it but that he depart from him on courteous wise, for that in separation is ease for each of them.' (Q.) 'What are the duties of the king to his subjects and of the latter to the king?' (A.) 'They shall do what he orders them with a pure intent and obey him in that which pleases him and pleases God and His apostle. It is the king's duty to protect their possessions and guard their women, even as it is their duty to hearken unto him and obey him and expend their lives freely in his defence and give him his lawful due and praise him duly for that which he bestoweth upon them of his justice and beneficence.' (Q.) 'Have his subjects any claim upon the king other than that which thou hast said?' (A.) 'Yes: the king's duty to his subjects is more imperative than their duty to him; for that the breach of his duty towards them is more harmful than that of theirs towards him; because the will of the king and the loss of his kingdom and fortune betide not but by the breach of his duty to his subjects: wherefore it behoves him who is invested with the kingship to be assiduous in ensuing three things, to wit, the furtherance of the faith, the welfare of his subjects and the due administration of government; for by the assiduous observance of these three things, his kingdom shall endure.' (Q.) 'How doth it behove him to do for his subjects' weal?' (A.) 'By giving them their due and maintaining their laws and usages and employing wise and learned men to teach them and justifying them, one of the other, and sparing their blood and defending their goods and lightening their burdens and strengthening their armies.' (Q.) 'What is the king's duty to his vizier?' (A.) 'None hath a more imperative claim on the king than the vizier, for three reasons: firstly, because of that which betides him with him, in case of error in judgment, and because of the common profit to king and people in case of sound judgment: secondly, that the folk may know the goodliness of the rank which the vizier holds in the king's estimation and so look on him with eyes of veneration and respect and submission; and thirdly, that the vizier, seeing this from king and people, may ward off from them that which they mislike and fulfil to them that which they love.' (Q.) 'I have heard all thou hast said of the attributes of king and vizier and people and approve thereof: but now tell me what is incumbent in the matter of keeping the tongue from lying and folly and slander and excess in speech.' (A.) 'It behoves a man to speak nought but good and kindness and to talk not of that which concerns him not; to leave detraction nor carry talk he hath heard from one man to his enemy, neither seek to harm his friend nor his enemy with his sultan and reck not of any, neither of him from whom he hopes for good nor of him whose mischief he fears, save of God the Most High; for, in truth, He is the [only] one who liveth or profiteth. Let him not impute default unto any nor talk ignorantly, lest he incur the burden and the sin thereof before God and earn hatred among men; for know that speech is like an arrow, which, once discharged, none can avail to recall. Moreover, let him beware of confiding his secret to one who shall discover it, lest he fall into mischief by reason of its disclosure, after having relied upon its concealment; and let him be more careful to keep his secret from his friend than from his enemy; for the keeping a secret with all folk is of the performance of trust.' (Q.) 'Tell me how a

man should bear himself with his family and friends.' (A.) 'There is no ease for a son of Adam save in good conduct; he should render to his family that which they deserve and to his brethren that which is their due.' (Q.) 'What should one render to one's kinsfolk?' (A.) 'To one's parents, submission and soft speech and affability and honour and reverence. To one's brethren, loyal counsel and readiness to expend one's good for them and assistance in their undertakings and grieving for their grief and joyance in their joy and closing of the eyes toward the errors that they may commit; for, when they experience this from a man, they requite him with the best they can command of good counsel and expend their lives in his defence; so, if thou know thy brother to be trusty, be lavish to him of thy love and helpful to him in all his affairs.' (Q.) 'I see that brethren are of two kinds, brethren of trust and brethren of society. As for the first, there is due to them that which thou hast set forth; but now tell me of the other.' (A.) 'As for brethren of society, thou gettest of them clearance and goodly usance and fair speech and company; so be thou not sparing to them of thy delights, but be lavish to them, like as they are lavish thereof to thee, and render to them that which they render to thee of affability and an open favour and sweet speech; so shall thy life be pleasant and thy speech have acceptance with them.' (Q.) 'Tell me now of the provision decreed by the Creator to all creatures. Hath He allotted to men and beasts each his several provision, to the completion of his appointed term; and if this be so, what maketh him who seeketh his livelihood to incur hardship and toil in the quest of that which he knows he cannot fail of obtaining, if it be decreed to him, though he incur not the misery of endeavour; whilst, if it be not decreed to him, he shall not win thereto, though he strive after it with his utmost endeavour? Shall he therefore leave striving and put his trust in his Lord and rest his body and his soul?' (A.) 'Indeed, we see that to each there is a provision allotted and a term prescribed; but to each provision is a way and means, and he who seeketh would get ease of his seeking by leaving to seek; et needs must he seek his fortune. Moreover, the seeker is in two cases; either he gains his fortune or fails thereof. In the first case, his pleasure consists, first in the having gained his fortune, and secondly, in the satisfactory issue of his quest; and in the other case, his pleasure consists, first, in his readiness to seek his living, secondly, in his abstaining from being a burden to the folk, and thirdly, in his freedom from liability to reproach.' (Q.) 'What sayst thou of the means of seeking one's fortune?' (A.) 'A man shall hold lawful that which God (to whom belong might and majesty) permitteth and unlawful that which He forbiddeth.'

With this the discourse between them came to an end and Shimas and all the learned men, who were present, rose and prostrating themselves before the prince, magnified and extolled him, whilst his father pressed him to his bosom and seating him on the throne of kingship, said, 'Praised be God who hath blessed me with a son to be the solace of mine eyes in my lifetime!' Then said the prince to Shimas, 'O sage that art versed in metaphysical questions, albeit God hath vouchsafed me but little knowledge, yet do I apprehend thine intent in accepting from me what I proffered in answer concerning that whereof thou hast asked me, whether I hit or missed the mark therein, and belike thou forgavest my errors; but now I wish to question thee of a thing, whereof my judgment fails and whereto my capacity is unequal and which my tongue availeth not to set forth, for that it is obscure to me, with the obscurity of limpid water in a black vessel; wherefore I would have thee expound it to me, so no

whit thereof may remain doubtful to the like of me, to whom its obscurity may present itself in the future, even as it hath presented itself to me in the past; since God, even as He hath made life to be in water and sustenance in food and the healing of the sick in the physician's skill, so hath He appointed the cure of the ignorant to be in the learning of the wise. Give ear, therefore, to my speech.' 'O luminous of wit and master of apt questions,' replied the vizier, 'thou whose superiority all the learned men attest, by reason of the goodliness of thy discrimination of things and thy departition thereof and the justness of thine answers to the questions I have put to thee, thou knowest that thou canst ask me of nought but thou art better able [than I] to form a just judgment thereon and expound it truly; for that God hath vouchsafed unto thee such wisdom as He hath bestowed on none other: but tell me of what thou wouldst question me.' Quoth the prince, 'Tell me from what did the Creator (magnified be His power!) create the world, albeit there was before it nought and there is nought seen in this world but it is created from something; and the Divine Creator (blessed and exalted be He!) is able to create things from nothing, yet hath His will decreed, for all the perfection of [His] power and grandeur, that He shall create nought but from something.' 'As for those,' answered the vizier, 'who fashion vessels of potters' clay, and other handicraftsmen, who cannot produce one thing except from another, they are themselves but created things: but, as for the Creator, who hath wrought the world after this wondrous fashion, if thou wouldst know His power (blessed and exalted be He!) of calling things into existence, consider the various kinds of created things, and thou wilt find signs and tokens, denoting the perfection of His omnipotence and that He is able to create things out of nothing: nay, He called them into being, after absolute nonentity, for the elements that are the matter of created things were sheer nothingness. I will expound this to thee, so thou mayst be in no doubt thereof, and this the phenomenon of the alternation of night and day shall make clear to thee. When the day departs and the night comes, the day is hidden from us and we know not where it abideth; and when the night passes away with its darkness and its terror, the day comes and we know not the abiding-place of the night. In like manner, when the sun rises upon us, we know not where it has laid up its light, and when it sets, we know not the abiding-place of its setting: and the examples of this among the works of the Creator (magnified be His name and exalted be His power!) abound in what confounds the thought of the keenest-witted of human beings.' 'O sage,' rejoined the prince, 'thou hast set before me of the power of the Creator what may not be denied; but tell me how He called His creatures into existence.' '[He created them] by [the sole power of] His Word,' answered Shimas, 'which existed before time, and with it He created all things.' 'Then,' said the prince, 'God (be His name magnified and His power exalted!) only willed the existence of created things, before they came into being?' 'And of His will,' replied Shimas, 'He created them with His Word and but for His speech and Manifest Word, the creation had not come into existence. And, O my son, there is no man can tell thee other than this that I have said, except he pervert the words handed down to us of the law of God and turn the truths thereof from their evident meaning. And such a perversion is their saying that the Word hath power [of itself] and I take refuge with God from such a conclusion. Nay, the meaning of our saying that God (to whom belong might and majesty) created the world with His Word is that He (exalted be His name!) is One in His essence and His attributes and not that

His Word hath power [of itself]. On the contrary, power is one of God's attributes, even as speech and other attributes of perfection are attributes of God (exalted be His dignity and magnified be His dominion!); wherefore He may not be conceived without His Word, nor may His Word be conceived without Him; for, with His Word, God (extolled be His praise!) created all His creatures, and without His Word, he created nought. Indeed, He created all things but by His Word of Truth, and by Truth are we created.' Quoth the prince, 'I apprehend that which thou hast said on the subject of the Creator and accept this from thee with understanding; but I hear thee say that He created the world by His Word of Truth. Now Truth is the opposite of Falsehood; whence then arose Falsehood and its opposition unto Truth, and bow comes it to be possible that it should be confounded therewith and be obscure to human beings, so that they need to distinguish between them? And doth the Creator (to whom belong might and majesty!) love Falsehood or hate it? If thou say He loves the Truth and by it created all things and hates Falsehood, how came the latter, which the Creator hates, to invade the Truth, which He loves?' Quoth Shimas, 'Verily God the Most High created man after His own image and likened him to Himself, all of him truth, without falsehood; then He gave him dominion over himself and ordered him and forbade him, and it was man who transgressed His commandment and erred in his disobedience and brought falsehood upon himself of his own will. When God created man with Truth, he had no need of repentance, till Falsehood invaded the Truth by which he was created, by means of the ableness that God had placed in him, being the will and the inclination called acquisitiveness. When Falsehood invaded Truth on this wise, it became confounded therewith, by reason of the will of man and his ableness and acquisitiveness, which is the voluntary party together with the weakness of human nature: wherefore God created repentance for man, to turn away from him falsehood and stablish him in truth; and He created for him also punishment, if he should abide in the obscurity of falsehood.' Quoth the prince, 'Tell me how came falsehood to invade truth, so as to be confounded therewith and how became man liable to punishment and so stood in need of repentance.' 'When God created man with truth,' replied Shimas, 'He made him loving to Himself and there was for him neither repentance nor punishment; but he abode thus till God put in him the soul, which is of the perfection of humanity, with the inclination to lusts which is inherent therein. From this sprang the growth of falsehood and its confusion with the truth, wherewith man was created and with the love whereof he had been informed; and when man came to this pass, he swerved from the truth with disobedience, and whoso swerves from the truth falls into falsehood.' 'Then,' said the prince, 'falsehood invaded truth only by reason of disobedience and transgression?' 'Yes,' answered Shimas; 'and it is thus because God loves man, and of the abundance of His love to him, He created him having need of Himself, that is to say, of the very Truth: but oftentimes man falls away from this by reason of the inclination of the soul to lusts and turns unto frowardness, wherefore he falls into falsehood by the very act of disobeying his Lord and thus renders himself liable to punishment; and by the putting away from himself of falsehood with repentance and the returning to the love of the truth, he merits reward.' Quoth the prince, 'Tell me the origin of frowardness. We see that all mankind trace their being to Adam, and how comes it that he, being created of God with truth, drew disobedience on himself; then was his disobedience coupled with repentance, after the

soul had been set in him, that his issue might be reward or punishment? Indeed, we see some men constant in frowardness, inclining to that which God loves not and transgressing in this the original exigence of their creation, which is the love of the Truth and drawing on themselves the wrath of their Lord, whilst others are constant in seeking to please their Creator and obeying Him and meriting mercy and recompense. Whence comes this difference between them?' 'The origin of disobedience in mankind,' replied Shimas, 'is attributable to Iblis, who was the noblest of all that God (magnified be His name!) created of angels and men and Jinn, and the love [of the Truth] was inherent in him, for he knew nought but this; but, for that he saw himself unique in this, there entered into him conceit and vainglory and arrogance and he revolted from loyalty and obedience to the commandment of his Creator; wherefore God made him inferior to all creatures and cast him out from love, making his abiding-place to be in disobedience. So, when he knew that God (glorified be His name!) loved not disobedience and saw Adam and the case wherein he was of truth and love and obedience to his Creator, envy entered into him and he cast about to pervert Adam from the truth, that he might be a partaker with himself in falsehood; and by this, Adam incurred chastisement, through his inclining to disobedience, which his enemy made fair to him, and his subjection to his lusts, whenas he transgressed the injunction of his Lord, by reason of the appearance of falsehood. When the Creator (magnified be His praises and hallowed be His names!) saw the weakness of man and the swiftness of his inclining to his enemy and leaving the truth, He appointed to him, of His mercy, repentance, that therewith he might arise from the morass of inclination to disobedience and taking the arms of repentance, overcome therewith his enemy Iblis and his hosts and return to the truth, wherein he was created. When Iblis saw that God had appointed him a protracted term, he hastened to wage war upon man and to beset him with wiles, to the intent that he might oust him from his Lord's favour and make him a partaker with himself in the curse which he and his hosts had incurred; wherefore God (extolled be His praises!) appointed unto man the power of repentance and commanded him to apply himself to the truth and persevere therein. Moreover, he forbade him from disobedience and frowardness and revealed to him that he had an enemy on the earth warring against him and relaxing not from him night nor day. Thus hath man a right to reward, if he adhere to the truth, in the love of which his essence was created; but he becomes liable to punishment, if his soul master him and drag him into lusts.' 'But tell me,' rejoined the prince, 'by what power is the creature able to transgress against his Creator, seeing that His power is without bounds, even as thou hast set forth, and that nothing can overcome Him nor depart from His will? Deemst thou not that He is able to turn His creatures from disobedience and compel them to adhere eternally to the truth?' 'Verily,' answered Shimas, 'God the Most High (honoured be His name!) is just and equitable and tenderly solicitous over the people of His love. He created His creatures with justice and equity and of the inspiration of His justice and the abundance of His mercy, He gave them dominion over themselves, that they should do whatever they would. He shows them the way of righteousness and bestows on them the power and ability of doing what they will of good: and if they do the opposite thereof, they fall into destruction and disobedience.' (Q.) 'If the Creator, as thou sayest, hath granted men power and ability and they by reason thereof avail to do what they will, why then doth He not come between them and that which they

desire of error and turn them to the truth?' (A.) 'This is of the greatness of His mercy and the excellence of His wisdom; for, even as aforetime He showed wrath to Iblis and had no mercy on him, so He showed Adam mercy, by means of repentance, and accepted of him, after He had been wroth with him.' (Q.) 'He is indeed the very Truth, for He it is who requiteth every one according to his works, and there is no Creator but God, to whom belongeth power over all things. But tell me, hath He created that which He loveth and that which He loveth not or only that which He loveth?' (A.) 'He created all things, but favours only that which He loveth.' (Q.) 'What hast thou to say of two things, one whereof is pleasing to God and earns reward for him who practices it?' (A.) 'Expound to me these two things and make me to apprehend them, that I may speak concerning them.' (Q.) 'They are good and evil, the two things innate in the body and the soul.' (A.) 'O wise youth, I see that thou knowest good and evil to be of the works that the soul and the body do [in conjunction]. Good is named good, because in it is the favour of God, and evil evil, for that in it is His wrath. Indeed, it behoveth thee to know God and to please Him by the practice of good, for that He hath commanded us to this and forbidden us to do evil.' (Q.) 'I see these two things, that is, good and evil, to be wrought only by the five senses known in the body of man, to wit, the seat of taste, whence proceed speech, hearing, sight, smell and touch. Tell me whether these five senses were created for good altogether or for evil.' (A.) 'Hear, O man, the exposition of that whereof thou askest and lay it up in thy memory and notify thy heart thereof, for it is a manifest proof. Know that the Creator (blessed and exalted be He!) created man with truth and informed him with the love thereof and there proceedeth from it no created thing save by the Most High decree, whose impress is on every phenomenon. It is not apt but to the ordering of justice and equity and beneficence and created man for the love of itself and informed him with a soul, wherein the inclination to lusts was innate and assigned him ableness and appointed the five senses aforesaid to be to him a means of winning Paradise or Hell.' (Q.) 'How so?' (A.) 'In that He created the tongue for speech and the hands for doing and the feet for walking and the eyes for seeing and the ears for hearing and gave them power and incited them to exercise and motion, bidding each of them do that only which pleaseth Him. Now what pleaseth Him in speech is truthfulness and abstaining from its opposite, which is falsehood, and what pleases Him in sight is turning it unto that which He liveth and leaving the contrary, which is turning it unto that which He abhorreth, such as looking unto lusts: and what pleaseth Him in hearing is hearkening to nought but that which is truth, such as admonition and that which is in the scriptures of God, and leaving the contrary, which is hearkening to that which incurreth the wrath of God; and what pleaseth Him in the hands is not hoarding up that which He entrusteth to them, but spending it on such wise as shall please Him and leaving the contrary, which is avarice or spending that which He hath committed to them in disobedience; and what pleaseth Him in the feet is that they be instant in the pursuit of good, such as the quest of instruction, and leave its contrary, which is the walking in other than the way of God. As for the other lusts that man practices, they proceed from the body by commandment of the soul. The lusts that proceed from the body are of two kinds, that of reproduction and that of the belly. As for the first, that which pleaseth God thereof is that it be not except in the way of law, and if it be in the way of sin, He is displeased with it. As for the lust of the belly, eating and

drinking, what pleaseth God thereof is that each take nought but that which God hath appointed him thereof, be it little or much, and praise God and thank Him: and what angereth Him thereof is that a man take that which is not his by right. All precepts other than these are false, and thou knowest that God created all things and delighteth only in good and commandeth each member of the body to do that which He hath made incumbent thereon, for that He is the all-wise, the all-knowing.' (Q.) 'Was it foreknown unto God (exalted be His power!) that Adam would eat of the tree from which He forbade him and so leave obedience for disobedience?' (A.) 'Yes, O sage. This was foreknown unto God the Most High, before He created Adam; and the proof and manifestation thereof is the warning He gave him against eating of the tree and His giving him to know that, if he ate thereof, he would be disobedient. And this was in the way of justice and equity, lest Adam should have an argument wherewith he might excuse himself against his Lord. When, therefore, he fell into error and calamity and reproach and disgrace were sore upon him, this passed to his posterity after him; wherefore God sent prophets and apostles and gave them scriptures and they taught us the divine ordinances and expounded to us what was therein of admonitions and precepts and made clear to us the way of righteousness and what it behoved us to do and what to leave undone. Now we are endowed with ableness and he who acts within these limits attains [felicity] and prospers, whilst he who transgresses them and does other than that which these precepts enjoin, sins and is mined in both worlds. This then is the road of good and evil. Thou knowest that God can all things and created not lusts for us but of His pleasure and will, and He commanded us to use them in the way of lawfulness, so they might be a good to us; but, when we use them in the way of sin, they are an evil to us. So what of good we compass is from God the Most High and what of evil from ourselves His creatures, not from the Creator, exalted be He for this with great exaltation!' (Q.) 'I understand that which thou hast expounded to me concerning God and His creatures; but tell me of one thing, concerning which my mind is perplexed with extreme wonderment, and that is that I marvel at the sons of Adam, how careless they are of the life to come and at their lack of taking thought thereto and their love of this world, albeit they know that they must needs leave it and depart from it, whilst they are yet young in years.' (A.) 'Yes, verily; and that which thou seest of its changefulness and perfidious dealing with its children is a sign that fortune will not endure to the fortunate, neither affliction to the afflicted; for none of its people is secure from its changefulness and even if one have power over it and be content therewith, yet needs must his estate change and removal hasten unto him. Wherefore man can put no trust therein nor profit by that which he enjoyeth of its painted gauds; and knowing this, we know that the sorriest of men in case are those who are deluded by this world and are unmindful of the world to come; for that this present ease they enjoy will not compensate the fear and misery and horrors that will befall them after their removal therefrom. Thus are we certified that, if the creature knew that which will betide him with the coming of death and his severance from that which he presently enjoyeth of delight and clearance, he would cast away the world and that which is therein; for we are assured that the next life is better for us and more profitable.' 'O sage,' said the prince, 'thou hast with thy shining lamp dispelled the darkness that was upon my heart and hast directed me into the road I must travel in the ensuing of the truth and hast given me a lantern whereby I may see.'

Then rose one of the learned men who were present and said, 'When the season of Spring cometh, needs must the hare seek the pasture as well as the elephant; and indeed I have heard from you both such questions and solutions as I never before heard; but now let me ask you of somewhat. What is the best of the goods of the world?' 'Health of body,' replied the prince, 'lawful provision and a virtuous son.' (Q.) 'What is the greater and what the less?' (A.) 'The greater is that to which a lesser than itself submitteth and the less that which submitteth to a greater than itself.' (Q.) 'What are the four things in which all creatures concur?' (A.) 'Meat and drink, the delight of sleep, the lust of women and the agonies of death.' (Q.) 'What are the three things whose foulness none can do away?' (A.) 'Folly, meanness of nature and lying.' (Q.) 'What is the best kind of lie, though all kinds are foul?' (A.) 'That which averteth harm from its utterer and bringeth profit.' (Q.) 'What kind of truthfulness is foul, though all kinds are fair?' (A.) 'That of a man glorying in that which he hath and boasting himself thereof.' (Q.) 'What is the foulest of foulnesses?' (A.) 'When a man boasteth himself of that which he hath not.' (Q.) 'Who is the most foolish of men?' (A.) 'He who hath no thought but of what he shall put in his belly.'

Then said Shimas, 'O king, verily thou art our king, but we desire that thou assign the kingdom to thy son after thee, and we will be thy servants and subjects.' So the king exhorted the learned men and others who were present to remember that which they had heard and do according thereto and enjoined them to obey his son's commandment, for that he made him his heir-apparent, so he should be the successor of the king his father; and he took an oath of all the people of his empire, doctors and braves and old men and boys, that they would not oppose him [in the succession] nor transgress against his commandment.

When the prince was seventeen years old, the king sickened of a sore sickness and came nigh unto death, so, being certified that his last hour was at hand, he said to the people of his household, 'This is a mortal sickness that is upon me; wherefore do ye summon the grandees and notables of my empire, so not one of them may remain except he be present.' Accordingly, they made proclamation to those who were near and made known the summons to those who were afar off, and they all assembled and went in to the king. Then said they to him, 'How is it with thee, O king, and how deemest thou for thyself of this thy sickness?' Quoth Jelyaad, 'Verily, this my sickness is mortal and the arrow [of death] hath executed that which God the Most High decreed against me: this is the last of my days in this world and the first of my days in the world to come.' Then said he to his son, 'Draw near unto me.' So he drew near, weeping sore, that he came nigh to wet the bed, whilst the king's eyes brimmed over with tears and all who were present wept. Quoth Jelyaad, 'Weep not, O my son; I am not the first whom this inevitable thing betideth; nay, it is common to all that God hath created. But fear thou God and do good, that shall forego thee to the place whither all creatures tend. Obey not thy lusts, but occupy thyself with the praises of God in thy standing up and thy sitting down and in thy sleep and thy wake. Make the truth the aim of thine eyes; this is the last of my speech with thee and peace be on thee.'

Then he bequeathed him the kingdom and the prince said, 'O my father, thou knowest that I have never ceased from obedience unto thee and mindfulness of thine injunctions, still carrying out thy commandment and seeking thine approve; for thou

hast been to me the best of fathers. How, then, after thy death, shall I depart from that whereof thou approvest? After having fairly ordered my bringing up, thou art now about to depart from me and I have no power to bring thee back to me; but, if I be mindful of thine injunctions, I shall be blessed therein and great good hap will betide me.' Quoth the king, and indeed he was in the last agony, 'Dear my son, cleave fast unto ten precepts which if thou observe, God shall profit thee herewith in this world and the next, and they are as follows. When thou art angered, curb thy wrath; when thou art afflicted, be patient; when thou speakest, be truthful; when thou promisest, perform; when thou judgest, do justice; when thou hast power, be merciful; deal generously by thy governors and lieutenants; forgive those that transgress against thee; be lavish of good offices to thine enemy and withhold thy mischief from him. Observe also other seven preceptor wherewith God shall profit thee among the people of thy realm, to wit, when thou dividest, be just; when thou punishest, oppress not; when thou makest an engagement, fulfil thine engagement; hearken to those that give thee loyal counsel; abstain from contention; enjoin thy subjects to the observance of the divine laws and of praiseworthy usages; do equal justice between the folk, so they may love thee, great and small, and the froward and corrupt of them may fear thee.'

Thn he addressed himself to the amirs and doctors, who were present when he appointed his son to be his successor, saying, 'Beware of transgressing the commandment of your king and neglecting to hearken to your chief, for in this lies ruin for your country and sundering for your union and hurt for your bodies and perdition for your goods, and your enemies would exult over you. Ye know the covenant ye made with me, and even thus shall be your covenant with this youth, and the pact that is between you and me shall be also between you and him; wherefore it behoveth you to give ear unto his commandment and obey him, for that in this is the well-being of your estates. So be ye constant with him unto that wherein ye were with me and your affair shall prosper and your case be good; for, behold, he hath the kingship over you and is the lord of your fortune, and so peace be on you!' Then the death-agony seized him and his tongue was bridled: so he pressed his son to his bosom and kissed him and gave thanks unto God; after which his hour came and his soul departed [his body].

All his subjects and the people of his court mourned over him and they shrouded him and buried him with pomp and honour and reverence; after which they returned with the prince and seating him on the throne of kingship, clad him in the royal robes and crowned him with his father's crown and put the seal-ring on his finger. He ordered himself towards them, a little while, after his father's fashion of mildness and justice and benevolence, till the world waylaid him and tempted him with its lusts, whereupon he seized on its pleasures and turned to its vain delights, forsaking the engagements which his father had commended to him and casting of his obedience to him, neglecting the affairs of his kingdom and walking in a road wherein was his own destruction. In particular, the love of women was stark in him and came to such a pass that, whenever he heard tell of a fair woman, he would send and make her to wife. After this wise, he collected women more in number than ever had Solomon, son of David, King of the children of Israel, and would shut himself up with a company of them for a month at a time, during which he went not forth neither enquired of his

kingdom or its governance nor looked into the grievances of such of his subjects as complained to him; and if they wrote to him, he returned them no answer.

When they saw his neglect of their affairs and interests and those of the state, they were assured that ere long some calamity would betide them and this was grievous to them. So they foregathered privily and took counsel together, and one of them said to the rest, 'Let us go to Shimas, chief of the viziers, and set forth to him our case and acquaint him with the strait wherein we are by reason of this king, so he may admonish him; else, in a little, calamity will betide us, for the world hath intoxicated the king with its delights and beguiled him with its snares.' Accordingly, they repaired to Shimas and said to him, 'O wise and prudent man, the world hath dazed the king with its delights and taken him in its snares, so that he turneth unto vanity and worketh for the disordering of the state. Now with the disordering of the state the commons will be corrupted and our affairs will come to ruin. Months and days we see him not nor cometh there forth from him any commandment to us or to the vizier or whom else. We cannot refer aught to him and he looketh not to the administration of justice nor taketh thought to the case of any of his subjects, in his heedlessness of them. And behold we are come to acquaint thee with the truth of the affair, for that thou art the chiefest and most accomplished of us and it behoveth not that calamity befall a land wherein thou dwellest, seeing that thou art most able of any to amend this thing. Wherefore go thou and speak with him: belike he will hearken to thy word and return unto God.'

So Shimas arose forthright and repairing to the palace, foregathered with the first of the king's officers to whom he might win and said to him, 'Good my son, I beseech thee ask leave for me to go in to the king, for I have an affair, concerning which I would fain see his face and acquaint him therewith and hear what be shall answer me thereof.' 'O my lord,' answered the officer, 'by Allah, this month past hath he given none leave to come in to him, nor all this time have I looked upon his face; but I will direct thee to one who shall crave admission for thee. Do thou lay hold of such a black, who standeth at his head and bringeth him food from the kitchen. When he cometh forth, to go to the kitchen, ask him what seemeth good to thee; for he will do for thee that which thou desirest.' So the vizier repaired to the door of the kitchen and sat there a little while, till up came the black and would have entered the kitchen; but Shimas [caught hold of him] and said to him, 'O my son, I would fain see the king and speak with him of somewhat that nearly concerneth him; so prithee, of thy kindness, when he hath made an end of his morning-meal and his soul is refreshed, speak thou for me to him and get leave for me to come in to him, so I may bespeak him of that which shall please him.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the black and taking the food, carried it to the king, who ate thereof and his soul was refreshed.

Then said the black to him, 'Shimas standeth at the door and craveth admission, so he may acquaint thee with matters that particularly concern thee.' At this the king was alarmed and disquieted and commanded to admit the vizier. So the black went forth to Shimas and bade him enter; whereupon he went in and prostrating himself before God, kissed the king's hands and called down blessings upon him. Then said the king, 'O Shimas, what hath betided thee that thou seekest admission unto me?' And he answered, saying, 'This long while have I not looked upon the face of my lord the king

and indeed I longed sore for thee. So, behold, I have seen thy countenance and come to thee with a word which I would fain say to thee, O king stablished in all prosperity.' Quoth the king, 'Say what seemeth good to thee;' and Shimas said, 'O king, verily God the Most High hath endowed thee, for all the tenderness of thy years, with knowledge and wisdom such as He never vouchsafed unto any of the kings before thee, and hath fulfilled the measure of His bounties to thee with the kingship; and He liveth not that thou depart from that wherewith He hath endowed thee unto other than it, by means of thy disobedience to Him; wherefore it behoveth thee not to wage war upon Him with thy treasures, but to be mindful of His injunctions and obedient unto His commandments. This I say because I have seen thee, this while past, forget thy father and his injunctions and forswear his covenant and neglect his admonition and renounce his justice and wise governance, remembering not God's bounty to thee neither requiting it with gratitude to Him.'

'How so?' asked the king. 'And what is the manner of this?' 'The manner of it,' replied Shimas, 'is that thou neglectest to attend to the affairs of the state and that which God hath committed unto thee of the interests of thy subjects and surrenderest thyself to thine own inclinations, in that which they make fair to thee of the paltry lusts of the world. Verily it is said that the welfare of the state and the faith and the people is of the things over which it behoveth the king to keep watch; wherefore it is my counsel, O king, that thou look well to the issue of thine affair, for thus wilt thou find the manifest road wherein is salvation, and give not thyself up to a trifling evanescent delight that leadeth to the abyss of destruction, lest there befall thee that which befell the fisherman.' 'What was that?' asked the king, and Shimas said, 'I have heard tell that

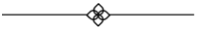
The Foolish Fisherman.

A FISHERMAN went forth one day to a certain river, to fish there, as of his wont; and when he came thither and walked upon the bridge, he saw a great fish in the water and said to himself, "It will not serve me to abide here, but I will follow yonder fish whithersoever it doeth, till I take it. for it will dispense me from fishing days and days." So he put off his clothes and plunged into the river after the fish. The current bore him along till he overtook it and laid hold of it, when he turned and found himself far from land. However, he would not loose the fish and return, but ventured himself and gripping it fast with both hands, let his body float with the current, which carried him on till it cast him into a whirlpool which none might enter and be saved therefrom. With this he fell to crying out and saying, "Save a drowning man!" And there came to him folk of the keepers of the river and said to him, "What ailed thee to cast thyself into this grievous peril?' Quoth he, "It was I myself who forsook the plain way wherein was salvation and gave myself over to coveting and perdition." "O fellow," said they, "why didst thou leave the way of safety and cast thyself into this destruction, knowing from of old that none may enter herein and be saved? What hindered thee from throwing away what was in thy hand and saving thyself? So hadst thou escaped with thy life and not fallen into this perdition, from which there is no deliverance; and now not one of us can rescue thee from this strait." So the man gave up hope of life and lost that which was in his hand and for which his soul had prompted him to venture himself and perish miserably. And I tell thee not this parable, O king,' added Shimas, 'but that thou mayst leave this contemptible thing that diverteth thee from thy duties and look to that which is committed to thee of the governance of thy people and the maintenance of the order of thy kingdom, so that none may see fault in thee.'

'What wouldst thou have me do?' asked the king, and Shimas said, 'To-morrow, if thou be in good health and case, give the folk leave to come in to thee and look into their affairs and excuse thyself to them and promise them good governance and prosperity.' 'O Shimas,' answered the king, 'thou hast spoken advisedly; and to-morrow, if it be the will of God the Most High, I will do that which thou counsellest me.' So the vizier went out from him and told the folk what he had said to him; and on the morrow the king came forth of his seclusion and bade admit the people, to whom he excused himself, promising them that thenceforward he would deal with them as they wished, wherewith they were content and departed each to his dwelling.

Then one of the king's women, who was his best- beloved of them and most in honour with him, went in to him and seeing him pale and thoughtful over his affairs, by reason of that which he had heard from his chief vizier, said to him, 'O king, how comes it that I see thee troubled in mind? Doth aught ail thee?' 'No,' answered he; 'but my pleasures have distracted me from my duties and I know not what hath possessed me to be thus negligent of my affairs and those of my subjects. If I continue on this wise, ere long the kingdom will pass out of my hand.' 'O king,' rejoined she, 'I see that thou hast been duped by thy viziers and ministers, who wish but to torment and spite thee, so thou mayst have no pleasure of this thy kingship neither enjoy ease nor

delight, and would have thee consume thy life in warding off trouble from them, till thy days be wasted in toll and weariness and thou be as one who slayeth himself for another's benefit or like the boy and the thieves.' 'How was that?' asked the king, and she answered, 'It is said that



The Boy and the Thieves.

SEVEN thieves once went out to steal, according to their wont, and fell in with a poor orphan boy, who besought them for somewhat to eat. Quoth one of them to him, "Wilt go with us, O boy, and we will feed thee and clothe thee and entreat thee kindly?" And he answered, saying, "Needs must I go with you whithersoever ye will and ye are as my own people." So they took him and fared on with him till they came to a garden, and entering, went round about therein, till they found a walnut-tree laden with ripe fruit and said one to another, "Look which is the lightest and smallest of us and make him climb the tree." And they said, "None of us is smaller than this boy." So they sent him up into the tree and said to him, "O boy, touch not aught of the fruit, lest some one see thee and do thee a mischief." "How then shall I do?" asked he, and they said, "Sit among the boughs and shake them with thy might, so that which is thereon may fall, and we will pick it up. Then, when thou hast made an end of shaking down the fruit, come down and take thy share of that which we have gathered." So he began to shake every bunch at which he could come, so that the nuts fell and the thieves picked them up and ate [some] and hid [other some] till they were all full, except the boy, who had eaten nought.

As they were thus engaged, up came the owner of the garden and said to them, "What do ye with this tree?" "We have taken nought thereof," answered they; "but we were passing by and seeing yonder boy on the tree, concluded that he was the owner thereof and besought him to give us to eat of the fruit. So he fell to shaking the branches, that the nuts dropped down, and we are not at fault." Quoth the master to the boy, "What sayst thou?" And he answered, "These men lie; but I will tell thee the truth. It is that we all came hither together and they bade me climb the tree and shake its branches, that the nuts might fall down to them, and I obeyed them." "Verily," said the master, "thou hast brought thyself into parlous case; but hast thou profited to eat aught of the fruit?" And he said, "I have eaten nought thereof." "Now know I thy stupidity and folly," rejoined the owner of the garden, "in that thou hast wroughten to ruin thyself and advantage others." Then said he to the thieves, "Go your ways: I have no resort against you." But he laid hands on the boy and punished him. On like wise,' added the favourite, 'thy viziers and officers of state would sacrifice thee to their interests and do with thee as did the thieves with the boy.' 'Thou sayst sooth,' answered the king, 'and I will not go forth to them nor leave my pleasures.'

Then he passed the night with his wife in all delight till the morning, when the chief vizier arose and assembling the officers of state, together with those of the folk who were present with them, repaired with them to the palace, glad and rejoicing [in the anticipation of good]. But the door opened not nor did the king come forth unto them nor give them leave to go in to him. So, when they despaired of him, they said to Shimas, 'O excellent vizier and accomplished sage, seest thou not the behaviour of this boy, young of years and little of wit, how he addeth falsehood to his offences? See how he hath broken his promise to us and hath failed of that for which he engaged unto us, and this it behoveth thee join to his other sins; but we beseech thee go in to him yet again and see what is the cause of his holding back and refusal to come forth; for we

doubt not but that the like of this fashion cometh of his depraved nature, and indeed he hath reached the utmost pitch of stiffneckedness.'

Accordingly, Shimas went in to the king and bespoke him, saying, 'Peace be upon thee, O king! How cometh it that I see thee give thyself up to paltry pleasures and neglect the great affair whereto it behoveth thee apply thyself? Thou art like unto a man, who had a milch- camel and coming one day to milk her, the goodness of her milk caused him forget to hold fast her halter; which whenas she felt she pulled herself free and made of into the desert. Thus he lost both milk and camel and the mischief that betided him overpassed his profit. Wherefore do thou look unto that wherein is thy welfare and that of thy subjects; for, even as it behoveth not a man to sit for ever at the kitchen door, because he needeth food, so should he not company overmuch with women, by reason of his inclination to them. A man should eat but as much food as will stay his hunger and drink but what will ward of the pangs of thirst; and in like manner it behoveth the man of understanding to content himself with passing two of the four-and-twenty hours of his day with women and spend the rest in ordering his own affairs and those of his people. For to be longer than this in company with women is hatful both to mind and body, seeing that they command not unto good neither direct thereto: wherefore it behoveth a man to accept from them neither speech nor deed, for indeed I have heard tell that many men have come to ruin through their women, and amongst others [I have heard tell of] a certain man who perished, for that he obeyed his wife's commandment and had to do with her [at an unseasonable time].' 'How was that?' asked the king, and Shimas answered, saying, 'They tell that

The Man and His Wilful Wife.

A CERTAIN man had a wife whom he loved and honoured, giving ear to her speech and doing according to her counsel. Moreover, he had a garden, which he had newly planted with his own hand, and was wont to go thither every day, to tend and water it. One day his wife said to him, "What hast thou planted in thy garden?" And he answered, "All that thou lovest and desirest, and I am assiduous in tending and watering it." Quoth she, "Wilt thou not carry me thither and show it to me, so I may see it and offer thee up a prayer [for its prosperity], for that my prayers are effectual?" "I will well," answered he; "but have patience with me till the morrow, when I will come and take thee." So, on the morrow, he carried her to the garden and entered with her therein.

Now two young men saw them enter from afar and said to each other, "Yonder man is an adulterer and yonder woman an adulteress, and they have not entered this garden but to do adultery therein." So they followed them, to see what they would do, and hid themselves in a corner of the garden. The man and his wife abode awhile therein, and presently he said to her, "Pray me the prayer thou didst promise me;" but she answered, saying, "I will not pray for thee, until thou fulfil my desire of that which women seek from men." "Out on thee, O woman!" cried he. "Hast thou not thy fill of me in the house? Here I fear scandal, more by token that thou divertest me from my affairs. Fearest thou not that some one will see us?" Quoth she, "We need have no care for that, seeing that we do neither sin nor lewdness; and as for the watering of the garden, that may wait, for that thou canst water it whenas thou wilt." And she would take neither excuse nor reason from him, but was instant with him in seeking dalliance.

So he arose and lay with her, which when the young men aforesaid saw, they ran upon them and seized them, saying, "We will not let you go. for ye are adulterers, and except we lie with the woman, we will denounce you to the police." "Out on you!" answered the man. "This is my wife and I am the master of the garden." They paid no heed to him, but fell upon the woman, who cried out to him for succour, saying, "Suffer them not to defile me!" So he came up to them, calling out for help, but one of them turned on him and smote him with his dagger and slew him. Then they returned to the woman and ravished her. This I tell thee, O king' continued the vizier, 'but that thou mayst know that it behoveth not men to give ear unto a woman's talk neither obey her in aught nor accept her judgment in counsel. Beware, then, lest thou don the garment of ignorance, after that of knowledge and wisdom, and follow perverse counsel, after knowing that which is true and profitable. Wherefore ensue thou not a paltry pleasure, whose end is corruption and whose inclining is unto sore and uttermost perdition.'

When the king heard this, he said to Shimas, 'To-morrow I will come forth to them, if it be the will of God the Most High.' So Shimas returned to the grandees and notables who were present and told them what the king had said. But this came to the ears of the favourite; so she went in to the king and said to him, 'A king's subjects should be his slaves; but thou art become a slave to thy subjects, for that thou standest

in awe of them and fearest their mischief. They do but seek to make proof of thy temper; and if they find thee weak they will disdain thee; but, if they find thee stout and brave they will stand in awe of thee. On this wise do ill viziers with their king, for that their wiles are many: but I will make manifest unto thee the truth of their malice. If thou fall in with their demands, they will cause thee leave thy commandment and do their will; nor will they cease to lead thee on from affair to affair till they cast thee into destruction; and thy case will be as that of the merchant and the thieves.' 'How was that?' asked the king; and she answered, 'I have heard tell that

The Merchant and the Thieves.

THERE was once a wealthy merchant, who set out for a certain city with merchandise, purposing to sell it there, and when he came thither, he hired a lodging there and took up his abode therein. Now certain thieves saw him, who were wont to lie in wait for merchants, that they might steal their goods; so they went to his house and cast about to enter in, but could find no way thereto, and their captain said, "I will accomplish you his affair." Then he went away and donning a physician's habit, threw over his shoulder a bag containing medicines, with which he set out, crying, "Who lacks a doctor?" and fared on till he came to the merchant's lodging and saw him sitting eating the morning meal. So he said to him, "Dost thou want a physician?" "Not I," answered the merchant; "but sit and eat with me." So the thief sat down over against him and began to eat.

Now this merchant was a great eater; and the thief, seeing this, said to himself, "I have found my opportunity." So he turned to his host and said to him, "It behoveth me to give thee an admonition; and after thy kindness to me, I cannot hide it from thee. I see thee to be a great eater and the cause of this is a disorder in thy stomach; so hasten to take order for thy cure, or thine affair will end in perdition.' Quoth the merchant, "My body is sound and my stomach quick of digestion, and though I be a hearty eater, yet is there no disease in me, to God be the praise and the thanks!" "It may so appear unto thee," rejoined the thief; "but I know thou hast a latent disorder in thy vitals and if thou hearken to me, thou wilt medicine thyself.' "And where shall I find him who knoweth my remedy?" asked the merchant. "God is the Healer," answered the robber; "but a physician like myself tendeth the sick to the best of his power." And the other said, "Show me my remedy and give me thereof." So he gave him a powder, wherein was great plenty of aloes, saying, "Use this to-night."

When the night came, the merchant tasted the powder and found it nauseous of taste; nevertheless he misdoubted not of it, but swallowed it all and found ease therefrom that night. Next night the thief brought him another powder, wherein was yet more aloes, and he took it. It purged him that night, but he bore with this and rejected it not. When the thief saw that he gave ear unto his word and put trust in him, he brought him a deadly drug and gave it to him. The merchant swallowed it and no sooner had he done this than that which was in his belly fell down and his guts were rent in sunder, and by the morrow he was a dead man; whereupon the thieves came and took all that belonged to him. This,' added the favourite, 'I tell thee, O king, but that thou mayst not give ear to these deluders; else will there befall thee that whereby thou wilt destroy thyself.' "Thou sayst sooth,' replied the king; 'I will not go forth to them.'

On the morrow, the folk assembled together and repairing to the king's door, sat there the most part of the day, till they despaired of his coming forth, when they returned to Shimas and said to him, 'O sage philosopher and learned master, seest thou not that this ignorant boy doth but redouble in falsehood to us? Verily it were of reason to take the kingdom from him and give it to another, so our affairs may be set in order and our estates maintained; but go thou in to him a third time and tell him

that nought hindereth us from rising against him and taking the kingship from him but [the remembrance] of his father's goodness to us and that which he required from us of oaths and engagements [with respect to him]. However, to-morrow, we will all, to the last of us, assemble here with our arms and break down the gate of the palace; and if he come forth to us and do that which we wish, well and good; else will we go in to him and slay him and put the kingdom in another's hand.'

So Shimas went in to him and said, 'O king, that wallowest in thy lusts and thy pleasures, what is this thou dost with thyself and who promptest thee thereunto? Indeed, thou sinnest against thyself and there hath ceased from thee that which we knew in thee aforetime of integrity and wisdom and eloquence. Would I knew who hath thus changed thee and turned thee from wisdom to folly and from fidelity to iniquity and from complaisance to stiffneckedness and from acceptance of me to aversion from me! How comes it that I admonish thee thrice and thou neglectest my admonition and that I counsel thee justly and thou still gainsayest my counsel? Tell me, what is this heedlessness and folly and who is it prompteth thee thereunto? Know that the people of thy kingdom have agreed together to come in to thee and slay thee and give thy kingdom to another. Art thou able to cope with them all and save thyself from their hands or canst thou quicken thyself after slaughter? If, indeed, thou availest to do all this, thou art safe and hast no occasion for my rede; but, if thou have any concern for thy life and thy kingship, return to thy senses and hold fast thy kingdom and show forth to the people the power of thy prowess and acquaint the folk with thine excuse, for they are minded to tear away that which is in thy hand and commit it unto another, being resolved upon revolt and rebellion, impelled thereto by that which they know of thy youth and thy surrender of thyself to lusts and voluptuousness; for that stones, albeit they lie long in water, if thou take them out therefrom and smite one upon another, fire will be struck from them. Now thy subjects are many in number and they have taken counsel together against thee, to transfer the kingship from thee to another and accomplish upon thee that which they desire of thy destruction. So shalt thou fare as did the wolf with the foxes and the lion.' 'How was that?' asked the king, and the vizier answered, 'They say that

The Foxes and the Wolf.

A TROOP of foxes went out one day to seek food, and as they coasted about in quest of this, they happened upon a dead camel and said to each other, "Verily we have found wherewithal we may live a great while; but we fear lest one of us oppress other and the strong overbear the weak with his strength, and so the weak of us perish; wherefore it behoveth us seek one who shall judge between us and appoint unto each his part, so the strong may not lord it over the weak." As they consulted together, up came a wolf, and some of the foxes said to the others, "Your counsel is just; let us make this wolf judge between us, for he is the strongest of beasts and his father was sultan over us aforetime; wherefore we hope in God that he will do justice between us." So they accosted the wolf and acquainting him with their determination, said to him, "We make thee judge between us, so thou mayst allot unto each of us his day's meat, after the measure of his need, lest the strong of us overbear the weak and some of us destroy other some."

The wolf consented to take the governance of their affairs and allotted unto each of them what sufficed him that day; but on the morrow he said in himself, "If I divide this camel amongst these weaklings, no part thereof will come to me, save that which they assign to me, and if I eat it alone, they can do me no hurt, seeing that they are a prey to me and to the people of my house. Who shall hinder me from taking it for myself? Surely, it is God who hath bestowed it on me, by way of provision, and no thanks to them. It were best that I keep it for myself, and henceforth I will give them nought." Accordingly, when the foxes came to him, as of wont, and sought of him their food, saying, "O Abou Sirhan, give us our day's provender," he answered, "I have nothing left to give you." Whereupon they went away in the sorriest case, saying, "Verily, God hath cast us into grievous trouble with this vile traitor, that feareth not God neither respecteth Him; but we have neither power nor resource." But one of them said, "Belike it was but stress of hunger that moved him to this; so let him eat his fill to-day, and to-morrow we will go to him again."

So, on the morrow, they again betook themselves to the wolf and said to him, "O Abou Sirhan, we set thee in authority over us, that thou mightest allot unto each of us his day's meat and do the weak justice against the strong of us and that, when this is finished, thou shouldst do thine endeavour to get us other and so we be still under thy safeguard and protection. Now hunger is sore upon us, for that we have not eaten these two days; so do thou give us our day's meat and thou shalt be free to dispose of the rest as thou wilt." But the wolf returned them no answer and redoubled in his stiffneckedness. So they strove to turn him from his purpose; but he would not be turned. Then said one of the foxes to the rest, "Nothing will serve us but that we go to the lion and cast ourselves on his protection and assign the camel unto him. If he vouchsafe us aught thereof it will be of his bounty, and if not, he is worthier of it than this filthy fellow."

So they betook themselves to the lion and acquainted him with that which had betided them with the wolf, saying, "We are thy servants and come to thee, imploring thy protection, so thou mayst deliver us from this wolf, and we will be thy slaves."

When the lion heard their story, he was jealous for God the Most High and went with them in quest of the wolf, who, seeing him making for him, addressed himself to flight; but the lion ran after him and seizing him, rent him in pieces and restored their prey to the foxes. This shows,' added Shimas, 'that it behoveth no king to neglect the affairs of his subjects; wherefore do thou hearken to my counsel and give credit to that which I say to thee; for thou knowest that thy father, before his decease, charged thee give ear unto loyal counsel. This is the last of my speech with thee and peace be on thee.' Quoth the king, 'I will hearken to thee and to-morrow, God willing, I will go forth to them.'

So Shimas went forth from him and returning to the Folk, told them that the king had accepted his counsel and promised to come out unto them on the morrow. But, when the favourite heard this saying reported of Shimas and knew that needs must the king go forth to his subjects, she betook herself to him and said to him, 'How great is my wonderment at thy submissiveness and obedience to thy slaves! Knowst thou not that these viziers are thy servants? Why then dost thou exalt them to such a pitch of importance that they conceit them it was they gave thee this kingship and advanced thee to this height and that it is they who confer favours on thee, albeit they have no power to do thee the least hurt? Indeed, it is they who owe thee submission, not thou who owest it unto them, and it is their duty to carry out thine orders; so how cometh it that thou art so mightily affrighted at them? It is said, "Except thy heart be like iron, thou art not fit to be a king." But thy mildness hath deluded these men, so that they presume upon thee and cast off their allegiance to thee, albeit it behoveth that they be constrained unto obedience and enforced to submissiveness unto thee. If therefore, thou hasten to accept their words and leave them in their present case and fulfil to them the least thing against thy will, they will importune thee and presume upon thee, and this will become their wont. But, if thou hearken to me, thou wilt not advance any one of them to power neither wilt thou accept his word nor encourage him to presume upon thee; else wilt thou fare with them as did the shepherd with the robber.' 'How was that?' asked the king, and she answered, 'They say that

The Shepherd and the Thief.

THERE was once a shepherd, who fed a flock of sheep in the desert and kept strait watch over them. One night, there came to him a thief thinking to steal some of his flock and finding him assiduous in guarding them, sleeping not by night neither relaxing in his vigilance by day, prowled about him all night, but could get nothing of him. So, when he was weary of striving, he betook himself to [another part of] the desert and trapping a lion, skinned him and stuffed his hide with straw; after which he carried it to a high place, where the shepherd might see it and be assured thereof, and set it up there. Then he went up to the shepherd and said to him, "Yonder lion hath sent me to demand his supper of these sheep." "Where is the lion?" asked the shepherd; and the thief answered, "Lift thine eyes: there he stands."

The shepherd raised his eyes and seeing the stuffed hide, deemed it a very lion and was mightily affrighted; so he said to the thief, "O my brother, take what thou wilt. I will not anywise gainsay thee." So the thief took what he would of the sheep and redoubled in avidity by reason of the excess of the shepherd's affright. Accordingly, every little while, he would go to him and frighten him, saying, "The lion hath need of this and that, and his intent is to do thus and thus," and take what he would of the sheep; and he stinted not to do thus with him, till he had wasted the most part of his flock. This, O king,' added the favourite, 'I tell thee but that thou suffer not the grandees of thy realm to be deluded by thy mildness and easiness of temper and presume on thee; and in sound judgment their death were better than that they deal thus with thee.' Quoth the king, 'I accept this thine admonition and will not go hearken to their counsel neither go out unto them..

On the morrow the viziers and officers of state and heads of the people assembled and taking each his arms, repaired to the palace of the king, so they might break in upon him and slay him and make another king in his stead. When they came to the door, they required the doorkeeper to open to them; but he refused, whereupon they sent to fetch fire, wherewith to burn down the doors and enter. The doorkeeper, hearing what was toward amongst them, went in to the king in haste and told him that the folk were gathered together at the gate. 'And,' quoth he, 'they required me to open to them, but I refused and they have sent to fetch fire to burn down the doors withal, so they may come in to thee and slay thee. What dost thou bid me do?' Quoth the king in himself, 'Verily, I am fallen into sheer perdition.'

Then he sent for the favourite and said to her, 'Indeed, Shimas never told me aught but I found it true, and now the folk are come, great and small, purposing to slay me and thee; and for that the doorkeeper would not open to them, they have sent to fetch fire, to burn the doors withal: so will the house be burnt and we therein. What dost thou counsel me to do?' 'Let not thine affair affright thee,' answered she; 'no harm shall betide thee. This is a time in which crackbrains rise against their kings.' 'But what,' asked he, 'dost thou counsel me and how shall I do in this matter?' Quoth she, 'My advice is that thou bind thy head with a fillet and feign thyself sick: then send for the vizier Shimas, who will come and see the case wherein thou art; and do thou say to him, "Verily I purposed to go forth to the folk this day; but this sickness

hindered me. So go thou out to them and acquaint them with my case and tell them that to-morrow I will without fail come forth to them and do their occasions and look into their affairs, so they may be reassured and their anger may subside." Then do thou summon ten of thy father's stoutest slaves, men of strength and prowess, to whom thou canst entrust thyself, giving ear to thy word and obedient to thy commandment, keeping thy secret and devoted to thy love, and bid them on the morrow stand at thy head nor suffer any of the folk to enter, save one by one; and all who enter do thou bid them put to death. If they agree with thee upon this, do thou to-morrow set up thy throne in the audience-chamber and open thy doors.

When the folk see that thou hast opened thy doors, their minds will be set at ease and they will come to thee with a whole heart, [thinking no evil], and seek admission to thee. Then do thou bid admit them, one by one, even as I said to thee, and do thy will with them; but it behoveth thee begin by putting Shimas, their chief and leader, to death; for he is the Grand Vizier and head of the matter. So slay him first and after put all the rest to death, one after another, and spare none whom thou knowest to have broken his covenant with thee; and on like wise slay all whose violence thou fearest. lf thou deal thus with them, there will be left them no power to make head against thee; so shalt thou be altogether at rest from them and shalt enjoy thy kingship in peace and do what thou wilt; and know that there is no device that will advantage thee more than this.' 'Verily,' said the king, 'this thy counsel is just and that which thou biddest me well-advised, and I will assuredly do as thou sayest.'

So he called for a fillet and bound his head therewith and feigned sickness. Then he sent for Shimas and said to him, 'O Shimas, thou knowest that I love thee and hearken to thy counsel and thou art to me as brother and father both in one. Moreover, thou knowest that I do all thou biddest me and indeed thou badest me go forth to the folk and sit to judge between them. Now I was certified that this was loyal counsel on thy part and purposed to go forth to them yesterday; but this sickness betided me and I cannot sit up. I hear that the folk are incensed at my failure to come forth to them and are minded of their malice to do with me that which is not seemly, for that they know not what aileth me. So go thou forth to them and acquaint them with my case and excuse me to them, for I am obedient to their bidding and will do according to their desire; wherefore do thou order this affair and engage thyself to them for me of this, for that thou hast been a loyal counsellor to me and to my father before me, and it is of thy wont to make peace between the folk. To- morrow, if it be the will of God the Most High, I will without fail come forth to them, and peradventure my sickness will cease from me this night, by the blessing of the purity of my intent and the good I purpose them in my heart.'

Shimas prostrated himself to God and called down blessings on the king and kissed his hand, rejoicing. Then he went forth to the folk and told them what he had heard from the king and forbade them from that which they had a mind to do, acquainting them with the king's excuse for his absence and that he had promised to come forth to them on the morrow and deal with them according to their wishes; whereupon they dispersed and returned to their houses.

Meanwhile the king sent for ten slaves of gigantic stature, men of stout heart and great prowess, whom he had chosen from amongst his father's body-guards, and said to

them, 'Ye know the favour and esteem in which my father held you and all the bounties and honours he bestowed on you, and I will advance you to yet higher rank with me than this. Now I will tell you the reason thereof and ye are under God's safeguard from me. But [first] I will ask you of somewhat wherein if ye do my bidding, obeying me in that which I shall command you and keeping my secret from all men, ye shall have of me largesse and favour overplaying your desire.'

The slaves answered him with one voice, saying, 'All that thou biddest us, O our lord, will we do, nor will we anywise depart from thy commandment, for thou art our lord and master.' 'God be good to you!' said the king. 'Now will I tell you why I have chosen you out for increase of honour with me. Ye know how generously my father dealt with the people of his dominions and the oath he took from them on my behalf and how they promised him that they would not break faith with me nor gainsay my commandment; and ye saw how they did yesterday, whenas they came all together about me and would have slain me. Now I am minded to do with them somewhat, to wit, I have considered their fashion of yesterday and see that nought but exemplary chastisement will restrain them from the like of this; wherefore I charge you privily to put to death whom I shall point out to you, to the intent that, by slaying their leaders and chiefs, I may ward off evil and calamity from my realm; and the manner thereof shall be on this wise. To-morrow I will sit in this chair in this chamber and give them leave to enter, one by one, coming in at one door and going out at another; and do ye stand, all ten, before me and be attentive to my signs; and whoso enters singly, take him and drag him into yonder chamber and slay him and hide his body.' The slaves answered, 'We hearken to thy word and obey thy commandment.' Whereupon he gave them largesse and dismissed them.

On the morrow he summoned the slaves and bade set up the throne. Then he donned his royal robes and taking the book of the law in his hands, posted the ten slaves before him and commanded to open the doors. So they opened the doors and the herald proclaimed aloud, saying, 'Whoso hath authority, let him come to the king's carpet!' Whereupon up came the viziers and prefects and chamberlains and stood, each in his rank. Then the king bade admit them, one by one, and the first to enter was Shimas, after the wont of the chief vizier; but no sooner had he presented himself before the king than the ten slaves set upon him, ere he could be ware, and dragging him into the adjoining chamber, despatched him. On like wise did they with the rest of the viziers and doctors and notables, slaying them, one after another, till they made an end of them all. Then the king called the headsmen and bade them put to the sword all who remained of the folk of valour and prowess. So they fell on them and left none whom they knew for a man of mettle but they slew him, sparing only the dregs and refuse of the people. These latter they drove away and they returned each to his folk, whilst the king secluded himself with his pleasures and surrendered his soul to its lusts, ensuing tyranny and oppression and unright, till he outwent all the men of evil who had foregone him.

Now this king's realm was a mine of gold and silver and jacinths and jewels and the neighbouring kings envied him this empire and looked for calamity to betide him. Moreover, one of them [to wit, the King of Farther India] said in himself, 'Now have I gotten my desire of wresting the realm from the hand of yonder crackbrained boy, by

reason of that which hath betided of his slaughter of the chiefs of his state and of all the men of valour and mettle that were in his dominions. Now is my occasion to snatch away that which is in his hand, seeing he hath no knowledge of war nor judgment thereto, nor is there any left to counsel him aright or succour him. Wherefore this very day will I open on him the door of mischief by writing him a letter wherein I will flout him and reproach him with that which he hath done and see what he will answer.'

So he wrote him a letter to the following effect: 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful! I have heard tell of that which thou hast done with thy viziers and doctors and men of war and that whereinto thou hast cast thyself of calamity, so that there is neither power nor strength left in thee to repel whoso shall assail thee, more by token that thou transgressest and orderest thyself tyrannously and profligately. Now God hath given me the mastery over thee and hath delivered thee into my hand; wherefore do thou give ear to my word and obey my commandment and build me an impregnable castle amiddleward the sea. If thou canst not do this, depart thy realm and begone with thy life; for I will send unto thee, from the farthest parts of Hind, twelve squadrons of horse, each twelve thousand fighting-men strong, who shall enter thy land and spoil thy goods and slay thy men and take thy women prisoners. Moreover, I will make my Vizier Bediya captain over them and bid him lay strait siege [to thy capital city] till he master it; and I have commanded the bearer of this letter that he tarry with thee but three days. So, if thou do my bidding, thou shalt be saved; else will I send unto thee that which I have said.'

Then he sealed the letter and gave it to a messenger, who journeyed with it till he came to Wird Khan's capital and delivered it to him. When the young king read it, his heart sank within him and his breast was straitened and he made sure of destruction, having none to whom he might resort for counsel or succour. So he rose and went in to his favourite, who, seeing him changed of colour, said to him, 'What ails thee, O king?' Quoth he, 'Today I am no king, but slave to the king.' And he opened the letter and read it to her, whereupon she fell to weeping and lamenting and tearing her clothes. Then said he to her, 'Hast thou aught of counsel or resource in this grievous state?' But she answered, 'Women have no resource in time of war, nor have they strength or judgment. It is men alone who have strength and judgment and resource in the like of this affair."

When the king heard this, there befell him the utmost grief and repentance and remorse for that wherein he had transgressed against his viziers and officers and the nobles of his people and the chiefs of his state, and he would that he had died ere there came to him the like of this shameful news. Then he said to his women, 'Verily, there hath betided me from you that which befell the heathcock with the tortoises.' 'What was that?' asked they, and he answered, 'It is said that

The Heathcock and the Tortoises.

A NUMBER of tortoises dwelt once in a certain island, abounding in trees and fruits and streams, and it chanced, one day, that a heathcock passing over the island, was overcome with heat and weariness and stayed his flight there. Presently, looking about for a cool place, he espied the resort of the tortoises and lighted down therein. Now they were then abroad in quest of food and when they returned from their feeding-places to their dwelling, they found the heathcock there. His beauty pleased them and God made him fair in their eyes, so that they extolled their Creator and loved the heathcock with an exceeding love and rejoiced in him, saying one to another, "Assuredly this is of the goodliest of the birds." And they began to caress him and entreat him with kindness. When he saw that they looked on him with eyes of affection, he inclined to them and made friends with them and took up his abode with them, Eying away in the morning whither he would and returning at eventide to pass the night with them.

After awhile, the tortoises, seeing that his [daylong] absence from them desolated them and finding that they saw him not but by night, (for at break of day he still took flight in haste and they knew not what came of him, for all their love to him,) said to each other, "Indeed, we love this heathcock and he is become our friend and we cannot brook parting from him; so how shall we do to make him abide with us always? For he flies away at daybreak and is absent from us all day and we see him not save by night." Quoth one of them, "Be easy, O my sisters. I will bring him not to leave us for the twinkling of an eye." And the rest answered, saying, "An thou do this, we will all be thy slaves."

So, when the heathcock came back from his feeding-place and sat down amongst them, the wily tortoise drew near unto him and called down blessings on him, giving him joy of his safe return and saying, "O my lord, know that God hath vouchsafed thee our love and hath in like manner set in thy heart the love of us, so that thou art become to us a familiar friend and a comrade in this desert place. Now the goodliest of times for those who love each other is when they are in company and the sorest of afflictions for them is absence and separation. But thou leavest us at peep of day and returnest not to us till sundown, wherefore there betideth us sore desolation. Indeed this is exceeding grievous unto us and we abide in sore longing by reason thereof."

"Indeed," answered the bird, "I love you also and yearn for you yet more than you for me, nor is it easy for me to leave you; but I have no help for this, seeing that I am a bird with wings and may not abide with you always, because that is not of my nature. For a bird, being a winged creature, may not remain still, except it be for the sake of sleep at night; but, as soon as it is day, he flies away and seeks his food in what place soever pleases him." "True," answered the tortoise. "Nevertheless he who hath wings hath no repose at most seasons, for that the good he getteth is not a fourth part of the trouble that betideth him, and the best of all the things for which one striveth is ease of life and contentment. Now God hath appointed love and fellowship between us and thee and we fear for thee, lest some of thine enemies catch thee and thou perish and we be denied the sight of thy face." "Thou sayst sooth," rejoined the heathcock; "but how

dost thou counsel me to do?" Quoth the tortoise, "My advice is that thou pluck out thy wing- feathers, wherewith thou speedest thy flight, and abide with us in peace, eating of our meat and drinking of our drink in this pasturage, that aboundeth in trees laden with ripe fruits, and thou and we, we will sojourn in this fruitful place and enjoy each other's company."

The heathcock inclined to her speech, seeking ease for himself, and plucked out his wing-feathers, one by one, in accordance with the tortoise's counsel; then he took up his abode with them and contented himself with the little ease and passing pleasure he enjoyed. Presently up came a. weasel and looking at the heathcock, saw that his wings were plucked so that he could not fly, whereat he was mightily rejoiced and said in himself, "Verily yonder heathcock is fat and scant of feather." So he went up to him and seized him, whereupon the heathcock called out to the tortoises for help; but, when they saw the weasel seize him, they drew apart from him and huddled together, choked with weeping for him, for they saw the beast torture him. Quoth the heathcock, "Is there aught but weeping with you?" And they answered, saying, "O our brother, we have neither strength nor power nor resource against a weasel." At this the heathcock was grieved and gave up hope of life; and he said to them, "The fault is not yours, but mine own, in that I hearkened to you and plucked out my wing-feathers, wherewith I used to fly. Indeed, I deserve death for having hearkened to you, and I blame you not in aught."

On like wise,' continued the king, 'I do not blame you, O women; but I blame and reproach myself for that I remembered not that ye were the cause of the transgression of our father Adam, by reason whereof he was cast out from Paradise, but forgot that ye are the root of all evil and hearkened to you, of my ignorance and folly and lack of sense and judgment, and slew my viziers and the governors of my state, who were my loyal counsellors in all things and my glory and my strength against whatsoever troubled me. Now find I not one to replace them and see none who shall stand me in their stead; and except God succour me with one of sound judgment, who shall guide me to that wherein is my deliverance, I am fallen into sheer perdition.' Then he arose and withdrew into his bedchamber, bemoaning his viziers and governors and saying, 'Would God those lions were with me, though but for an hour, so I might excuse myself unto them and look on them and make my moan to them of my case and that which hath betided me after them!' And he abode all that day sunken in the sea of troublous thought, eating not neither drinking.

When the night came, he arose and changing his raiment, donned old clothes and disguised himself and went forth at a venture to walk about the city, so haply he might hear some comfortable word. As he wandered about the streets, he chanced upon two boys of equal age, each about twelve years old, who sat talking under a wall: so he drew near them whereas he might hear and apprehend what they said, unseen of them, and heard one say to the other, 'O my brother, hear what my father told me yesternight of the calamity that hath betided him in the withering of his crops, before their time, by reason of the lack of rain and the great affliction that is fallen on this city.' Quoth the other, 'Knowst thou not the cause of this affliction?' 'Not I,' answered the first. 'I prithee, tell it me, if thou know it.' 'Yes,' rejoined the second; 'I know it and will tell it thee. Know that I have heard from one of my father's friends that our king put his

viziers and ministers to death, without offence done of them, by reason of his love for women and inclination to them; for that his viziers forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden and commanded to slay them, in obedience to his women. Thus he killed Shimas my father, who was his vizier and the vizier of his father before him and the chief of his council; but thou shalt see how God will do with him by reason of his sins against them and how He shall avenge them of him.' 'How so?' asked the first boy.

'Know,' replied his fellow, 'that the King of Farther India maketh light of our king and hath sent him a letter, rating him and saying to him, "Build me a castle amiddleward the sea, or I will send unto thee Bediya my vizier, with twelve squadrons of horse, each twelve thousand strong, to seize upon thy kingdom and slay thy men and take thee and thy women prisoners." And he hath given him three days' time to answer. Now thou must know, O my brother, that this King of Farther India is a masterful tyrant, a man of might and exceeding prowess, and in his realm are much people; wherefore, except our king make shift to fend him off from himself, he will fall into perdition, whilst the King of Hind will seize on our possessions and slay our men and make prize of our women." When the king heard this talk, his agitation redoubled and he inclined to the boys, saying, 'Surely, this boy is a wizard, in that he is acquainted with this thing; for the letter is with me and the secret also and none hath knowledge of this matter but myself. How then knoweth this boy of it? I will resort unto him and talk with him and I pray God that our deliverance may be at his hand.'

Then he approached the boy softly and said to him, 'O dear boy, what is this thou sayest of our king, that he did ill to the utterest in slaying his viziers and the chiefs of his state? Indeed, he sinned against himself and his people and thou art right in that which thou sayest. But tell me, O my son, whence knowest thou that the King of Farther India hath written him a letter, berating him and bespeaking him with the grievous speech whereof thou tellest?' 'O brother,' answered the boy, 'I know this from the sand wherewith I tell the tale of night and day and from the saying of the ancients, "No mystery is hidden from God;" for the sons of Adam have in them a spiritual virtue which discovers to them hidden secrets.' 'True, O my son,' answered Wird Khan; 'but whence learnedly thou the [art of divination by] sand, and thou young of years?' Quoth the boy, 'My father taught it me;' and the king said, 'Is thy father alive or dead?' 'He is dead,' answered the boy.

Then said Wird Khan, 'Is there any resource or device for our king, whereby he may ward off this sore calamity from himself and his kingdom?' And the boy answered, 'It befits not that I speak with thee [of this]; but, if the king send for me and ask me how he shall do to baffle his enemy and win free of his snares, I will acquaint him with that wherein, by the power of God the Most High, shall be his deliverance.' 'But who shall tell the king of this,' asked Wird Khan, 'that he may send for thee?' Quoth the boy, 'If I hear that he seeketh men of experience and good counsel, I will go up with them to him and tell him that wherein shall be his welfare and the warding off of this affliction from him; but, if he neglect this pressing matter and busy himself with his pleasures among his women and I go to him of my own motion, purposing to acquaint him with the means of deliverance, he will assuredly give orders to slay me, even as he slew those his viziers, and my courtesy to him will be the cause of my

destruction; wherefore the folk will think meanly of me and belittle my wit and I shall be of those of whom it is said, "He whose learning exceeds his wit perishes by his ignorance."'

When the king heard the boy's speech, he was assured of his sagacity and the excellence of his merit was manifest unto him. So he was certified that deliverance would betide him and his subjects at the boy's hands and said to him, 'Whence art thou and where is thy house?' 'This is the wall of our house,' answered he. The king took note of the place and leaving the boy, returned to his palace, rejoicing. There he changed his clothes and called for meat and drink, forbidding his women access to him. Then he ate and drank and returned thanks to God the Most High and besought Him of succour and deliverance. Moreover he craved His pardon and forgiveness for that which he had done with his counsellors of state and ministers and turned to Him with sincere repentance, imposing on himself prayer and fasting galore, by way of votive offering.

On the morrow, he called one of his chief officers and describing to him the boy's abiding-place, bade him go thither and bring him to his presence with all gentleness So the officer sought out the boy and said to him, 'The king bids thee to him, that good may betide thee from him and that he may ask thee a question; then shalt thou return in peace to thy dwelling.' 'What is the king's occasion with me?' asked the boy, and the officer said, 'My lord's occasion with thee is question and answer.' 'A thousand times hearkening and a thousand times obedience to the commandment of the king!' answered the boy and accompanied the officer to the palace. When he came into the presences he prostrated himself before God and saluting the king, called down blessings on him. Wird Khan returned his salutation and bade him sit. So he sat down and the king said to him, 'Knowst thou who walked with thee yesternight?' 'Yes,' answered the boy, and the king said, 'And where is he?' 'It is he who speaketh with me at this present,' replied the boy. 'Thou sayst sooth, O friend,' rejoined the king and bade set him a chair beside his own, whereon he made him sit and called for meat and drink.

Then they talked awhile and the king said, 'O vizier, thou toldest me yesternight that thou hadst a device wherewith thou couldst fend off from us the malice of the King of Hind. What is this device and how shall we contrive to ward off his mischief from us? Tell me, that I may make thee chief of those who speak with me in the realm and choose thee to be my vizier and do according to thy judgment in all thou counsellest me and assign thee a splendid recompense.' 'O king,' answered the boy, 'keep thy recompense to thyself and seek counsel and policy of thy women, who counselled thee to slay my father Shimas and the rest of the viziers.' When the king heard this, he was confounded and sighed and said, 'O dear boy, was Shimas indeed thy father?' 'Yes,' answered the boy; 'Shimas was indeed my father and I am in truth his son.' Whereupon the king bowed his head, whilst the tears ran from his eyes, and he craved pardon of God.

Then said he, 'O boy, indeed I did this of my ignorance and by the evil counsel of the women and of the greatness of their malice; but I beseech thee to forgive me and I wilt set thee in thy father's stead and make thy rank higher than his. Moreover, if thou do away this retribution from us, I will encircle thy neck with a collar of gold and

mount thee on the goodliest of steeds and bid the crier make proclamation before thee, saying, "This is the glorious boy, he who sitteth in the second seat after the king!" As for the women, I have it in mind to do vengeance on them at such time as God the Most High shall will it. But tell me now what thou hast with thee of counsel and contrivance, that my heart may be at ease.' Quoth the boy, 'Swear to me that thou wilt not gainsay me in that which I shall say to thee and that I shall be in safety from that which I fear.' And the king answered, 'This is the covenant of God between thee and me, that I will not go from thy word and that thou shalt be my chief counsellor and whatsoever thou biddest me, that will I do; and God the Most High is witness betwixt us of what I say.'

Therewith the boy's breast dilated and the field of speech was opened to him wide and he said, 'O king, my counsel to thee is that thou wait till the expiration of the delay appointed by thee for returning an answer to the courier of the King of Hind; and when he cometh to thee, seeking the answer, do thou put him off to another day. With this he will excuse himself to thee, on the score of his master having appointed him certain fixed days, and press thee for an answer; but do thou rebut him and put him off to another day, without specifying it. Then will he go forth from thee, angry, and betake himself into the midst of the city and speak openly among the folk, saying, "O people of the city, I am a courier of the King of Farther India, who is a king of great might and of determination such as softeneth iron. He sent me with a letter to the king of this city and limited unto me certain days, saying, 'An thou be not with me by the time appointed, my vengeance shall fall on thee.' Now, behold, I went in to the king of this city and gave him the letter, which when he had read, he sought of me a delay of three days, after which he should return me an answer thereto, and I agreed to this of courtesy and consideration for him. When the three days were past, I went to seek the answer of him, but he put me off to another day; and now I have no patience to wait longer; so I am about to return to my lord the King of Farther India and acquaint him with that which hath befallen me; and ye, O folk, are witnesses between me and him."

This will be reported to thee and do thou send for him and bespeak him gently and say to him, "O thou that strivest for thine own destruction, what moveth thee to blame us among our subjects? Verily, thou deservest present death at our hands; but the ancients say, 'Clemency is of the attributes of the noble.' Know that our delay in answering thy master's letter arose not from neglect on our part, but from our much business and lack of leisure to look into thine affair and write a reply to thy king." Then call for the letter and read it again and laugh immoderately and say to the courier, "Hast thou a letter other than this? If so, we will write thee an answer to that also." He will say, "I have none other than this letter;" but do thou repeat thy question to him a second and a third time, and he will reply, "I have none other at all." Then say to him, "Verily, this thy king lacketh wit in that he writeth us the like of this letter, seeking to arouse our anger against him, so that we shall go forth to him with our troops and invade his dominions and take his realm. But we will not punish him this time for the vileness of his breeding, [as shown] in this letter, for that he is scant of wit and weak of judgment, and it beseemeth our dignity that we first admonish him and warn him not to repeat the like of these extravagances; and if he again adventure

himself and return to the like of this, he will merit present destruction. Indeed, methinks this king of thine must be an ignorant fool, taking no thought to the issue [of that he doth] and having no vizier of sense and good counsel, with whom he may advise. Were he a man of sense, he had taken counsel with a vizier, before sending us the like of this ridiculous letter. But he shall have an answer like unto his letter and overpassing it; for I will give it to one of the boys of the school to answer." Then send for me, and when I come, bid me read the letter and answer it.'

When the king heard the boy's speech, his breast expanded and he approved his counsel and his device pleased him. So he conferred largesse upon him and instating him in his father's once, sent him away, rejoicing. When the three days of delay were expired, that he had appointed unto the courier, the latter presented himself and going in to the king, demanded the answer; but he put him off to another day; whereupon he went to the end of the throne-room and spake unseemly, even as the boy had foresaid. Then he betook himself to the bazaar and said, 'Ho, people of this city, I came with a message from the King of Farther India to your king, and still he putteth me off from an answer. Now the term is past which my master limited unto me and your king hath no excuse, and ye are witnesses unto this.'

When this speech was reported to the king, he sent for the courier and said to him, 'O thou that seekest thine own destruction, art thou not the bearer of a letter from king to king, between whom are secrets, and how cometh it that thou goest forth among the folk and publishest kings' secrets to the common people? Verily, thou meritest punishment from us; but this we will forbear, for the sake of returning an answer by thee to this fool of a king of thine: and it befitteth not that any return him an answer but the least of the boys of the school.' Then he sent for the vizier's son, who carne and prostrating himself to God, offered up prayers for the king's abiding glory and long life; whereupon Wird Khan threw him the letter, saying, 'Read that letter and write me a reply hereto in haste.'

The boy took the letter and reading it, smiled; then he laughed aloud and said to the king, 'Didst thou send for me to answer this letter?' 'Yes,' answered Wird Khan, and the boy said, 'O king, methought thou hadst sent for me on some grave matter; indeed a lesser than I had availed to the answering of this letter; but it is thine to command, O puissant king.' Quoth the king, 'Write the answer forthright, on account of the courier, for that he is appointed a term and we have delayed him another day.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the boy and pulling out paper and inkhorn, wrote the following answer.

'In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate! Peace be upon him who hath gotten pardon and deliverance and the mercy of the Compassionate One! To proceed. O thou that pretendeth thyself a mighty king [and art but a king] in word and not in deed, we give thee to know that thy letter hath reached us and we have read it and have taken note of that which is therein of absurdities and rare extravagances, whereby we are certified of thine ignorance and ill-will unto us. Verily, thou hast put out thy hand to that whereunto thou availest not, and but that we have compassion on God's creatures and the people, we had not held back [our hand] from thee. As for thy messenger, he went forth to the bazaar and published the news of thy letter to great and small, whereby he merited punishment from us; but we spared him and remitted

his offence, not of respect for thee, but of pity for him, seeing that he is excusable with thee.

As for that whereof thou makest mention in thy letter of the slaughter of my viziers and wise men and grandees, this is the truth and [this I did] for a reason that availed with me, and I slew not one man of learning but there are with me a thousand of his kind, wiser than he and more of sense and learning, nor is there with me a child but is filled with knowledge and wisdom, and I have, in the stead of each of the slain, of those who surpass in his kind, what is beyond count. Moreover, each of my troops con cope with a battalion of thine, whilst, as for treasure, I have a manufactory that makes every day a thousand pounds of silver, besides gold, and precious stones are with me as pebbles; and as for the people of my kingdom, I cannot set forth to thee their wealth and beauty and goodliness. How darest thou, therefore, presume upon us and say to us, "Build me a castle amiddleward the sea?" Verily, this is a marvellous thing, and doubtless it arises from the slenderness of thy wit; for, hadst thou aught of sense, thou hadst enquired of the beatings of the waves and the movements of the winds. But fend thou off therefrom the waves and the surges of the sea and still the winds, and we will build thee the castle.

As for thy pretension that thou wilt vanquish me, God forfend that the like of thee should lord it over us and conquer our realm! Nay, God the Most High hath given me the mastery over thee, for that thou hast transgressed against me and provoked me without due cause. Know, therefore, that thou hast merited chastisement from God and from me; but I fear God in respect of thee and thy subjects and will not take horse against thee but after warning. Wherefore, if thou fear God, hasten to send me this year's tribute; else will I not leave to ride forth against thee with a thousand thousand and a hundred thousand fighting-men, all giants on elephants, and I will range them round about my vizier and bid him beleaguer thee three years, in place of the three days' delay thou appointedst to thy messenger, and I will make myself master of thy kingdom, except that I will slay none but thyself alone and make prisoners therefrom none but thy harem.'

Then the boy drew his own portrait in the margin of the letter and wrote thereunder the words: 'This answer was written by the least of the boys of the school;' after which he sealed it and handed it to the king. The latter gave it to the courier, who took it and kissing the king's hands, went forth from him, rendering thanks to God and the king for the latter's clemency to him and marvelling at the boy's intelligence. He arrived at the court of the king, his master, three days after the expiration of the term appointed to him, and found that he had called a meeting of his council, by reason of the failure of the courier to return at the appointed time. So he went in to the king and prostrating himself before him, gave him the letter. The king took it and questioned him of the cause of his tarrying and how it was with King Wird Khan. So he recounted to him all that he had seen with his eyes and heard with his ears; whereat the king's wit was confounded and he said, 'Out on thee! What tale is this thou tellest me of the like of this king?' 'O mighty king,' answered the courier, 'I am here before thee, but open the letter and read it, and the truth of my speech will appear to thee.'

So the king opened the letter and read it and seeing the portrait of the boy who had written it, made sure of the loss of his kingdom and was perplexed concerning the

issue of his affair. Then, turning to his viziers and grandees, he acquainted them with the case and read them the letter, whereat they were mightily affrighted and sought to calm the king's terror with words that were only from the tongue, whilst their hearts were torn with alarm and anxiety; but Bediya, the chief vizier, said, 'Know, O king, that there is no avail in that which my brother viziers have said, and it is my counsel that thou write this king a letter and excuse thyself to him therein, saying, "I love thee and loved thy father before thee and sent thee this letter by the courier only to prove thee and try thy constancy and see what was in thee of stoutness and thy proficiency in matters practical and theoretical and skill in enigmas and that wherewith thou art endowed of all perfections. Wherefore we pray God the Most High to bless thee in thy kingdom and strengthen the defences of thy [capital] city and add to thy dominion, since thou art mindful of thyself and accomplishest the needs of thy subjects." And send it to him by another courier.' 'By the Great God,' exclaimed the king, 'it is a wonder of wonders that this man should be a mighty king and prepared for war, after his slaughter of all the wise men of his kingdom and his counsellors and the captains of his host and that his realm should prosper after this and there should issue therefrom this vast strength! But the most wonderful of all is that the little ones of its schools should return the like of this answer for its king. Verily, of my ill-omened presumption, I have kindled this fire upon myself, and I know not how I shall quench it, save [by acting on] the advice of this my vizier.'

Accordingly he made ready a rich present, with slaves and attendants galore, and wrote the following letter [in answer to that of Wird Khan]. 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! To proceed. O glorious King Wird Khan, son of my dear brother Jelyaad, may God have mercy on thee and continue thee [on life!] Thine answer to our letter hath reached us and we have read it and apprehended its meaning and see therein that which rejoiceth us, and this is the utmost of that which we sought of God for thee; wherefore we beseech Him to exalt thy dignity and stablish the pillars of thy state and give thee the victory over thy foes and those who purpose thee ill. Know, O king, that thy father was my brother and that there were between us in his lifetime pacts and covenants of friendship, and never had he of me nor I of him other than good; and when he was translated [to the mercy of God] and thou sattest upon the throne of his kingship, there betided us the utmost joy and contentment; but, when the news reached us of that which thou didst with thy viziers and the notables of thy state, we feared lest the report of thee should come to the ears of some king other than ourselves and he should presume against thee, for that we deemed thee neglectful of thine affairs and of the maintenance of thy defences and careless of the interests of thy kingdom; so we wrote unto thee what should arouse thee [from thy torpor]. But, when we saw that thou returnest us the like of this answer, our heart was set at ease for thee, may God give thee enjoyment of thy kingdom and stablish thee in thy dignity! And so peace be on thee.'

Then he despatched the letter and the present to Wird Khan with an escort of a hundred horse, who fared on till they came to his court and saluting him, presented him with the letter and the gifts. The king read the letter and accepted the presents, lodging the captain of the escort in a befitting place and entreating him with honour. So the news of this was bruited abroad among the people and the king rejoiced therein

with an exceeding joy. Then he sent for the boy, the son of Shimas, and the captain of the hundred horse, and entreating the young vizier with honour, gave him the letter to read; whilst he himself upbraided the captain concerning the king's conduct, and the latter kissed his hand and made his excuses to him, offering up prayers for the continuance of his life and the eternity of his fortune. The king thanked him for his good wishes and bestowed upon him honours and largesse galore. Moreover, he gave his men what befitted them and made ready presents to send by them and bade the young vizier write an answer to their king's letter.

So the boy wrote an answer, wherein, after an elegant exordium, he touched briefly on the question of reconciliation and praised the good breeding of the envoy and of his men, and showed it to the king, who said to him, 'Read it, O dear boy, that we may know what is written therein.' So the boy read the letter in the presence of the hundred horse, and the king and all present marvelled at the excellence of its style and sense. Then the king sealed the letter and delivering it to the captain of the hundred horse, dismissed him with an escort of his own troops, to bring him to the frontier of his country. So the captain returned, confounded at that which he had seen of the boy's knowledge and sagacity and thanking God for the speedy accomplishment of his errand and the acceptance of [the proffered] peace, to the King of Farther India, to whom he delivered the presents and the letter, telling him what he had seen and heard, whereat the king was mightily rejoiced and returned thanks to God the Most High and honoured the envoy, lauding his care and zeal and advancing him in rank: and he was thenceforth in peace and tranquillity and all contentment.

As for King Wird Khan, he returned to the way of righteousness, abandoning his evil courses and turning to God with sincere repentance; and he altogether forswore women and devoted himself to the ordering of the affairs of his realm and the governance of his people in the fear of God. Moreover, he made the son of Shimas vizier in his father's room and the chief of his counsellors and keeper of his secrets and commanded to decorate his capital and the other cities of his kingdom seven days. At this the subjects rejoiced, glad in the prospect of justice and equity, and fear and alarm ceased from them and they were instant in prayer for the king and for the vizier who had done away this trouble from him and them.

Then said the king to the vizier, 'What is thy counsel for the proper ordering of the state and the prospering of the people and the furnishing of the realm anew with captains and counsellors as before?' 'O king of high estate,' answered the boy, 'in my judgment, it behoves, before all, that thou began by tearing out from thy heart the root of frowardness and leave thy debauchery and tyranny and devotion to women; for, if thou return to the root of transgression, the second backsliding will be worse than the first.' 'And what,' asked the king, 'is the root of frowardness that it behoves me to tear out from my heart?' 'O mighty king,' answered the vizier, little of years but great of wit, 'the root of frowardness is the ensuing the desire of women and inclining to them and following their counsel and policy; for the love of them troubles the soundest wit and corrupts the most upright nature, and manifest proofs bear witness to my saying, wherein, if thou meditate them and consider their actions and the consequences thereof with eyes intent, thou wilt find a loyal counsellor against thine own soul and wilt stand in no need of my advice.

Look then, thou occupy not thy heart with the thought of women and do away the trace of them from thy mind, for that God the Most High hath forbidden the excessive use of them by the mouth of His prophet Moses, so that quoth a certain wise king to his son, "O my son, when thou succeedest to the throne after me, spare to frequent women overmuch, lest thy heart be led astray and thy judgment corrupted; for that their much frequentation leadeth to love of them, and love of them to corruption of judgment." And the proof of this is what befell our lord Solomon, son of David (peace be upon them both!) whom God endowed with knowledge and wisdom and supreme dominion above all men, nor vouchsafed He to any of the kings of old time the like of that which He gave him; and women were the cause of his father's offending.

The examples of this are many, O king, and I do but make mention of Solomon to thee for that thou knowest that to none was given the like of the dominion wherewith he was invested, so that all the kings of the earth obeyed him. Know then, O king, that the love of women is the root of all evil and none of them hath any judgment: wherefore it behoveth a man to confine his use of them within the limits of necessity and not incline to them altogether, for that will cause him fall into corruption and perdition. If thou hearken to my rede, all thine affairs will prosper; but, if thou neglect it, thou wilt repent, whenas repentance will not avail thee.'

'Indeed,' answered the king, 'I have left my sometime inclination to women and have altogether renounced my infatuation for them; but how shall I do to punish them for that which they have done? For the slaying of thy father Shimas was of their malice and not of my own will, and I know not what ailed my reason that I fell in with their proposal to kill him.'

Then he cried out and groaned and lamented, saying, 'Alas for the loss of my vizier and his just judgment and wise ordinance and for the loss of his like of the viziers and notables of the state and of the goodliness of their apt and sagacious counsels!' 'O king,' said the young vizier, 'know that the fault is not with women alone, for that they are like unto a pleasing commodity, whereto the desires of the beholders incline. To whosoever desireth and buyeth, they sell it, but whoso buyeth not, none forceth him thereto; so that the fault is his who buyeth, especially if he know the harmfulness of the commodity. Now, I warn thee, as did my father before me, but thou hearkenedst not to his counsel.' 'O vizier,' answered the king, 'indeed thou hast fixed this fault upon me, even as thou hast said, and I have no excuse except the Divine ordinances.' 'O king,' rejoined the vizier, 'know that God hath created us and endowed us with ableness and appointed to us will and choice; so, if we will, we do, and if we will, we do not. God commandeth us not to do harm, lest sin attach to us; wherefore it behoveth us to consider that which it is right to do, for that the Most High commandeth us nought but good in all cases and forbiddeth us only from evil; but what we do, we do of our free will, be it right or wrong.'

Quoth the king, 'Thou sayst truly, and indeed my fault arose from my surrendering myself to my lusts, albeit many a time my reason warned me from this and thy father Shimas often warned me likewise; but my lusts carried it over my reason. Hast thou then with thee aught that may [in the future] withhold me from committing this error and whereby my reason may be victorious over the lusts of my soul?' 'Yes,' answered the vizier. 'I can tell thee what will restrain thee from committing

this error, and it is that thou put off the garment of ignorance and don that of understanding, disobeying thy passions and obeying thy Lord and reverting to the policy of the just king thy father, fulfilling thy duties to God the Most High and to thy people, applying thyself to the defence of thy faith and the promotion of thy subjects' welfare, governing thyself aright and forbearing the slaughter of thy people.

Look to the issues of things and sever thyself from tyranny and oppression and arrogance and lewdness, practising justice and equity and humility and obeying the commandments of God the Most High, applying thyself to gentle dealing with those of His creatures whom He hath committed to thy governance and being assiduous in fulfilling their prayers unto thee, in accordance with that which is incumbent on thee. If thou be constant in the practice of these virtues, may thy days be serene and may God of His mercy spare thee and make thee revered of all who look on thee; so shall thine energies be brought to nought, for God the Most High shall put their hosts to the rout, and thou shalt have acceptance with Him and be loved and reverenced of His creatures.'

'Verily,' said the king, 'thou hast quickened mine entrails and enlightened my heart with thy sweet speech and hast opened the eyes of mine understanding, after blindness; and I am resolved to do all thou hast set forth to me, with the help of God the Most High, leaving my former estate of lust and frowardness and bringing forth my soul from duresse into freedom and from fear into safety. It behoveth thee, then, to be joyful and contented, for that I, for all my greater age, am become to thee as a son, and thou to me as a dear father, for all thy tenderness of years, and it is grown incumbent on me to do my utmost endeavour in that thou commandest me.

Wherefore I thank the bounty of God the Most High and thy bounty for that He hath vouchsafed me, by thee, fair fortune and good guidance and just judgment to fend off my trouble and anxiety; and the deliverance of my people hath been brought about by means of the excellence of thy skill and the goodliness of thine ordinance. Henceforward, thou shalt be the governor of my kingdom and equal to myself in all but sitting upon the throne; and all that thou dost shall be law to me and none shall gainsay thy word, young in years though thou be, for that thou art old in wit and knowledge. So I thank God who hath vouchsafed thee to me, that thou mayst guide me out of the crooked paths of perdition into the way of righteousness.'

Quoth the vizier, 'O august king, know that no merit is due to me for giving thee loyal counsel; for that to succour thee by deed and word is of that which is incumbent on me, seeing that I am but a plant of thy bounty; nor I alone, but my father before me was overwhelmed with thy favours; so that we are both alike partakers in thy munificence, and how shall we not acknowledge this? Moreover thou, O king, art our shepherd and ruler and he who wards off our enemies from us and to whom is committed our protection and our guardian, instant in endeavour for our safety. Indeed, though we lavished our lives in thy service, yet should we not fulfil that which behoveth us of gratitude to thee; but we supplicate God the Most High, who hath set thee in dominion over us and made thee our ruler, and beseech Him to vouchsafe thee long life and success in all thine enterprises and not to try thee with afflictions in thy time, but bring thee to thy desire and make thee to be reverenced till the day of thy death and lengthen thine arms in beneficence and generosity, so thou mayst have

commandment over every wise man and subdue every froward one and all men of wisdom and mettle be found with thee in thy realm and all the ignorant and faint-hearted be plucked out therefrom; and we pray Him to withhold from thy people scarcity and misfortune and sow among them love and good fellowship and cause them to enjoy of this world its prosperity and of the next its felicity, of His grace and bounty and hidden mercies. Amen. For He can all things and there is nought difficult unto Him, in whom all things have their goal and glace of returning.'

When the king heard the vizier's prayers he was mightily rejoiced thereat and inclined to him with his whole heart, saying, 'Henceforth, O vizier, thou art to me in the stead of brother and son and father, and nought but death shall sever me from thee. Thou shalt have the disposal of all that my hand possesses, and if I have no child to succeed me, thou shalt sit on my throne in my stead; for thou art the worthiest of all the people of my realm, and I will invest thee with my kingship and appoint thee my heir presumptive to inherit the kingdom after me, if it be the will of God the Most High, in the presence of the grandees of my state, and will them to witness thereof.'

Then he called his secretary and bade him write to all the notables of his kingdom, summoning them to his court, and caused proclamation to be made in his city unto all the townsfolk great and small, bidding all the amirs and governors and chamberlains and other officers and dignitaries, as well as the sages and doctors of the law, to his presence. Moreover he held a grand divan and made a banquet, never was its like, and bade all the folks high and low, thereto. So they all assembled and abode in eating and drinking and delight a month's space; after which the king clothed all his household and the poor of his kingdom and bestowed abundant largesse on the men of learning.

Then he chose out a number of the sages and wise men, by counsel of the son of Shimas, and caused them go in to him, bidding him choose out six of them, that he might make them viziers under his commandment. So he chose out six of the oldest of them in years and the most accomplished of them in understanding and knowledge and the speediest of memory and judgment, and presented them to the king, who clad them in the vizier's habit and said to them, 'Ye are become my viziers, under the commandment of this my chief vizier, the son of Shimas. Whatsoever he saith to you or biddeth you thereto, ye shall not in anywise depart from it, albeit he is the youngest of you in years; for he is the eldest of you in wit.'

Then he seated them upon chairs, adorned with gold, after the usage of viziers, and appointed unto them stipends and allowances, bidding them choose out such of the notables of the kingdom and officers of the troops present at the banquet as were most fit for the service of the state, that he might make them captains of tens and hundreds and thousands and appoint to them dignities and assign them provision, after the manner of grandees. This they did with all diligence and he bade them also handsel all who were present with largesse galore and dismiss them each to his country with honour and worship. Moreover he charged his governors rule the people with justice and enjoined them to be tenderly solicitous for rich and poor and bade succour them from the treasury, according to their several degrees. So the viziers wished him continuance of glory and long life, and he commanded to decorate the city three days, in gratitude to God the Most High for His mercies.

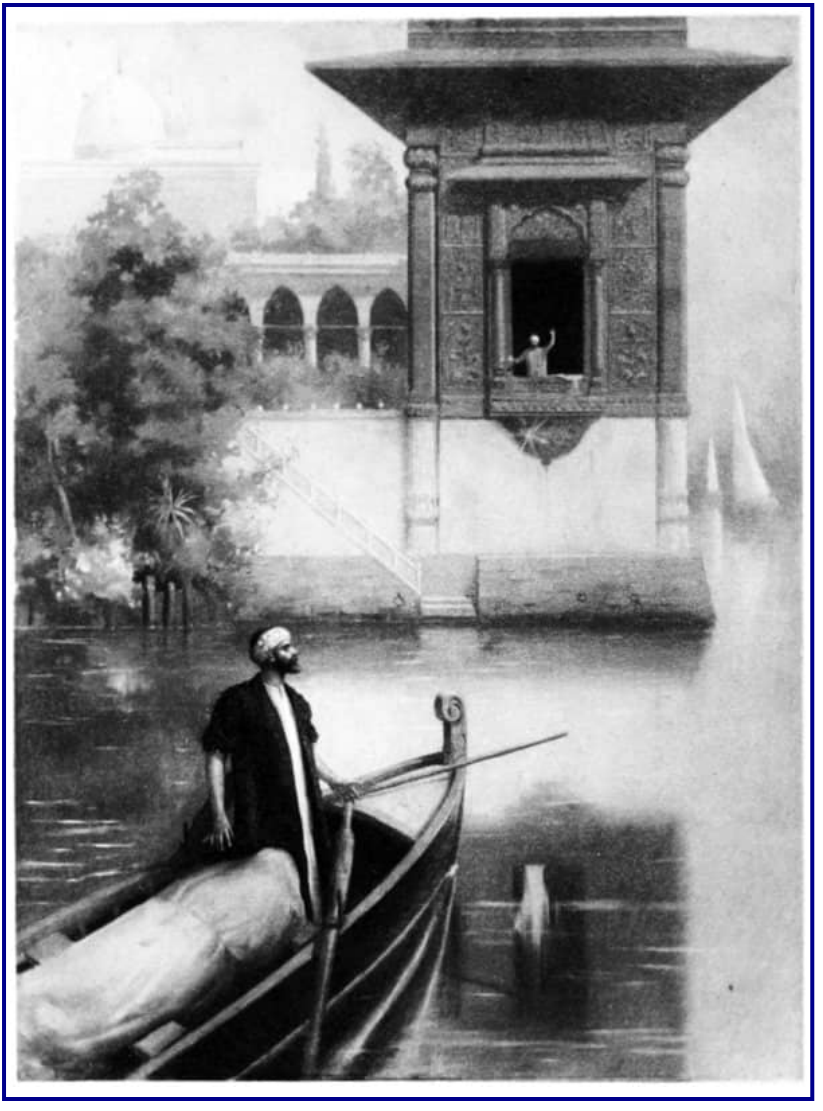
When the court was dissolved and all the people had departed, each to his own place, after their affairs had been set in order, the king summoned the son of Shimas and the other six viziers and taking them apart privily, said to them, 'Know, O viziers, that I have been a wanderer from the right way, drowned in ignorance, setting my face against admonition, a breaker of pacts and promises and a gainsayer of folk of good counsel; and the cause of all this was my befoolment by these women and the wiles with which they beset me and the seeming fairness of their speech, wherewith they beguiled me, and my acceptance of this, for that I deemed their words true and loyal counsel, by reason of the sweetness and softness thereof; but behold, they were deadly poison. And now I am certified that they sought but to ruin and destroy me, wherefore they deserve punishment and requital from me, for the sake of justice, that I may make them an admonition to all who will be admonished. But what deem ye advisedly of putting them to death?'

'O mighty king,' answered the young vizier, 'I have already told thee that women are not alone to blame, but that the fault is shared between them and the men who hearken to them; but they deserve punishment for two reasons: first, for the fulfilment of thy word, because thou art the supreme king; and secondly, by reason of their presumption against thee and their beguilement of thee and their intermeddling with that which concerns them not and whereof it befits them not to speak. Wherefore they have right well deserved death; yet let that which hath befallen them suffice them, and do thou henceforth reduce them to servants' estate. But it is thine to command in this and other than this.'

Some of the viziers seconded Ibn Shimas's advice; but one of them prostrated himself before the king and said to him, 'May God prolong the king's days! If thou be indeed resolved to put them to death, do with them as I shall say to thee.' 'And what is that?' asked Wird Khan. Quoth the vizier, 'It were best that thou bid some of thy female slaves carry the women who played thee false to the apartment, wherein befell the slaughter of thy viziers and sages, and imprison them there, and do thou assign to them a little meat and drink, enough to keep life in them [and no more]. Let them never be suffered to go forth of that place, and whenever one of them dies, let her abide among them, as she is, till they die all, even to the last of them. This is the least of their desert, for that they were the cause of this great wickedness, ay, and the origin of all the troubles and calamities that have befallen in our time; so shall there be verified in them the words of him who said, "He who diggeth a pit for his brother shall surely himself fall therein, though he go long in safety."'

The king accepted the vizier's counsel and sending for four stalwart female slaves, committed the offending women to them, bidding them carry them to the place of slaughter and imprison them there and allow them every day a little coarse food and a little troubled water. They did with them as he bade; wherefore the women mourned sore, repenting them of that which they had done and lamenting grievously. Thus God gave them their reward of abjection in this world and prepared for them torment in the world to come; nor did they cease to abide in that dark and noisome place, whilst every day one or other of them died, till they all perished, even to the last of them; and the report of this event was bruited abroad in all lands and countries. This is the end of the story of the king and his viziers and subjects, and praise be to God who causeth

peoples to pass away and quickeneth the rotten bones, Him who [alone] is worthy to be glorified and magnified and hollowed for ever and ever!



Aboukir the Dyer and Abousir the Barber.

THERE dwelt once, in the city of Alexandria, two men, one of whom was a dyer, by name Aboukir; and the other a barber called Abousir; and they were neighbours in the market, where their shops were side by side. The dyer was a swindler and a liar, an exceeding wicked man, as if indeed his temples were hewn out of the rock or fashioned of the threshold of a Jewish synagogue, nor was he ashamed of any knavery he wrought amongst the folk. It was his wont, when any brought him stuffs to dye, to require of him present payment, on pretence of buying dyestuffs withal. So the man would give him the hire in advance and go away, and he would spend it on meat and drink; after which he would sell the stuff itself and spend its price in eating and drinking and what not else, for he ate not but of the choicest and most delicate meats nor drank but of the best of that which doth away the wit.

When the owner of the stuff came to him, he would say to him, 'Come to me to-morrow before sunrise and thou shalt find thy stuff dyed.' So the man would go away, saying in himself, 'One day is near another,' and return next day at the appointed time, when the dyer would say to him, 'Come to-morrow; yesterday I was not at work, for I had with me guests and was occupied with their service till they went: but come to-morrow before sunrise and take thy stuff dyed.' So he would go away and return on the third day, when Aboukir would say to him, 'Indeed yesterday I was excusable, for my wife was brought to bed in the night and all day I was busy with one thing and another; but to-morrow, without fail, come and take thy stuff dyed.'

When the man came again at the appointed time, he would put him off with some other tale, it mattered little what, and would swear to him; nor would he cease to promise and swear to him, as often as he came, till the customer lost patience and said, 'How often wilt thou say to me, "To-morrow?" Give me my stuff: I will not have it dyed.' Whereupon the dyer would make answer, 'By Allah, O my brother, I am abashed at thee; but I will tell the truth and may God harm all who do folk hurt in their goods!' The other would say, 'Tell me what hath happened;' and Aboukir would answer, 'Indeed I dyed thy stuff on matchless wise and hung it on the rope [to dry;] but it was stolen and I know not who took it.' If the owner of the stuff were a good-natured man, he would say, 'God will recoup me;' and if he were ill-conditioned, he would pursue him with exposure and insult, but would get nothing of him, though he complained of him to the judge.

He ceased not to do thus till his report was noised abroad among the folk and they used to warn one another against him and he became a byword amongst them. So they all held aloof from him and none had to do with him save those who knew not his character; but, for all this, he failed not daily to suffer insult and disgrace from God's creatures. By reason of this his trade became slack and he used to go to the shop of his neighbour the barber and sit there, with his eyes on the door of the dyery. Whenever he espied any one who knew him not standing at the dyery-door, with a piece of stuff in his hand, he would go up to him and say, 'What seekest thou, O man?' And the man would answer, 'Take and dye me this thing.' So the dyer would say, 'What colour wilt thou have it?' For, with all his knavery, he could dye all manner of colours;

but he never kept faith with any one; so poverty had gotten the better of him. Then he would take the stuff and say, 'Give me my hire in advance and come to-morrow and take the stuff.' So the stranger would give him the money and go his way; whereupon Aboukir would carry the stuff to the market and sell it and buy meat and vegetables and tobacco and fruit and what not else he needed with the price; but, whenever he saw any one who had given him stuff to dye standing at the door of his shop, he would not show himself to him.

On this wise he abode years and years, till it chanced one day that he received stuff to dye from a masterful man and sold it and spent the price. The owner came to him every day, but found him not in his shop; for, whenever he espied any one who had a claim against him, he would flee from him into the shop of the barber Abousir. At last, the angry man, finding that he was not to be seen and growing weary of coming, repaired to the Cadi and bringing one of the latter's serjeants to the shop, nailed up the door, in presence of a number of Muslims, and sealed it, for that he found therein nothing but some broken pans, to stand him instead of his stuff; after which the serjeant took the key, saying to the neighbours, 'Tell him to bring back this man's goods and take the key of his shop,' and went his way, he and the man.

Then said Abousir to Aboukir, 'What aileth thee? Whoever brings thee aught, thou losest it for him. What is gone of this angry man's stuff?' 'O my neighbour,' answered the dyer, 'it was stolen from me.' 'Wonderful!' exclaimed the barber. 'Whenever any one gives thee aught, a thief steals it from thee! Art thou then the resort of the whole college of thieves? But I doubt me thou liest: so tell me the truth.' 'O my neighbour,' replied Aboukir, 'none hath stolen aught from me.' 'What then dost thou with the people's goods?' asked Abousir. And the dyer said, 'Whenever any one giveth me aught to dye, I sell it and spend the price.' Quoth Abousir, 'is this permitted thee of God?' 'I only do this out of poverty,' answered Aboukir, 'because trade is dull with me and I am poor and have nothing.' And he went on to complain to him of the slackness of his trade and his lack of means.

Abousir in like manner lamented the slackness of his own trade, saying, 'I am a master of my craft and have not my equal in this city; but no one is shaved at my shop, because I am a poor man; and I loathe this craft, O my brother.' 'And I also,' answered Aboukir, 'loathe my own craft, by reason of its slackness; but, O my brother, what call is there for our abiding in this city? Let us depart from it and divert ourselves with foreign travel, carrying our crafts in our hands, the which are in demand in all countries; so shall we breathe the air and be rid of this grievous trouble.' And he ceased not to commend travel to Abousir, till the latter became wishful to set out, whereat Aboukir rejoiced and recited the following verses:

Forsake thy native land, it thou advancement seek, and hie
Abroad for five advantages in foreign travel lie.
The putting off of care, the gain of livelihood and lore
And manners and the company of noble folk and high.
If it be said, 'Distress and woe and severance of loves
And hardships still in travel be beneath a foreign sky,'

I trow 'twere better for a man that he should die than live
Still in humiliation's house, 'twixt envier and spy.

Then they agreed to travel together and Aboukir said to Abousir, 'O my neighbour, we are become brethren and there is no difference between us, so it behoves us to recite the first chapter of the Koran [in token of agreement] that he of us who gets work shall of his profit feed him who is out of work, and whatever is left, we will lay in a chest; and when we come back to Alexandria we will divide it fairly and equally.' 'So be it,' answered Abousir, and they repeated the first chapter of the Koran on this understanding. Then Ahousir locked up his shop and gave the keys to the landlord, whilst Aboukir left his shop locked and sealed and let the key lie with the Cadi's serjeant; after which they took their gear and embarked on the morrow in a galleon upon the salt sea. They set sail the same day and fortune attended them, for, of Abousir's great good luck, of all that were in the ship (and there were therein an hundred and twenty men, besides the captain and the crew,) there was not a single barber. So, when they spread the sails, the barber said to the dyer, 'O my brother, this is the sea and we shall need meat and drink, and we have but little victual with us and it may be the voyage will be long upon us; wherefore methinks I will shoulder my gear and pass among the passengers, and belike some one will say to me, "Come hither, O barber, and shave me," and I will shave him for a cake of bread or a para or a draught of water: so shall we both profit by this.'

'There is no harm in that,' replied the dyer and laid down his head and slept, whilst the barber took his razor and shaving-tackle and throwing over his shoulder a rag, to serve as napkin (for that he was poor), passed among the passengers. Quoth one of them, 'Ho, master, come and shave me.' So he shaved him, and the man gave him a para. 'O my brother,' said Ahousir, 'I have no use for this para; hadst thou given me a cake of bread, it were more blessed to me in this sea, for I have a shipmate and we are short of victual.' So he gave him a cake of bread and a piece of cheese and filled him the basin with sweet water. The barber carried all this to Aboukir and bade him eat the bread and cheese and drink the water. So he ate and drank, whilst Abousir again took up his shaving-gear and went round about the deck among the passengers. One man he shaved for two cakes of bread and another for a piece of cheese, and he was in demand, because there was no other barber on board. So he bargained with every one who said to him, 'Ho, master, shave me!' for two cakes of bread and a para, and they gave him whatever he sought, so that, by sundown, he had gotten thirty cakes of bread and thirty paras, besides store of cheese and olives and botargoes.

Amongst the rest he shaved the captain, to whom he complained of his lack of victual for the voyage, and the captain said to him, 'Have no care for that, so long as ye sail with us; for thou art welcome to bring thy comrade every night and sup with me.' Then he returned to the dyer, whom he found still asleep; so he aroused him; and when Aboukir awoke, he found at his head bread and cheese and olives and botargoes galore and said, 'Whence gottest thou all this?' 'From the bounty of God the Most High,' replied Abousir. Then Aboukir would have eaten; but the barber said to him, 'Eat not of this, O my brother; but leave it to serve us another time; for know that I shaved the captain and complained to him of our lack of victual: whereupon quoth he, "Bring thy comrade and sup both of ye with me every night and welcome. And this

night we sup with him for the first time.' But Aboukir replied, 'I am sea-sick and cannot rise from my place; so let me sup off these things and go thou alone to the captain.' 'So be it,' said Abousir and sat looking at the other, as he ate, and saw him hew off gobbets, as the quarryman hews stone from the mountain, and gulp them down with the gulp of an elephant that has not eaten for days, bolting one mouthful before he was rid of the previous one and glaring the while at that which was before him with the glower of a ghoul and blowing as the hungry bull blows over his beans and straw.

Presently up came a sailor and said to the barber, 'O master, the captain bids thee come to supper and bring thy comrade.' Quoth the barber to the dyer, 'Wilt thou come with us?' But he answered, 'I cannot walk.' So the barber went by himself and found the captain and his company sitting awaiting him, with a tray before them, wherein were a score or more of dishes. When the captain saw him, he said, 'Where is thy friend?' And Abousir answered, 'O my lord, he is sea-sick.' 'That will do him no harm,' answered the captain; 'his sickness will pass off; but do thou carry him his supper and come back, for we await thee.' Then he set apart a dish of kabobs and putting therein some of each dish, till there was enough for ten, gave it to Abousir, who took it and carried it to the dyer, whom he found grinding away with his dog-teeth at that which was before him, as he were a camel, and heaping mouthful on mouthful in his haste. Quoth Abousir, 'Did I not say to thee, "Eat not [of this]?" Indeed the captain is a man of exceeding kindness. See what he hath sent thee, for that I told him thou wast sick.' 'Give it here,' answered the dyer. So the barber gave it to him and he snatched it from him and fell upon it, like a ravening dog or a raging lion or a roc pouncing on a pigeon or one who is well-nigh dead for hunger and seeing victual, falls to eating thereof.

Then Abousir left him and going back to the captain, supped and enjoyed himself and drank coffee with him; after which he returned to Aboukir and found that he had eaten all that was in the platter and thrown it aside, empty. So he took the empty dish and gave it to one of the captain's servants, then went back to Aboukir and slept till the morning. On the morrow he continued to shave, and all he got by way of meat and drink he gave to Aboukir, who ate and drank and sat still, rising not save to do his natural occasions, and every night the barber brought him a full dish from the captain's table.

They fared thus twenty days, at the end of which time the galleon cast anchor in the harbour of a city; whereupon they took leave of the captain and landing, entered the town and took them a lodging in a khan. Abousir furnished the room and buying a cooking pot and a platter and spoons and what else they needed, fetched meat and cooked it; but Aboukir fell asleep the moment he entered the khan and awoke not till his companion aroused him and set the tray of food before him. When he awoke, he ate and saying to Abousir, 'Blame me not, for I am giddy,' fell asleep again. Thus he did forty days, whilst, every day, the barber took his tools and making the round of the city, wrought for that which fell to his lot, and returning, found the dyer asleep and aroused him. No sooner did he wake than he fell ravenously upon the food, eating as one who cannot have his fill nor be content; after which he went to sleep again.

On this wise he passed other forty days, and whenever the barber said to him, 'Sit up and shake off this torpor and go forth and take an airing in the city, for it is a bright and pleasant place and hath not its equal among the cities,' he would answer, saying, 'Blame me not, for I am [still] giddy.' Abousir cared not to vex him nor give him hard words; but, on the forty-first day, he himself fell sick and could not go abroad; so he pressed the porter of the khan into his service, and he did their occasions and brought them meat and drink four days, whilst Aboukir did nothing but eat and sleep. At the end of this time, the barber's sickness redoubled on him, till he lost his senses for stress thereof; and Aboukir, feeling the pangs of hunger, arose and sought in his comrade's clothes, where he found a thousand paras. So he took them and shutting the door of the chamber upon Abousir, went out, without telling any; and the doorkeeper of the inn was then at market and thus saw him not go out.

Aboukir betook himself to the bazaar and clad himself in rich apparel, at a cost of five hundred paras; then he proceeded to walk about and divert himself by viewing the place, which he found a city whose like was not among cities; but he noted that all its people were clad in clothes of white and blue, without other colour. Presently he came to a dyer's and seeing nought but blue in his shop, pulled out to him a kerchief and said, 'O master, take this kerchief and dye it and take thy hire.' Quoth the dyer, 'The cost of dying this will be twenty dirhems.' 'In our country,' said Aboukir, 'we dye it for two.' 'Then go and dye it in your own country,' answered the dyer. 'As for me, my price is twenty dirhems and I will not bate a tittle thereof.' 'What colour wilt thou dye it?' asked Aboukir; and the dyer said, 'I will dye it blue.' Quoth Aboukir, 'But I want it dyed red.' 'I know not how to dye red,' answered the dyer. 'Then dye it green,' rejoined Aboukir. But the dyer said, 'I know not how to dye green.' 'Yellow,' said Aboukir. 'Nor yet yellow,' answered the dyer; and Aboukir went on to name the different colours to him, one after another, till the dyer said, 'We are here in this city forty master-dyers, neither more nor less; and when one of us dies, we teach his son the craft. If he leave no son, we abide wanting one, and if he leave two sons, we teach one of them the craft, and if he die, we teach his brother. This our craft is straitly ordered and we know not how to dye aught but blue.'

Then said Aboukir, 'Know that I also am a dyer and know how to dye all colours; and I would have thee take me into thy service on hire, and I will teach thee my art, so thou mayst glory therein over all the company of dyers.' But the dyer answered, 'We never admit a stranger into our craft.' 'And what if I open a dyery for myself?' asked Aboukir. 'We will not suffer thee to do that,' replied the other; whereupon he left him and going to a second dyer, made him the like proposal; but he returned him the same answer as the first; and he ceased not to go from one to another, till he had made the round of the whole forty; but they would not accept of him either to master or journeyman. Then he repaired to the Syndic of the Dyers and told him what had passed, and he said, 'We admit no stranger into our craft.'

With this Aboukir became exceeding wroth and going up to the king of the city, made complaint to him, saying, 'O king of the age, I am a stranger and a dyer by trade;' and he told him what had passed between himself and the dyers of the town, adding, 'I can dye various kinds of red, such as rose-colour and carnation, and various kinds of green, such as grass-green and pistachio-green and olive and parrot's wing, and various

kinds of black, such as coal-black and blue-black, and various shades of yellow, such as orange and lemon-colour,' and went on to name to him the rest of the colours. Then said he, 'O king of the age, there is not a dyer in thy city who can avail to any one of these colours, for they know not how to dye aught but blue; yet will they not admit me amongst them, either as master or journeyman.' 'Thou sayst sooth for that matter,' answered the king; 'but I will open thee a dyery and give thee capital and have thou no care for them; for whoso offereth to do thee hindrance, I will hang him over the door of his shop.

Then he sent for builders and said to them, 'Go round about the city with this master, and whatsoever place pleases him, be it shop or khan or what not, turn out its occupier and build him a dyery after his wish. Whatsoever he bids you, that do ye and gainsay him not in aught.' And he clad him in a handsome suit and gave him two white slaves, to serve him, and a horse with housings of brocade and a thousand dinars, saying, 'Provide thyself with this, against the building be completed.' So Aboukir donned the dress and mounting the horse, became as he were an amir. Moreover the king assigned him a house and bade furnish it; so they furnished it for him and he took up his abode therein.

On the morrow he mounted and rode through the city, looking about him, whilst the architects went before him, till he saw a place that pleased him and said, 'This place is good;' whereupon they turned out the owner thereof and carried him to the king, who gave him, to the price of his holding, what more than contented him. Then the builders fell to work, whilst Aboukir said to them, 'Build thus and thus and do this and that,' till they built him a dyery that had not its like; whereupon he presented himself before the king and informed him that they had made an end of building the dyery and that there needed but the price of the dye-stuffs and gear to set it a-work. Quoth the king, 'Take these four thousand dinars to thy capital and let me see the outcome of thy dyery.' So he took the money and went to the market, where, finding dye-stuffs plentiful and [well-nigh] valueless, he bought all that he needed of materials for dyeing; and the king sent him five hundred pieces of stuff, which he proceeded to dye of all colours and spread them before the door of his dyery.

When the folk passed by the shop, they saw this wonderful sight, whose like they had never in their lives seen; so they crowded about the door, staring and questioning the dyer and saying, 'O master, what are tne names of these colours?' Quoth he, 'This is red and that yellow and the other green,' and so on with the rest of the colours. And they fell to bringing him stuffs and saying to him, 'Dye this for us like this and that and take what thou seekest [to thy hire].' When he had made an end of dyeing the king's stuffs, he took them and went up with them to the divan; and when the king saw them he rejoiced in them and bestowed abundant largesse on the dyer. Moreover, all the troops brought him stuffs, saying, 'Dye for us thus and thus;' and he dyed for them to their wish, and they threw him gold and silver. On this wise his fame spread abroad and his shop was called the Sultan's dyery. Good came in to him at every door and he became the owner of slaves, male and female, and amassed store of wealth. None of the other dyers dared say a word to him, but they used to come to him, kissing his hands and excusing themselves to him for the affronts they had done him aforetime and offering themselves to him as journeymen; but he would none of them.

Meanwhile Abousir abode three days, prostrate and unconscious, in the chamber where Aboukir had left him, at the end of which time the doorkeeper of the khan, chancing to look at the chamber-door, observed that it was shut and bethought himself that he had seen and heard nothing of the two companions [for some time]. So he said to himself, 'Belike they have made oft; without paying the rent of the chamber, or perhaps they are dead, or what is to do with them?' And he waited till sunset, when he went up to the chamber-door and heard the barber groaning within. He saw the key in the lock; so he opened the door and entering, found Abousir lying, groaning, and said to him, 'No harm to thee: where is thy friend?' 'By Allah,' answered Abousir, 'I only came to my senses this day and called out; but none answered me. God on thee, O my brother, look for the purse under my head and take five paras from it and buy me something to eat, for I am sore anhungred.'

The porter put out his hand and taking the purse, found it empty and said to the barber, 'The purse is empty; there is nothing in it.' Whereupon Abousir knew that the dyer had taken that which was therein and fled and said to the porter, 'Hast thou not seen my friend?' 'I have not seen him these three days,' answered the porter, 'and indeed methought you had departed, thou and he.' 'Not no,' said Ahousir; 'but he coveted my money and seeing me sick, took it and fled.' Then he fell a-weeping and lamenting, but the porter said to him, 'No harm shall come to thee, and God will requite him his deed.' So saying, he went away and cooked him a mess of broth, whereof he ladled out a platterful and brought it to him; nor did he cease to tend him and maintain him with his own monies for two months' space, at the end of which time he sweated and God made him whole of his sickness. Then he stood up and said to the porter, 'So God the Most High enable me, I will surely requite thee thy kindness to me; but none requiteth save God of His bounty!' Praised be He for thy recovery!' answered the porter. 'I dealt not thus with thee but of desire for the favour of God the Bountiful.'

Then the barber went forth of the khan and walked about the markets of the town, till chance brought him to that wherein was Aboukir's dyery, and he saw the vari-coloured stuffs spread before the shop and the people crowding to look upon them. So he questioned one of the townsmen and said to him, 'What place is this and how comes it that I see the folk crowding together?' And the man answered, saying, 'This is the Sultan's dyery, which he set up for a foreigner, by name Aboukir; and whenever he dyes a [new] piece of stuff we all flock to him and divert ourselves by gazing upon his handiwork, for that we have no dyers in our land who know how to dye these colours; and indeed there befell him with the dyers who are in the city thus and thus.' And he went on to tell him all that had passed between Aboukir and the dyers and how he had complained of them to the sultan and he had taken him by the hand and built him that dyery and given him this and that; brief, he told him all that had passed.

At this the barber rejoiced and said to himself, 'Praised be God who hath prospered him, so that he is become a master of his craft! Indeed, the man is excusable, for of a surety he hath been diverted from thee by his work and hath forgotten thee; but thou didst him kindness and entreatedst him generously, what time he was out of work; so, when he seeth thee, he will rejoice in thee and entreat thee generously, even as thou entreatedst him.' So he made for the door of the dyery and saw Aboukir seated on

a high divan in the doorway, clad in royal apparel and attended by four black and four white slaves all dressed in the richest of clothes. Moreover, he saw the workmen, ten black slaves, standing at work; for, when Aboukir bought them, he taught them the craft of dyeing, and he himself sat amongst his cushions, as he were a grand vizier or a most mighty king, putting his hand to nought, but only saying to the men, 'Do this and do that.'

The barber went up to him and stood before him, doubting not but that, when he saw him, he would rejoice in him and salute him and entreat him with honour and make much of him; but, when eye met eye, the dyer said to him, 'O rascal, how many a time have I bidden thee stand not at the door of this workshop? Hast thou a mind to disgrace me with the folk, knave that thou art?' [And he cried out, saying], 'Seize him!' So the slave. ran at him and laid hold of him; and the dyer said, 'Throw him down.' So they threw him down and Aboukfr rose and taking a stick, dealt him a hundred blows on the back; after which they turned him over and he dealt him other hundred on his belly. Then he said to him, 'Hark ye, scurril knave that thou art! If ever again I see thee standing at the door of this dyery, I will forthwith send thee to the king, and he will commit thee to the master of police, that he may strike off thy head. Begone, may God not bless thee!'

So Abousir [arose and] departed from him, broken-hearted by reason of the beating and humiliation that had betided him; whilst the bystanders said to Aboukir, 'What hath this man done?' Quoth he, 'He is a thief, who steals the people's goods: he hath robbed me of stuffs, how many a time! and I still said in myself, "God forgive him! He is a poor man," and cared not to deal harshly with him; so I used to give the folk the worth of their goods and forbid him gently; but he would not be forbidden; and if he come again, I will send him to the king, who will put him to death and rid the folk of his mischief.' And the bystanders fell to reviling the barber in his absence.

Meanwhile, the latter returned to the khan, where he sat pondering that which Aboukir had done with him, till the pain of the beating subsided, when he went out and walked about the markets of the city. Presently, he bethought him to go to the bath; so he said to one of the townsfolk, 'O my brother, which is the way to the bath?" 'And what manner of thing is the bath?' asked the other. Quoth Abousir, 'It is a place where people wash themselves and do away their defilements, and it is of the best of the good things of the world.' 'Get thee to the sea,' replied the townsman; but the barber replied, 'I want the bath.' Quoth the other, 'We know not what manner of thing is the bath, for we all resort to the sea; even the king, when he would wash, betaketh himself to the sea.'

When Abousir was certified that there was no bath in the city and that the people knew not the bath nor the fashion thereof he betook himself to the king's divan and kissing the earth before him, called down blessings on him and said, 'I am a stranger and a bath-keeper by trade, and I entered thy city and thought to go to the bath; but found not one therein. How cometh a city of this comely fashion to lack a bath, seeing that the bath is of the goodliest of the delights of this world?' Quoth the king, 'What manner of thing is the bath?' So Abousir proceeded to set forth to him the attributes of the bath, saying, 'Thy city will not be complete till there be a bath in it.' 'Welcome to thee!' said the king and clad him in a dress that had not its like and gave him a

horse and two black and two white slaves and four slave-girls. Moreover he appointed him a furnished house and honoured him yet more abundantly than he had honoured the dyer.

Then he sent builders with him and bade them build him a bath in what place soever should please him. So he took them and went with them through the midst of the city, till he saw a place that pleased him. He pointed it out to the builders and they set to work, under his direction, and wrought till they built him a bath that had not its like. Then he made them paint it, and they painted it on rare wise, so that it was a delight to the beholders; after which Abousir went up to the king and told him that they had made an end of building and decorating the bath, adding, 'There lacks nought but the furniture.' The king gave him ten thousand dinars, with which he furnished the bath and ranged the napkins on the cords; and all who passed by the door stared at it and their mind was confounded at its decorations. So the people crowded to this thing, whose like they had never in their lives seen, and stood staring at it and saying, 'What is this thing?' To which Abousir replied, 'This is a bath;' and they marvelled thereat.

Then he heated water and set the bath a-work; and he made a fountain in the [central] basin, which ravished the wit of all who saw it of the people of the city. Moreover he sought of the king ten white slaves not yet come to manhood, and he gave him ten boys like moons: whereupon Abousir proceeded to shampoo them, saying, 'Do thus and thus with the customers,' [till they were perfect in the bathman's craft]. Then he burnt perfumes and sent out a crier to cry aloud in the city, saying, 'O creatures of God, get ye to the bath, for it is called the Sultan's Bath!' So the people came to the bath and Abousir bade the slave-boys wash their bodies. The folk went down into the bath and coming forth, seated themselves on the estrade, whilst the boys shampooed them, even as Abousir had taught them; and they ceased not to enter the bath and do their occasion thereof and go out, without paying, for the space of three days.

Then the barber invited the king, who took horse with his grandees and rode to the bath, where he put oft his clothes and entered; whereupon Abousir came in to him and rubbed his body with the bath-gloves, peeling the dirt from his skin [in rolls] like lamp-wicks and showing them to the king, who rejoiced therein, till his body shone for very smoothness and purity; after which Abousir mingled rose-water with the water of the tank and the king went down therein. When he came forth, his body was refreshed and he felt a lightness and liveliness such as he had never in his life known. Then the barber made him sit on the estrade and the boys proceeded to shampoo him, whilst the censers smoked with the finest aloes-wood.

Then said the king, 'O master, is this the bath?' And Abousir answered, 'Yes.' 'As my head liveth,' quoth the king, 'my city is not become a city indeed but by this bath! But what pay takest thou for each person?' 'That which thou biddest me will I take,' replied Abousir; and the king said, 'Take a thousand dinars for every one who washeth in thy bath.' But Abousir said, 'Pardon, O king of the age! All men are not alike, but there are amongst them rich and poor, and if I take of each a thousand dinars, the bath will stand empty, for the poor man cannot avail to this price.' 'How then wilt thou do for the price?' asked the king. 'I will leave it to the generosity [of the customers],'

answered the barber. 'Each who can afford aught shall pay that which his soul grudgeth not to give, and we will take from every man, after the measure of his condition. So will the folk come to us and he who is rich shall give according to his station and he who is poor shall give what he can afford. On this wise the bath will still be at work and prosper; but a thousand dinars is a king's gift, and not every man can avail thereto.'

The grandees of the kingdom confirmed Abousir's words, saying, 'This is the truth, O king of the age! Thinkest thou that all folk are like unto thee, O glorious king?' 'You say sooth,' answered the king; 'but this man is a stranger and poor and it behoveth us to deal generously with him, for that he hath made in our city this bath, whose like we have never in our lives seen and without which our city were not adorned nor had gotten importance; wherefore, if we guerdon him with increase of pay, it will not be much.' But the grand ees said, 'If thou wilt guerdon him, let it be of thine own monies, and be the king's bounty extended to the poor by means of the low price of the bath, so the folk may bless thee; but, as for the thousand dinars, we are the grandees of thine empire, yet do our souls grudge to pay it; and how then should the poor afford it?' Quoth the king, 'O my grandees, for this time let each of you give him a hundred dinars and a white slave and a black and a slave-girl.' 'It is well,' answered they; 'but after to-day each who enters shall give him only what he can afford, without grudging.' 'So be it,' said the king; and they gave him each as he had said.

Now the number of the nobles who were washed with the king that day was four hundred souls; so that the sum of that which they gave him was forty thousand dinars, besides four hundred black and four hundred white slaves and a like number of slave-girls. Moreover, the king gave him ten thousand dinars, besides ten white slaves and ten black and a like number of slave-girls; whereupon Abousir kissed the earth before him and said, 'O august king, lord of just judgment, what place will suffice me for all these slaves and women?' Quoth the king, 'O lackwit, I bade not my nobles deal thus with thee but that we might gather together unto thee great plenty of wealth; for maybe thou wilt bethink thee of thy country and family and yearn unto them and be minded to return to thy native place; so shalt thou take from our country store of wealth, to maintain thyself withal, what while thou livest in thine own land.' 'O king of the age,' replied Abousir, (may God advance thee!) these many slaves and women are a king's behoof; and hadst thou ordered me ready money, it were more profitable to me than this army; for they must eat and drink and be clothed, and whatever betideth me of wealth, it will not suffice to their support.'

The king laughed and said, 'By Allah, thou sayst sooth! They are indeed a mighty host, and thou mayst not avail unto their maintenance; but wilt thou sell them to me for a hundred dinars each?' Quoth Abousir, 'I sell them to thee at that price.' So the king sent to his treasurer for the money and he brought it and gave Abousir the whole of the price, in full; after which the king restored the slaves to their former owners, saying, 'Let each of you who knoweth his slaves take them; for they are a gift from me to you.' So they obeyed his commandment and took each his own; whilst the barber said to the king, 'God ease thee, O king of the age, even as thou hast eased me of these ghouls, whom none may fill save God!' The king laughed, and gave him reason; then, taking the grandees of his realm, returned to his palace; but Abousir passed the night

in counting his money and laying it up in bags and sealing them; and he had with him twenty black slaves and a like number of white and four slave-girls to serve him.

On the morrow, as soon as it was day, he opened the bath and sent out a crier to make proclamation, saying, 'Whoso entereth the bath and washeth shall give that which he can afford and which his generosity deemeth fit.' Then he seated himself by the chest and customers flocked in upon him, each putting down that which was easy to him, nor was eventide come before the chest was full of the good gifts of God the Most High. Presently the queen desired to go to the bath, and when this came to Abousir's knowledge, he divided the day, on her account, into two parts, appointing the time between day-break and noon to the men and that between noon and sundown to the women. When the queen came, he stationed a female slave behind the pay-chest; for he had taught four slave-girls the service of the bath, so that they were become expert bathwomen. So, when the queen entered, this pleased her and her breast dilated and she laid down a thousand dinars.

On this wise his report was noised abroad in the city, and all who entered the bath he entreated with honour, were they rich or poor, and good came in upon him at every door. Moreover he made acquaintance with the king's officers and got him friends and companions. The king himself used to come to him one day in every week, and the other days of the week were for rich and poor alike; and he was wont to deal courteously with the folk and use them with the utmost of consideration. It chanced that the king's sea-captain came in to him one day in the bath; so Abousir put off his clothes and going in with him, proceeded to shampoo him and entreated him with the utmost courtesy. When he came forth, he made him sherbet and coffee; and when he would have given him somewhat, he swore that he would accept nothing from him. So the captain abode under obligation to him, by reason of his exceeding kindness and courtesy to him, and knew not how to requite him his generous dealing with him.

Meanwhile Aboukir, bearing all the people talking rapturously of the bath and saying, 'Verily, this bath is the Paradise of this world! God willing, O such an one, thou shalt go with us to-morrow to this delectable bath,' said to himself, 'Needs must I go like [the rest of the] folk and see this bath that hath taken their wits.' So he donned his richest clothes and mounting a mule, rode to the bath, attended by four white slaves and four black, walking before and behind him. When he alighted at the door, he smelt the fragrance of burning aloes-wood and saw people going in and out and the benches full of great and small. So he entered the vestibule and saw Abousir, who rose to him and rejoiced in him: but the dyer said to him, 'Is this the fashion of men of honour? I have opened me a dyery and am become master-dyer of the city and acquainted with the king and have risen to fortune and lordship; yet camest thou not to me nor askedst of me nor saidst, "Where is my comrade?" For my part, I sought thee in vain and sent my slaves and Servants to make search for thee in all the inns and other places; but they knew not whither thou hadst gone, nor could any give me news of thee.' Quoth Abousir, 'Did I not come to thee and didst thou not make me out a thief and beat me and disgrace me before the folk?'

At this Aboukir made a show of concern and said, 'What manner of talk is this? Was it thou whom I beat?' 'Yes,' answered Abousir, 'it was I.' Whereupon Aboukir swore to him a thousand oaths that he knew him not and said, 'There was a fellow like

unto thee, who used to come every day and steal the people's stuff, and I took thee for him.' And he went on to feign repentance, beating hand upon hand and saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Indeed, I have sinned against thee; but would that thou hadst made thyself known to me and said, "I am such an one!" Indeed the fault is with thee, for that thou madest not thyself known unto me, more by token that I was distraught for much business.' 'God pardon thee, o my comrade!' replied Abousir. 'This was fore-ordained, and reparation is with God. Enter and put off thy clothes and bathe at thine ease.' 'I conjure thee by Allah, O my brother,' said the dyer, 'forgive me!' And Abousir said, 'God acquit thee of blame and forgive thee! Indeed this thing was decreed to me from all eternity.'

Then said Aboukir, 'Whence gottest thou this lordship?' 'He who prospered thee prospered me,' answered Abousir. 'For I went up to the king and set forth to him the fashion of the bath, and he bade me build one.' And the dyer said, 'Even as thou art an acquaintance of the king, so also am I; and God willing, I will make him love and barr tender thee more than ever, for my sake; for he knows not that thou art my comrade; but I will tell him of this and commend thee to him.' 'There needs no commendation,' answered Abousir; 'for He who inclinetb [men's hearts unto love] is [ever]-present; and indeed the king and all his court love me [already] and have given me this and that.' And he told him the whole story and said to him, 'Put off thy clothes behind the chest and enter the bath, and I will go in with thee and shampoo thee.' So he put off his clothes and Abousir, entering the bath with him, soaped him and shampooed him and busied himself with his service till he came forth, when he brought him the morning meal and sherbets, whilst all the folk marvelled at the honour he did him.

Then Aboukir would have given him somewhat; but he swore that he would take nothing from him and said to him, 'Shame upon thee! Thou art my comrade, and there is no difference between us.' 'By Allah, O my comrade,' said Aboukir, 'this is a fine bath of thine, but there lacks one thing to thy fashion therein.' 'And what is that?' asked Abousir. 'It is the depilatory, to wit, the paste compounded of orpiment and quicklime,' answered the dyer, 'that removes the hair with ease. Do thou prepare it and next time the king comes, present it to him, teaching him how he shall cause the hair fall off by means thereof, and he will love thee with an exceeding love and honour thee.' Quoth Abousir, 'Thou sayst sooth, and if it be the will of God the Most High, I will do this.'

Then Aboukir mounted his mule and riding to the palace, went in to the king and said to him, 'O king of the age, I have a warning to give thee.' 'And what is thy warning?' asked the king. Quoth Aboukir, 'I hear that thou hast built a bath.' 'Yes; answered the king; 'there came to me a stranger and I founded the bath for him, even as I founded the dyery for thee; and indeed it is a magnificent bath and an ornament to my city.' And he went on to set forth to him the virtues of the bath. 'Hast thou entered therein?' asked the dyer. And the king answered, 'Yes.' 'Praised be God,' exclaimed Aboukir, 'who hath preserved thee from the mischief of yonder villain and enemy of the faith, to wit, the bath-keeper!' 'And what of him?' asked the king. 'Know, O king of the age,' replied Aboukir, 'that, if thou enter the bath again, after this day, thou wilt surely perish.' 'How so?' inquired the king; and the dyer answered, 'This bath-keeper is thine enemy and the enemy of the faith, and he induced thee not to set

up this bath but because he designed to poison thee therein. He hath made for thee somewhat which, when thou enterest the bath, he will present to thee, saying, "This is an unguent, which if one apply to his privy parts, it will remove the hair with ease."

Now it is no unguent, but a deadly drug and a violent poison; for the Sultan of the Christians hath promised this filthy fellow to release to him his wife and children, if he will kill thee; for they are captives in the hands of the Sultan in question. I myself was captive with him in their land, but I opened a dyery and dyed for them various colours, so that they inclined the king's heart unto me and he bade me ask a boon of him. I sought of him freedom and he set me free, whereupon I made my way hither, and seeing yonder man in the bath, asked him how he had effected his escape and that of his wife and children. Quoth he, "We ceased not to be in captivity, I and my wife and children, till one day the King of the Christians held a court, at which I was present, amongst a number of other people. Presently, I heard them discourse of the kings and name them, one after another, till they came to the name of the king of this city, whereupon the King of the Christians cried out, 'Alas!' and said, 'None irketh me in the world, but the king of such a city! Whosoever will contrive me his slaughter, I will give him all he asks.' So I went up to him and said, 'If I contrive thee his slaughter, wilt thou set me free, me and my wife and children?' 'Yes,' answered the king, 'and I will give thee [to boot] whatsoever thou shalt desire.

So we agreed upon this and he sent rue in a galleon to this city, where I presented myself to the king and he built me this bath. So now I have nought to do but to slay him and return to the King of the Christians, that I may redeem my wife and children and ask a boon of him." Quoth I, "And how wilt thou go about to kill him?" "By the simplest of all devices," answered he; "for I have compounded him somewhat wherein is poison, so, when he comes to the bath, I shall say to him, 'Take this unguent and anoint thy privy parts therewith, for it will cause the hair to drop off.' So he will take it and anoint himself therewith, and the poison will work in him a day and a night, till it reaches his heart and destroys him; and meanwhile I shall have made off and none will know that it was I slew him." When I heard this,' added Aboukir, 'I feared for thee, being beholden to thee for thy goodness, wherefore I have told thee thereof.'

When the king heard the dyer's story, he was exceeding wroth and said to him, 'Keep this secret.' Then he betook himself to the bath, that he might dispel doubt with assurance; and when he entered, Abousir put off his clothes and betaking himself [as of wont] to the service of the king, proceeded to shampoo him; after which he said to him, 'O king of the age, I have made an unguent for removing the hair from the privy parts.' 'Bring it to me,' said the king. So the barber brought it to him and the king, finding it nauseous of smell, was assured that it was poison; wherefore he was incensed and called out to his guards, saying, 'Seize him!' So they seized him and the king donned his clothes and returned to his palace, boiling with rage, whilst none knew the cause of his anger; for, of the excess of his wrath, he had acquainted no one therewith and none dared ask him. Then he repaired to the audience-chamber and causing Abousir to be brought before him, with his hands bound behind his back, sent for his sea-captain and said to him, 'Take this villain and tie him in a sack with two quintals of quicklime. Then lay him in a boat and row out with him in front of my palace, where thou wilt see me sitting at the lattice. Do thou say to me, "Shall I cast him in?"

and if I answer, "Cast," throw him into the sea, so the lime may be slaked on him, to the intent that he shall die drowned and burnt.'

'I hear and obey,' answered the captain and taking Abousir, carried him to an island, that lay over against the king's palace, where he said to him, 'Harkye, I once visited thy bath and thou entreatedst me with honour and accomplishedst all my wants and I had great pleasure of thee: moreover, thou sworest that thou wouldst take no pay of me, and I love thee with a great love. So tell me how the case stands between thee and the king and what abomination thou hast done with him that he is wroth with thee and hath commanded me that thou shouldst die this horrid death.' 'By Allah, O my brother,' answered Abousir, 'I have done nothing, nor do I know of any crime I have committed against him that merits this!' 'Verily,' rejoined the captain, 'thou wast in high favour with the king, such as none ever enjoyed before thee, and all who are prosperous are envied. Belike some one envied thee thy good fortune and missaid of thee to the king, by reason whereof he is become thus enraged against thee: but be of good cheer; no harm shall befall thee: for, even as thou entreatedst me generously, without knowledge of me, so now I will deliver thee. But, if I release thee, thou must abide with me in this island till some galleon set sail from the city to thy native land, when I will send thee thither therein.'

Abousir kissed his hand and thanked him for this; after which the captain fetched the lime and laid it in a sack, together with a great stone, the bigness of a man, saying, 'I put my trust in God.' Then he gave the barber a net, saying, 'Cast this net into the sea, so haply thou mayst take somewhat of fish. For I am bounden to furnish the king's kitchen with fish every day; but to-day I have been distracted from fishing by this calamity that hath befallen thee, and I fear lest the cook's servants come to me in quest of fish and find none. So, if thou take aught, they will find it and thou wilt veil my face, whilst I go and play off my device in front of the palace and feign to cast thee into the sea.' 'Go,' answered Abousir; 'and God be thy helper. I will fish the while.'

So the captain laid the sack in the boat and rowed till he came under the palace, where he saw the king seated at the lattice and said to him, 'O king of the age, shall I Cast him in?' 'Cast,' answered the king and signed to him with his hand, whereupon something flashed and fell into the sea. Now this that had fallen into the sea was the king's seal-ring, which was enchanted on such wise that, when the king was wroth with any one and was minded to slay him, he had but to sign to him with his right hand, whereon was the ring, and there issued lightning therefrom, which smote the offender, and thereupon his head fell from his shoulders. It was this ring that gave him authority over the troops, nor did he overcome the mighty save by means thereof; so, when it dropped from his finger, he concealed the matter and kept silence, for that he dared not say, 'My ring is fallen into the sea,' for fear of the troops, lest they should rise against him and slay him.

Meanwhile, Abousir cast the net into the sea and drew it up full of fish. Then he cast it again and it came up full of fish; nor did he cease to cast it and pull it up full, till there was a great heap of fish before him. So he said to himself, 'By Allah, I have not eaten fish this long while!' And chose himself a large fat fish, saying, 'When the captain comes back, I will bid him fry it for me, so I may make the morning meal of it.' Then he cut its throat with a knife he had with him; but the knife stuck in its gills

and there he saw the king's seal-ring; for the fish had swallowed it and destiny had driven it to the island, where it had fallen into the net. So he took the ring and put it on his little finger, not knowing its properties. Presently, up came two of the cook's underlings in quest of fish and seeing Abousir, said to him, 'O man, whither is the captain gone?' 'I know not,' answered he and signed to them with his right hand; when, behold, their heads dropped from their shoulders.

At this Abousir was amazed and said, 'I wonder who slew them!' And their case was grievous to him and he was still musing upon it, when the captain returned and seeing the two men lying dead and the ring on Abousir's finger, said to him, 'O my brother, move not thy hand whereon is the ring; else thou wilt slay me.' Abousir wondered at this speech and the captain coming up to him, said, 'Who slew these two men?' 'By Allah, O my brother,' answered the barber, 'I know not!' 'Thou sayst sooth,' rejoined the captain; 'but tell me whence hadst thou that ring?' Quoth Abousir, 'I found it in this fish's gills.' ' True,' said the captain, 'for I saw it fall flashing from the king's palace and disappear in the sea, what time he signed toward [the sack in which he deemed] thee [to be], saying, "Cast him in." So I cast the sack into the water, and it was then that the ring slipped from his finger and fell into the sea, where the fish swallowed it, and God drove it to thee, so that thou tookest it, for this ring was thy lot; but knowest thou its property?' 'I knew not that it had any properties,' answered Abousir, and the captain said, 'Know, then, that the king's troops obey him not save for fear of this ring, for it is enchanted, and when he was wroth with any one and had a mind to put him to death, he would sign at him therewith and his head would drop from his shoulders; for there issued a lightning from the ring and its ray smote the object of his wrath, who died forthright.'

At this, Abousir rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said to the captain, 'Carry me back to the city.' 'That will I,' answered he, 'now that I no longer fear for thee from the king; for, wert thou to sign at him with thy hand, purposing to kill him, his head would fall down before thee; and if thou be minded to slay him and all his troops, thou mayst do so without hindrance.' So saying, he embarked with him in the boat and rowed him back to the city, where Abousir landed and going up to the palace, entered the council-chamber, where he found the king seated in the midst of his officers, sore concerned by reason of the ring and daring not tell any of its loss.

When he saw Abousir, he said to him, 'Did we not cast thee into the sea? How hast thou made shift to come forth therefrom?' 'O king of the age,' answered Abousir, 'whenas thou badst throw me into the sea, thy captain carried me to an island and questioned me of the cause of thy wrath against me, saying, "What hast thou done with the king, that he should decree thy death?" "By Allah," answered I, "I know not that I have offended against him in aught!" Quoth he, "Thou wast in high favour with the king, and most like some one envied thee and slandered thee to him, so that he is become incensed against thee. But, when I visited thee in thy bath, thou entreatedst me hospitably, and I will requite thee thy hospitality by setting thee free and sending thee back to thine own country." Then he laid a great stone in the sack and cast it into the sea in my stead; but, when thou signedst to him to throw me in, thy seal-ring dropped from thy finger into the sea, and a fish swallowed it.

Now I was on the island, fishing, and this fish came up [in the net] with others; whereupon I took it, thinking to broil it; but, when I opened its maw, I found the ring therein; so I took it and put it on my finger. Presently, up came two of the servants of the kitchen, in quest of fish, and I signed to them with my hand, knowing not the property of the ring, and their heads fell off. Then the captain came back and seeing the ring on my finger, acquainted me with its enchantment; and behold, I have brought it back to thee, for that thou dealtest bounteously by me and entreatedst me with the utmost generosity, nor is that which thou hast done me of kindness lost upon me. Here is thy ring; take it; and if I have done with thee aught deserving of death, tell me my crime and slay me and thou shalt be quit of my blood.' So saying, he pulled the ring from his finger and gave it to the king, who put it on and his life returned to him.

Then he rose to his feet and embracing Abousir, said to him, 'O man, thou art indeed of the flower of the noble! Bear me not malice, but forgive me the wrong I have done thee. Had any but thou come by this ring, he had never restored it to me.' 'O king of the age,' answered Abousir, 'if thou wouldst have me forgive thee, tell me what was my offence that drew down thine anger upon me, so that thou commandedst to put me to death.' 'By Allah,' rejoined the king, 'it is clear to me that thou art altogether guiltless of offence, since thou hast done this good deed; only the dyer denounced thee to me;' and he told him all that Aboukir had said. 'By Allah, O king of the age,' replied Abousir, 'I know not the King of the Christians and have never journeyed to their country, nor did it ever enter my thought to kill thee; but this dyer was my comrade and neighbour in the city of Alexandria, and life was straitened upon us there; wherefore we departed thence, to seek our fortunes, by reason of the straitness of our livelihood there, after we had recited the first chapter of the Koran together [in token of our agreement] that he who got work should feed him who lacked thereof; and there befell me with him such and such things.'

Then he went on to relate to the king all that had befallen him with the dyer; how he had robbed him and left him alone and sick in the khan and how the porter had fed him of his own monies till God recovered him of his sickness, when he went forth and walked about the city with his shaving gear, as of his wont, till he espied a dyery, about which the folk were crowding; so he looked at the door and seeing Aboukir seated on a bench there, went in to salute him, whereupon he accused him of being a thief and beat him grievously; brief, he told him his whole story, from first to last, and added, 'O king of the age, it was he who counselled me to make the depilatory and present it to thee, saying, "The bath is perfect in all things but that it lacketh this;" and know, O king, that this unguent is harmless and we use it in our country, where it is one of the requisites of the bath; but I had forgotten it: so, when he visited the bath, I entreated him with honour and he reminded me thereof. But do thou send after the porter of such a khan and the workmen of the dyery and question them all of that which I have told thee.'

So the king sent for them and questioned them and they acquainted him with the truth of the matter. Then he sent to fetch the dyer, bidding bring him barefoot and bareheaded, with his hands bound behind him. Now he was sitting in his house, rejoicing in Abousir's [supposed] death, when, before he could be ware, the king's guards rushed in upon him and cuffed him on the nape of the neck; after which they

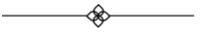
bound him and carried him into the royal presence, where he saw Abousir seated by the king's side and the porter and workmen of the dyery standing before him. Quoth the porter to him, 'Is not this thy comrade whom thou robbedst of his money and leftest with me sick in the khan?' And the workmen said to him, 'Is not this he whom thou badest us seize and beat?'

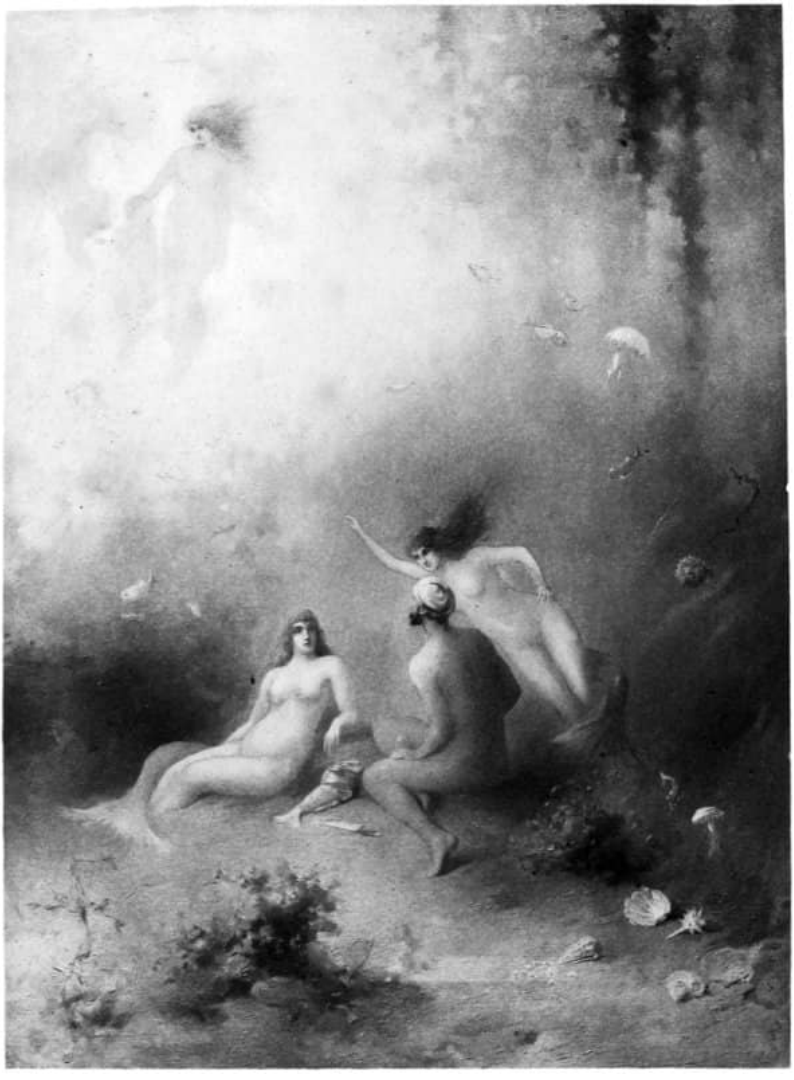
Therewith Aboukir's baseness was made manifest to the king and he was certified that he merited a punishment yet sorer than that which Munker and Neckir deal [to the wicked after death]. So he upbraided him and said to his guards, 'Take him and parade him about the city and the markets; then lay him in a sack and cast him into the sea.' Whereupon quoth Abousir, 'O king of the age, accept my intercession for him; for I pardon him all he hath done with me.' 'If thou pardon him his offences against thee,' answered the king, 'I cannot pardon him his offences against me.' And he cried out, saying, 'Take him.' So they took him and paraded him about the city, after which they laid him in a sack with quicklime and cast him into the sea, and he died, drowned and burnt.

Then said the king to the barber, 'O Abousir, ask of me what thou wilt and it shall be given thee.' And he answered, saying, 'I ask of thee to send me back to my own country, for I care no longer to abide here.' Then the king offered to make him his vizier; but he consented not; so he gave him great store of gifts, over and above that which he had bestowed on him aforetime; and amongst the rest a galleon laden with goods; and the crew of this galleon were slaves; so he gave him these also. Then he took leave of the king and set sail; nor did he cast anchor till he reached Alexandria and made fast to the shore there. Then they landed and one of his servants, seeing a sack on the beach, said to Abousir, 'O my lord, there is a great heavy sack on the sea-shore, with the mouth tied up and I know not what therein.' So Abousir came up and opening the sack, found therein the dead body of Aboukir, which the sea had borne thither. He took it forth and burying it near Alexandria, built over the grave a place of visitation and endowed it for pious uses, writing over the door the following verses:

A man is by his actions known among his fellows aye:
The actions of the freeborn man his generous birth betray.
Backbite not any, lest thyself backbitten be in tarn.
Whososaith aught, his fellow-men the like of him will say.
Abstain from lewd and ribald words: I rede thee speak them not
At any time, or if it be in earnest or in play.
The dog, good manners if he use, Is suffered in the house;
The lion, of his ignorance, is fettered night and day.
The carrion of the waste floats up upon the topmost sea,
Whilst on the lowest of its sands the pearls neglected stay.
But for its feather-headedness and levity of wit,
The sparrow never with the hawk to jostle would essay.
Lo, on the pages of the air is written, in the sky,
'Whoso doth good, the like thereof his actions shall repay.'
Beware of gathering sugar, then, from out the colocynth:
Still in the tasting will the thing its origin bewray.

After this Abousir abode awhile, till God took him to Himself and they buried him hard by the tomb of his comrade Aboukir; wherefore the place was called Aboukir and Abousir; but it is now known as Aboukir [only]. This, then, is that which hath reached us of their history, and glory be to Him who endureth for ever and by whose will the days and nights succeed each other!





Abdallah the Fisherman and Abdallah the Merman.

THERE was once a fisherman named Abdallah, who had a wife and nine children and was very poor, owning nothing but his net. Every day he used to go to the sea to fish, and if he caught little, he sold it and spent the price on his children, after the measure of that which God vouchsafed him of provision; but, if he caught much, he would cook a good mess of meat and buy fruit and spend without stint till nothing was left him, saying in himself, 'To-morrow's provision will come to-morrow.' Presently, his wife gave birth to another child, making ten in all, and it chanced that day that he had nothing at all; so she said to him, 'O my master, see [and get] me wherewithal I may sustain myself.' Quoth he, 'Under favour of God the Most High, I am going to-day to the sea, to fish in the name of this new-born child, that we may see its luck.' And she answered, 'Put thy trust in God.'

So he took his net and went down to the sea-shore, where he cast it in the name of the little child, saying, 'O my God, make his living easy, not hard, and abundant, not scant!' Then he waited awhile and drew in the net, which came up full of rubbish and sand and pebbles and weeds, and he found therein no fish, neither much not little. He cast it again and waited, then drew it in, but found no fish in it, and threw it a third and a fourth and a fifth time, with no better success. So he removed to another place, beseeching God the Most High to grant him his daily bread, and thus he did till the end of the day, but caught not so much as a sprat; whereat he fell a-marvelling in himself and said, 'Hath God then created this new-born child, without [an appointed] provision? This may never be; He who slits the corners of the mouth hath engaged for its provision, for He is the Bountiful, the Provider!' So saying, he shouldered his net and turned homeward, broken-spirited and heavy at heart for his family, for that he had left them without food, more by token that his wife was in the straw.

As he trudged along, saying in himself, 'How shall I do and what shall I say to the children to-night?' he came to a baker's oven and saw a crowd about it; for it was a time of dearth and food was scant with the folk; so they were proffering the baker money, but he paid no heed to any of them, by reason of the much crowd. The fisherman stood looking and snuffing the smell of the hot bread, and indeed his soul longed for it, by reason of his hunger, -till the baker caught sight of him and cried out to him, saying, 'Come hither, O fisherman!' So he went up to him, and the baker said to him, 'Dost thou want bread?' But he was silent. 'Speak,' said the baker, 'and be not ashamed, for God is bountiful. If thou have no money, I will give thee [bread] and have patience with thee till good [fortune] betide thee.' 'By Allah, O master,' replied Abdallah, 'I have indeed no money! But give me bread enough for my family, and I will leave thee this net in pawn till the morrow.' 'Nay, good fellow,' rejoined the baker, 'this net is [as it were] thy shop and the means of thy livelihood; so, if thou pawn it, wherewithal wilt thou fish? Tell me, how much [bread] will suffice thee?' 'Ten pares' worth,' replied the fisherman.

So he gave him ten pares' worth of bread and ten pares in money, saying, 'Take these ten pares and cook thyself a mess of meat therewith; so wilt thou owe me twenty pares, for which bring me fish to-morrow; but, if thou catch nothing again, come and

take thy bread and thy ten pares, and I will have patience with thee till better luck betide thee, when thou shalt bring me fish for all thou owest me.' 'May God the Most High reward thee' said the fisherman, 'and requite thee for me with all good!' Then he took the bread and the money and went away, glad at heart, and buying what he could [of meat and vegetables], returned to his wife, whom he found sitting up, soothing the children, who were weeping for hunger, and saying to them, 'Your father will be here with what ye may eat.' So he set the bread before them and they ate, whilst he told his wife what had befallen him, and she said, 'God is bountiful.'

On the morrow, he shouldered his net and went forth of his house, saying, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me this day what shall whiten my face with the baker!' When he came to the sea-shore, he proceeded to cast his net and pull it in; but there came up no fish therein; and he toiled thus till ended day and caught nothing. Then he set out homeward, in sore concern, and the way to his house lay past the baker's shop; so he said in himself, 'How shall I go home? But I will hasten past that the baker may not see me.' When he reached the shop, he saw a crowd about it and quickened his pace, being ashamed to face the baker; but the latter raised his eyes to him and cried out to him, saying, 'Ho, fisherman! Come and take thy bread and spending-money. Meseems thou forgettest.' 'By Allah,' answered Abdallah, 'I had not forgotten; but I was ashamed to face thee, because I have caught no fish to-day.' 'Be not ashamed,' answered the baker. 'Said I not to thee, "At thy leisure; till good hap betide thee?"'

Then he gave him the bread and the ten pares and he returned and told his wife, who said, 'God is bountiful. If it please the Most High, good luck shall yet betide thee and thou shalt give the baker his due.' On this wise he did forty days, betaking himself daily to the sea, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, and returning [at nightfall], without fish; and still he took bread and spending-money of the baker, who never named the fish to him nor neglected him nor kept him waiting, like the folk, but gave him the bread and the ten pares [forthright]. Whenever the fisherman said to him, 'O my brother, reckon with me,' he would say, 'Go thy ways; this is no time for reckoning. [Wait] till good luck betide thee, and then I will reckon with thee.' And the fisherman would go away, blessing and thanking him.

On the one-and-fortieth day, he said to his wife, 'I have a mind to tear up the net and be quit of this life.' 'Why wilt thou do this?' asked she. And he said, 'Meseems there is an end of my getting my living from the sea. How long shall this last? By Allah, I am consumed with shame before the baker, and I will go no more to the sea, so I may not pass by his shop, for I have no other way home; and every time I pass, he calls me and gives me the bread and the ten pares. How much longer shall I run in debt to him?' 'Praised be God the Most High,' replied his wife, 'who hath inclined his heart to thee, so that he giveth thee our daily bread! What dislikest thou in this?' Quoth he, 'I owe him now a great sum of money, and he will without fail demand his due.' 'Hath he vexed thee with words?' asked his wife. 'Nay,' answered Abdallah; 'on the contrary, he still refuses to reckon with me, saying, "[Wait] till good luck betide thee."' And his wife said, 'If he press thee, say to him, "[Wait] till there come the good luck for which we hope, thou and I."' 'And when will the good luck come that we hope

for?' asked the fisherman. 'God is bountiful,' answered she; and he said, 'Thou sayst sooth.'

Then he shouldered his net and went down to the sea-side, saying, 'O Lord, provide Thou me, though but with one fish, that I may give it to the baker!' And he cast his net into the sea and pulling it in, found it heavy; so he tugged at it till, after sore travail, he got it ashore and found in it a dead ass, swollen and stinking; whereat his soul sickened and he freed it from the net, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, I can no more! I say to yonder woman, "There is no more provision for me in the sea; let me leave this craft." And she still answers me, "God is bountiful; good will betide thee." Is this dead ass the good of which she speaks?' And he was sore chagrined.

Then he removed to another place, so he might be quit of the stench of the dead ass, and cast his net there. He waited awhile, then drew it in and found it heavy; whereupon quoth he, 'Good; we are hauling up all the dead asses in the sea and ridding it of its rubbish.' However he gave not over tugging at the net, till the blood streamed from the palms of his hands, and when he got it ashore, he saw a man in it and took him for one of the Afrits of the lord Solomon, whom he was wont to imprison in vessels of brass and cast into the sea, supposing that the vessel had burst for length of years and that the Atrit had come forth and fallen into the net; wherefore he fled from him, crying out and saying, 'Mercy, mercy, O Afrit of Solomon!' But the creature called out to him from within the net and said, 'Come hither, O fisherman, and flee not from me; for I am a human being like thyself Release me, so thou mayst get a recompense for me [of God].'

So the fisherman took heart and coming up to him, said to him, 'Art thou not an Afrit of the Jinn?' 'Nay,' replied the other, 'I am a mortal and a believer in God and His Apostle.' 'Who threw thee into the sea?' asked the fisherman; and he answered, 'I am of the children of the sea and was going about therein, when thou castest the net over me. We are people who obey God's commandments and show loving-kindness unto the creatures of the Most High, and but that I fear and dread to be of the disobedient, I had torn thy net; but I accept that which God hath decreed unto me; wherefore thou art become my owner and I thy captive. Wilt thou then set me free for the love of God the Most High and make a covenant with me and become my friend? I will come to thee every day in this place, and do thou come to me and bring me a gift of the fruits of the land. For with you are grapes and figs and melons and peaches and pomegranates and what not else, and all thou bringest me will be acceptable unto me. Moreover, with us are coral and pearls and chrysolites and emeralds and rubies and other precious stones, and I will fill thee the basket, wherein thou bringest me the fruit, with precious stones of the jewels of the sea. What sayst thou to this, O my brother?'

Quoth the fisherman, 'Be the first chapter of the Koran between thee and me upon this.' So they recited the Fatiheh, [in token of their agreement], and the fisherman loosed the merman from the net and said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Abdallah of the sea,' answered he; 'and if thou come hither and see me not, do thou call out and say, "Where art thou, O Abdallah, O merman?" And I will be with thee presently. But thou, what is thy name?' 'My name also is Abdallah,' answered the fisherman. Quoth the other, 'Thou art Abdallah of the land and I am Abdallah of the

sea; but abide here till I go and fetch thee a present.' And the fisherman said, 'I hear and obey.'

Then the merman went down into the sea [and disappeared]; whereupon the fisherman repented him of having released him and said in himself, 'How know I that he will come back to me? Indeed, he beguiled me, so that I released him, and now he will laugh at me. Had I kept him, I might have made a show of him for the diversion of the people of the city and taken money from all the folk and entered with him the houses of the great.' And he repented him of having let him go and said, 'Thou hast let thy prey go from thy hand.' But, as he was thus bemoaning his credulity, behold, the merman returned to him, with his hands full of pearls and coral and emeralds and rubies and other jewels, and said to him, 'Take these, O my brother, and excuse me, for I had no basket that I might fill it for thee.'

The fisherman rejoiced and took the jewels from the merman, who said to him, 'Come hither every day, before sunrise,' and taking leave of him, went down into the sea; whilst the other returned to the city, rejoicing, and stayed not till he came to the baker's shop and said to him, 'O my brother, good luck is come to us [at last]; so do thou reckon with me.' 'There needs no reckoning,' answered the baker. 'If thou have aught, give it me; and if not, take thy bread and spending-money and begone, against good betide thee.' 'O my friend,' rejoined the fisherman, 'indeed good hath betided me of God's bounty, and I owe thee much money; but take this.' So saying, he took up, at a handful, half of the pearls and coral and rubies and other jewels he had with him, and gave them to the baker saying, 'Give me some ready money to spend this day, till I sell these jewels.'

So the baker gave him all the money he had by him and all the bread in his basket and rejoiced in the jewels he had given him, saying, 'I am thy slave and thy servant.' Then he set all the bread on his head and following the fisherman home, gave it to his wife and children, after which he repaired to the market and fetched meat and vegetables and all kinds of fruit. Moreover, he left his shop and abode with Abdallah all that day, busying himself in his service and doing all his occasions. 'O my brother,' said the fisherman, 'thou weariest thyself.' 'This is my duty,' answered the baker; 'for I am become thy servant and thou hast overwhelmed me with thy bounties.' 'Not so,' rejoined the fisherman; 'it is thou who wast my benefactor in the days of dearth and straitness.' And the baker passed the night in feasting with him and became a faithful friend to him. Then the fisherman told his wife what had befallen him with the merman, whereat she rejoiced and said, 'keep thy secret, lest the magistrates come down upon thee.' But he said, 'Though I keep my secret from all the folk, yet will I not hide it from the baker.'

On the morrow, he rose before the sun and shouldering a basket, which he had filled overnight with all manner fruits, repaired to the sea-shore, where he set down the basket and called out, saying, 'Where art thou, O Abdallah, O merman?' And he answered, saying, 'Here am I, at thy service;' and came forth to him. The fisherman gave him the fruit and he took it and plunging into the sea with it, was absent awhile. after which he came up, with the basket full of all kinds of precious stones and jewels. The fisherman set it on his head and went away; and when he came to the baker's shop, the latter said to him, 'O my lord, I have baked thee forty brioches and have sent them

to thy house; and now I will bake wastel-bread, and as soon as it is done, I will bring it to thy house and go and fetch thee meat and vegetables.'

Abdallah gave him three handsful of jewels out of the basket and going home, set it down there. Then he took a jewel of price of each sort and going to the jewel-bazaar, stopped at the Syndic's shop and said to him, 'Buy these jewels of me.' 'Show them to me,' said the Syndic. So he showed them to him and the jeweller said, 'Hast thou other than these?' 'Yes,' answered Abdallah, 'I have a basketful at home.' 'And where is thy house?' asked the Syndic. 'In such a quarter,' replied the fisherman; whereupon the Syndic took the jewels from him and said to his servants, 'Lay hold of him, for he is the thief who stole the queen's jewels.' And he bade beat him. So they beat him and bound his hands behind him; after which the Syndic and all the people of the jewel-market arose and set out [to carry him to the king], saying, 'We have gotten the thief.' Quoth one, 'None robbed such an one but this knave,' and another, 'It was none but he stole all that was in such an one's house;' and some said this and some that.

But he was silent and spoke not a word nor answered any of them, till they brought him before the king, to whom said the Syndic, 'O king of the age, when the queen's necklace was stolen, thou sentest to acquaint us therewith, requiring of us the discovery of the culprit; wherefore I strove beyond the rest of the folk and have taken the thief for thee. Here he is before thee, and these jewels we have recovered from him.' Thereupon the king said to the eunuch, 'Carry these jewels to the queen and say to her, "Are these thy jewels that thou hast lost?"' So the eunuch carried the jewels to the queen who marvelled at them and sent to the king to say, 'I have found my necklace in my own place and these jewels are not my property; nay, they are finer than those of my necklace. Wherefore oppress thou not the man; but, if he will sell them, buy them of him for thy daughter Umm es-Suwood, that we may string them on a necklace for her.'

When the eunuch returned and told the king what the queen said, he cursed the Syndic of the jewellers and his company with the curse of Aad and Themoud,' and they said to him, 'O king of the age, we knew this man for a poor fisherman and deemed these jewels too much for him [to come by honestly], so made sure that he had stolen them.' 'Wretches that ye are!' cried the king. 'Do ye begrudge a true-believer good fortune? Why did ye not question him? Peradventure God the Most High hath vouchsafed him these things from a source on which he did not reckon. Why did ye make him out a thief and dishonour him amongst the folk? Begone, and may God not bless you!'

So they went out in affright and the king said to Abdallah, 'O man, (may God bless thee in that He hath bestowed on thee!) no harm shall befall thee; but tell me truly, whence gottest thou these jewels; for I am a king and have not the like of them.' 'O king of the age,' answered the fisherman, 'I have a basketful of them at home.' And he told him of his friendship with the merman, adding, 'We have made a covenant together that I shall bring him every day a basketful of fruit and that he shall fill me the basket with these jewels.' 'O man,' said the king, 'this is thy lot; but wealth hath need of station.' I will protect thee for the once against men's usurpations; but it may be I shall be deposed or die and another be made king in my stead, and he shall put thee to death, because of his love of the things of this world and his covetousness.

Wherefore I am minded to marry thee to my daughter and make thee my vizier and bequeath thee the kingdom after me, so none may oppress thee after my death.'

Then said he to his officers, 'Carry this man to the bath.' So they carried him to the bath and washed his body and clad him in royal apparel, after which they brought him back to the king, and he made him his vizier and sent to his house couriers and the soldiers of his guard and all the wives of the notables, who clad his children in royal apparel and mounting the former in a horse-litter, with the little child in her lap, carried her to the palace, whilst the guards and couriers and Cadis walked before her. Moreover, they brought her elder children in to the king, who made much of them, taking them in his lap and seating them by his side; for they were nine male children and the king had no [male] offspring, nor had he been blessed with any child, save this one daughter, Umm es-Suwood. Meanwhile the queen entreated Abdallah's wife with honour and bestowed favours on her and made her her vizieress. Then the king commanded to draw up the contract of marriage between his daughter and the fisherman, who assigned to her, as her dower, all the precious stones and jewels in his possession, and they opened the chapter of festivity. Moreover, the king made proclamation, commanding to decorate the city, in honour of his daughter's wedding, and Abdallah went in to the princess and did away her maiden head.

Next morning, the king looked out of window and saw Abdallah carrying on his head a basket full of fruit. So he said to him, 'What hast thou there, O my son-in-law, and whither goest thou?' 'I go to my friend Abdallah the merman,' answered the fisherman; and the king said, 'O my son-in-law, this is no time to go to thy friend.' Quoth Abdallah, 'Indeed, I fear to break tryst with him, lest he reckon me a liar and say, "The things of the world have distracted thee from me."' 'True,' rejoined the king. 'Go to thy friend and God help thee!' So he passed through the city on his way to the sea-shore, and as he went, he heard those who knew him say, 'There goes the king's son-in-law to exchange fruit for jewels;' whilst those who knew him not said, 'Harkye, how much a pound? Come, sell to me.' And he answered, saying, 'Wait till I come back to thee,' for that he would not vex any.

Then he fared on till he came to the sea-shore and foregathered with his friend the merman, to whom he delivered the fruit, receiving jewels in return. As he passed by the shop of the baker, on his return, he saw it closed; and thus he did ten days, during which time the shop abode shut and he saw nothing of the baker. So he said in himself, 'This is a strange thing! I wonder what is come of the baker!' Then he enquired of his neighbour, saying, 'O my brother, where is thy neighbour the baker and what hath God done with him?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'he is sick and cometh not forth of his house.' 'Where is his house?' asked Abdallah; and the other replied, 'In such a quarter.'

So he went thither and enquired of him; but, when he knocked at the door, the baker looked out of window and seeing his friend the fisherman, with a full basket on his head, came down and opened the door to him. Abdallah entered and throwing himself on the baker, embraced him and wept, saying, 'How dost thou, O my friend? Every day, I pass by thy shop and see it closed; so I asked thy neighbour, who told me that thou wast sick; and I enquired for thy house, that I might see thee.' 'God requite thee for me with all good!' answered the baker. 'Nothing ails me; but it was told me

that the king had taken thee, for that certain of the folk had lied against thee and accused thee of being a thief; wherefore I feared and shut my shop and hid myself' 'It is well,' said Abdallah and told him all that had befallen him with the king and the Syndic of the jewellers, adding, 'Moreover, the king hath given me his daughter to wife and made me his vizier: so do thou take what is in this basket to thy share and fear nothing.'

Then he left him, after having done away his fear from him, and returned with the empty basket to the king, who said to him, 'O my son-in-law, it would seem thou hast not foregathered with thy friend the merman to-day.' 'I went to him,' replied Abdallah; 'but that which I got of him I gave to my friend the baker, to whom I owe kindness.' 'Who is this baker?' asked the king; and the fisherman answered, 'He is a benevolent man, who did with me thus and thus in the days of my poverty and never neglected me a single day nor vexed my spirit.' Quoth the king, 'What is his name?' ' His name is Abdallah the baker,' replied the fisherman; 'and my name is Abdallah of the land and that of my friend the merman Abdallah of the sea.' 'And my name, also, is Abdallah,' rejoined the king; and the servants of God are all brethren. So send and fetch thy friend the baker that I may make him my vizier of the left.'

So he sent for the baker and the king invested him with the vizier's habit and made him vizier of the left, making Abdallah of the land his vizier of the right. On this wise the fisherman abode a whole year, every day carrying the merman the basket full of fruit and receiving it back, full of jewels; and when fruit failed from the gardens, he carried him raisins and almonds and hazel-nuts and walnuts and figs and so forth; and all that he brought him the merman accepted and returned him the basket full of jewels, as of wont.

It chanced one day that he carried him the basket, full of dry fruits, according to custom, and his friend took them from him. Then they sat down to converse, the fisherman on the beach and the merman in the water, near the shore, and conversed; and the talk went round between them, till it fell upon the subject of tombs; whereupon quoth the merman, 'O my brother, they say that the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve!) is buried with you on the land. Knowest thou his tomb?' 'Yes,' answered Abdallah. 'It lies in a city called Yethrib.' 'And do the people of the land visit it?' asked the merman. 'Yes,' replied the fisherman, and the other said, 'I give you joy, O people of the land, of visiting [the tomb of] that noble and compassionate prophet, which whoso visits merits his intercession! Hast thou visited it, O my brother?' 'No,' answered the fisherman, 'for I was poor and had not what to spend by the way, nor have I been at my ease but since I knew thee and thou bestowedst on me this good fortune. But it behoves me to visit it, after I have made the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God, and nought withholds me therefrom but my love for thee, for I cannot leave thee for one day.'

'And dost thou set the love of me,' rejoined the merman, 'before the visitation of the tomb of Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve!), who shall intercede for thee on the day of appearance before God and shall save thee from the fire and through whose intercession thou shalt enter Paradise? And dost thou, for the love of the world, leave to visit the tomb of thy Prophet Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve?' 'No, by Allah,' replied Abdallah. 'I set the visitation of the Prophet's tomb above all

else, and I crave thy leave to visit it this year.' 'I grant thee leave,' answered the merman; 'but I have a trust to give thee; so come thou with me into the sea, that I may carry thee to my city and my house and entertain thee there and give thee a deposit; and when thou standest by the Prophet's tomb, do thou lay it thereon, saying, "O apostle of God, Ahdallah the merman salutes thee and sends thee this present, imploring thine intercession to save him from the fire."' 'O my brother,' said the fisherman, 'thou wast created in the water and it is thine abiding-place and doth thee no hurt; but, if thou shouldst come forth to the land, would any harm betide thee?' ' Yes,' answered the merman; 'my body would dry up and the breezes of the land would blow upon me and I should die.' 'And I, in like manner,' rejoined the fisherman, 'was created on the land and it is my abiding-place; but, if I went down into the sea, the water would enter my belly and choke me and I should die.' 'Have no fear for that, replied the other; 'for I will bring thee an ointment, wherewith when thou hast anointed thy body, the water will do thee no hurt, though thou shouldst pass the rest of thy life going about in the sea; and thou shalt lie down and rise up in the sea and nought shall harm thee.' 'If the case be so,' said the fisherman, 'well and good; but bring me the ointment, so I may make proof of it.' 'So be it,' answered the merman and taking the basket, disappeared in the sea.

After awhile, he returned with an ointment, as it were the fat of oxen, yellow as gold and sweet of savour. 'What is this, O my brother?' asked the fisherman. 'It is the liver-fat of a kind of fish called the dendan,' answered the merman, 'which is the biggest of all fish and the fiercest of our foes. Its bulk is greater than that of any beast of the land, and were it to meet a camel or an elephant, it would swallow it at one mouthful.' 'O my brother,' asked Abdallah, 'what eateth this baleful [beast]?' 'It eateth of the beasts of the sea,' replied the merman. 'Hast thou not heard the byword, "Like the fishes of the sea: the strong eateth the weak?"'

'True,' answered the fisherman; 'but have you many of these dendans in the sea?' And the other said, 'Yes, there be many of them with us. None can tell their tale save God the Most High.' Quoth Abdallah, 'Verily, I fear lest, if I go down with thee into the sea, one of these beasts fall in with me and devour me.' 'Have no fear,' replied the merman. 'When it sees thee, it will know thee for a son of Adam and will fear thee and flee. It feareth none in the sea as it feareth a son of Adam; for that, if it eat him, it dieth forthright, because his flesh is a deadly poison to this kind of creature; nor do we gather its liver-fat save by means of a man, when he falleth into the sea and is drowned; for that his favour becometh changed and ofttimes his flesh is torn; so the dendan eateth him, deeming him of the beasts of the sea, and dieth. Then we light upon it dead and take the fat of its liver. Moreover, wherever there is a son of Adam, though there be in that place a hundred or two hundred or a thousand or more of these beasts, if they but hear him cry once, they all die forthwith and not one of them can avail to remove from its place; wherefore, whenas a son of Adam falleth into the sea, we take him [ere he can drown] and anoint him with this fat and go round about the sea with him, and whenever we see a dendan or two or three or more, we bid him cry out and they all die forthright for his once crying.'

Quoth the fisherman, 'I put my trust in God,' and putting off his clothes, buried them in a hole, which he dug in the beach; after which he rubbed his body from top to

toe with the ointment. Then he descended into the water and diving, opened his eyes and the water did him no hurt. So he walked right and left, and if he would, he rose [to the surface] and if he would, he sank to the bottom. And he saw the water of the sea vaulted over him, as it were a tent; yet it did him no hurt. Then said the merman to him, 'What seest thou, O my brother?' 'O my brother,' answered Abdallah, 'I see [that which is] good; and indeed thou spokest truth in that which thou saidst to me; for the water doth me no hurt.' Quoth the merman, 'Follow me.'

So he followed him and they fared on from place to place, whilst Abdallah saw mountains of water before him and on his right and left and diverted himself by gazing thereon and on the various kinds of fish, some great and some small, that sported in the sea. Some of them were like unto buffaloes, others to oxen and others to dogs and yet others unto human beings; but all to which they drew near fled, whenas they saw the fisherman, who said to the merman, 'O my brother, how is it that I see all the fish, to which we draw near, flee from us?' 'Because they fear thee,' answered the other; 'for all things that God hath made fear the son of Adam.'

The fisherman ceased not to gaze upon the marvels of the sea, till they came to a high mountain and fared on beside it. Presently, he heard a great cry and turning, saw some black thing, the bigness of a camel or bigger, coming down upon him from the mountain and crying out. So he said to his friend, 'What is this, O my brother?' 'This is the dendan,' answered the merman. 'It cometh down in quest of me, seeking to devour me; so cry thou out at it, O my brother, ere it win to us; else will it snatch me up and devour me.' So Abdallah cried out at it and it fell down dead; which when he saw, he said, 'Extolled be the perfection of God and His praise! I smote it not with sword nor knife; how comes it, then, that, for all the vastness of the creature's bulk, it could not endure my cry, but died?' 'Marvel not,' replied the merman; 'for, by Allah, O my brother, were there a thousand or two thousand of these creatures, yet could they not endure the cry of a son of Adam.'

Then they fared on, till they came to a city, whose inhabitants the fisherman saw to be all women, there being no male among them; so he said to his companion, 'O my brother, what city is this and what are these women?' 'This is the city of women,' answered the merman, 'for its inhabitants are of the women of the sea.' 'Are there any males among them?' asked the fisherman; and the merman said, 'No.' 'Then how,' said Abdallah, 'do they conceive and bear young, without males?' Quoth the other, 'The king of the sea banishes them hither and they conceive not neither bear children. All the women of the sea, with whom he is wroth, he sends to this city and they cannot leave it; for, should one of them come forth therefrom, any of the beasts of the sea that saw her would devour her. But in the other cities of the sea there are both males and females.'

'Are there then other cities than this in the sea?' asked the fisherman, and the merman said, 'There are many.' 'And is there a Sultan over you in the sea?' asked the fisherman. 'Yes,' answered the merman. Then said Abdallah, 'O my brother, I have indeed seen many marvels in the sea!' 'And what hast thou seen of the marvels [of the sea]?' quoth the merman. 'Hast thou not heard the saying, "The marvels of the sea are more in number than the marvels of the land?"' 'True,' answered the fisherman and fell to gazing upon the women, whom he saw having faces like moons and hair like

women's hair, but their hands and feet were in their bellies and they had tails like fishes' tails.

When the merman had shown him the people of the city, he carried him forth therefrom and forewent him to another city, which he found full of folk, both males and females, after the fashion of the women aforesaid and having tails; but there was neither selling nor buying amongst them, as with the people of the land, nor were they clothed, but went all naked and with their privities uncovered. 'O my brother,' said Abdallah, 'I see males and females alike with their privities exposed.' And the other said, 'This is because the folk of the sea have no clothes.' 'And how do they, when they marry?' asked the fisherman. 'They do not marry,' answered the merman; 'but every one who hath a mind to a female doth his will of her.' Quoth Abdallah, 'This is unlawful. Why doth he not ask her in marriage and dower her and make her a wedding-festival and marry her, in accordance with that which is pleasing to God and His Apostle?' 'We are not all of one religion,' answered his companiom 'Some of us are Muslims, believers in the unity of God, others Jews and Christians and what not else; and each marries in accordance with the ordinances of his religion; but those of us who marry are mostly Muslims.'

Quoth the fisherman, 'Ye are naked and have neither buying nor selling among you: of what then is your wives' dowry? Do ye give them jewels and precious stones?' 'Jewels with us are but stones without value,' answered the merman: 'but upon him who is minded to marry they impose a dowry of a certain number of fish of various kinds, that he must catch, a thousand or two thousand, more or less, according to the agreement between himself and the bride's father. As soon as he brings the required amount, the families of the bride and bridegroom assemble and eat the marriage-banquet; after which they bring him in to his bride, and he catches fish and feeds her; or, if he be unable, she catches fish and feeds him.' 'And how if a woman commit adultery?' asked the fisherman. 'If a woman be convicted of this case,' answered the merman, 'they banish her to the City of Women; and if she be with child, they leave her till she be delivered, when, if she give birth to a girl, they banish her with her, naming her adulteress, daughter of adulteress, and she abideth a maid till she die; but, if she give birth to a male child, they carry it to the Sultan of the Sea, who puts it to death.'

Abdallah marvelled at this and the merman carried him to another city and thence to another and another, till he had shown him fourscore cities, and he saw the people of each city to be different from those of every other. Then said he to the merman, 'O my brother, are there yet other cities in the sea?' 'And what hast thou seen of the cities of the sea and its wonders?' replied the other 'By the virtue of the noble prophet, the benign, the compassionate, were I to show thee a thousand cities a day for a thousand years, and in each city a thousand marvels, I should not have shown thee one carat of the four-and-twenty carats of the cities of the sea and its wonders! I have but shown thee our own province and country, nothing more.'

'O my brother,' said the fisherman, 'since this is the case, what I have seen sufficeth me, for I am sick of eating fish, and these fourscore days I have been in thy company, thou hast fed me morning and night upon nothing but raw fish, neither broiled nor boiled.' 'And what is broiled and boiled?' asked the merman. Quoth

Abdallah, 'we broil fish with fire and boil it [in water] and dress it in various ways and make many dishes of it.' 'And how should we come by fire in the sea?' rejoined the other, 'we know not broiled nor boiled nor aught else of the kind.' Quoth the fisherman, 'We also fry it in olive-oil and oil of sesame,' and the merman said, 'How should we come by olive-oil and oil of sesame in the sea? Verily we know nothing of that thou names.'

'True,' said Abdallah, 'but, O my brother, thou hast shown me many cities; yet hast thou not shown me thine own city.' Quoth the merman 'As for mine own city, we passed it long since, for it is near the land whence we came, and I only left it and came with thee hither, thinking to divert thee with the sight of the [greater] cities of the sea.' 'That which I have seen of them sufficeth me,' replied Abdallah; 'and now I would have thee show me thine own city.' 'So be it,' answered the other and returning on his traces, carried him back thither and said to him, 'This is my city.'

Abdallah looked and saw a city small by comparison with those he had seen; then he entered with his companion and they fared on till they came to a cavern. Quoth the merman, 'This is my house and all the houses in the city are on this wise, caverns, great and small, in the mountains; as likewise are those of all the other cities of the sea. For every one who is minded to make him a house repairs to the king and says to him, 'I wish to make me a house in such a place.' Whereupon the king sends with him a band of the fish called peckers, which have beaks that crumble the hardest rock, appointing a certain dole of fish to their wage. They betake themselves to the mountain chosen by the owner of the house and hew therein the house. whilst the owner catches fish for them and feeds them, till the cavern is finished, when they depart and the owner of the house takes up his abode therein. After this wise do all the people of the sea; they traffic not with one another nor serve each other save by means of fish; and their food is fish and they themselves are a kind of fish.'

Then he said to him, 'Enter.' So Abdallah entered and the merman cried out, saying, 'Ho, daughter mine!' whereupon there came to him a damsel with a face like the round of the moon and long hair, heavy buttocks, languishing black eyes and slender waist; but she was naked and had a tail. When she saw the fisherman, she said to her father, 'O my father, what is this lacktail thou hast brought with thee?' 'O my daughter,' answered he, 'this is my friend of the land, from whom I use to bring thee the fruits of the earth. Come hither and salute him.' So she came forward and saluted the fisherman with eloquent tongue and fluent speech; and her father said to her, 'Bring victual for our guest, by whose coming a blessing hath betided us;' whereupon she brought him two great fishes, each the bigness of a lamb, and the merman said to him, 'Eat.' So he ate, in his own despite, for stress of hunger; because he was weary of eating fish and they had nothing else.

Before long, in came the merman's wife, who was fair to look upon, and with her two children, each having in his hand a young fish, which he munched as a man would munch a cucumber. When she saw the fisherman with her husband, she said, 'What is this lacktail?' And she and her sons and daughter came up to him and fell to examining his breech and saying, 'Yea, by Allah, he is tailless!' And they laughed at him. So he said to the merman, 'O my brother, hast thou brought me hither to make me a laughing-stock for thy wife and children?' 'Pardon, O my brother,' answered the

merman. 'Those who have no tails are rare among us, and whenever one such is found, the Sultan taketh him, to make him sport, and he abideth a marvel amongst us, and all Who see him laugh at him. But, O my brother, excuse these young children and this woman, for they lack understanding.' Then he cried out to his family, saying, 'Hold your peace!' So they were afraid and kept silence; whilst he went on to soothe Abdallah's mind.

Presently, as they were talking, in came half a score mermen, tall and strong and stout, and said to him, 'O Abdallah, it hath reached the king that thou hast with thee a lacktail.' 'Yes,' answered the merman, 'and this is he; but he is not of us nor of the children of the sea. He is my friend of the land and hath come to me as a guest and I purpose to carry him back to the land.' Quoth they, 'We cannot depart without him; so, if thou have aught to say, arise and come with him to the king; and whatsoever thou wouldst say to us, that say thou to the king.' Then said the merman to the fisherman, 'O my brother, my excuse is manifest, and we may not gain-say the king; but go thou with me to him and I will do my endeavour to deliver thee from him, if it please God. Fear not, for he deemeth thee of the children of the sea; but, when he seeth thee, he will know thee to be of the children of the land, whereupon he will surely entreat thee with honour and restore thee to the land.' 'It is thine to decide,' replied Abdallah. 'I will put my trust in God and go with thee.'

So he took him and carried him to the king, who, when he saw him, laughed at him and said, 'Welcome to the lacktail!' And all who were about the king fell to laughing at him and saying, 'Yea, by Allah, he is tailless!' Then Abdallah of the sea came forward and acquainted the king with the fisherman's case, saying, 'This man is of the children of the land and he is my friend and cannot live amongst us, for that he loves not the eating of fish, except it be fried or boiled; wherefore l desire that thou give me leave to restore him to the land.' 'Since the case is so,' answered the king, 'I give thee leave to restore him to his place, after due entertainment. Bring him the guest-meal'

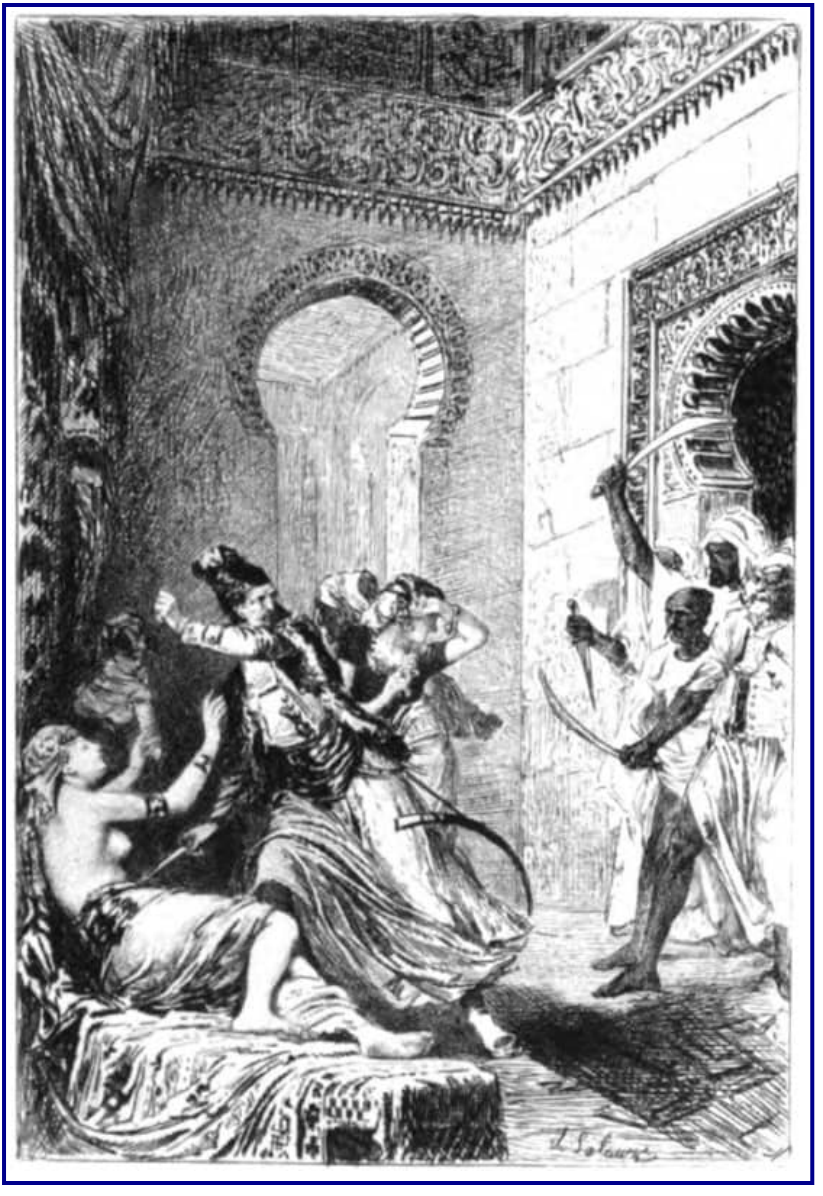
So they brought him fish of various kinds and colours and he ate, in obedience to the king's commandment; after which the latter said to him, 'Ask a boon of me.' Quoth he, 'I ask of thee that thou give me jewels;' and the king said, 'Carry him to the jewel-house and let him choose that whereof he hath need.' So his friend carried him to the jewel-house and he chose out what he would, after which the merman brought him back to his own city and pulling out a purse, said to him, 'Take this deposit and lay it on the tomb of the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve!' And he took it, knowing not what was therein.

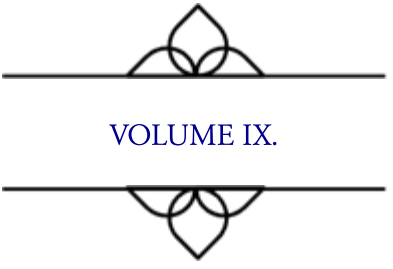
Then the merman went forth with him, to bring him back to land, and by the way he heard singing and merry-making and saw a table spread with fish and folk eating and singing and holding high festival. So he said to his friend, 'What ails these people to rejoice thus? Is there a wedding toward amongst them?' 'Nay,' answered Abdallah of the sea; 'only one of them is dead.' 'Do ye then,' asked the fisherman, 'when one dieth amongst you, rejoice for him and sing and feast?' 'Yes,' replied the merman; 'and ye of the land, what do ye?' 'When one dieth amongst us,' said Abdallah, 'we weep and mourn for him and the women buffet their faces and rend the bosoms of

their garments, in token of mourning for the dead.' The merman stared at him with wide eyes and said to him, 'Give me the deposit.' So he gave it to him.

Then he set him ashore and said to him, 'Henceforward our love and our friendship are at an end, and thou shalt no more see me, nor I thee.' 'Why sayst thou this?' asked the fisherman; and the other said, 'Are ye not, O folk of the land, a deposit of God?' 'Yes,' answered Abdallah. 'Why then,' asked the merman, 'is it grievous to you that God should take back His deposit and wherefore weep ye over it? How can I entrust thee with a deposit for the Prophet, whom God bless and preserve, seeing that, when a child is born to you, ye rejoice in it, albeit God the Most High setteth the soul therein as a deposit; and yet, when He taketh it again, it is grievous to you and ye weep and mourn? Since it is uneath to thee to give up the deposit of God, how shall it be easy to thee to give up the deposit of the Prophet?' Wherefore we reck not of your companionship.' So saying, he left him and disappeared in the sea.

The fisherman donned his clothes and taking the jewels, went up to the king, who received him with open arms and rejoiced at his return, saying, 'How dost thou, O my son-in-law, and what is the cause of thine absence from me this while?' So he told him his story and acquainted him with that which he had seen of marvels in the sea, whereat the king wondered. Moreover, he told him what the merman had said [about the mourning for the dead]; and the king replied, 'Indeed thou west at fault to tell him this.' Nevertheless, he continued for some time to go down to the sea-shore and call upon the merman; but he answered him not nor came to him; so, at last, he gave up hope of him and abode, he and the king his father-in-law and their families, in the happiest of case and the practice of righteousness, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Severer of Companies and they died all. And glory be to the [Ever-]Living One, who dieth not, whose is the empire of the Seen and the Unseen, who can all things and is gracious to His servants and knoweth all that pertaineth to them!





VOLUME IX.

The Merchant of Oman.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid was one night exceeding wakeful; so he called Mesrour and said to him, 'Fetch me Jaafer in haste.' Accordingly, he went out and returned with the vizier, to whom said the Khalif, 'O Jaafer, wakefulness hath gotten hold of me this night and forbiddeth sleep from me, nor know I what shall do it away from me.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'the wise say, "Looking on a mirror, entering the bath and hearkening unto song do away care and chagrin."' 'O Jaafer,' rejoined Haroun, 'I have done all this, but it hath brought me no whit of relief, and I swear by my pious forefathers, except thou contrive that which shall do away this [restlessness] from me, I will strike off thy head.'

Quoth Jaafer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, wilt thou do that which I shall counsel thee?' 'And what is that?' asked the Khalif. 'It is,' replied the vizier, 'that thou take boat with us and drop down the Tigris with the tide to a place called Kern es Serat, so haply we may hear or see some new thing, for it is said, "The solace of care is in one of three things; to wit, that a man see what he never before saw or hear what he never yet heard or tread an earth he hath never yet trodden." It may be this shall be the means of doing away thy restlessness, O Commander of the Faithful, if it be the will of the Most High. There, on both sides of the stream, are windows and balconies facing one another, and it may be we shall hear or see from one of these somewhat wherewith our hearts may be lightened.'

Jaafer's counsel pleased the Khalif, so he rose from his place and taking with him the vizier and his brother El Fezl and Isaac the boon-companion and Abou Nuwas and Abou Delef and Mesrour the headsman, entered the wardrobe, where they all donned merchants' habits. Then they went down to the Tigris and embarking in a gilded boat, dropped down with the stream, till they came to the place they sought, where they heard the voice of a damsel singing to the lute and chanting the following verses:

I say to my love, whilst the wine-cup is here
And the thousand-voiced bird in the coppice sings clear,
'How long this delaying from gladness? Awake;
For life's but a loan for a day or a year.
So take thou the cup from a loveling's white hands,
Whose languishing lids are as those of a deer.'
I sowed a fresh rose in his cheek, but amidst
His locks a pomegranate for fruit did appear.
Indeed, very fire wouldst thou deem his fair cheek
And the place of the scratching dead ashes and sere.
Quoth my censor, 'Forget him;' but where's my excuse,
When the down sprouts and creeps on the face of my dear?

When the Khalif heard this, he said, 'O Jaafer, how goodly is that voice!' 'O our lord,' answered the vizier, 'never smote my hearing aught sweeter or goodlier than this singing! But hearing from behind a wall is only half hearing; how would it be, if we heard it from behind a curtain?' 'Come, O Jaafer,' said the Khalif, 'let us go up and

intrude upon the master of the house; it may be we shall look upon the songstress, face to face.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer. So they landed and sought admittance; whereupon there came out to them a young man, fair of favour, sweet of speech and eloquent of tongue, who said to them, 'Welcome and fair welcome, O lords that favour me [with your presence!] Enter in all ease and liberty.'

They followed him into a saloon, four-square, whose roof was decorated with gold and its walls adorned with ultra- marine. At its upper end was an estrade, whereon stood a goodly settle and thereon sat a hundred damsels like moons. The young man cried out to them and they came down from their seats. Then he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'O my lord, I know not the worshipful of you from the more worshipful, but, in God's name, let him that is highest in rank among you favour me by taking the highest room, and let his brethren sit each in his several station.' So they sat down, each according to his rank, whilst Mesrour abode standing to do them service; and the host said to them, 'O my guests, with your leave, shall I set food before you?' 'Yes,' answered they. So he called for food, whereupon four damsels with girded waists set before them a table, whereon were rare meats of that which flies and walks the earth and swims the seas, sandgrouse and quails and chickens and pigeons [and what not else], and written on the marges of the tray were verses such as sorted with the entertainment.

They ate till they had enough and washed their hands, after which said the young man, 'O my lords, if you have any want, let us know it, that we may have the honour of satisfying it.' 'It is well,' answered they. 'We came not to thy dwelling but because of a voice we heard from behind the wall of thy house, and we would fain hear it [again] and know her to whom it belongs. So, if thou deem well to vouchsafe us this favour, it will be of the munificence of thy nature, and we will after return whence we came.' 'Ye are welcome,' answered the host and turning to a black slave-girl, said to her, 'Fetch me thy mistress such an one.' So she went away and returning with a chair of chinaware, cushioned with brocade, set it down; then withdrew again and presently returned with a damsel, as she were the moon on the night of its full, who sat down on the chair. Then the black girl gave her a bag of satin, from which she brought out a lute, inlaid with jacinths and jewels and furnished with pegs of gold, and tuned its strings, even as saith the poet of her and her lute:

When in her lap she sets it, the soul in it she sets,
Its pegs [and strings] its organs by which its thought hath speech;
Nor doth her right hand outrage its beauties, but her left
On equal wise and measure amendeth still the breach.

Then she strained it to her bosom, bending over it as the mother bends over her child, and swept the strings, which complained as the child complains to its mother; after which she played upon it and sang the following verses:

Vouchsafe me Fortune the return of him I love, and
I Will chide him, saying, 'Pass about thy cups, O friend; fill high
And drink of wine that mingleth not with heart of man but he
Still barters care for cheer and calls a truce with tear and sigh.
Unto its bearing in its cup the zephyr doth suffice:

Didst e'er a full moon in its hand a star that bore espy?
How many a night with its full moon I've held converse of yore,
Whilst, o'er the Tigris shed, its light lit up the darkling sky!
As to the westward she inclined, it was as if she drew
A gilded sword that stretched athwart the water far and nigh.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept sore and all who were in the place cried out with weeping, till they were well-nigh dead; nor was there one of them but took leave of his senses and rent his clothes and buffeted his face, for the goodliness of her singing. Then said Er Reshid, 'This damsel's song denoteth that she is one parted from her beloved.' Quoth her master, 'She hath lost her father and mother.' But the Khalif said, 'This is not the weeping of one who hath lost her father and mother, but the affliction of one who hath lost her beloved.' And he was delighted with her singing and said to Isaac, 'By Allah, I never saw her like!' 'O my lord,' answered Isaac, 'indeed I marvel at her to the utterest and am beside myself for delight.'

Now with all this Er Reshid stinted not to look upon their host and observe his charms and the elegance of his fashion; but he saw on his face a pallor as he would die; so he turned to him and said, 'Harkye!' 'At thy service, O my lord,' answered he. 'Knowest thou who we are?' asked the Khalif; and he said 'No.' Quoth Jaafer, 'Wilt thou that I tell thee the names of each of us?' 'Yes,' answered the young man; and the vizier said, 'This is the Commander of the Faithful, descendant of the uncle of the Prince of the Apostles,' and told him the names of the others of the company; after which quoth Er Reshid, 'I desire that thou tell me the cause of the paleness of thy face, whether it be acquired or natural from thy birth.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'my case is rare and my affair extraordinary; were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as an admonition to him who will be admonished.' 'Tell it me,' said the Khalif. 'Peradventure, thy healing may be at my hand.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said the young man, 'lend me thine ears and give me thy whole mind.' 'Come,' said the Khalif, 'tell it me, for thou makest me long to hear it.'

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the young man, 'that I am a merchant of the merchants of the sea and come from the city of Oman, where my father was a rich merchant, having thirty ships trading upon the sea, whose yearly hire was thirty thousand dinars; and he had partners trading with his money and journeying on the sea. He was a man of worth and generosity and taught me writing and all whereof a man hath need. When his last hour drew near, he called me to him and gave me the customary injunctions; then God the Most High admitted him to His mercy and may He continue the Commander of the Faithful [on life!]

One day, as I sat in my house with a company of merchants, one of my servants came in to me and said, "O my lord, there is a man at the door, who craves admittance to thee." So I gave leave and he came in, bearing on his head a covered box. He set it down and uncovered it, and behold, therein were fruits out of season and [vegetables] conserved in salt and fresh, such as are not found in our country. I thanked him and gave him a hundred dinars, and he went away, grateful. Then I divided these things amongst my guests and asked them whence they came. Quoth they, "They come from

Bassora," and praised them and went on to expatiate upon the beauties of Bassora and were all of accord that there was nothing in the world goodlier than Baghdad and its people. Then they fell to describing Baghdad and the excellence of its air and the beauty of its ordinance and the goodly manners of its people, till my soul longed for it and all my hopes clave to the sight of it.

So I arose and selling my ships and houses and lands and slaves, male and female, got together a thousand thousand dinars, besides jewels and precious stones, with which I freighted a ship and setting out therein, sailed nights and days till I came to Bassora, where I abode awhile. Then I hired a bark and embarking therein with all my goods, sailed up the river some days till I arrived at Baghdad. I enquired where the merchants abode and what part thereof was pleasantest of sojourn and was answered, "The Kerkh quarter." So I went thither and hiring a house in a street called the Street of Saffron, transported my goods to it and took up my lodging therein.

Here I abode some days, till, one Friday, I sallied forth apleasuring, taking with me somewhat of money. I went first to a mosque, called the Mosque of Mensour, where the Friday service was held, and when we had made an end of prayers, I went out with the folk to a place called Kern es Serat, where I saw a tall and goodly house, with a balcony overlooking the river-bank, wherein was a lattice- window. So I betook myself thither with a company of folk and saw there an old man sitting handsomely clad and exhaling a sweet scent. His beard flowed down upon his breast, where it divided into two waves like silver-wire, and about him were four damsels and five pages in attendance upon him. So I said to one of the folk, "What is the name of yonder old man and what is his business?" "His name is Tahir ibn el Alaa," answered he, "and he is a keeper of girls; all who go in to him eat and drink and look upon fair ones." "By Allah," quoth I, "this long while have I gone about in quest of the like of this!"

So I went up to the old man and saluting him, said to him, "O my lord, I desire to be thy guest to-night." And he said, "With all my heart; but, O my son, with me are many damsels, some whose night is ten dinars, some forty and others more. Choose which thou wilt have." Quoth I, "I choose her whose night is ten dinars." And I counted out to him three hundred dinars, being the price of a month; whereupon he committed me to a page, who carried me to a bath within the house and tended me on goodly wise. When I came out of the bath, he brought me to the door of a chamber and knocked, whereupon out came a damsel, to whom said he, "Take thy guest." She received me with welcome and courtesy, laughing and rejoicing, and brought me into a rare apartment, decorated with gold. I looked at her and saw her like the moon on the night of its full, having in attendance on her two damsels like stars. She made me sit and seating herself by my side, signed to her maids, who set before us a table covered with dishes of various kinds of meats, fowls and quails and sandgrouse and pigeons. So we ate till we were satisfied, and never in my life saw I aught more delicious than this food. When we had eaten, she caused remove the table [of meats] and set on the table of wine and flowers and fruits and sweetmeats; and I abode with her a month on this wise.

At the end of the month, I repaired to the bath; then, going to the old man, I said to him, "O my lord, I want her whose night is twenty dinars." "Pay down the money," said he. So I fetched money and counted out to him six hundred dinars for a month's

hire, whereupon he called a boy and said to him, "Take thy lord here." So he carried me to the bath and thence to the door of a chamber, at which he knocked and there came out a damsel, to whom quoth he, "Take thy guest." She received me on the goodliest wise and I found in attendance on her four slave-girls, whom she commanded to bring food. So they brought a table spread with all kinds of meats, and I ate. When I had made an end of eating and the table had been removed, she took the lute and sang the following verses:

O windwafts of musk, from the land of Babel to us-ward that fare,
In the name of my passion and heat, I charge you my messages bear;
For lo, in those regions of yours are dwellings of yore that I knew,
The homes of our loved ones, to wit, the noblest of all that are there;
And in them abideth the maid, for whom many a lover doth pine,
Distraught with the pangs of desire, but getteth no grace of the fair.

I abode with her a month, after which I returned to the old man and said to him, "I want her of the forty dinars [a night]." "Pay the money," said he. So I counted out to him twelve hundred dinars and abode with her a month, as it were one day, for what I saw of the beauty of her person and the goodliness of her converse. After this I went to the old man one evening and heard a great clamour and loud voices. So I said to him, "What is to do?" And he answered, saying, "This is the night of our greatest holiday, whereon all the townsfolk embark on the river and divert themselves by gazing upon one another. Hast thou a mind to go up to the roof and amuse thyself by looking upon the folk?" "Yes," answered I, and went up to the roof, whence I [looked down upon the river and] saw [a great multitude of] folk with flambeaux and cressets, and great mirth and merriment toward.

Then I went up to the end of the roof and saw there a little chamber railed off by a goodly curtain, and in its midst a couch of juniper-wood, plated with gold and covered with a handsome carpet. On this sat a lovely young lady, confounding all beholders with her beauty and grace and symmetry, and by her side a youth, whose hand was on her neck; and he was kissing her and she him. When I saw them, O Commander of the Faithful, I could not contain myself nor knew I where I was, so dazzled was I by her beauty: but, when I came down, I questioned the damsel with whom I was and described the young lady to her. "What wilt thou with her?" asked she; and I said, "She hath taken my wit." She smiled and said, "O Aboulhusn, hast thou a mind to her?" "Ay, by Allah!" answered I; "for she hath captived my heart and soul." Quoth she, "This is the daughter of Tahir ibn el Alaa; she is our mistress and we are all her handmaids; but knowest thou, O Aboulhusn, what is the price of her night and day?" And I said, "No." "Five hundred dinars," answered she; "for she is one for whom kings might sigh in vain."

"By Allah," quoth I, "I will spend all I have on this damsel!" And I lay, heartsore for desire, till the morning, when I donned a suit of the richest royal raiment and betaking myself to Ibn el Alaa, said to him, "O my lord, I want her whose night is five hundred dinars." Quoth he, "Pay the money." So I counted out to him fifteen thousand dinars for a month's hire and he took them and said to the page, "Carry him to thy mistress such an one." So he took me and carried me to a saloon, than which

my eyes never saw a goodlier on the face of the earth, and there I found the young lady seated. When I saw her, O Commander of the Faithful, my reason was dazed with her beauty, for she was like the full moon on its fourteenth night, full of grace and symmetry and loveliness. Her speech put to shame the tones of the lute, and it was as it were she to whom the poet referred in the following verses:

Quoth she (and verily desire ran riot in her side,
What while the dusky night let down the darkness like a tide),
"Night, in thy blackness is there none to company with me?
Is there no swiver for this kaze of all men, far and wide?"
Then with her palm she smote thereon and said, what while she sighed
The sighing of the sorrowful, the sad, the weeping-eyed,
"As by the toothstick's use appears the beauty of the teeth,
So, like a toothstick is the yard unto the kaze applied.
O, Muslims, stand your yards not up on end and is there none
'Mongst you will succour her who doth to you complain?" she cried.
Therewith my yard thrust out erect, from underneath my clothes,
And said to her, "Here, here's for thee!" And I the while untied
The laces of her drawers. She made a show of fear and said,
"Who'rt thou?" And I, "A youth thy cry that answereth," replied
And straightway fell to routing her with what was like her wrist,
A lusty routing, that full sore the buttocks mortified;
Till when, three courses run, I rose, "Fair fall thee of the swive!"
Quoth she, and I, "May solacement thyself therefrom betide!"

And how excellent is the saying of another!

A fair one, to idolaters if she her face should show,
They'd leave their idols and her face for only Lord would know.
If in the Eastward she appeared unto a monk, for sure,
He'd cease from turning to the West and to the East bend low;
And if into the briny sea one day she chanced to spit,
Assuredly the salt sea's floods straight fresh and sweet would grow.

And that of another:

I looked one look upon her and dazed was all my thought,
For all the rare perfections wherewith the maid was fraught.
Suspicion that I loved her discovered unto her,
And straight the supposition her cheeks to redden wrought.

I saluted her and she said to me, "Welcome and fair welcome!" and taking me by the hand, made me sit down beside her; whereupon, of the excess of my passion, I fell aweeping for fear of parting and poured forth the tears of the eye, reciting the following verses:

The nights of estrangement I love; yet not that in them
I delight, But fate peradventure shall cause reunion ensue their despite;

And eke, on like wise, I abhor the days of enjoyment, because
I see that all things in this world still issue in ceasing outright.

She strove to solace me with soft speech, but I was drowned in the sea of passion, fearing, even in the midst of union, the anguish of separation, for excess of longing and desire; and I bethought me of the misery of absence and estrangement and repeated these verses:

Even in her arms I me bethought of severance from her
And from mine eyes the tears ran down, a ruddy-coloured flood,
Like tragacanth, and straight I wiped mine eyes upon her neck,
For of the use of camphor 'tis to stay the flow of blood.

Then she called for food and there came four damsels, high-bosomed maids, who set before us meats and fruits and sweetmeats and flowers and wine, such as befit none but kings. So we ate and sat at the wine, compassed about with flowers and herbs of sweet savour, in a chamber fit only for kings. Presently, one of her maids brought her a bag of silk, which she opened and taking thereout a lute, laid it in her lap and touched its strings, whereupon it complained, as the child complains to its mother, and she sang the following verses:

Drink not of wine except it be at the hands of a loveling slim,
Who in brightness of soul resembles it and it resembles him.
The drinker of wine, in very sooth, hath no delight thereof,
Except the cheek of the fair be pure, who doth the goblet brim.

On this wise, O Commander of the Faithful, I abode with her, month after month, till all my money was spent; wherefore, as I sat with her [one day], I bethought me of [coming] separation from her and my tears streamed down upon my cheeks like rivers, and I became not knowing night from day. Quoth she, "Why dost thou weep?" And I answered, "O light of mine eyes, I weep because of our [coming] parting." "And what," asked she, "shall part thee and me, O my lord?" "O my lady," said I, "from the time I came to thee, thy father hath taken of me, for every night, five hundred dinars, and now I have nothing left. Indeed the poet speaks sooth when he says:

Exile at home, I trow, is lack of good, And wealth is home in very strangerhood."

"Know," rejoined she, "that it is my father's wont, whenas a merchant abideth with him and hath spent all his money, to give him hospitality three days; then doth he put him out and he may never return to us. But keep thou thy secret and conceal thy case and I will contrive so that thou shalt abide with me till such time as God will; for, indeed, there is a great love for thee in my heart. Thou must know that all my father's wealth is under my hand and he knows not the tale thereof; so, every day I will give thee a purse of five hundred dinars, which do thou give him, saying, 'Henceforth, I will pay thee only day by day.' He will hand the purse to me, and I will give it to thee again, and we will abide thus till such time as God pleases."

I thanked her and kissed her hand; and on this wise I abode with her a whole year, till it chanced one day that she beat one of her handmaids grievously and the latter said, "By Allah, I will torture thy heart, even as thou hast tortured me!" So she

went to the girl's father and discovered to him all our practice, whereupon he arose forthright and coming in to me, as I sat with his daughter, said to me, "Harkye, such an one!" "At thy service," replied I. Quoth he, "It is our wont, when a merchant grows poor with us, to give him hospitality three days; but thou hast had a year with us, eating and drinking and doing what thou wouldst." Then he turned to his servants and said to them, "Pull off his clothes." They did as he bade them and gave me ten dirhems and an old suit worth other five; after which he said to me, "Go forth; I will not beat thee nor revile thee; but go thy ways and if thou abide in this town, thy blood be on thine own head."

So I went forth, in my own despite, knowing not whither to go, for all the trouble in the world was fallen on my heart and I was occupied with melancholy thought. Then I bethought me of the wealth which I had brought from Oman and said in myself, "I came hither with a million dinars and have made away with it all in the house of yonder ill-omened old man, and now I go forth from him, naked and broken-hearted! But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!"

I abode three days in Baghdad, without tasting meat or drink, and on the fourth day I saw a ship bound for Bassora; so I hired a passage in her and when we reached Bassora, I landed and went to the market, being sore anhungred. Presently, a man saw me, a grocer, whom I had known aforetime, and coming up to me, embraced me, — for he had been my friend and my father's friend before me, — and questioned me of my case, for that he saw me clad in those tattered clothes. So I told him all that had befallen me, and he said, "By Allah, this is not the fashion of a reasonable man! But what dost thou purpose to do, after this that hath befallen thee?" Quoth I, "I know not what I shall do," and he said, "Wilt thou abide with me and write my goings-out and comings-in, and thou shalt have two dirhems a day, over and above thy meat and drink?" I agreed to this and abode with him a whole year, buying and selling, till I had gotten a hundred dinars; when I hired an upper chamber by the river-side, so haply a ship should come up with merchandise, that I might buy goods with the dinars and go with them to Baghdad.

One day, there came ships with merchandise, and all the merchants resorted to them to buy, and I with them. [We boarded one of the ships,] and behold, there came two men out of the hold and setting themselves chairs on the deck, sat down thereon. The merchants accosted them, with intent to buy, and they said to one of the crew, "Bring the carpet." So he brought the carpet and spread it, and another came with a pair of saddle-bags, from which he took a budget and emptied it on the carpet; and our sights were dazzled with that which issued thence of pearls and corals and jacinths and cornelians and other jewels of all sorts and colours. Then said one of the men on the chairs, "O merchants, we will sell but this to-day, by way of spending-money, for that we are weary." So the merchants fell to bidding for the jewels and bid, one against the other, till the price reached four hundred dinars.

Now the owner of the bag was an old acquaintance of mine and when he saw me, he came down to me and saluting me, said, "Why dost thou not speak and bid like the rest of the merchants?" "O my lord," answered I, "the shifts of fortune have run against me and I have lost my wealth and have but a hundred dinars left in the world." Quoth

he, “O Omani, after this vast wealth, do but a hundred dinars remain to thee?” And I was abashed before him and my eyes filled with tears; whereupon he looked at me and indeed my case was grievous to him. So he said to the merchants, “Bear witness against me that I sell all that is in this bag of various kinds of jewels and precious stones to this man for a hundred dinars, albeit I know them to be worth so many thousand dinars, and I make him a present of them.” So saying, he gave me the bag and the carpet, with all the jewels thereon, for which I thanked him, and all the merchants present praised him. Then I carried all this to the jewel- market and sat there to sell and buy. Among the jewels was a round amulet of the handiwork of the masters, weighing half a pound. It was of bright red cornelian and on both sides of it were graven characters and talismans, like unto the tracks of ants; but I knew not its use.

I bought and sold a whole year, at the end of which time I took the amulet and said to myself, “This hath been with me a great while, and I know not what it is nor what is its use.” So I gave it to the broker, who went round with it and returned, saying, “None of the merchants will give more than ten dirhems for it.” Quoth I, “I will not sell it at that price.” And he threw it in my face and went away. Another day I again offered it for sale and its price reached fifteen dirhems; so I took it from the broker in a pet and threw it back into the tray. Presently, as I sat in my shop, there came up to me a man, who bore the traces of travel, and saluting me, said, “By thy leave, I will turn over thy wares.” “It is well,” answered I, and indeed I was still wroth by reason of the lack of demand for the amulet.

So he fell to turning over my wares, but took nought thereof save the amulet, which when he saw, he said, “Praised be God!” and kissed his hand. Then said he to me, “O my lord, wilt thou sell this?” And I said, “Yes,” being still angry. Quoth he, “What is its price?” And I, “How much wilt thou give?” “Twenty dinars,” answered he. I thought he was making mock of me and said, “Go thy ways.” Quoth he, “I will give thee fifty dinars for it.” I made him no answer, and he said, “A thousand dinars.” But I was silent, whilst he laughed at my silence and said, “Why dost thou not return me an answer?” “Go thy ways,” repeated I and was like to quarrel with him. But he bid thousand after thousand, and I still made him no reply, till he said, “Wilt thou sell it for twenty thousand dinars?”

I still thought he was making mock of me; but the people gathered about me and all of them said to me, “Sell to him, and if he buy not, we will all fall upon him and beat him and put him out of the city.” So I said to him, “Wilt thou buy or dost thou jest?” Quoth he, “Wilt thou sell or dost thou jest?” And I said, “I will sell if thou wilt buy.” Then said he, “I will buy it for thirty thousand dinars: take them and strike the bargain.” And I said to the bystanders, “Bear witness against him.” [Then to him, “I sell to thee,] but on condition that thou acquaint me with the use and virtues of the amulet, for which thou payest all this money.” “Close the bargain,” answered he, “and I will tell thee this.” Quoth I, “I sell to thee.” And he said, “God be witness of that which thou sayst!”

Then he brought out the money and giving it to me put the amulet in his bosom; after which he said to me, “Art thou content?” “Yes,” answered I, and he said to the people, “Bear witness against him that he hath closed the bargain and touched the price, thirty thousand dinars.” Then he turned to me and said, “Harkye, good man,

hadst thou held back from selling, by Allah, I would have bidden thee up to a hundred thousand dinars, nay even to a thousand thousand!" When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, the blood fled from my face, and from that day there overcame it this paleness that thou seest.

Then said I to him, "Tell me the reason of this and what is the use of this amulet." And he answered, saying, "Know that the King of Hind hath a daughter, never was seen a fairer than she, and she is possessed with a demon. So the king summoned the scribes and men of science and diviners, but none of them could ease her of this. Now I was present in the assembly; so I said to him, 'O king, I know a man called Saadullah the Babylonian, than whom there is not on the face of the earth one more versed in these matters, and if thou see fit to send me to him, do so.' Quoth he, 'Go to him.' And I said, 'Bring me a piece of cornelian.' So he gave me a great piece of cornelian and a hundred thousand dinars and a present, with which I betook myself to the land of Babel and seeking out Saadullah, delivered him the money and the present, which he accepted and sending for a lapidary, caused him fashion the cornelian into this amulet. Then he abode seven months in observation of the stars, till he chose out an auspicious time for engraving it, when he graved upon it these talismanic characters that thou seest, and I took it and returned with it to the king.

Now the princess was bound with four chains, and every night a damsel lay with her and was found in the morning slain. The King took the amulet and laid it upon his daughter, whereupon she was straightway made whole. At this he rejoiced greatly and invested me with a dress of honour and gave alms of much money; and he caused set the amulet in the princess's necklace. It chanced, one day, that she embarked with her damsels in a ship and went apleasuring on the sea. Presently, one of her maids put out her hand to her, to sport with her, and the necklace broke asunder and fell into the sea. From that hour the princess's malady returned to her, wherefore great grief betided the king and he gave me much money, saying, 'Go thou to Saadullah and let him make her another amulet, in the stead of that which is lost.' So I journeyed to Babel, but found the Sheikh dead; whereupon I returned and told the king, who sent me and ten others to go round about in all countries, so haply we might find a remedy for her: and now God hath caused me happen on it with thee." So saying, he took the amulet and departed.

As for me, I repaired to Baghdad, carrying all my wealth with me, and took up my abode in the house which I had occupied aforetime. On the morrow, as soon as it was light, I donned my clothes and betook myself to the house of Tahir ibn el Alaa, so haply I might see her whom I loved, for the love of her had never ceased to increase upon my heart. When I came to the house, I saw the balcony broken down and the lattice stopped up; so I stood awhile, pondering my case and the shifts of time, till there came up a serving-man and I questioned him, saying, "What hath God done with Tahir ibn el Alaa?" He answered, "O my brother, he hath repented to God the Most High [and renounced his unlawful trade]." Quoth I, "What was the cause of his repentance?" And he said, "O my brother, in such a year there came to him a merchant, by name Aboulhusn the Omani, who abode with his daughter awhile, till his money was all spent, when the old man turned him out broken-hearted. Now the girl loved him with an exceeding love, and when she was parted from him, she sickened

of a sore sickness and came nigh upon death. When her father knew how it was with her, he sought for Aboulhusn high and low, promising whoso should bring him to him a hundred thousand dinars; but none could find him nor come on any trace of him; and she is now at death's door." "And how is it with her father?" asked I. Quoth the servant, "He hath sold all his girls, for stress of that which hath befallen him, and repented to God the Most High."

Then said I, "What wouldst thou say to him who should direct thee to Aboulhusn the Omani?" And he answered, saying, "I conjure thee by Allah, O my brother, that thou do this and quicken my poverty!" "Go to her father," rejoined I, "and say to him, 'Thou owest me the reward for good news, for that Aboulhusn the Omani standeth at the door.'" With this he set off running, as he were a mule loosed from the mill, and presently came back, accompanied by Tahir himself, who no sooner saw me than he returned to his house and gave the man a hundred thousand dinars, with which he went away, calling down blessings on me. Then the old man came up to me and embraced me and wept, saying, "O my lord, where hast thou been absent all this while? Indeed, my daughter is perished by reason of her separation from thee; but come with me into the house." So we entered and he prostrated himself in gratitude to God the Most High, saying, "Praised be God who hath reunited us with thee!"

Then he went in to his daughter and said to her, "God healeth thee of this sickness." "O my father," answered she, "I shall never be whole of my sickness, except I look upon the face of Aboulhusn." Quoth he, "If thou wilt eat a morsel and go to the bath, I will bring thee in company with him." "Is it true that thou sayest?" asked she; and he replied, "By the Great God, it is true!" "By Allah," rejoined she, "if I look upon his face, I shall have no need of eating!" Then said he to his servant, "Bring in thy lord." So I entered, and when she saw me, she fell down in a swoon, and presently coming to herself, recited the following verse:

Lo, God hath deigned to reunite the separated twain, For all in very sooth they deemed they ne'er should meet again.

Then she sat up and said, "By Allah, O my lord, I had not thought to see thy face again, but if it were in sleep!" And she embraced me and wept. Then said she, "O father mine, now will I eat and drink." The old man rejoiced in this and brought her meat and drink and we ate and drank. After this, I abode with them awhile, till she was restored to her former beauty, when her father sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and let draw up the contract of marriage between her and me and made a great bride-feast; and she is my wife to this day and this is my son by her." So saying, he went away and returned with a boy of marvellous beauty and symmetry, to whom said he, 'Kiss the earth before the Commander of the Faithful.' So he kissed the earth before the Khalif, who marvelled at his beauty and glorified his Creator; after which he departed with his company, saying to the vizier, 'O Jaafer, verily this is none other than a marvellous thing, never heard I of aught more extraordinary.'

When he was seated in the palace of the Khalifate, he said to Mesrour, 'Bring the year's tribute of Bassora and Baghdad and Khorassan and lay it in this recess.' So he laid the three tributes together and they were a vast sum of money, whose tale none might tell save God. Then the Khalif bade draw a curtain before the recess and said to

Jaafer, 'Fetch me Aboulhusn.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Jaafer and going forth, returned presently with the Omani, who kissed the ground before the Khalif fearing lest he had sent for him, because of some fault that he had committed, whenas he was with him in his house. Then said Er Reshid, 'Harkye, O Omani!' and he replied, 'At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful! May God still bestow his favours upon thee!' Quoth the Khalif, 'Draw back yonder curtain.' So Aboulhusn drew back the curtain from the recess and was confounded at the mass of money he saw there. 'O Aboulhusn,' said Er Reshid, 'whether is the more, this money or that thou didst lose by the amulet?' And he answered, 'This is many times the greater, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth the Khalif, 'Bear witness, all ye who are present, that I give this money to this young man.' Aboulhusn kissed the earth and was abashed and wept before the Khalif for excess of joy.

Now, when he wept, the tears ran down upon his cheeks and the blood returned to its place and his face became as it were the moon on the night of its full. Whereupon quoth the Khalif, 'There is no god but God! Glory be to Him who decreeth change upon change and is Himself the Everlasting One, that changeth not!' So saying, he fetched a mirror and showed Aboulhusn his face therein, which when he saw, he prostrated himself in gratitude to God the Most High. Then the Khalif bade transport the money to Aboulbusn's house and charged the latter absent not himself from him, so he might enjoy his company. Accordingly he paid him frequent visits, till Er Reshid was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High; and glory be to Him who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the Seen and the Unseen!

Ibrahim and Jemileh.

EL KHESIB, lord of Egypt, had a son named Ibrahim, there was none goodlier than he, and of his fear for him, he suffered him not to go forth, save to the Friday prayers. One day, as he was returning from the mosque, he happened upon an old man, with whom were many books; so he lighted down from his horse and seating himself beside him, fell to turning over the books and examining them. In [one of] them he saw the portrait of a woman, that all but spoke, never was seen on the earth's face a fairer than she; and this captivated his reason and confounded his wit. So he said to the old man, 'O elder, sell me this picture.' And the bookseller kissed the earth before him and said, 'O my lord, [it is thine,] without price.' Ibrahim gave him a hundred dinars and taking the book in which was the picture, fell to gazing upon it and weeping night and day, abstaining from meat and drink and sleep.

Then said he in himself, 'If I ask the bookseller of the painter of the picture, belike he will tell me; and if the original be on life, I will cast about to win to her; but, if it be an imaginary portrait, I will leave doting upon it and torment myself no more for a thing that hath no reality.' So, on the following Friday, he betook himself to the bookseller, who rose to receive him, and said to him, 'O uncle, tell me who painted this picture.' And he answered, saying, 'O my lord, a man of the people of Baghdad painted it, by name Aboulcasim es Sendelani; [he dwells] in a quarter called El Kerkh; but I know not of whom it is the portrait.' So Ibrahim left him and return to the palace, after praying the Friday prayers, without acquainting any of his household with his case.

Then he took a bag and filling it with gold and jewels, to the value of thirty thousand dinars, waited till the morning, when he went out, without telling any, and presently overtook a caravan. Here he saw a Bedouin and said to him, 'O uncle, how far am I from Baghdad?' 'O my son,' replied the other, 'what hast thou to do with Baghdad? Verily, between thee and it is two months' journey.' Quoth Ibrahim, 'O uncle, an thou wilt bring me to Baghdad, I will give thee a hundred dinars and this mare under me, that is worth other thousand.' ['Agreed!'] answered the Bedouin. 'And God be witness of what we say! Thou shalt not lodge this night but with me.'

Ibrahim agreed to this and passed the night with him. At break of day, the Bedouin took him and fared on with him in haste by a near road, in his eagerness for the promised reward; nor did they leave journeying till they came to the walls of Baghdad, when he said, 'Praised be God for safety! O my lord, this is Baghdad.' Whereat Ibrahim rejoiced with an exceeding joy and alighting from the mare, gave her to the Bedouin, together with the hundred dinars. Then he took the bag and [entering the city], walked on, enquiring for the Kerkh quarter and the abiding-place of the merchants, till destiny led him to a by-street, wherein were ten houses, five facing five, and at the farther end was a [gateway with a] two-leaved door and a ring of silver. In the porch stood two benches of marble, spread with the finest carpets, and on one of them sat a, man of comely and reverend aspect, clad in sumptuous apparel and attended by eve white slaves, like moons.

When Ibrahim saw the street, he knew it by the description the bookseller had given him; so he saluted the man, who returned his greeting and bidding him welcome, made him sit down and asked him of his case. Quoth Ibrahim, 'I am a stranger and desire of thy favour that thou look me out a house in this street where I may take up my abode.' With this the other cried out, saying, 'Ho, Ghezaleh!' And there came forth to him a slave-girl, who said, 'At thy service, O my lord!' 'Take some servants,' said her master, 'and go to such a house and clean it and furnish it with all that is needful for this well-favoured youth.'

So she went forth and did as he bade her; whilst the old man took the youth and showed him the house; and he said, 'O my lord, what is the rent of this house?' 'O bright of face,' answered the other, 'I will take no rent of thee, what while thou abidest there.' Ibrahim thanked him for this and the old man called another slave-girl, whereupon there came forth to him a damsel like the sun, to whom said he, 'Bring chess.' So she brought it and one of the servants set the board; whereupon said his host to Ibrahim, 'Wilt thou play with me?' And he answered, 'Yes.' So they played several games and Ibrahim beat him. 'Well done, O youth!' exclaimed the other. 'Thou art indeed perfect in qualities. By Allah, there is not one in Baghdad can beat me, and yet thou hast beaten me!'

When they had made ready the house and furnished it with all that was needful, the old man delivered the keys to Ibrahim and said to him, 'O my lord, wilt thou not enter my house and honour me by eating of my bread?' He assented and entering with him, found it a handsome and godly house, decorated with gold and full of all manner pictures and furniture and other things, such as the tongue availeth not to set out. The old man welcomed him and called for food, whereupon they brought a table of the make of Senaa of Yemen and spread it with all manner rare meats, than which there was nought costlier nor more delicious. So Ibrahim ate till he was satisfied, after which be washed his hands and proceeded to look at the house and furniture. Presently, he turned to look for the leather bag, but found it not and said, [in himself,] 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme! I have eaten a morsel worth a dirhem or two and have lost a bag wherein is thirty thousand dinars' worth: but I seek aid of God.' And he was silent and could not speak for the greatness of his trouble.

Presently his host brought the chess and said to him, 'Wilt thou play with me?' And he said, 'Yes.' So they played and the old man beat him. 'Well done!' said Ibrahim and left playing and rose; whereupon said his host, 'What ails thee, O youth?' And he answered, 'I want the bag.' So the old man rose and brought it out to him, saying, 'Here it is, O my lord. Wilt thou now return to playing with me?' 'Yes,' replied Ibrahim. So they played and the young man beat him. Quoth the other, 'When thy thought was occupied with the bag, I beat thee: but, now I have brought it back to thee, thou beatest me. But, tell me, O my son, what countryman art thou.' 'I am from Egypt,' answered Ibrahim. 'And what is the cause of thy coming to Baghdad?' asked the other; whereupon Ibrahim brought out the portrait and said to him, 'Know, O uncle, that I am the son of El Khesib, lord of Egypt, and I saw with a bookseller this picture, which ravished my wit. I asked him who painted it and he said, "He who wrought it is a man, Aboulcasim es Sendelani by name, who dwells in a street called the Street of

Saffron in the Kerkh quarter of Baghdad." So I took with me somewhat of money and came hither alone, none knowing of my case; and I desire of the fulness of thy bounty that thou direct me to Aboulcasim, so I may ask him of the manner of his painting this picture and whose portrait it is. And whatsoever he desireth of me, that will I give him.'

'By Allah, O my son,' said his host, 'I am Aboulcasim es Sendelani, and this is an extraordinary thing how fate hath thus led thee to me!' When Ibrahim heard this, he rose to him, and embraced him and kissed his head and hands, saying, 'God on thee, tell me whose portrait it is.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the other and rising, opened a closet and brought out a number of books, in which he had painted the same picture. Then said he, 'Know, O my son, that the original of this portrait is the daughter of my father's brother, whose name is Aboulleith. She dwells in Bassora, of which city her father is governor, and her name is Jemileh. There is not a fairer than she on the face of the earth; but she is averse from men and cannot hear speak of them in her company. Now I once repaired to my uncle, to the intent that he should marry her to me, and was lavish of wealth to him; but he would not consent; and when his daughter knew of my offer, she was enraged and sent to me to say, amongst other things, "If thou have wit, tarry not in this city; else wilt thou perish and thy blood will be on thine own head." For she is a virago of viragoes. So I left Bassora, broken-hearted, and limned this portrait of her in books and scattered them abroad in various countries, so haply they might fall into the hands of a comely youth like thyself and he contrive to win to her and peradventure she might fall in love with him, purposing to take a promise of him that, when he should have gotten possession of her, he would show her to me, though but for a moment from afar off.'

When Ibrahim heard this, he bowed his head awhile in thought and Es Sendelani said to him, 'O my son, I have not seen in Baghdad a comelier than thou, and meseems tent, when she sees thee, she will love thee. Art thou willing, therefore, in case thou foregather with her and get possession of her, to show her to me, if but for a moment from afar?' 'Yes,' answered Ibrahim, and the painter rejoined, 'This being so, abide with me till thou set out.' 'I cannot tarry longer,' replied the youth; 'for my heart is all afire with love of her.' 'Have patience three days,' said Es Sendelani, 'till I fit thee out a ship, wherein thou mayst go to Bassora.' So he waited whilst the painter equipped him a ship and stored it with all that he needed of meat and drink and so forth.

When the three days were past, he said to Ibrahim, 'Make ready for the voyage; for I have equipped thee a ship and furnished it with all thou requireth. The ship is my property and the sailors are of my servants. In the vessel is what will suffice thee till thy return, and I have charged the crew to serve thee till thou come back in safety.' So Ibrahim took leave of his host and embarking, sailed down the river till he came to Bassora, where he took out a hundred dinars and offered them to the sailors; but they said, 'We have gotten our hire of our master.' 'Take this by way of largesse,' answered he; 'and I will not acquaint him therewith.' So they took it and blessed him.

Then he landed and entering the town, enquired for the merchants' lodging and was directed to a khan called the Khan of Hemdan. So he betook himself to the market where stood the khan in question, and all eyes were attracted to him by reason of his exceeding beauty and grace. He entered the khan, with one of the sailors in his

company, and enquiring for the porter, was directed to an old man of reverend aspect. He saluted him and the porter returned his greeting; after which Ibrahim said to him, 'O uncle, hast thou a decent chamber?' 'Yes,' answered he and taking him and the sailor, opened to them an elegant chamber, decorated with gold, and said, 'O youth, this chamber befitteth thee.' Ibrahim pulled out two dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'Take these as key-money.' And the porter took them and blessed him.

Then Ibrahim sent the sailor back to the ship and entered the chamber, where the porter abode with him and served him, saying, 'O my lord, thy coming hath brought us joy.' Ibrahim gave him a, dinar, saying, 'Buy us bread and meat and wine and sweetmeats with this.' So the porter went to the market and buying ten dirhems' worth of victual, brought it back to Ibrahim and gave him the other ten dirhems. But he said to him, 'Spend them on thyself;' whereat the porter rejoiced mightily. Then he ate a cake of bread, with a little seasoning, and gave the rest to the porter, saying, 'Carry this to the people of thy household.' So the porter carried it to his family and said to them, 'Methinketh there is not on the face of the earth a more generous than the young man who is come to lodge with us this day, nor yet a pleasanter than he. If he abide with us, we shall grow rich.'

Then he returned to Ibrahim and found him weeping; so he sat down and began to rub his feet and kiss them, saying, 'O my lord, why weepest thou? May God not make thee weep!' 'O uncle,' said Ibrahim, 'I have a mind to drink with thee this night.' And the porter answered, 'I hear and obey.' So he gave him ten dinars, saying, 'Buy up fruit and wine and dessert, and flowers and five fat fowls and bring me a lute.' The porter went out and buying what he had ordered, said to his wife, 'Strain this wine and cook us this food and look thou dress it daintily, for this young man overwhelms us with his bounties.' So she did as he bade her, to the utmost of desire; and he took the victuals and carried them to Ibrahim. Then they ate and drank and made merry; and Ibrahim wept and repeated the following verses:

O friend, though I should barter life for travail all in vain,
And all my wealth and all the world and that it doth contain
And all the meads of Paradise, to boot, against one hour
Of union, my heart to buy at such a price were fain.

Then he gave a great sob and fell down in a swoon. The porter sighed, and when he came to himself, he said to him, 'O my lord, what is it makes thee weep and who is she to whom thou alludest in these verses? Indeed, she cannot be but as dust to thy feet.' Ibrahim made him no answer, but, rising, brought out a parcel of the richest women's clothes and said to him, 'Take this to thy harem.' So he carried it to his wife and she returned with him to the young man's lodging and found him weeping, whereupon quoth the porter to him, 'Verily, thou breakest our hearts! Tell us what fair one thou desirest, and she shall be thy handmaid.' 'O uncle,' answered he, 'know that I am the son of El Khesib, lord of Egypt, and I am enamoured of Jemileh, daughter of the lord Aboulleith.' 'Allah! Allah!' exclaimed the porter's wife. 'O my brother, leave this talk, lest any hear of us and we perish. For there is not on the face of the earth a more masterful than she nor may any name to her the name of a man, for she is averse from men. Wherefore, O my son, turn from her to other than her.'

When Ibrahim heard this, he wept sore, and the porter said to him, 'I have nothing save my life; but that I will venture for thy love and contrive thee a means of bringing thee to thy desire.' Then they went out from him and on the morrow, he betook himself to the bath and donned a suit of royal raiment, after which he returned to his lodging. Presently the porter and his wife came in to him and said, 'Know, O my lord, that there is a humpbacked tailor here who sews for the lady Jemileh. Go thou to him and acquaint him with thy case; peradventure he will put thee in the way of attaining thy desire.'

So Ibrahim arose and betaking himself to the shop of the humpbacked tailor, went in to him and found with him ten white slaves, as they were moons. He saluted them and they returned his greeting and made him sit down; and indeed they rejoiced in him and were amazed at his beauty and grace. Now he had torn his pocket with intent and he said to the hunchback, 'I desire that thou sew me up my pocket.' So the tailor took a needleful of silk and sewed up his pocket; whereupon Ibrahim gave him five dinars and returned to his lodging. Quoth the tailor, 'What have I done for this youth, that he should give me five dinars?' And he passed the night pondering his beauty and generosity.

On the morrow Ibrahim returned to the shop and saluted the tailor, who returned his greeting and welcomed him and made much of him. Then he sat down and said to the hunchback, 'O uncle, sew up my pocket, for I have torn it again.' 'On my head and eyes, O my son,' answered the tailor and sewed it up; whereupon Ibrahim gave him ten dinars and he took them, amazed at his beauty and generosity. Then said he, 'By Allah, O youth, needs must there be a reason for this conduct of thine, for this is no matter of sewing up a pocket. Tell me the truth of thy case. If thou be enamoured of one of these boys, by Allah, there is not among them a comelier than thou, for they are all as the dust of thy feet; and behold, they are all thy slaves and at thy disposal. Or if it be other than this, tell me.' 'O uncle,' replied Ibrahim, 'this is no place for talk, for my case is strange and my affair extraordinary.' 'If it be so,' rejoined the tailor, 'come with me to a privy place.' So saying, he took the youth by the hand and carrying him into a chamber behind the shop, said, 'Now tell me.'

So Ibrahim related his whole story to the tailor, who was amazed at his speech and said, 'O my son, fear God [and have mercy] on thyself, for she of whom thou speakest is a virago and averse from men. Wherefore, O my brother, do thou guard thy tongue, or thou wilt destroy thyself.' When Ibrahim heard the hunchback's words, he wept sore and clinging to the tailor's skirts, said, 'Help me, O my lord, or I am a dead man; for I have left my kingdom and the kingdom of my father and grandfather and am become a stranger and lonely in the lands; nor can I endure without her.' When the tailor saw how it was with him, he had compassion on him and said, 'O my son, I have but my life and that I will venture for thy love, for thou makest my heart ache. [Come again] to-morrow [and meanwhile] I will contrive thee somewhat whereby thy heart shall be solaced.' Ibrahim called down blessings on him and returning to the khan, told the porter what the tailor had said, and he answered, 'Indeed, he hath dealt kindly with thee.'

Next morning, the youth donned his richest clothes and taking a purse of money, repaired to the tailor and saluted him. Then he sat down and said, 'O uncle, fulfil thy

promise to me.' Quoth the hunchback, 'Arise forthright and take three fat fowls and three ounces of sugar-candy and two small jugs of wine and a cup. Lay all these in a bag and to-morrow, after the morning-prayers, take boat with them, bidding the boatman row thee down the river below Bassora. If he say to thee, "I cannot go farther than a parasang [from the city]," do thou answer, "As thou wilt;" but, when he shall have come so far, tempt him with money to carry thee farther; and the first garden thou wilt see after this will be that of the lady Jemileh. Go up to the gate and there thou wilt see two high steps, carpeted with brocade, and seated thereon a hunchback like unto me. Do thou complain to him of thy case and solicit his favour: it may be he will have compassion on thee and bring thee to the sight of her, though but for a moment from afar. This is all I can do for thee; and except he be moved to pity for thee, we are dead men, thou and I. This then is my counsel, and the matter rests with God the Most High.' Quoth Ibrahim, 'I seek aid of God; what He wills, is; and there is no power and no virtue save in Him!' Then he returned to his lodging and taking the things the tailor had named, laid them in a small bag.

On the morrow, as soon as it was day, he went down to the bank of the Tigris, where he found a boatman asleep; so he awoke him and giving him ten dinars, bade him row him down the river below Bassora. 'O my lord,' answered the man, '[it must be] on condition that I go no farther than a parasang; for if I overpass that distance by a span, I am a lost man, and thou too.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' said Ibrahim. So he took him and dropped down the river with him till he drew near the garden, when he said to him, 'O my son, I can go no farther; for, if I overpass this limit, we are both dead men.' Whereupon Ibrahim pulled out other ten dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'Take this spending-money and better thy case therewithal.' The boatman was ashamed to refuse him and fared on with him, saying, 'I commit the affair to God the Most High!' When they came to the garden, the youth arose, in his joy, whilst the boat was yet a spear's cast from the land, and springing ashore, cast himself down, whilst the boatman turned and fled.

Then Ibrahim went up to the garden-gate, which stood open, and saw in the porch a couch of ivory, whereon sat a humpbacked man of pleasant favour, clad in gold-laced clothes and bearing in his hand a mace of silver, plated with gold. So he hastened up to him and seizing his hand, kissed it; whereupon quoth the hunchback, 'O my son, who art thou and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither?' And indeed, when he saw the youth, he was amazed at his beauty. 'O uncle,' answered Ibrahim, 'I am an ignorant boy and a stranger;' and he wept The hunchback took pity on him and taking him up on the couch, wiped away his tears and said to him, 'No harm shall come to thee. If thou be in debt, may God quit thy debt; and if thou be in fear, may He appease thy fear!' 'O uncle,' replied Ibrahim, 'I am neither in fear nor in debt, but have wealth in plenty, thanks to God.' 'Then, O my son,' rejoined the other, 'what is thine occasion, that thou ventureth thyself and thy beauty to a place, wherein is destruction?'

So he told him his story and discovered to him his case, whereupon he bowed his head awhile, then said to him, 'Was it the humpbacked tailor who directed thee to me?' 'Yes,' answered Ibrahim, and the keeper said, 'This is my brother, and he is a blessed man. But, O my son, had not the love of thee gotten hold upon my heart and had I not taken compassion on thee, verily thou wert lost, thou and my brother and the

porter of the khan and his wife. For know that this garden hath not its like on the face of the earth and that it is called the Garden of the Pearl, nor hath any entered it in all my life, except the Sultan and myself and its mistress Jemileh; and I have dwelt here twenty years and never yet saw any else come dither. Every forty days the lady Jemileh comes hither in a bark and lands in the midst of her women, under a canopy of satin, whose skirts ten damsels hold up with hooks of gold, whilst she enters, and I see nothing of her. Nevertheless, I have but my life and I will venture it for thy sake.'

Ibrahim kissed his hands and the keeper said to him, 'Abide with me, till I contrive somewhat for thee.' Then he took him by the hand and carried him into the garden, which when he saw, he deemed it Paradise, for therein were trees intertwining and tall palms and watery welling and birds carolling with various voices. Presently, the keeper brought him to a pavilion and said to him, 'This is where the lady Jemileh sitteth.' So he examined it and found it of the rarest of pleasure-places, full of all manner paintings in gold and ultramarine. It had four doors, to which one mounted by five steps, and in its midst was a basin of water, to which led down steps of gold, set with precious stones. Midmost the pool was a fountain of gold, with figures, large and small, and water pouring from their mouths; and when, by reason of the issuing forth of the water, they piped and whistled in various tones, it seemed to the hearer as though he were in Paradise. Round the pavilion ran a channel of water, with conduits of silver, and it was covered with brocade. To the left of the pavilion was a lattice of silver, giving upon a green park, wherein were all manner wild cattle and gazelles and hares, and on the right hand was another lattice, overlooking a meadow full of birds of all sorts, warbling in various voices and bewildering the hearers with delight.

The youth was ravished at all he saw and sat down in the doorway by the gardener, who said to him, 'How deemest thou of my garden?' Quoth Ibrahim, 'It is the Paradise of the world.' Whereat the gardener laughed and rising, was absent awhile and presently returned with a tray, full of fowls and quails and sweetmeats of sugar and other dainties, which he set before Ibrahim, saying, 'Eat thy fill.' So he ate till he had enough, whereat the keeper rejoiced and said, 'By Allah, this is the fashion of kings and kings' sons!' Then said he, 'O Ibrahim, what hast thou in yonder bag?' So he opened it before him and the keeper said, 'Take it with thee; it will serve thee when the lady Jemileh cometh; for, when once she is come, I shall not be able to bring thee food..

Then he rose and taking the youth by the hand, brought him to a place over against the pavilion, where he made him a bower among the trees and said to him, 'Get thee up here, and when she comes, thou wilt see her and she will not see thee. When she sings, drink thou to her singing, and when she departs, God willing, thou shalt return in safety whence thou camest. This is the best I can do for thee and on God be our dependence!' Ibrahim thanked him and would have kissed his hand, but he forbade him. Then he laid the bag in the bower and the keeper said to him, 'O Ibrahim, walk about and take thy pleasure in the garden and eat of its fruits, for thy mistress's coming is appointed for to-morrow.' So he took his pleasure in the garden and ate of its fruits; after which he passed the night with the keeper.

When the morning arose and gave forth its light and shone, he prayed the morning-prayer and presently the keeper came to him with a pale face, and said to him, 'Rise, O my son, and go up into the bower; for the slave-girls are come, to set the place

in order, and she cometh after them; and beware lest thou spit or sneeze or blow thy nose; else we are dead men, thou and I.' So Ibrahim rose and went up into the bower, whilst the keeper went away, saying, 'God grant thee safety, O my son!'

Presently up came four slave-girls, whose like none ever saw, and entering the pavilion, put off their clothes and washed it. Then they sprinkled it with rose-water and incensed it with ambergris and aloes-wood and spread it with brocade. After these came other fifty damsels, with instruments of music, and amongst them Jemileh, within a canopy of red brocade, the skirts whereof the slave-girls bore up with hooks of gold, till she had entered the pavilion, so that Ibrahim saw nought of her nor of her dress. So he said in himself, 'By Allah, all my labour is lost! But needs must I wait to see how the case will be.' Then the damsels brought meat and drink and they ate and drank and washed their hands, after which they set her a stool and she sat down. Then they all played on instruments of music and sang with ravishing voices, without compare.

Presently, out came an old woman, a duenna and clapped her hands and danced, whilst the girls pulled her hither and thither, till the curtain was lifted and out came Jemileh, laughing. She was clad in [costly] robes and ornaments, and on her head was a crown set with pearls and jewels. About her neck she wore a necklace of pearls and her waist was clasped with a girdle of chrysolite bugles, with tassels of rubies and pearls. The damsels kissed the earth before her, and when Ibrahim saw her, he took leave of his senses and his wit was dazed and his thought confounded for amazement at the sight of loveliness whose like is not on the face of the earth. He fell into a swoon and coming to himself weeping-eyed, recited the following verses:

I see thee nor mine eyes I shut, lest for a space
My lids should veil from me the vision of thy face;
For, though with every glance I gazed on thee for e'er,
Mine eyes might not suffice thy beauties to embrace.

Then said the old woman to the girls, 'Let ten of you arise and dance and sing.' And Ibrahim said in himself, 'I wish the lady Jemileh would dance.' When the damsels had made an end of their dance, they came round the princess and said to her, 'O my lady, we would have thee dance amongst us, so the measure of our joy may be filled, for never saw we a more delightful day than this.' Quoth Ibrahim to himself, 'Doubtless the gates of heaven are open and God hath granted my prayer.'

Then the damsels kissed her feet and said to her, 'By Allah, we never saw thee light of heart as to-day!' Nor did they cease to importune her, till she put off her [outer] clothes and abode in a shift of cloth of gold, broidered with various jewels, discovering breasts that stood out like pomegranates and unveiling a face as it were the moon on the night of its full. Then she began to dance, and Ibrahim beheld motions whose like he had never in his life seen, for she showed such rare skill and wonderful invention, that she made men forget the dancing of the bubbles in the wine-cups and called to mind the inclining of the turbans from the heads; even as saith of her the poet:

As she would, she was created, after such a wise that lo,
She in beauty's mould was fashioned, perfect, neither less nor mo'.

'Tis as if she had been moulded out of water of pure pearls;
In each member of her beauty is a very moon, I trow.

And as saith another:

A dancer, like a willow-wand her shape; her movements sweet When
I behold, for ravishment my soul is like to fleet.
Nor this nor t'other foot of her rests aye, when she doth dance;
'Tis as the fire within my heart were underneath her feet.

As he gazed upon her, she chanced to look up and saw him, whereupon her face changed and she said to her women, 'Sing ye till I come back to you.' Then, taking up a knife half a cubit long. she made towards him, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!'

When Ibrahim saw this, he [well-nigh] lost his wits; But, when she drew near him and her eyes fell upon his face, the knife dropped from her hand, and she exclaimed, 'Glory to Him who turneth hearts!' Then said she to him, 'O youth, be of good cheer, for thou art safe from that thou fearest!' Whereupon Ibrahim fell to weeping and she to wiping away his tears with her hand and saying, 'O youth, tell me who thou art, and what brought thee hither.' He kissed the earth before her and clung to her skirt; and she said, 'No harm shall come to thee; for, by Allah, no male hath ever filled mine eyes but thyself! Tell me, then, who thou art.'

So he told her his story from first to last, whereat she marvelled and said to him, 'O my lord, I conjure thee by Allah, tell me if thou be Ibrahim ben el Khesib?' 'I am,' answered he, and she threw herself upon him, saying, 'O my lord, it was thou madest me averse from men; for, when I heard that there was in the land of Egypt a youth than whom there was no goodlier on the face of the earth, I fell in love with thee by report and my heart became enamoured of thee, for that which was told me of thy surpassing comeliness, so that I was, in respect of thee, even as saith the poet:

My ear my eye prevented in loving him, trow I; For whiles the ear, it chances, doth love before the eye.

So praised be God who hath shown me thy face! But, by Allah, had it been other than thou, I had crucified the keeper of the garden and the porter of the khan and the tailor and him who had recourse to them! But how shall I contrive for somewhat thou mayst eat, without the knowledge of my women?' Quoth Ibrahim, 'I have here what we may eat and drink.' And he opened the bag before her. She took a fowl and began to feed him and he to feed her; which when he saw, it seemed to him that this was a dream. Then be brought out wine and they drank what while the damsels sang on; nor did they leave to do thus from morn to noon, when she rose and said, 'Go now and get thee a boat and await me in such a place, till I come to thee; for I have no patience left to brook separation from thee.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I have with me a ship of my own, whose crew are in my hire, and they await me.' 'This is as we would have it,' rejoined she and returning to her women, said to them, 'Come, let us go back to our palace.' 'Why should we return now,' asked they, 'seeing that we used to abide here three days?' Quoth she, 'I feel an exceeding oppression in myself, as I were sick, and I fear lest this increase upon me.'

So they answered, 'We hear and obey,' and donning their clothes, went down to the river-bank and embarked; whereupon, the keeper of the garden came up to Ibrahim and said to him, knowing not what had happened, 'O Ibrahim, thou hast not had the luck to enjoy the sight of her, and I fear lest she have seen thee, for it is her custom to abide here three days.' 'She saw me not, nor I her,' replied Ibrahim; 'for she came not forth of the pavilion.' 'True, O my son,' rejoined the keeper; 'for, had she seen thee, we were both dead men: but tarry with me till she come again next week, and thou shalt see her and take thy fill of looking on her.' 'O my lord,' replied the prince, 'I have with me good and fear for it. Moreover, I left men behind me and I fear lest they take advantage of my absence.' 'O my son,' said the keeper, 'it is grievous to me to part with thee;' and he embraced him and bade him farewell.

Then Ibrahim returned to the khan where he lodged, and foregathering with the doorkeeper, took of him his good [that he had left with him]. Quoth the latter, 'Good news, if it be the will of God!' But Ibrahim said, 'I found no way to my desire, and now I am minded to return to my people.' Whereupon the porter wept; then taking up his goods, he carried them to the ship and bade him farewell. Ibrahim repaired to the place which Jemileh had appointed him and awaited her there till it grew dark, when she came up, disguised as a swash-buckler, with a round beard and her waist bound with a girdle. In one hand she held a bow and arrows and in the other a drawn sword, and she said to him, 'Art thou Ibrahim, son of El Khesib, lord of Egypt?' 'I am he,' answered the prince; and she said, 'What good-for-nought art thou, that comest to debauch kings' daughters? Come; speak with the Sultan.'

Therewith he fell down in a swoon and the sailors well-nigh died in their skins for fear; but, when she saw what had betided her lover, she pulled off her beard and throwing down her sword, unbound the girdle from her waist, whereupon he knew her for the lady Jemileh and said to her, 'By Allah, thou hast rent my heart in sunder!' Then said he to the boatmen, 'Hasten she vessel's course.' So they spread the sail and putting off, fared on with all diligence; nor was it many days before they reached Baghdad, where they saw a ship lying by the river-bank. When the sailors saw them, they cried out to the crew, saying, 'Ho, such an one and such an one, we give you joy of your safety!' Then they drove their ship against Ibrahim's and he looked and beheld Aboulcasim es Sendelani in the other boat.

When the latter saw them, he exclaimed, 'This is what I sought,' and he said to Ibrahim, 'Praised be God for safety! Hast thou accomplished thine errand?' 'Yes,' answered the young man. Now Aboulcasim had a flambeau before him; so he brought it near unto Ibrahim's boat, and when Jemileh saw him, she was troubled and her colour changed: but, when he saw her, he said, 'Go ye in God's safe keeping. I am bound to Bassora, on an errand to the Sultan; but the gift is for him who is present.' Then he brought out a box of sweetmeats, wherein was henbane, and threw it into the boat: whereupon quoth Ibrahim to Jemileh, 'O solace of mine eyes, eat of this.' But she wept and said, 'O Ibrahim, knowest thou who that is?' 'Yes,' answered he, 'it is such an one.' Quoth she, 'He is my father's brother's son and sought me aforetime in marriage of my father; but I would not accept of him. And now he is gone to Bassora and most like he will tell my father of us.' 'O my lady,' rejoined Ibrahim, 'he will not reach

Bassora, till we are at Mosul.' But they knew not what lurked for them in the secret purpose of God.

Then he ate of the sweetmeat, but hardly had it reached his stomach when he smote the ground with his head. [He lay insensible till] near dawn, when he sneezed and the henbane issued from his nostrils. With this, he opened his eyes and found himself naked and cast out among ruins; so he buffeted his face and said, 'Doubtless

this is a trick that Es Sendelani hath played me.' And he knew not whither he should go, for he had upon him nothing but his trousers. However, he rose and walked on a little, till he espied the prefect of police coming towards him, with a company of men with swords and staves; whereat he took fright and seeing a ruined bath, hid himself there. Presently, his foot stumbled at something; so he put his hand on it, and it became befouled with blood. He wiped his hand upon his trousers, unknowing what had befouled it, and put it out a second time, when, behold, it fell upon a dead body, and the head came up in his hand. He threw it down, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High!' and took refuge in one of the cabinets of the bath.

Presently, the prefect stopped at the door of the bath and said, 'Enter this place and search.' So ten of them entered with cressets, and Ibrahim of his fear retired behind a wall and looking upon the dead body, saw it to be that of a young lady with a face like the full moon. She was clad in costly raiment and her head lay on one side and her body on the other; and when he saw this, terror got hold upon his heart. Then the prefect of police entered and said, 'Search the corners of the bath.' So they entered the place where Ibrahim was, and one of them, seeing him, came up to him with a knife, half a cubit long, in his hand. When he drew near him, he said, 'Glory be to God, the Creator of this fair face! O youth, whence art thou?' Then he took him by the hand and said, 'O youth, why slewest thou this woman?' 'By Allah,' replied Ibrahim, 'I slew her not, nor know I who slew her, and I entered not this place but in fear of you!' And he told him his case, saying, 'God on thee, do me no wrong, for I am in concern for myself!' Then he took him and carried him to the prefect, who, seeing the marks of blood on his hands, said, 'This needs no proof: strike off his head.' When Ibrahim heard this, he wept sore and recited the following verses, with the tears streaming from his eyes:

We tread the steps to us of destiny forewrit,
For he to whom a way's decreed must needs submit
To walk therein, and he whose death is fore-ordained
To be in such a land shall die in none but it.

Then he gave a sob and fell down in a swoon; and the headsman's heart was moved to pity for him and he exclaimed, 'By Allah, this is no murderer's face!' But the prefect said, 'Strike off his head.' So they seated him on the carpet of blood and bound his eyes; after which the headsman drew his sword and asking leave of the prefect, was about to strike of his head, whilst he cried out, saying, 'Alas, my strangerhood!' when he heard a noise of horse coming up and one cried out, saying, 'Leave him! Stay thy hand, O headsman!'

Now there was for this a rare reason and an extraordinary cause; and it was thus. El Khesib, lord of Egypt, had sent his chamberlain to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid with presents and a letter, saying, 'My son hath been missing this year past, and I hear that he is in Baghdad; wherefore I crave of the bounty of the Vicar of God that he make search for tidings of him and do his endeavour to and him and send him back to me by the chamberlain.' When the Khalif read the letter, he commanded the chief of the police to search out the truth of the matter, and he accordingly proceeded to enquire after Ibrahim, till it was told him that he was at Bassora, whereupon he informed the Khalif, who wrote a letter [to the viceroy] and giving it to the Chamberlain of Egypt, bade him repair to Bassora and take with him a company of the vizier's followers. So, of his solicitude for the son of his lord, the chamberlain set out forthright and happened [by the way] upon Ibrahim, as he sat upon the carpet of blood.

When the prefect saw the chamberlain, he alighted to him, and the latter said, 'What young man is that and what is his case?' The prefect told him how the matter stood and the chamberlain said (and indeed he knew him not for the son of the Sultan, for that his charms were wasted [and his favour changed] by reason of the much terror and affliction he had suffered), 'Verily this young man hath no murderer's face.' And he bade loose him and bring him to him. So they loosed him and brought him to the chamberlain, who said to him, 'O youth, tell me thy case and how comes this slain woman with thee.' Ibrahim looked at him and knowing him, said to him, 'Out on thee! Dost thou not know me? Am I not Ibrahim, son of thy lord? Belike thou art come in quest of me.'

With this the chamberlain considered him straitly and knowing him right well, threw himself at his feet; which when the prefect saw, his colour changed; and the chamberlain said to him, 'Out on thee, O tyrant! Was it thine intent to kill the son of my master El Khesib, lord of Egypt?' The prefect kissed his skirt, saying, 'O my lord, how should I know him? We found him in this plight and saw the damsel lying slain by his side.' 'Out on thee!' rejoined the chamberlain. 'Thou art not fit for the prefectship. This is a lad of fifteen and he hath not killed a sparrow; so how should he be a murderer? Why didst thou not have patience with him and question him of his case?'

Then the chamberlain and the prefect commanded to make search for the young lady's murderer. So they re-entered the bath and finding him, brought him to the prefect who carried him to the Khalif and acquainted him with that which had happened. Er Reshid bade put the murderer to death and sending for Ibrahim, smiled in his face and said to him, 'Tell me thy story and that which hath betided thee.' So he told him his story from first to last, and it was grievous to the Khalif, who called Mesrour, his swordbearer, and said to him, 'Go straightway and fall upon the house of Aboulcasim es Sendelani and bring me him and the young lady.' So he went forth at once and breaking into the house, found Jemileh bound with her hair and nigh upon death. So he loosed her and taking the painter, carried them both to the Khalif, who marvelled at Jemileh's beauty. Then he turned to Es Sendelani and said, 'Take him and cut off his hands, wherewith he beat this young lady; then crucify him and deliver his goods and possessions to Ibrahim.'

They did his bidding, and as they were thus, in came Aboulleith, governor of Bassora, the lady Jemileh's father, seeking aid of the Khalif against Ibrahim ben el Khesib and complaining to him that the latter had taken his daughter. Quoth Er Reshid, 'He hath been the means of delivering her from torture and death.' Then he sent for Ibrahim, and when he came, he said to Aboulleith, 'Wilt thou not accept of this young man, son of the Sultan of Egypt, as husband to thy daughter?' 'Hearkening and obedience [are due] to God and to thee, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Aboulleith; whereupon the Khalif summoned the Cadi and the witnesses and married the young lady to Ibrahim. Moreover, he gave him all Es Sendelani's good and equipped him for his return to his own country, where he abode with Jemileh in the utmost of delight and the most perfect of contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and glory be to the [Ever-]Living One who dieth not!

Aboulhusn of Khorassan.

THE KHALIF El Mutezid Billah was a high-spirited and noble-minded prince; he had in Baghdad six hundred viziers and no whit of the affairs of the folk was hidden from him. He went forth one day, he and Ibn Hemdoun, to divert himself with observing his subjects and hearing the latest news of the folk, and being overtaken with the heats of noonday, they turned aside from the main thoroughfare into a little by-street, at the upper end whereof they saw a handsome and high-builded house, discoursing of its owner with the tongue of praise. They sat down at the gate to rest, and presently out came two servants, as they were moons on their fourteenth night. Quoth one of them to his fellow, 'Would some guest would seek admission! My master will not eat but with guests and we are come to this hour and I have seen no one.'

The Khalif marvelled at their speech and said, 'This is a proof of the hospitality of the master of the house; needs must we go in to him and note his generosity, and this shall be a means of favour betiding him from us.' So he said to the servant, 'Ask leave of thy master for the admission of a company of strangers.' For it was the Khalif's wont, whenas he was minded to observe his subjects, to disguise himself in a merchant's habit. The servant went in and told his master, who rejoiced and rising, came out to them in person. He was a comely and well-favoured man, clad in a tunic of Nishapour [silk] and a gold-laced mantle; and he dripped with scented waters and wore a ring of rubies on his hand. When he saw them, he said to them, 'Welcome and fair welcome to the lords who do us the utmost of favour by their coming!' So they entered the house and found it such as would make a man forget home and family, for it was as it were a piece of Paradise. Within it was a garden, full of all kinds of trees, confounding the beholder, and its dwelling-places were furnished with costly furniture. They sat down and the Khalif sat looking at the house and the furniture.

(Quoth Ibn Hemdoun), I looked at the Khalif and saw his countenance change, and being wont to know from his face whether he was pleased or angry, said to myself, 'I wonder what has vexed him.' Then they brought a golden basin and we washed our hands, after which they spread a silken cloth and set thereon a table of bamboo. When the covers were taken off the dishes, we saw therein meats [costly] as the flowers of Spring in the season of their utmost scarcity, in pairs and singly, and the host said, '[Eat,] O my lords, in the name of God! By Allah, hunger pricks me; so favour me by eating of this food, as is the fashion of the noble.'

Then he fell to tearing fowls apart and laying them before us, laughing the while and repeating verses and telling stories and talking gaily with quaint and pleasant sayings such as sorted with the entertainment. We ate and drank, then removed to another room, which confounded the beholder with its beauty and which reeked with exquisite perfumes. Here they brought us a tray of freshly-gathered fruits and delicious sweetmeats, whereat our joys redoubled and our cares ceased. But withal the Khalif ceased not to wear a frowning face and smiled not at that which gladdened the soul, albeit it was his wont to love mirth and merriment and the putting away of cares, and I

knew that he was free from envy and no oppressor. So I said to myself, 'I wonder what is the cause of his moroseness and ill-humour.'

Presently they brought the wine-tray, the uniter of friends, and clarified wine in flagons of gold and crystal and silver, and the host smote with a wand of bamboo on the door of an inner chamber, whereupon it opened and out came three damsels, high-bosomed maids, with faces like the sun at the fourth [hour] of the day, one a lute-player, another a harpist and the third a dancer. Then he set before us fruits and confections and drew between us and the damsels a curtain of brocade, with tassels of silk and rings of gold. The Khalif paid no heed to all this, but said to the host, who knew not who was in his company, 'Art thou noble?' 'No, my lord,' answered he; 'I am but a man of the sons of the merchants and am known among the folk as Aboulhusn Ali, son of Ahmed of Khorassan.'

Quoth the Khalif, 'Dost thou know me, O man?' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered he, 'I have no knowledge of either of your worships!' Then said I to him, 'O man, this is the Commander of the Faithful El Mutezid Billah, grandson of El Mutawekkil ala Allah.' Whereupon he rose and kissed the ground before the Khalif, trembling for fear of him. Then said he, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I conjure thee by the virtue of thy pious ancestors, if thou have seen in me any shortcoming or lack of good manners in thy presence, do thou forgive me!' 'As for that which thou hast done with us of hospitality,' replied the Khalif, 'nothing could have exceeded it; and as for that wherewith I have to reproach thee here, if thou tell me the truth respecting it and it commend itself to my reason, thou shalt be saved from me; but, if thou tell me not the truth, I will take thee with manifest proof and punish thee as I have never yet punished any.'

'God forbid that I should tell thee a lie!' answered the host. 'But what is it that thou reproachest to me, O Commander of the Faithful?' Quoth the Khalif, 'Since I entered thy house and looked upon its goodliness, I have noted the furniture and vessels therein, nay, even to thy clothes, and behold, on all of them is the name of my grandfather, El Mutawekkil ala Allah.' 'Yes,' answered Aboulhusn. 'O Commander of the Faithful (may God protect thee), truth is thine inner and sincerity thine outer garment and none may speak other than truly in thy presence.' The Khalif bade him be seated and said, 'Tell us.' So he sat down and said, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, whom God stablish with His aid and encompass with His bounties, that there is not a richer in Baghdad than am I nor than was my father: but do thou grant me thine ears and eyes and understanding, whilst I expound to thee the cause of that which thou reproachest to me.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Say thy say.'

'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' began Aboulhusn, 'that my father belonged to the markets of the money-changers and druggists and linendrapers and had in each a shop and an agent and all kinds of goods. Moreover, behind the money-changer's shop he had an apartment, where he might be private, appointing the shop for buying and selling. His wealth was beyond count and limit, but he had no child other than myself, and he loved me and was tenderly solicitous over me. When his last hour was at hand, he called me to him and commended my mother to my care and charged me to fear God the Most High. Then he died, may God have mercy upon him and continue the Commander of the Faithful [on life!] And I gave myself up to

pleasure and eating and drinking and took to myself friends and comrades and boon-companions. My mother used to forbid me from this and to blame me for it, but I would not hear a word from her, till my money was all gone, when I sold my lands and houses and nought was left me save the house in which I now dwell, and it is a goodly house, O Commander of the Faithful.

So I said to my mother, "I wish to sell the house." "O my son," answered she, "if thou sell it, thou wilt be dishonoured and wilt have no place wherein to take shelter." Quoth I, "It is worth five thousand dinars, and with one thousand thereof I will buy me another house and trade with the rest." "Wilt thou sell it to me at that price?" asked she; and I replied, "Yes." Whereupon she went to a coffer and opening it, took out a porcelain vessel, wherein were five thousand dinars. When I saw this, meseemed the house was all gold and she said to me, "O my son, think not that this is of thy father's good. By Allah, it was of my own father's money and I have treasured it up against a time of need; for, in thy father's time, I had no need of it."

I took the money from her and fell again to feasting and merry-making with my friends, without heeding my mother's words and admonitions, till the five thousand dinars came to an end, when I said to her, "I wish to sell the house." "O my son," answered she, "I forbade thee from selling it before, of my knowledge that thou hadst need of it; so how wilt thou sell it a second time?" Quoth I, "Do not multiply words upon me, for I must and will sell it." "Then sell it to me for fifteen thousand dinars," said she, "on condition that I take charge of thine affairs." So I sold her the house at that price and gave up my affairs into her charge, whereupon she sought out my father's factors and gave each of them a thousand dinars, keeping the rest in her own hands and ordering the outgoings and the incomings. Moreover she gave me money to trade withal and said to me, "Sit thou in thy father's shop." So I took up my abode in the chamber behind the shop in the market of the money-changers, and my friends came and bought of me and I sold to them; whereby I profited well and my wealth increased. When my mother saw me in this fair way, she discovered to me that which she had treasured up of jewels and pearls and gold, and I bought back my houses and lands that I had wasted and my wealth became great as before. I abode thus for some time, and the factors of my father came to me and I gave them goods, and I built me a second chamber behind the shop.

One day, as I sat in my shop, according to my wont, there came up to me a damsel, never saw eyes a fairer than she of favour, and said, "Is this the shop of Aboulhusn Ali ibn Ahmed el Khurasani?" "Yes," answered I. "Where is he?" asked she. "I am he," said I, and indeed my wit was dazed at the excess of her loveliness. She sat down and said to me, "Bid thy servant count me out three hundred dinars." So I bade him give her that sum and he counted it out to her and she took it and went away, leaving me stupefied. Quoth my clerk to me, "Dost thou know her?" And I answered, "No, by Allah!" "Then why," asked he, "didst thou bid me give her the money?" "By Allah," replied I, "I knew not what I said, of my amazement at her beauty and grace!" Then he rose and followed her, without my knowledge, but presently returned, weeping and with the mark of a blow on his face. I asked him what ailed him, and he said, "I followed the damsel, to see whither she went; but, when she was aware of me, she turned and dealt me this blow and all but put out my eye."

After this, a month passed, without my seeing her, and I abode bewildered for love of her; but, at the end of this time, she came again and saluted me, whereat I was like to fly for joy. She asked me how I did and said to me, "Belike thou saidst to thyself, 'What manner of trickstress is this, who hath taken my money and made off?'" "By Allah, O my lady," answered I, "my money and my life are all at thy service!" With this she unveiled herself and sat down to rest, with the jewels and ornaments playing over her face and bosom. Presently, she said to me, "Give me three hundred dinars." "I hear and obey," answered I and counted out to her the money. She took it and went away and I said to my servant, "Follow her." So he followed her, but returned mumchance, and some time passed without my seeing her. But, as I was sitting one day, she came up to me and after talking awhile, said to me, "Give me five hundred dinars, for I have occasion for them." I would have said to her, "Why should I give thee my money?" But excess of passion hindered me from speaking; for, whenever I saw her, I trembled in every limb and my colour paled and I forgot what I would have said and became even as saith the poet:

I may not chance to look on her on unexpected wise, But so amazed am I, I scarce can answer, for surprise.

So I counted her out the five hundred dinars and she took them and went away; whereupon I arose and followed her myself, till she came to the jewel-market, where she stopped at a man's shop and took of him a necklace. Then she turned and seeing me, said, "Pay [him] five hundred dinars for me." When the jeweller saw me, he rose to me and made much of me, and I said to him, "Give her the necklace and be the price at my charge." "I hear and obey," replied he, and she took it and went away. I followed her, till she came to the Tigris and took boat there, whereupon I signed to the ground, as who should say, "I kiss it before thee." She went off, laughing, and I stood, watching her, till I saw her land and enter a palace, which when I considered, I knew it for the palace of the Khalif El Mutawekkil. So I turned back, with all the trouble in the world fallen on my heart, for she had had of me three thousand dinars, and I said in myself, "She hath taken my money and ravished my wit, and belike I shall lose my life for love of her."

Then I returned home and told my mother all that had befallen me, and she said, "O my son, beware how thou have to do with her after this, or thou art a lost man." When I went to my shop, my factor in the drug-market, who was a very old man, came to me and said, "O my lord, how is it that I see thee in ill case and with marks of chagrin upon thee? Tell me what ails thee." So I told him all that had befallen me with her and he said, "O my son, this is one of the women of the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and indeed she is the Khalif's favourite: so do thou reckon the money [expended] for the sake of God the Most High and occupy thyself no more with her. If she come again, beware lest she have to do with thee and tell me of this, that I may contrive thee somewhat, lest perdition betide thee." Then he went away and left me with a flame of fire in my heart.

At the end of the month she came again and I rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy. Quoth she, "What ailed thee to follow me?" And I said, "Excess of passion that is in my heart urged me to this," and I wept before her. She wept out of pity for me and said, "By Allah, there is not in thy heart aught of passion, but in mine is more! But

how shall I do? By Allah, I have no resource but to see thee thus once a month." Then she gave me a bill, saying, "Carry this to such an one, who is my factor, and take of him what is named therein." But I replied, "I have no need of money; be my money and my life thy sacrifice!" Quoth she, "I will assuredly contrive thee a means of access to me, whatever trouble it cost me." Then she took leave of me and went away; whilst I repaired to the old druggist and told him what had passed. He went with me to the Khalif's palace, which I knew for that which the lady had entered; and he was at a loss for a device.

Presently he espied a tailor sitting with his journeymen at work in his shop, opposite the lattice giving upon the river-bank, and said to me, "Yonder is one by whom thou shalt come to thy desire; but first tear thy pocket and go to him and bid him sew it up. When he hath done this, give him ten dinars." "I hear and obey," answered I and taking two pieces of Greek brocade, went to the tailor and bade him make of them four suits, two with surcoats and two without. When he had made an end of cutting them out and sewing them, I gave him to his hire much more than of wont, and he put out his hand to me with the clothes; but I said, "Take them for thyself and those who are with thee." And I fell to sitting with him and sitting long. Moreover, I bespoke of him other clothes and bade him hang them out in front of his shop, that the folk might see them and buy them. He did as I bade him, and whoso came forth of the palace and aught of the clothes pleased him, I made him a present thereof, even to the doorkeeper.

One day, the tailor said to me, "O my son, I would have thee tell me the truth of thy case; for thou hast bespoken of me a hundred costly suits, each worth much money, and hast given the most of them to the folk. This is no merchant's fashion, for a merchant calleth an account for [every] dirhem, and what can be the sum of thy capital and what thy gain every year, that thou givest these gifts? Tell me then the truth of thy case, that I may further thee to thy desire." Then, "I conjure thee by God," added he, "[tell me,] art thou not in love?" "Yes," answered I; and he said, "With whom?" Quoth I, "With one of the women of the Khalif's palace." And he exclaimed, "May God put them to shame! How long shall they seduce the folk? Knowest thou her name?" "No," answered I; and he said, "Describe her to me." So I described her to him and he said, "Out on it! This is the favourite lutanist of the Khalif El Mutawekkil. But she hath a servant, and do thou clap up a friendship with him; it may be he shall be the means of thy having access to her."

As we were talking, out came the servant in question from the palace, as he were the moon on its fourteenth night. Now I had before me the clothes that the tailor had made me, and they were of brocade of all colours. He began to look at them and examine them; then he came up to me and I rose and saluted him. "Who art thou?" asked he; and I answered, "I am a man of the merchants." Quoth he, "Wilt thou sell these clothes?" "Yes," replied I. So he chose out five of them and said to me, "How much these five?" Quoth I, "They are a present from me to thee, in earnest of friendship between us." At this he rejoiced and I went home and fetching a suit embroidered with jewels and jacinths, worth three thousand dinars, gave it to him.

He accepted it and carrying me into a room within the palace, said to me, "What is thy name among the merchants?" Quoth I, "I am a man of them." "Verily," rejoined

he, "I misdoubt me of thine affair." "Why so?" asked I. "Because," answered he, "thou hast bestowed on me a great matter and won my heart therewith, and I doubt not but thou art Aboulhusn of Khorassan the money-changer." With this I fell aweeping and he said to me, "Why dost thou weep? By Allah, she for whom thou weepest is yet more passionately in love with thee than thou with her! And indeed her case with thee is notorious among all the women of the palace. But what wouldst thou have?" Quoth I, "I would have thee succour me in my affliction." So he appointed me for the morrow and I returned home.

Next morning, I betook myself to him and waited in his chamber till he came, when he said to me, "Know that, when she returned to her apartment yesternight, after having made an end of her service about the Khalif's person, I related to her all that passed between me and thee and she is minded to foregather with thee. So abide thou with me till the end of the day." Accordingly I abode with him till dark, when he brought me a shirt of gold-inwoven stuff and a suit of the Khalif's apparel and clothing me therein, incensed me and I became most like the Khalif. Then he brought me to a gallery with rows of doors on each side and said to me, "These are the lodgings of the chief of the slave-girls; and when thou passest along the gallery, do thou lay a bean at each door, — for it is the Khalif's wont to do this every night, — till thou come to the second passage on thy right hand, when thou wilt see a door with a threshold of alabaster. Touch it with thy hand; or, if thou wilt, count the doors, so many, and enter the one whose marks are thus and thus. There thy mistress will see thee and take thee in with her. As for thy coming forth, God will make it easy to me, though I carry thee out in a chest."

Then he left me and returned, whilst I went on, counting the doors and laying at each a bean. When I had reached the middle of the gallery, I heard a great noise and saw the light of flambeaux coming towards me. As the light drew near me, I looked at it and behold the Khalif himself, surrounded by the slave-girls carrying flambeaux, and I heard one of the women [by whose door I had passed] say to another, "O my sister, have we two Khalifs? Verily, the Khalif hath already passed by my chamber and laid the bean at my door, as is his wont, and I smelt the perfumes and essences on him, and now I see the light of his flambeaux, and here he comes with them." "Indeed this is a strange thing," replied the other; "for none would dare disguise himself in the Khalif's habit."

Then the light drew near me, whilst I trembled in every limb; and up came an eunuch, crying out to the women and saying, "Hither!" Whereupon they turned aside to one of the chambers and entered. Then they came out again and went on till they came to the chamber of my mistress and I heard the Khalif say, "Whose chamber is this?" They answered, "This is the chamber of Shejeret ed Durr." And he said, "Call her." So they called her and she came out and kissed the feet of the Khalif, who said to her, "Wilt thou drink to-night?" Quoth she, "But for thy presence and the looking on thy face, I would not drink, for I have no mind to wine this night." Then said the Khalif to the eunuch, "Bid the treasurer give her such a necklace." And he commanded to enter her chamber. So the torches entered before him and he followed them into the apartment.

At the same moment, there came up to me a damsel, the lustre of whose face outshone that of the flambeau in her hand, and said, "Who is this?" Then she laid hold of me and carrying me into one of the chambers, said to me, "Who art thou?" I kissed the earth before her, saying, "I implore thee by Allah, O my lady, spare my blood and have pity on me and commend thyself unto God by saving my life!" And I wept for fear of death. Quoth she, "Doubtless, thou art a thief." "No, by Allah," answered I, "I am no thief. Seest thou on me the signs of thieves?" "Tell me the truth of thy case," said she, "and I will put thee in safety." So I said, "I am a silly, ignorant lover, whom passion and my ignorance have moved to do as thou seest, so that I am fallen into this peril." Quoth she, "Abide here till I come back to thee."

Then she went out and presently returning with some of her maids' clothes, clad me therein and bade me follow her. So I followed her till she came to her apartment and bade me enter. I went in and she brought me to a couch, whereon was a splendid carpet, and said, "Sit down here: no harm shall befall thee. Art thou not Aboulhusn el Khurasani, the money-changer?" And I answered, "Yes." "May God spare thy blood," rejoined she, "an thou speak truth! If thou be a thief, thou art a lost man, more by token that thou art dressed in the Khalif's habit and perfumed with his scents. But, if thou be indeed Aboulhusn, thou art safe and no hurt shall come to thee, for that thou art the lover of Shejeret ed Durr, who is my sister and stinteth never to name thee and tell us how she took of thee money, yet wast thou not chagrined, and how thou didst follow her to the river-bank and madest as thou wouldst kiss the ground in her honour; and her heart is yet more aflame for thee than thine for her. But how camest thou hither? Was it by her order or without? [If she hath bidden thee unto this,] she hath imperilled thy life. But what seekest thou in foregathering with her?"

"By Allah, O my lady," replied I, "it is I who have ventured my own life, and my desire in foregathering with her is but to look on her and hear her speech." And she said, "Thou hast spoken well." "O my lady," added I, "God is my witness that my soul prompteth me to no transgression against her honour." Quoth she, "In this intent may God deliver thee! Indeed compassion for thee hath taken hold upon my heart." Then she called her maid and said to her, "Go to Shejeret ed Durr and say to her, 'Thy sister salutes thee and bids thee to her; so favour her by coming to her this night, according to thy wont, for her breast is straitened.'" So the maid went out and presently returning, told her mistress that Shejeret ed Durr said, "May God bless me with thy long life and make me thy ransom! By Allah, hadst thou bidden me to other than this, I had not hesitated; but the Khalif's meagrims constrain me and thou knowest my rank with him.' But the other said to her maid, "Return to her and say, 'Nothing will serve but thou must come to my mistress, upon a privy matter between her and thee.'"

So the maid went out again and presently returned with the lady, whose face shone like the full moon. Her sister met her and embraced her; then said she, "Ho, Aboulhusn, come forth to her and kiss her hands." Now I was in a closet within the apartment; so I came out; and when my mistress saw me, she threw herself upon me and strained me to her bosom, saying, "How camest thou in the Khalif's clothes and his ornaments and perfumes? Tell me what hath befallen thee." So I related to her all that had befallen me and what I had suffered for fright and so forth; and she said, "What thou hast endured for my sake is grievous to me, and praised be God who hath

appointed the issue to be safety, and the fulfilment of safety is in thy entering my lodging and that of my sister." Then she carried me to her own apartment, saying to her sister, "I have made a covenant with him that I will not foregather with him unlawfully; but, as he hath ventured himself and incurred this great peril, I will be even as earth for his treading and as dust to his shoes." "In this intent may God deliver him!" replied her sister. "Thou shalt see," added my mistress, "how I will do, so I may foregather with him in the way of law, and needs must I lavish my heart's blood to contrive this."

As we were in talk, we heard a great noise and turning, saw the Khalif making for her lodging, of the greatness of the store he set by her; whereupon she hid me in an underground chamber and shut down the trap-door upon me. Then she went out to meet the Khalif, who entered and sat down, whilst she stood before him, to serve him, and commanded to bring wine. Now the Khalif loved a damsel by name Benjeh, who was the mother of El Mutezz Billah; but they had fallen out and in the pride of her beauty and grace, she would not [offer to] make peace with him, nor, for the dignity of the Khalifate and the Kingship, would he [offer to] make peace with her nor humble himself to her, albeit his heart was aflame with passion for her, but sought to divert his mind from her with her mates among the slave-girls and with going in to them in their chambers. Now he loved Shejeret ed Durr's singing: so he bade her sing. Accordingly she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

I marvel at the ruthless stress of fate against us two
And how it stinted, having wrought our union to undo.
I held aloof from thee, till, "Love he knoweth not," 'twas said
And did thee visit, till 'twas said, "He lacks of patience due."
Add to my transport, love of her, each night, and solacement
Of loves, the Resurrection be thy day of rendezvous!
She hath a skin like very silk and a soft speech and sweet:
Gracious to all, her words are nor too many nor too few.
Two eyes she hath, quoth God Most High, "Be," and forthright they were:
Even with the reason as doth wine, so with the hearts they do.

When the Khalif heard these verses, he was moved to exceeding delight, and I also was moved to delight in my hiding-place, and but for the bounty of God the Most High, I had cried out and we had been discovered. Then she sang these also:

I clip him close and still my soul doth yearn for him full fain:
Can aught of straiter union be than clips for lovers twain?
I kiss his mouth, to do away my heat; but every kiss,
Alack! doth only aggravate the transport of my pain;
As 'twere, indeed, until my heart our souls commingled saw,
Nought could it of its thirst for him on anywise assain.

The Khalif was delighted and said, "O Shejeret ed Durr, ask a boon of me." "O Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "I ask of thee my freedom, for the sake of the reward that is therein." "Thou art free for the love of God," said he; whereupon she kissed the earth before him. Quoth he, "Take the lute and sing me somewhat on the

subject of my slave-girl, of whom I am enamoured: the folk seek my approof and I seek hers." So she took the lute and sang as follows:

Lady of beauty, that hast done away my piety,
I cannot brook, whate'er betide, to live withouten thee;
So, or with humbleness, that best befitteth love, I'll gain
Thy favours, or with might, that best befitteth kings like me.

The Khalif was charmed with these verses and said, "Now sing me somewhat setting out my case with three damsels, who hold the reins of my heart and hinder my repose; and they are thyself and this froward one and another I will not name, who hath not like her." So she took the lute and playing a lively measure, sang the following verses:

There are three lovely maidens, the reins of me that sway:
Within my heart's high places they lord it night and day.
There's none in all creation can bow me to his will;
Yet I obey these maidens and they my will gainsay.
This is of Love's dominion, whereby they overcome
A prouder than my empire and force it still obey.

The Khalif marvelled exceedingly at the aptness of these verses to his case and the delight [to which they moved him] inclined him to reconciliation with the refractory damsel. So he went forth and made for her lodging, whither a slave-girl forewent him and acquainted her with the Khalif's coming. She came to meet him and kissed the earth before him; then she kissed his feet and he was reconciled to her and she to him.

Meanwhile Shejeret ed Durr came to me, rejoicing, and said, "I am become free by thy blessed coming! Surely God will help me in that which I shall contrive, so I may foregather with thee in the way of law." And I said, "Praised be God!" As we were talking, in came her servant, to whom we related that which had passed, and he said, "Praised be God who hath made the affair to end well, and we implore Him to crown His favours with thy safe going-out hence!" Presently, in came my mistress's sister, whose name was Fatir, and Shejeret ed Durr said to her, "O my sister, how shall we do to bring him out of the palace in safety? For God hath vouchsafed me emancipation and by the blessing of his coming, I am become a free woman." Quoth Fatir, "I see nothing for it but to dress him in a woman's habit." So she brought me a suit of women's clothes and clad me therein; and I went out forthwith; but, when I came to the midst of the palace, I found the Khalif seated there, with the eunuchs in attendance upon him.

When he saw me, he misdoubted of me exceedingly and said to his attendants, "Hasten and bring me yonder damsel." So they brought me back to him and raised the veil from my face, which when he saw, he knew me and questioned me of my case. I told him the whole truth, hiding nought, and when he heard my story, he bethought himself awhile, then rose and going into Shejeret ed Durr's chamber, said to her, "How couldst thou prefer one of the sons of the merchants before me?" She kissed the earth before him and told him her story from first to last, in accordance with the truth; wherewith he had compassion upon her and his heart relented to her and he excused

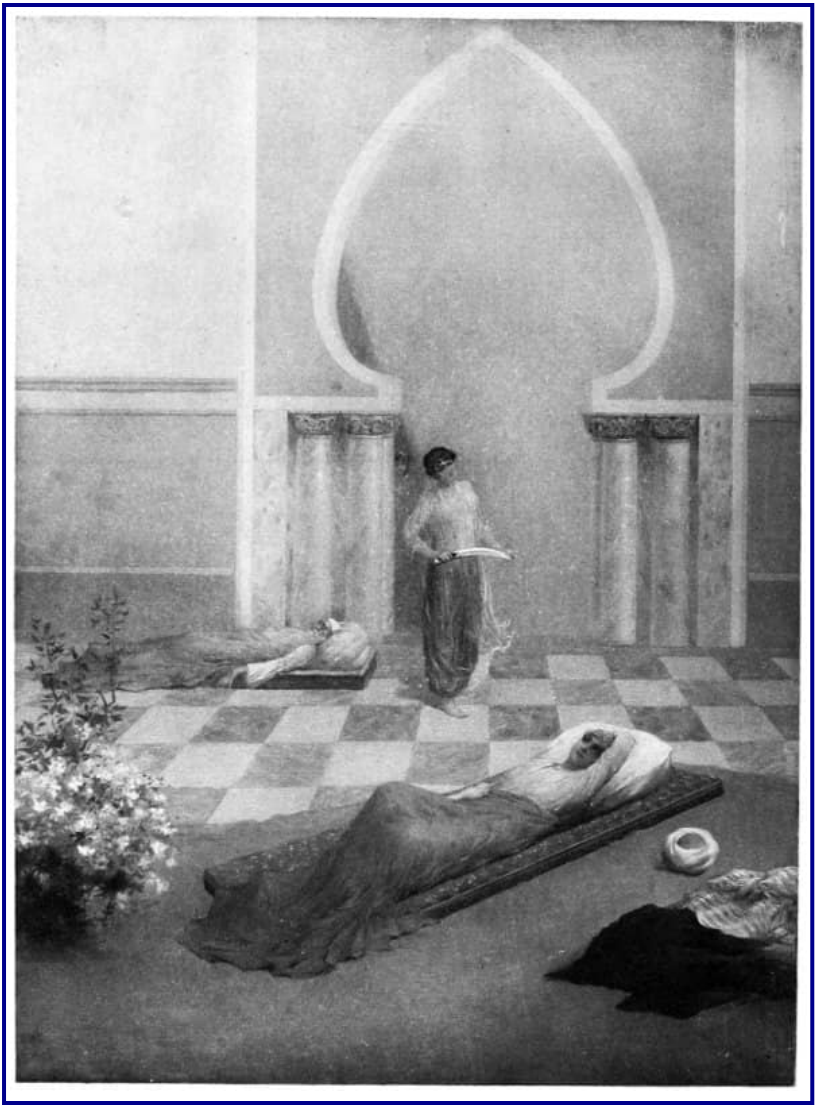
her by reason of love and its conditions. Then he went away and her servant came in to her and said, "Be of good cheer; for, when thy lover came before the Khalif, he questioned him and he told him that which thou toldest him, word by word."

Presently the Khalif returned and calling me before him, said to me, "What made thee dare to violate the palace of the Khalifate?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered I, "it was my ignorance and passion and my confidence in thy clemency and generosity that led me to this." And I wept and kissed the earth before him. Then said he, "I pardon you both," and bade me be seated. So I sat down and he sent for the Cadi Ahmed ibn Abi Dawud and married me to her. Then he commanded to make over to me all that was hers and they brought her to me in bridal procession in her lodging. After three days, I went forth and transported all her goods and gear to my own house; so all that thou hast seen, O Commander of the Faithful, in my house and whereof thou misdoubtest is of her marriage-equipage.

After this, she said to me, one day, "Know that El Mutawekkil is a generous man and I fear lest he bethink him of us, or that some one of the envious remind him of us; wherefore I have it in mind to do somewhat that may ensure us against this." "And what is that?" asked I. Quoth she, "I mean to ask his leave to go the pilgrimage and renounce singing." "This is well thought," answered I; but, as we were talking, in came a messenger from the Khalif to seek her, for that El Mutawekkil loved her singing. So she went with the officer and did her service to the Khalif, who said to her, "Sever not thyself from us." And she answered, "I hear and obey."

One day, after this, she went to him, he having sent for her, according to his wont; but, before I knew, she came back, with her clothes torn and her eyes full of tears. At this I was alarmed, misdoubting me that he had commanded to seize upon us, and said, "We are God's and to Him we return! Is El Mutawekkil wroth with us?" "Where is El Mutawekkil?" answered she. "Verily, El Mutawekkil's rule is ended and his trace is blotted out!" Quoth I, "Tell me what hath happened." And she said, "He was seated behind the curtain, drinking, with El Feth ben Khacan and Sedekeh ben Sedekeh, when his son El Muntesir fell upon him, with a company of the Turks, and slew him; and mirth was turned to misery and fair fortune to weeping and lamentation. So I fled, I and the maid, and God saved us." When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I arose forthright and went down to Bassora, where the news reached me of the falling out of war between El Muntesir and El Mustain; wherefore I was affrighted and transported my wife and all my good to Bassora. This, then, is my story, O Commander of the Faithful, nor have I added to nor diminished the truth by a syllable. So all that thou seest in my house, bearing the name of thy grandfather El Mutawekkil, is of his bounty to us, and the source of our fortune is from thy noble ancestors; for indeed ye are people of munificence and a mine of generosity.'

The Khalif marvelled at his story and rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy: and Aboulhusn brought forth to him the lady and the children she had borne him, and they kissed the earth before the Khalif, who marvelled at their beauty. Then he called for inkhorn and paper and wrote Aboulhusn a patent of exemption from taxes on his lands and houses for twenty years. Moreover, he rejoiced in him and made him his boon-companion, till time sundered them and they took up their abode in the tombs, after having dwelt in palaces; and glory be to God, the Most Merciful King!



Kemerezzeman and the Jeweller's Wife.

THERE was once, of old time, a merchant called Abdurrehman, whom God had blessed with a son and daughter, and for their much beauty and grace, he named the girl Kaukeb a Sebah and the boy Kemerezzeman. When he saw what God had vouchsafed them of beauty and grace and brightness and symmetry, he feared for them from the eyes of the beholders and the tongues of the envious and the craft of the crafty and the wiles of the profligate and shut them up from the folk in a house for the space of fourteen years, during which time none saw them save their parents and a slave-girl who waited on them. Now their father recited the Koran, even as God sent it down, as also did their mother, wherefore she taught her daughter to read and recite it and he his son, till they had both gotten it by heart. Moreover, they both learned from their parents writing and reckoning and all manner of knowledge and accomplishment and needed no master.

When Kemerezzeman came to years of manhood, his mother said to her husband, 'How long wilt thou keep thy son Kemerezzeman sequestered from the eyes of the folk? Is he a boy or a girl?' And he answered, 'A boy.' 'If he be a boy,' rejoined she, 'why dost thou not carry him to the bazaar and seat him in thy shop, that he may know the folk and they him, to the intent that it may become notorious among them that he is thy son, and do thou teach him to buy and sell. Belike somewhat may betide thee; so shall the folk know him for thy son and he shall lay his hand on thy leavings. But, if thou die, as the case now is, and he say to the folk, "I am the son of the merchant Abdurrehman," they will not believe him, but will say, "We have never seen thee and knew not that he had a son;" wherefore the magistrates will take thy goods and thy son will be despoiled. In like manner, I mean to make my daughter known among the folk, so haply some one of her own condition may demand her in marriage and we will marry her to him and rejoice in her.' Quoth he, '[I did thus] of my fear for them of the of the eyes of the folk and because I love them and love is exceeding jealous, and well saith he who made the following verses:

I'm jealous of myself and of my sight for thee
And of thy self and place and time and Fate's decree.
Though in mine eye for aye I set thee, ne'er, I trow,
Of union strait and close should I aweary be.
Ay, if with me thou wert united every hour Until the
Judgment Day, 'twould scarce suffice to me.'

'Put thy trust in God,' said his wife, 'for no harm betideth him whom He protecteth, and carry him with thee this very day to the shop.'

Then she clad the boy in the richest of clothes and he became a ravishment to all who looked on him and an affliction to the hearts of lovers His father took him and carried him to the market, whilst all who saw him were ravished with him and accosted him, kissing his hand and saluting him. Quoth one, 'The sun hath risen in such a place and shineth in the market,' and another, 'The place of rising of the full moon is in such a quarter ;' and a third, 'The new moon of the Festival [of the breaking of the

fast of Ramazan] hath appeared to the creatures of God.' And they went on to allude to the boy in talk and call down blessings upon him.

Abdurrehman rated the folk for following the boy, to gaze upon him, for they crowded upon him, behind and before; and he was abashed at their talk, but could not hinder them from talking; so he fell to reviling the boy's mother and cursing her for that she had been the cause of his bringing him out. Then he walked on till he reached his shop and opening it, sat down and seated his son before him: after which he looked out and saw the thoroughfare blocked with people, for all the passers- by, going and coming, stopped before the shop, to gaze on that fair-faced one, and could not leave him and all the men and women crowded about him, applying, to them- selves the words of him who saith:

Thou didst beauty create a temptation to us
And saidst,'O my servants fear [Me and abstain].'
Behold, Thou art lovely and loveliness lov'st:
How, then, shall Thy creatures from loving refrain?

When Abdurrehman saw the folk thus crowding about him and standing in rows, men and women, to gaze upon his son, he was sore abashed and confounded and knew not what to do; but presently there came up from the end of the bazaar a man of the wandering dervishes, clad in haircloth garments, [the apparel] of the pious servants of God and seeing Kemerezzeman sitting there as he were a willow wand springing from a mound of saffron, wept copiously and recited the following verses:

I saw a sapling on a sand-hill grow,
As 'twere a moon at full and all aglow.
'Thy name?' I questioned, and he said, 'A pearl'
Quoth I, 'Mine! Mine!' but he replied, 'No! No!'

Then he fell to walking, now drawing near and now moving away, and wiping his gray hairs with his right hand, whilst the heart of the crowd was cloven asunder for reverence of him. When he looked upon the boy, his eyes were dazzled and his wit confounded, and the saying of the poet was exemplified in him:

What while yon fair-faced loveling was in a certain place
And the new moon of Shawwal shone glittering from his face,
There came a reverend elder, who walked with leisure pace:
His steps a staff supported and in his looks the trace
Of abstinent devoutness was plain unto the sight.
The days he had made proof of and eke the nights essayed;
In lawful and unlawful he had not spared to wade.
He had been love-distracted for minion and for maid
And to a skewer's likeness worn down was he and frayed;
But wasted bones were left him, with parchment skin bedight.
A Moor in this same fashion the sheikh himself did show,
For by his side a youngling was ever seen to go:
He in the love of women an Udhri was, I trow;
In either mode seductive and throughly versed, for lo,

Zeid was to him as Zeyneb, to wit, and wench as wight.
Distraught he was with passion for this and th' other fair;
He mourned the camp, bewailing the ruins bleak and bare:
Of his excess of longing, thou'dst deem him, as it were,
A sapling that the zephyr still bendeth here and there.
Cold-heartedness pertaineth to stones alone aright.
Yea, In the way of passion experienced was he,
Sharp-witted in Love's matters and quick indeed to see.
He'd prove Love's hard and easy, its valley and its sea,
And buck and doe delighted to clip indiff'rently;
He burnt alike when beardless and when his beard was white.

Then he came up to the boy and gave him a sprig of sweet basil, whereupon his father put his hand to his pouch and gave him some small matter of money, saying, 'Take thy portion, O dervish, and go thy ways.' He took the money, but sat down on the bench before the shop, opposite the lad, and fell to gazing upon him and heaving sigh upon sigh, whilst the tears flowed like springs welling forth. The folk began to look at him and remark upon him, some saying, 'All dervishes are lewd fellows,' and other some, 'Verily, this dervish's heart is set on fire for love of this youth.'

When Abdurrehman saw this, he said to the boy, 'Come O my son, let us shut the shop and go home, for it boots not to buy and sell this day; and may God requite thy mother that which she hath done with us, for it is she who hath brought all this about!' Then said he to the dervish, 'Rise, that I may shut my shop.' So the dervish rose and Abdurrehman shut his shop and taking his son, went away. The dervish and the folk followed them, till they reached their dwelling, when Kemerezzeman went in and his father, turning to the dervish, said to him, 'What wouldst thou, O dervish, and why do I see thee weep ?' 'O my lord,' answered he, ' I would fain be thy guest this night, for the guest is the guest of God.' Quoth the merchant, 'Welcome to the guest of God! Enter, O dervish !' But he said in himself, 'If he be enamoured of the boy and require him of lewdness, needs must I slay him this night and bury him secretly. But, if there be no lewdness in him, the guest shall eat his portion.'

Then he brought him into a saloon, where he left him with Kemerezzeman, after he had said privily to the latter, 'O my son, when I am gone out, sit thou beside the dervish and sport with him and provoke him to dalliance. I will watch you from the window overlooking the saloon, and if he seek of thee lewdness, I will come down to him and slay him.' So, as soon as Kemerezzeman was alone with the dervish, he sat down by him, and the latter began to look upon him and sigh and weep. Whenever the lad spoke to him, he answered him kindly, trembling the while and groaning and sobbing, and thus he did till the evening meal was brought in, when he fell to eating, with his eyes on Kemerezzeman, but stinted not from weeping. When a fourth part of the night was past and talk was ended and the time of sleep come, Abdurrehman said to the lad, 'O my son, apply thyself to the service of thine uncle the dervish and gainsay him not :' and would have gone out; but the dervish said to him, 'O my lord, carry thy son with thee or sleep with us.' 'Nay,' answered the merchant; 'my son shall lie with thee: peradventure thy soul may desire somewhat, and he will do thine

occasion and wait upon thee.' Then he went out and sat down in an adjoining room, wherein was a window giving upon the saloon.

As soon as he had left them, the lad came up to the dervish and began to provoke him and make advances to him, whereupon he waxed wroth and said, 'What talk is this, O my son? I take refuge with God from Satan the Stoned! O my God, indeed this is an iniquity that pleaseth Thee not! Hold off from me, O my son !' So saying, he arose and sat down at a distance; but the boy followed him and threw himself upon him, saying, 'O dervish, why wilt thou deny thyself the delight of my possession, seeing that my heart loveth thee ?' With this the dervish's anger redoubled and he said, 'An thou refrain not from me, I will call thy father and tell him of thee.' Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'My father knows my mind to thee and it may not be that he will hinder me: so heal thou my heart. Why cost thou hold off from me? Do I not please thee?' 'By Allah, O my son,' answered the dervish, 'I will not do this, though I be hewn in pieces with sharp swords!' And he repeated the saying of the poet:

My heart the fair desireth, both wench and wight;
I sigh For all I see: yet passion leads not my wit awry.
Nay, though I still behold them morning and eventide,
Nor sodomite, believe me, nor whoremonger am I.

Then he wept and said, 'Arise, open the door, that I may go my way, for I will lie no longer in this place.' Therewith he rose to his feet; but the boy caught hold of him, saying, 'Look at the brightness of my face and the redness of my cheeks and the softness of my sides and the daintiness of my lips.' Moreover he discovered to him a leg that would put to shame wine and cupbearer and gazed on him with looks that would baffle enchantment and enchanter; for he was surpassing of loveliness and full of tender blandishment, even as saith of him the poet:

I never can forget him, since of intent the fair
A leg to me discovered, as flashing pearl it were.
So marvel not if on me the flesh should rise; for lo, the
Day of Resurrection's a day of shanks laid bare.

Then he displayed to him his bosom, saying, 'Look at my breasts. They are goodlier than girls' breasts and my spittle is sweeter than sugar-candy. So leave scruple and abstinence and cast off piety and devoutness and take thy delight of my possession and enjoy my beauty. Fear nothing, for thou art safe from hurt, and leave this dulness, for it is an ill habit.' And he went on to discover to him his hidden charms, striving to turn the reins of his reason with his [graceful] bendings, whilst the dervish averted his face and said, 'I seek refuge with God! Shame upon thee, O my son! This is a forbidden thing, and I will not do it, no, not even in sleep.' The boy pressed upon him, but the dervish escaped from him and turning towards Mecca, addressed himself to prayer.

When Kemerezzeman saw him praying, he left him till he had prayed a two-bow prayer and saluted, when he would have accosted him again; but the dervish again repeated the intent and prayed a second two-bow prayer, and thus he did a third and a fourth and a fifth time. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'What prayers are these ? Art thou minded to take flight upon the clouds? Thou lettest slip our delight, whilst thou

passest the whole night in the prayer-niche.' So saying, he threw himself upon the dervish and kissed him between the eyes: and he said, 'O my son, put away from thee the devil and betake thee to the obedience of the Compassionate One.' Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'An thou do not with me that which I wish, I will call my father and say to him, "The dervish is minded to do lewdness with me." Whereupon he will come in to thee and beat thee, till thy bones be broken upon thy flesh.'

All this while Abdurrehman was watching with his eyes and hearkening with his ears, and he was certified that there was no lewdness in the dervish and said in himself, 'An he were a lewd fellow, he had not stood out against all this importunity.' The boy continued to beguile the dervish and every time he addressed himself to prayer, he interrupted him, till at last he waxed exceeding wroth with him and was rough with him and beat him. Kemerezzeman wept and his father came in and wiped away his tears and comforted him. Then said he to the dervish, 'O my brother, since thou art on this wise, why didst thou weep and sigh, when thou sawest my son? Is there a reason for this?' 'Yes,' answered the dervish; and Abdurrehman continued, 'When I saw thee weep at sight of my son, I deemed evil of thee and bade the boy do with thee thus, that I might try thee, purposing in myself, if I saw thee require him of lewdness, to come in upon thee and slay thee. But, when I saw thy carriage towards him, I knew thee for one of those who are virtuous to the utmost. But, God on thee, tell me the cause of thy weeping!'

The dervish sighed and said, 'O my lord, fret not a closed wound.' But the merchant said, 'Nothing will serve but thou must tell me.' 'Know, then,' began the other, 'that I am a dervish who wander in the lands and the countries, admonishing myself by the traces of the Creator of Night and Day. It chanced that one Friday I entered the city of Bassora in the forenoon of the day and saw the shops open and full of all manner wares and goods and meat and drink; but they were deserted and there was in them neither man nor woman nor girl nor boy: nor in the markets and the streets was there dog nor cat nor yet voice heard nor creature seen. I marvelled at this and said to myself, "I wonder whither the people of the city are gone with their dogs and cats and what hath God done with them ? " Now I was anhungred, so I took hot bread from a baker's oven and going into an oilman's shop, spread the bread with butter and honey and ate. Then I entered the shop of a sherbet-seller and drank what I would; after which, seeing a coffee-shop open, I went in and saw the pots on the fire, full of coffee; but there was no one there. So I drank my fill and said, "Verily, this is a strange thing! It seems as if death had stricken the people of this city and they had all died forthright, or as if they had taken fright at some- thing that hath befallen them and fled, without having time to close their shops."

As I pondered this matter, I heard a sound of drums beating; whereat I was afraid and hid myself: then, looking out through a crevice, I saw fourscore damsels, like moons, come walking through the market, two by two, with uncovered heads and faces displayed; and in their midst a young lady, riding on a horse that could hardly move its feet for that which was upon it of trappings and housings. Her face was unveiled, and she was adorned with the costliest ornaments and clad in the richest of raiment and covered with gold and silver and jewels. About her neck she wore a collar of gold and on her bosom were necklaces of the same metal; her wrists were clasped with bracelets,

that shone like stars, and her ankles with bangles of gold set with precious stones. The slave- girls walked before her and behind and on her right and left and before her was a damsel girt with a great sword, with hilts of emerald and hangers of gold, set with jewels.

When the young lady came to where I lay hid, she checked her horse and said, "O damsels, I hear a noise of somewhat within yonder shop: so do ye search it, lest there be one hidden there, with intent to look upon us, whilst we have our faces unveiled." So they searched the shop opposite that in which I lay hid, whilst I abode in terror; and presently I saw them come forth with a man and heard them say to her, "O our lady, we found a man there and here he is before thee." Quoth she to the damsel with the sword, "Strike off his head." So she went up to him and smote off his head and they passed on, leaving the dead man lying on the ground. When I saw this, I was affrighted; but my heart was taken with love of the young lady.

After awhile, the people reappeared and every one who had a shop entered it; whilst the folk began to come and go in the markets and gathered about the slain man, staring at him. Then I came forth from my hiding-place by stealth, and none took note of me; but love of the lady had gotten possession of my heart, and I began to enquire of her privily; but none gave me news of her. So I left Bassora, with a heart torn with love of her; and when I came upon this thy son, I saw him to be the likest of all creatures to the young lady, wherefore he minded me of her and his sight revived the fire of passion in me and kindled anew in my heart the flames of love-longing and distraction.' Then he wept passing sore and said, 'O my lord, I conjure thee by Allah, open the door to me, so I may go my way!' So Abdurrehman opened the door and he went forth.

As for Kemerezzeman, when he heard the dervish's story, his heart was taken with love of the lady and passion got the mastery of him and longing and dis- traction raged in him; so, on the morrow, he said to his father, 'All the sons of the merchants travel in the lands, to attain their desire, nor is there one of them but his father provideth him with merchandise, wherewith he may travel and traffic for gain. Why, then, O my father, dost thou not provide me with merchandise, so I may travel with it and try my luck?' 'O my son,' answered Abdurrehman, 'the merchants [of whom thou speakest] lack of money; so they send their sons abroad for the sake of profit and gain and the getting of the goods of the world. But I have wealth in plenty nor do I covet [more]: so why should I exile thee [from thy native land?] Indeed, I cannot brook to be parted from thee an hour, more by token that thou art unique in beauty and grace and perfection and I fear for thee.' But Kemerezzeman said, 'O my father, nothing will serve but thou must furnish me with merchandise wherewithal to travel; else will I take thee at unawares and flee, though without goods or money. So, if thou wish to pleasure my heart, make ready for me merchandise, that I may travel and divert myself by viewing foreign countries.'

Abdurrehman, seeing his son enamoured of travel, acquainted his wife with this, saying, ' My son would have me provide him with merchandise, so he may travel therewith in strange countries, albeit travel is travail.' 'What is there should mislike thee in this?" answered she. 'This is the wont of the sons of the merchants and they all vie with one another in glorying in travel and gain. 'Quoth he, 'Most of the merchants

are poor and seek increase of good; but I have wealth galore.' 'More of a good thing hurteth not,' replied she; 'and if thou comply not with his wish, I will furnish him of my own monies.' Quoth Abdurrehman, 'I fear strangerhood for him, for it is rife in trouble.' But she said, 'There is no harm in strangerhood, when it leads to gain; and [if we do not according to his wish], our son will go away and we shall seek him and find him not and be dishonoured among the folk.' The merchant accepted his wife's counsel and provided his son with merchandise, to the value of fourscore and ten thousand dinars, whilst his mother gave him a purse containing forty jewels of price, the least of the value of one of which was five hundred dinars, saying, 'O my son, be careful of these jewels, for they will be of service to thee.'

Kemerezzeman took the jewels and laid them in a belt, which he buckled about his waist; then he set out for Bassora with his goods and stayed not till there remained but a day's journey between that city and himself; when the [wild] Arabs came out upon him and stripped him and slew his men and servants; but he himself lay down among the slain and smeared himself with blood, so that the Bedouins took him for dead and left him and made off with their booty. When they had gone their ways, he arose, having nought left but the jewels in his girdle, and fared on till he came to Bassora. It chanced that his entry was on a Friday and the town was empty of folk, even as the dervish had told him. He found the streets deserted and the shops open and full of goods; so he ate and drank and looked about him. Presently, he heard drums beating and hid himself in a shop, till the slave- girls came up, when he looked at them and seeing the young lady riding amongst them, love and longing took him and passion and distraction overcame him, so that he could hardly stand. After awhile, the people reappeared and the markets became full. Whereupon he went to the bazaar and sold one of his jewels to a jeweller there for a thousand dinars, with which he returned to his place and passed the night there.

Next morning he changed his clothes and going to the bath, came forth as he were the full moon. Then he sold other four stones for four thousand dinars and sauntered about the streets of Bassora, clad in the costliest of raiment, till he came to a market, where he saw a barber's shop. So he went in to the barber, who shaved his head, and clapping up an acquaintance with him, said to him, 'O my father, I am a stranger in these parts and yesterday I entered this city and found it void of inhabitants, nor was there in it any living soul, man nor genie. Then I saw a company of slave-girls and amongst them a young lady riding in state.' And he went on to tell him all he had seen. 'O my son,' said the barber, 'hast thou told any but me of this?' And he answered, 'No.' 'Then, O my son,' rejoined the barber, 'beware of mentioning this before any but me; for all cannot keep a secret and thou art but a lad and I fear lest the talk travel from folk to folk, till it reach those whom it concerns and they kill thee. For know, O my son, that this thou hast seen, none ever heard nor knew in other than this city. As for the people of Bassora, they are dying of this vexation; for every Friday forenoon they shut up the dogs and cats, to hinder them from going about the streets, and all the people of the city enter the mosques, where they lock the doors on them, and not one of them can pass about the market nor even look out of window; nor knoweth any the cause of this calamity. But to-night I will question my wife of it, for she is a midwife and enters the houses of the notables and knows all the news of the city. And if it

please God the Most High, do thou come to me to-morrow and I will tell thee what she shall have told me.'

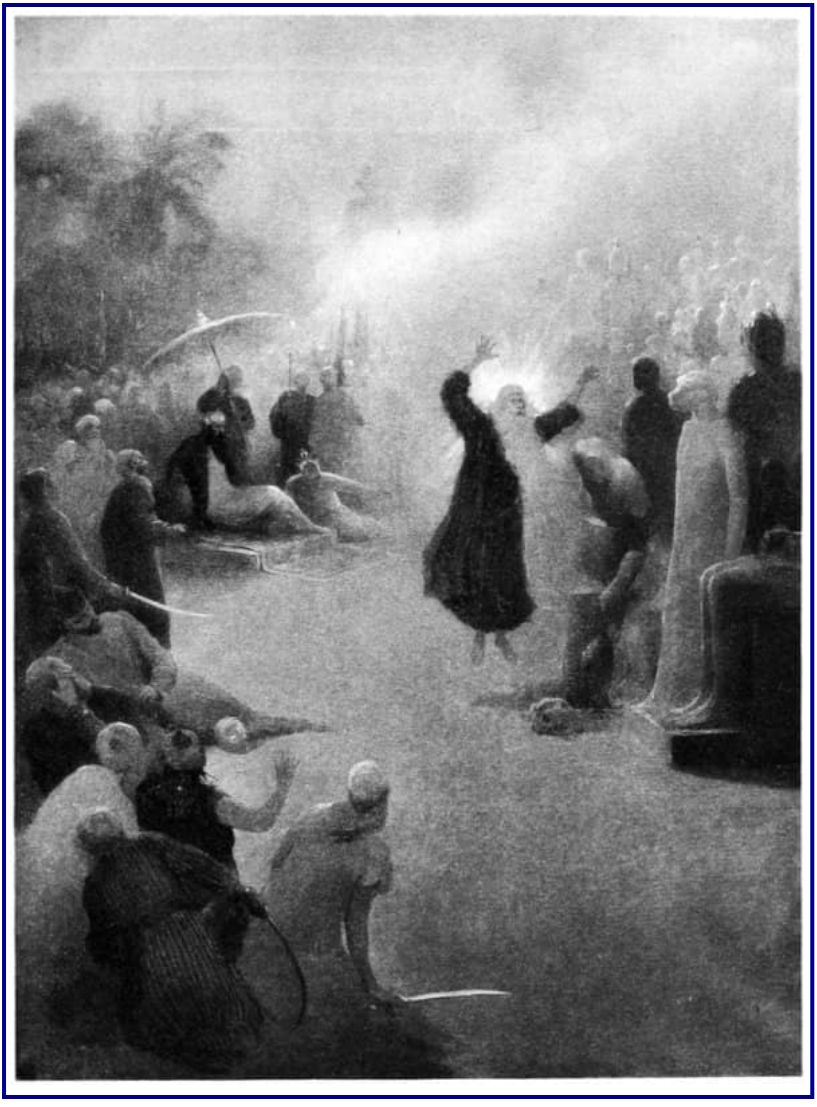
With this Kemerezzeman pulled out a handful of gold and said to him, 'O my father, take this gold and give it to thy wife, for she is become my mother.' Then he gave him a second handful, saying 'Take this for thyself.' Whereupon quoth the barber, 'O my son, sit thou in thy place, till I go to my wife and ask her and bring thee news of the true state of the case.' So saying, he left him in the shop and going home, acquainted his wife with the young man's case, saying, 'I would have thee tell me the truth of this affair, so I may tell it to this young merchant, for he hath set his heart on knowing the reason why men and beasts are forbidden the streets every Friday forenoon; and methinks he is in love, for he is open-handed and generous, and if we tell him [what he would know], we shall get great good of him.' Quoth she, 'Go back and say to him, "Come and speak with thy mother my wife, for she salutes thee and says to thee, 'The thing is done."'

So he returned to the shop, where he found Kemerezze- man sitting awaiting him and gave him his wife's message. Then he carried him in to her and she gave him welcome and bade him sit down; whereupon he pulled out a hundred dinars and gave them to her, saying, 'O my mother, tell me who this young lady is.' 'Know, O my son,' answered she, 'that there came a jewel to the Sultan of Bassora from the King of Hind, and he was minded to have it pierced. So he called all the jewellers together and said to them, "I wish you to pierce me this jewel Whoso pierces it, I will give him whatsoever he shall ask; but if he break it, I will cut off his head." At this they were afraid and said, " O king of the age, a jewel is soon spoilt and there are few who can pierce them without injury, for most of them have a flaw. So do not thou impose upon us a task to which we are unable; for we cannot avail to pierce this jewel. However, the syndic of our guild is more experienced than we." "And who is your syndic?" asked the king. "Master Ubeid," answered they. "He is more versed than we in this art and hath wealth galore and exceeding skill. So do thou send for him and bid him pierce thee this jewel." Accordingly, the king sent for Ubeid and bade him pierce the jewel, imposing on him the condition aforesaid. He took it and pierced it to the liking of the king, who said to him, "Ask a boon of me, O master!" "O king of the age," answered he, " have patience with me till to-morrow."

Now the reason of this was that he wished to take counsel with his wife, who is the young lady thou sawest riding in state; for he loveth her with an exceeding love. and of the greatness of his love for her, he doth nought without consulting her; wherefore he put off asking till the morrow. When he went home, he said to her, " I have pierced the king a jewel and he hath granted me a boon; but I put off asking till to-morrow, that I might consult thee. So what cost thou wish, that I may ask it? " Quoth she, "We have riches such as fires may not consume; but, if thou love me, ask of the king that he make proclamation in the streets of Bassora that all the townsfolk shall every Friday enter the mosques, two hours before the hour of prayer, so none, great or small, may abide in the town, except they be in the mosques or in the houses and the doors be locked upon them, and that all the shops of the town be left open. Then will I ride with my women through the city and none shall look on me from window or lattice; and every one, whom I find abroad, I will kill."

So he went in to the king and sought of him this boon, which he granted him; but, when he caused proclamation to be made to the effect aforesaid, the people objected that they feared for their goods from the dogs and cats; wherefore he commanded to shut the latter up till the folk should come forth from the Friday prayers. So the jeweller's wife fell to sallying forth every Friday, two hours before the time of prayer, and riding in state through the city with her women; during which time none dares pass through the market nor look out of window or lattice. This, then, is what thou wouldst know and I have told thee who she is; but, O my son, was it thy desire [only] to have news of her or hast thou a mind to foregather with her?' 'O my mother,' answered he, 'it is my wish to foregather with her.' Quoth she, 'Tell me what valuables thou hast with thee.' And he replied, 'O my mother, I have with me precious stones of four kinds, the first worth five hundred dinars each, the second seven hundred, the third eight hundred and the fourth a thousand.' 'Art thou willing to spend four of these?' asked she; and he said, 'I am ready to spend them all.'

'Then,' rejoined she, 'arise, O my son, and go straight to thy lodging and take a jewel of those worth five hundred dinars, with which do thou repair to the jewel-market and ask for the shop of Master Ubeid, the Syndic of the Jewellers. Thou wilt find him seated in his shop, clad in rich clothes, with workmen under his hand. Salute him and sit down by him; then pull out the jewel and give it him, saying, "O master, take this stone and fashion it into a ring for me with gold. Make it not large, a mithcal in weight and no more; but let the fashion of it be excellent." Then give him twenty dinars and give each of his journeymen a diner. Sit with him awhile and talk with him and if a beggar accost thee, give him a dinar, to the intent that he may take thee into affection. After this, leave him and return to thy lodging. Pass the night there and next morning, take a hundred dinars and bring them and give them to thy father [the barber], for he is poor.'



'Be it so,' answered Kemerezzeman and returning to his hostelry, took a jewel worth five hundred dinars and went with it to the jewel-bazaar. There he enquired for the shop of Master Ubeid, Syndic of the Jewellers, and they directed him thereto. So he went thither and saw the syndic, a man of reverend aspect and clad in sumptuous apparel [sitting in his shop,] with four journeymen under his hand. He saluted him and the jeweller returned his greeting and welcoming him, made him sit down. Then he brought out the jewel and said to Ubeid, 'O master, I wish thee to make me this jewel into a ring with gold. Let it be the weight of a mithcal and no more, but fashion it curiously.' Then he pulled out twenty dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'This is for the chasing, over and above the price of the ring.' And he gave each of the journeymen a diner, wherefore they loved him, and so did the syndic. Then he sat talking with the jeweller and whenever a beggar came up to him, he gave him a diner and they all marvelled at his generosity.

Now Ubeid had tools at home, like those he had in the shop, and whenever he was minded to do any extraordinary piece of work, it was his wont to carry it home and do it there, that his journeymen might not learn the secrets of his curious workmanship. His wife used to sit before him, and when she was sitting thus and he looking upon her, he would fashion all manner of curiously wrought trinkets, such as were fit for none but kings. So he took Kemerezzeman's jewel home and sat down to fashion the ring with rare workmanship. When his wife saw him thus engaged, she said to him, 'What wilt thou do with this jewel ?' And he answered, 'I mean to make it into a ring with gold, for it is worth five hundred dinars.' 'For whom wilt thou set it?' asked she. 'For a young merchant,' replied he, 'who is fair of face, with eyes that wound and cheeks that strike fire and mouth like Solomon's seal and cheeks like blood-red anemones and lips red as coral and neck like that of a gazelle. His complexion is white blent with red and he is well-bred, pleasant and generous and doth thus and thus.' And he went on to describe to her his beauty and grace and bounty and perfection and ceased not to vaunt his charms and the generosity of his fashion, till he had made her in love with him; for there is no sillier cuckold than he who vaunts another man's good looks and liberality to his wife.

So, when desire rose high in her, she said to him, 'Is aught of my charms found in him?' 'He hath all thy beauties,' answered her husband; 'and he is thy counter- part in favour. Meseemeth his age is even as thine and but that I fear to vex thee, I would say that he is a thousand times handsomer than thou.' She was silent, and the jeweller ceased not to talk with her and set out Kemerezzeman's charms to her, till he had made an end of chasing the ring; when he gave it to her and she put it on her finger, which it fitted exactly. ' O my lord,' said she, 'my heart loveth this ring and I long for it to be mine and will not take it from my finger.' 'Have patience,' answered her husband. 'The owner of it is generous and I will seek to buy it of him, and if he will sell it to me, I will bring it to thee. Or if he have another jewel, I will buy it of him for thee and fashion it for thee into a ring like this.'

Meanwhile, Kemerezzeman passed the night in his lodging and on the morrow he took a hundred dinars and carried them to the old woman, the barber's wife, who said to him, 'Give them to thy father.' So he gave them to the barber, and she said, 'Hast thou done as I told thee ?' 'Yes,' answered he, and she said, 'Go now to the jeweller and

if he give thee the ring, put it on the top of thy finger and pull it off in haste and say to him, " O master, thou hast made a mistake; the ring is too strait." He will say, " O merchant, shall I break it and make it again larger ? " And do thou reply, " It boots not to break it and fashion it anew. Take it and give it to one of thy women." Then pull out another stone worth seven hundred dinars and say to him, " Take this stone and set it for me, for it is handsomer than the other." Give him thirty dinars and give each of the journeymen two, saying, "This is for the chasing, over and above the price of the ring." Then return to thy lodging for the night and on the morrow bring me two hundred dinars, and I will complete thee the rest of the device.'

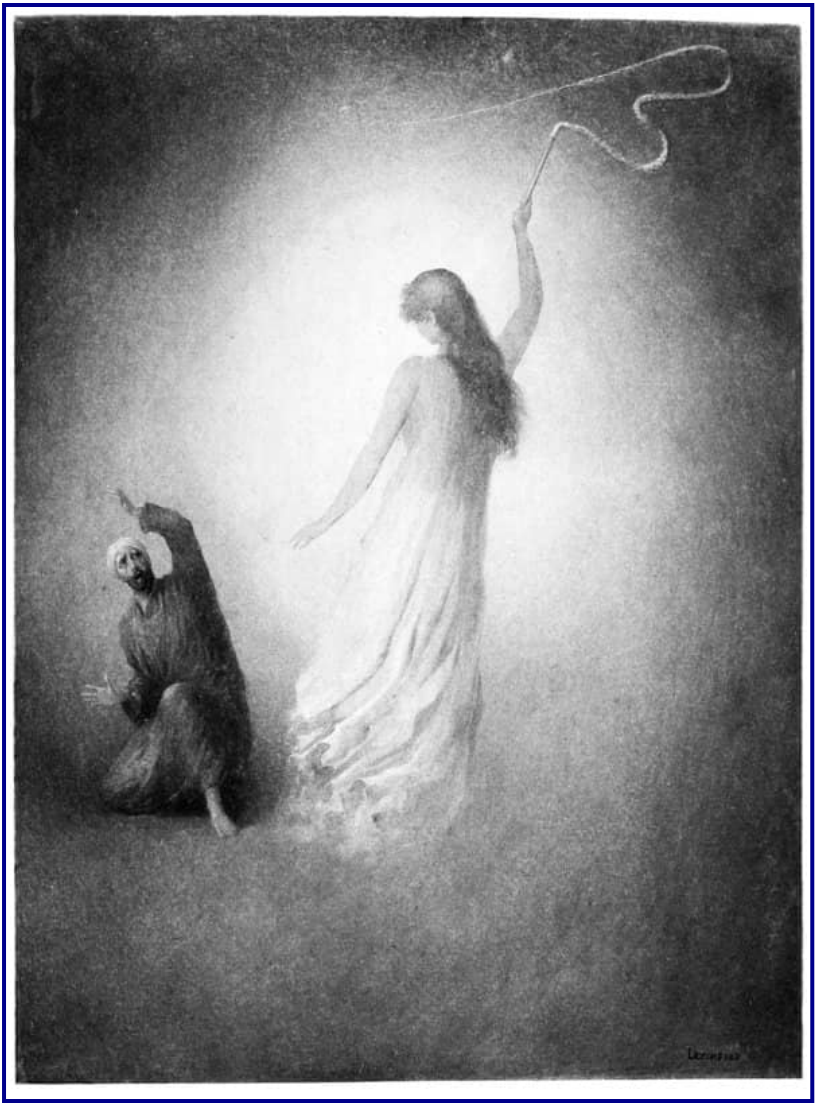
So Kemerezzeman went to the jeweller, who welcomed him and made him sit down; and he said to him, 'Hast thou done my occasion ?' 'Yes,' answered Ubeid and brought out to him the ring; whereupon he set it on the top of his finger and pulling it off in haste, said, 'Thou hast made a mistake, O master. And threw it to him, saying, ' It is too strait for my finger.' 'O merchant,' asked the jeweller, "shall I make it larger?' 'Not so,' replied Kemerezzeman 'take it as a gift and give it to one of thy women. Its worth is trifling, some five hundred dinars; so it boots not to fashion it over again.' Then he brought out to him another stone worth seven hundred dinars and said to him, 'Set this.' Moreover, he gave him thirty dinars and gave each of his journeymen two. Quoth Ubeid, 'O my lord, we will take the price of the ring, when we have made it.' But Kemerezzeman said, 'This is for the chasing, and the price of the ring remains over.' So saying, he went away, leaving the jeweller and his men amazed at the excess of his generosity.

Presently the jeweller returned home and said to his wife, 'O Helimeh,' [for that was her name,] 'never did I set eyes on a more generous than this young man, and as for thee, thy luck is good, for he hath given me the ring without price, saying, " Give it to one of thy women."' And he told her what had passed between himself and Kemerezzeman, adding, 'Methinks this youth is none of the sons of the merchants, but that he is of the sons of the kings and sultans.' The more he praised him, the more she waxed in passion and longing and love-distraction for him. So she took the ring and put it on her finger, whilst the jeweller made another for Kemerezzeman, a little larger than the first. When he had finished it, she put it on her finger, under the first, and said, 'Look, O my lord, how well the two rings show on my finger! I wish they were both mine.' 'Patience,' answered he. 'It may be I shall buy thee this second one.' Then he lay that night and on the morrow he took the ring and went to his shop.

As for Kemerezzeman, as soon as it was day, he betook himself to the barber's wife and gave her two hundred dinars. Quoth she, 'Go to the jeweller and when he gives thee the ring, put it on thy finger and pull it off again in haste, saying, " Thou hast made a mistake, O master I This ring is too large. It behoveth a master like thee, when the like of me cometh to him with a piece of work, to take his measure; and if thou hadst taken the measure of my finger, thou hadst not erred." Then pull out another stone worth a thousand dinars and say to him, "Take this and set it, and give this ring to one of thy women." Give him forty dinars and each of his men three, saying, "This is for the chasing, and for the cost of the ring, that stands over." And see what he will say. Then bring three hundred dinars and give them to thy father the barber, that he may mend his fortune withal, for he is a poor man.' 'I hear and obey,'

answered Kemerezzeman and betook himself to the jeweller, who welcomed him and making him sit down, gave him the ring.

He took it and put it on his finger; then pulled it off in haste and said, 'It behoveth a master like thee, when the like of me brings him a piece of work, to take his measure. Hadst thou taken the measure of my finger, thou hadst not erred; but take it and give it to one of thy women.' Then he brought out to him a stone worth a thousand dinars and said to him, 'Take this and set it for me after the measure of my finger.' 'Good,' answered Ubeid. 'Thou art in the right;' and took his measure, whereupon he pulled out forty dinars and gave them to him, saying, 'This is for the chasing and the price of the ring shall remain.' 'O my lord,' said the jeweller, ' how much hire have we taken of thee! Verily, thy bounty to us is great!' ' No harm,' answered Kemerezzeman and sat talking with him awhile and giving a diner to every beggar who passed.



Then he left him and went away, whilst the jeweller returned home and said to his wife, 'How generous is this young merchant! Never did I set eyes on a more open-handed or a comelier than he, no, nor a sweeter of speech.' And he went on to recount to her his charms and liberality and was loud in his praise. 'Lack- courtesy that thou art!' said she. 'Since thou notest these attributes in him, and indeed he hath given thee two rings of price, it behoveth thee to invite him and make him an entertainment and entreat him friendly. When he seeth that thou tenderest him and cometh to our house, we shall surely get great good of him; and if thou grudge him this, do thou bid him and I will entertain him of my monies.' Quoth he, 'Dost thou know me to be niggardly, that thou sayest this?' 'Thou art no niggard,' rejoined she; 'but thou lackest of breeding. Invite him this night and come not without him. If he refuse, conjure him by the oath of divorce and be instant with him.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered he and wrought at the ring till he had finished it, after which he passed the night and went forth on the morrow to his shop and sat there.

Meanwhile, Kemerezzeman took three hundred dinars and carrying them to the barber's wife, gave them to her for her husband. Quoth she, 'Most like he will invite thee to his house this night; and if he do this and thou lie with him, tell me in the morning what happens to thee and bring with thee four hundred dinars and give them to thy father [the barber].' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; and as often as he ran out of money, he would sell some of his jewels. So he repaired to the jeweller, who received him with open arms and clapped up a friendship with him. Then he gave him the ring, and he found it after the measure of his finger and said to the jeweller, 'God bless thee, O prince of craftsmen! The setting is conformable [to my wishes], but the stone is not to my liking. I have a handsomer than it: so take the ring and give it to one of thy women.' Then he gave him a fourth stone and a hundred dinars, saying, 'Take thy hire and pardon me the trouble I have given thee.' 'O merchant,' answered Ubeid, 'all the trouble thou hast given us thou hast requited us and hast overwhelmed us with thy bounties: and indeed my heart is taken with love of thee and I cannot brook parting from thee. So, God on thee, be thou my guest this night and heal my heart.' 'So be it,' replied Kemerezzeman; 'but needs must I go to my khan, that I may give a charge to my servants and tell them that I shall sleep abroad to-night, so they may not expect me.' ' Where dost thou lodge?' asked the jeweller; and he answered, 'In such a khan.' Quoth Ubeid, 'I will come for thee there.' And Kemerezzeman said, 'Good.'

So the jeweller repaired to the khan before sundown, fearing lest his wife should be wroth with him, if he returned home without Kemerezzeman, and carrying him to his house, seated him in a saloon that had not its match. Helimeh saw him, as he entered, and was ravished with him. They talked till the evening-meal came, when they ate and drank; after which came coffee and sherbets, and the jeweller ceased not to entertain him with talk till evensong, when they prayed the ordained prayers. Then in came a handmaid with two cups of [diet-]drink, which when they had drunk, drowsiness overcame them and they slept. Presently in came the jeweller's wife and seeing them asleep, looked upon Kemerezzeman's face and was confounded at his beauty. 'How can he sleep who loves the fair?' said she, and turning him over on his back, bestrode his breast. Then in the rage of her passion for him, she rained down kisses on his cheeks, till she left mark upon them and they became exceeding red and

his cheekbones shone. Moreover, she sucked his lips, till the blood ran out into her mouth; but with all this, her heat was not quenched nor her thirst assuaged.

She ceased not to kiss and clip him and twine leg with leg, till the forehead of the day grew white and the dawn broke forth and shone; when she put in his pocket four huckle-bones and went away. Then she sent her maid with something like snuff, which she applied to their nostrils and they sneezed and awoke. 'O my lords,' said the girl, 'prayer is a duty; so rise and pray the morning prayer.' And she brought them basin and ewer. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'O master, we have overslept ourselves.' 'O my friend,' answered the jeweller, ' verily the air of this room is heavy; for, whenever I sleep in it, this happens to me.' 'It is well,' rejoined Kemerezzeman and proceeded to make the ablution; but, when he put the water to his face, his cheeks and lips burned him. 'This is a strange thing!' said he. 'If the air of the room be heavy and we have been drowned in sleep, what ails my cheeks and lips that they burn me ? ' And he said to the jeweller, 'O master, my cheeks and lips burn me.' 'Doubtless this comes of the mosquito-bites,' answered the other. 'Strange!' said Kemerezzeman. ' Hath this thing happened to thee?' 'No,' replied Ubeid. 'But, whenever I have a guest like thee, he complains in the morning of the mosquito-bites, and this only happens when he is like thee, beardless. If he be bearded, the mosquitoes trouble him not, and nought hinders them from me but my beard. It seems they love not bearded men.' ' True,' rejoined Kemerezzeman. Then the maid brought them breakfast and they broke their fast and went out.

Kemerezzeman betook himself to the old woman, who exclaimed, when she saw him, 'I see the marks of dalliance on thy face: tell me what thou hast seen.' Quoth he, 'I have seen nothing. Only I supped with the master of the house in a saloon and prayed the evening prayer, after which we fell asleep and woke not till the morning.' She laughed and said, 'What are those marks on thy cheeks and lips?' 'It was the mosquitoes of the saloon that did this with me,' answered he. 'It is well,' rejoined she. 'But did the same thing betide the master of the house?' 'Nay,' replied he; 'on the contrary, he told me that the mosquitoes of that saloon molest not bearded men, but bite those only who have no hair on their faces, and that, whenever he hath to guest one who is beardless, the latter awakes, complaining of the mosquito-bites; but, if he have a beard, there befalls him nothing of this.' 'Good,' said she. ' Sawest thou ought but this?' and he answered, 'I found four huckle-bones in my pocket.' Quoth she, 'Show them to me.'

So he gave them to her and she laughed and said, 'Thy mistress laid these in thy pocket.' 'How so?' asked he; and she replied, 'It is as if she said to thee, in the language of signs, "An thou wert in love, thou wouldst not sleep, for a lover sleeps not: but thou art yet a child and fit for nothing but to play with these huckle-bones. So what ails thee to fall in love with the fair? " Now she came to thee by night and finding thee asleep, devoured thy cheeks with kisses and left thee this sign. But this will not suffice her of thee and she will certainly send her husband to invite thee again to-night; so, when thou goest home with him, hasten not to fall asleep, and on the morrow bring me five hundred dinars and acquaint me with what hath passed, and I will tell thee what more thou shalt do. 'I hear and obey,' answered he and went back to the khan.

Meanwhile, the jeweller's wife said to her husband, ' Is the guest gone ?' 'Yes,' answered he: ' but, O Helimeh, the mosquitoes plagued him last night and scarified his cheeks and lips, and indeed I was abashed before him.' 'This is the wont of the mosquitoes of our saloon,' rejoined she; for they love none but the beardless. But do thou invite him again to-night.' So he repaired to Kemerezzeman's lodging and bidding him, carried him to his house, where they ate and drank and prayed the evening prayer in the saloon, after which the maid came in and gave each of them a cup of drink, and they drank and fell asleep. Presently, in came Helimeh and said, 'O good-for-nought, how canst thou sleep and call thyself a lover? A lover sleepeth not.' Then she mounted on his breast and ceased not to ply him with kisses and caresses, biting and sucking his lips and so forth, till the morning, when she put a knife in his pocket and sent her maid to arouse them.

When Kemerezzeman awoke, his cheeks were on fire, for excess of redness, and his lips like coral, for dint of sucking and kissing. Quoth the jeweller, 'Did the mosquitoes plague thee last night?' 'No,' answered the young man; for, since he knew the word of the enigma, he left complaining. Then he felt the knife in his pocket and was silent. When he had broken his fast and drunk coffee, he left the jeweller and going to the khan, took five hundred dinars and carried them to the old woman, to whom he related what had passed, saying, 'I slept in my own despite, and when I woke I found nothing but a knife in my pocket.' 'May God protect thee from her this next night !' exclaimed the old woman. ' For she saith to thee [by this sign,] "An thou sleep again, I will cut thy throat." Thou wilt once more be bidden to the jeweller's house to-night, and if thou sleep, she will slay thee.'

'What is to be done?' asked he; and she said, 'Tell me what thou atest and drankest before sleeping.' Quoth he, 'We supped as usual and prayed the evening prayer, after which there came in to us a maid, who gave each of us a cup of [diet-]drink, which when I had drunk, I fell asleep and awoke not till the morning.' 'The mischief is in the cup of drink,' said the old woman. 'So, when the maid gives it thee, take it from her, but drink not and wait till the master of the house have drunken and fallen asleep; then say to her, "Give me a draught of water," and she will go to fetch thee the gugglet. Whilst she is gone, empty the cup behind the pillow and lie down and feign sleep. So when she comes back with the gugglet, she will deem that thou hast fallen asleep, after having drunk off the cup, and will go away; and the case will appear to thee anon; but beware of disobeying my bidding.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and returned to the khan.

Meanwhile the jeweller's wife said to her husband, 'A guest's due is three nights' entertainment: so do thou invite him a third time.' Accordingly the jeweller betook himself to Kemerezzeman and inviting him, carried him home and sat down with him in the saloon. When they had supped and prayed the evening prayer, in came the maid and gave each of them a cup. The jeweller drank and fell asleep; but Kemerezzeman forbore to drink whereupon quoth the maid, 'Wilt thou not drink, O my lord?" 'I am athirst,' answered he. 'Bring me the gugglet.' So she went to fetch it, and in the meantime he emptied the cup behind the cushion and lay down. When the girl returned, she saw him lying down and told her mistress that he had drunk off the cup and fallen asleep; whereupon quoth Helimeh to herself, 'Verily, his death is better than

his life.' Then, taking a sharp knife, she went in to him, saying, 'Three times, and thou notedest not the sign, O fool! So now I will slit thy weasand'

When he saw her making for him, with the knife in her hand, he opened his eyes and rose, laughing; whereupon, ' It was not of thine own wit,' said she, 'that thou camest at the meaning of the token, but by the help of some wily cheat; so tell me whence had thou this knowledge.' 'From an old woman,' answered he and told her all that had passed between himself and the barber's wife. 'To-morrow,' said she, 'go thou to her and say, " Hast thou any further device in store?" And if she say, "Yes," do thou rejoin, "Then do thine endeavour to bring me to enjoy her publicly." But, if she say, " I have no means of doing that, and this is the last of my contrivance," put her away from thy thought, and to-morrow night my husband will come to thee and invite thee. Do thou come with him and tell me and I will consider what remains to be done.' 'Good,' answered he.

Then he spent the rest of the night with her in kissing and clipping, plying the particle of copulation in concert and according the conjunctive with the conjoined, whilst her husband was as a cast-out nunation of construction, till the morning, when she said to him, ' It is not a night of thee that will content me, nor a day, no, nor yet a month nor a year; but it is my intent to abide with thee the rest of my life. Wait till I play my husband a trick that would baffle the keenest-witted and whereby we shall come to our desires. I will cause doubt to enter into him, so that he shall put me away, whereupon I will marry thee and go with thee to thine own country. Moreover, I will transport all his wealth and treasures to thy lodging and will contrive thee the ruin of his dwelling-place and the blotting-out of his traces. But do thou hearken to my speech and obey me in that I shall say to thee and cross me not.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Kemerezzeman; 'there is no opposition in me.'

Then said she, 'Go to the khan and when my husband comes to thee and invites thee, say to him, " O my brother, a man is apt to be burdensome, and when his visits grow [over]frequent, both generous and niggard loathe him. How then shall I go with thee every night and lie with thee in the saloon? lf thou be not chagrined with me, thy harem will bear me a grudge, for that I hinder thee from them. If, therefore, thou hast a mind to my company, take me a house beside thine own and we will abide thus, now I sitting with thee till the time of sleep, and now thou with me. Then I will go to my lodging and thou to thy harem, and this will be better- advised than that I hinder thee from thy harem every night." Then will he come to me and take counsel with me, and I will advise him to turn out our neighbour, for that the house in which he lives is ours and he rents it of us; and once thou art in the house, God will make the rest of our scheme easy to us. Go now and do as I bid thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; whereupon she left him and went away, whilst he lay down and feigned sleep.

Presently, the maid came and aroused them; and when the jeweller awoke, he said to Kemerezzeman, 'O merchant, have the mosquitoes troubled thee?' 'No,' answered he, and Ubeid said, 'Belike thou art grown used to them.' Then they broke their fast and drank coffee, after which they went out to their affairs, and Kemerezzeman betook himself to the old woman, to whom he related what had passed, saying, 'Hast thou any farther device to bring me to foregather with her publicly?' 'O my son,' answered she, 'my contrivance hath gone thus far, and now I am at the end of my devices.' So he left

her and returned to the khan, where towards eventide the jeweller came to him and invited him. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'I cannot go with thee.' 'Why so?' asked the merchant. 'I love thee and cannot brook separation from thee. I conjure thee by Allah to come with me!' 'If it be thy wish,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'to continue our intercourse and keep up the friendship betwixt thee and me, take me a house beside shine own, and if thou wilt, thou shalt pass the evening with me and I with thee; but, when the time of sleep cometh, each of us shall go to his own house and lie there.' Quoth Ubeid, 'I have a house adjoining mine, which is my own property: so go thou with me to-night and to-morrow I will have the house voided for thee.'

So he went with him and they supped and prayed the evening-prayer, after which the jeweller drank the cup of drugged liquor and fell asleep: but in Kemerezzeman's cup there was no drug; so he drank it and slept not. Then came the jeweller's wife and passed the night with him, whilst her husband lay like a dead man. When he awoke in the morning, he sent for the tenant of the adjoining house and said to him, 'O man, void me the house, for I have need of it.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered the man and voided the house to him, whereupon Kemerezzeman took up his abode therein and transported all his goods thither. The jeweller passed that evening with him, then went to his own house.

On the morrow, his wife sent for a cunning builder and wrought on him with money to make her an underground [way] from her chamber to Kemerezzeman's house, ending in a trap-door under the earth. So, before Kemerezzeman was ware, she came in to him with two bags of money and he said to her, ' Whence comest thou ?' She showed him the underground way and said to him, 'Take these two bags of his money.' Then she abode with him, toying and dallying with him, till the morning, when she said, 'Wait for me, till I go to him and wake him, so he may go to his shop, and return to thee.' So saying, she went away and awoke her husband, who made the ablution and prayed and went to his shop. As soon as he was gone, she took four bags of money and carrying them to Kemerezzeman, sat with him awhile, after which she returned to her house and he betook himself to the bazaar.

When he returned at sundown, he found in his house ten purses and jewels and what not else. Presently the jeweller came to him and carried him to his own house, where they passed the evening in the saloon, till the maid brought them to drink. The jeweller drank and fell asleep, whilst nought betided Kemerezzeman [and he abode awake], for that his cup was pure and there was no drug therein. Then came Helimeh and fell to toying with him, whilst the maid transported the jeweller's goods to Kemerezzeman's house by the secret passage. Thus they did till morning, when the maid awoke her master and gave them to drink of coffee, after which they went each his own way.

On the third day she brought out to him a knife of her husband's, that he had chased and wrought with his own band. He priced it at five hundred dinars and because of the eagerness with which the folk sought it of him, he had laid it up in a chest and could not bring himself to sell it to any. Quoth she, 'Take this knife and stick it in thy girdle and go to my husband and sit with him. Then pull out the knife and say to him, "Look at this knife I bought to-day and tell me if I made a good bargain or not." He will know it, but will be ashamed to say to thee, "This is my

knife." So he will ask thee, " Whence didst thou buy it and for how much ? "And do thou answer," I saw two Levantines disputing and one said to the other, 'Where hast thou been?' Quoth his companion, 'I have been with my mistress, and whenever I foregather with her, she gives me money; but to-day she said to me, "I have no money to give thee to-day, but take this knife of my husband's." So I took it and mean to sell it.' The knife pleased me and I said to him, 'Wilt thou sell it to me?' 'Buy,' answered he. So I got it of him for three hundred dinars and I wonder whether it was cheap or dear." And note what he will say to thee. Then talk with him awhile and rise and come back to me in haste. Thou wilt find me awaiting thee at the mouth of the underground way, and do thou give me the knife.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Kemerezzeman and taking the knife, stuck it in his girdle.

Then he went to the shop of the jeweller, who saluted him and welcomed him and made him sit down. He spied the knife in his girdle, at which he wondered and said in himself, 'That is my knife: who can have given it to this merchant?' And he fell a-musing and saying in himself, 'I wonder if it is my knife or one like it!' Presently, Kemerezzeman pulled it out of his girdle and said to him, 'Harkye, master; take this knife and look at it.' Ubeid took it and knew it right well, but was ashamed to say, ' This is my knife;' so he said, 'Where didst thou buy it?' Kemerezzeman replied as Helimeh had charged him, and the jeweller said, 'The knife was cheap at that price, for it is worth five hundred dinars' But fire flamed in his heart and his hands were tied from working at his craft.

Kemerezzeman continued to talk with him, whilst he was drowned in the sea of solicitudes, and for fifty words wherewith the youth bespoke him, he answered him but one; for his heart was in torment and his body racked and his mind troubled and he was even as saith the poet:

I cannot speak, what time to talk with me folk have a mind,
And if they speak to me, my thought they absent from me find.
Drowned in the sea of care, that hath no bottom, 'twixt the folk
I can't distinguish, no, nor man can tell from womankind.

When Kemerezzeman saw him thus discomfited, he said to him, 'Belike thou art busy at this present,' and leaving him, returned to his own house, where he found Helimeh standing at the door of the underground passage, awaiting him. Quoth she, 'Hast thou done as I bade thee?' And he said, 'Yes.' ' What said he to thee?' asked she, and he answered, 'He told me that the knife was cheap at that price, for that it was worth five hundred dinars: but I could see that he was troubled; so I left him and know not what befell him after that.' 'Give me the knife,' said she, 'and reck thou not of him.' Then she took the knife and restoring it to its place, sat down.

Meanwhile, fire flamed in the jeweller's heart and disquietude was sore upon him and he said in himself, 'Needs must I go and look for the knife and do away doubt with certainty.' So he repaired to his house and went in to his wife, snorting like a dragon; and she said to him, 'What ails thee, O my lord ?' 'Where is my knife ?' asked he. 'In the chest,' answered she and smote upon her breast, saying, 'Woe is me! Belike thou hast fallen out with some one and art come to fetch the knife to smite him withal' 'Give me the knife,' said he. 'Let me see it' But she replied, '[I will not give it

thee] till thou swear to me that thou wilt not smite any one with it.' So he swore this to her and she opened the chest and brought out to him the knife and he fell to turning it over, saying, 'Verily, this is a strange thing!'

Then said he to her, 'Take it and lay it back in its place.' Quoth she, 'Tell me the meaning of all this.' And he answered, 'I saw a knife like this with our friend [the merchant],' and told her all that had passed between himself and Kemerezzeman, adding, 'But, when I saw it in the chest, there was an end of my doubts.' 'Belike,' said she, 'thou misdoubtedst of me and deemedst that I was the Levantine's mistress and had given him the knife.' 'Yes,' replied he; 'I had my doubts of this; but, when I saw the knife, suspicion was lifted from my heart.' 'O man,' rejoined she, 'there is no good in thee!' And he fell to excusing himself to her, till he appeased her; after which he returned to his shop.

Next day, she gave Kemerezzeman her husband's watch, which he had wrought with his own hand and whereof none had the like, saying, 'Go to his shop and sit with him and say to him, "I saw again to-day him whom I saw yesterday. He had a watch in his hand and said to me, 'Wilt thou buy this watch?' Quoth I, 'Whence hadst thou it?' And he answered, saying, 'I was with my mistress and she gave me this watch.' So I bought it of him for eight- and-fifty diners. Look at it: is it cheap at that price or dear?" Note what he says to thee; then return to me in haste and give me the watch.' So Kemerezzeman repaired to the jeweller and did with him as his mistress had charged him. When Ubeid saw the watch, he said, 'This is worth seven hundred diners;' and suspicion entered into him. Then Kemerezzeman left him and returning to Helimeh, gave her back the watch.

Presently, in came her husband, snorting, and said to her, 'Where is my watch?' 'Here it is,' answered she. And he said, 'Give it me.' So she brought it to him and he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' 'O man,' said she, 'there is something the matter with thee. Tell me what it is.' 'What shall I say?' answered he. 'Verily, I am bewildered by these [strange] chances!' And he recited the following verses:

By the Compassionate, I'm dazed about my case; for lo!
Troubles and griefs beset me sore, I know not whence they grow.
Patient I'll be, so aloes' self, that I against a thing
Bitt'rer than ever aloes was endured have, may know.
Aloes itself less bitter than my patience is; I've borne
With patience what is hotter far than coals with fire aglow.
Will o'er my case hath no command; but unto patience fair
I'm bidd'n of Him who orders all that is for weal or woe.'

Then he said to his wife, 'O woman, I saw, in the hands of the merchant our friend, first my knife, which I knew, for that its fashion was of my own invention, nor doth its like exist; and he told me of it a story that troubled the heart: so I came [home] and found it [here]. Again to-day I see him with the watch, whose fashion also is of my own invention, nor is there the fellow of it in Bassora, and of this also he told me a story that troubled my heart. Wherefore I am bewildered in my wit and know not what is come to me.' Quoth she, 'The gist of thy speech is that thou suspectedst me of being

the merchant's mistress and giving him thy goods; so thou camest to question me and make proof of my perfidy; and but that I showed thee the knife and the watch, thou hadst been certified of my faithlessness But, O man, since thon deemest thus of me, henceforth I will never again break bread with thee nor drink water, for I loathe thee with the loathing of prohibition.'

So he spoke her fair and excused himself to her till he appeased her and returned, repenting him of having bespoken her thus, to his shop, where he sat, in sore disquiet and exceeding anxiety, between belief and disbelief, till eventide. Then he went home, but brought not Kemerezzeman with him; whereupon quoth his wife, 'Where is the merchant?' And he said, 'In his house.' 'Is the friendship between thee and him grown cold?' asked she. 'By Allah,' replied he, 'I have taken an aversion to him, because of that which hath betided me from him.' Quoth she, 'Go and fetch him, to please me.' So he arose and went in to Kemerezzeman in his house, where he saw his own goods strewn about and knew them. At this sight, fire was kindled in his heart and he fell asighing. Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'How is it that I see thee melancholy?' Ubeid was ashamed to say, 'Here are my goods in thy house: who brought them hither?' So he answered only, 'A vexation hath betided me; but come thou with me to my house, that we may divert ourselves there.' 'Let me be in my place,' said Kemerezzeman. 'I will not go with thee.' But the jeweller conjured him [to come] and taking him, [carried him to his house,] where they supped and passed the evening together, Kemerezzeman talking with the jeweller, who was drowned in the sea of solicitude and answered him but one word for a hundred wherewith he bespoke him.

Presently, the maid brought them two cups of drink, as usual, and they drank; whereupon Ubeid fell asleep, but Kemerezzeman abode on wake, for that his cup was not drugged. Then came Helimeh and said to her lover,

'How deemest thou of yonder cuckold, who is drunken in his heedlessness and knoweth not the wiles of women? Needs must I cozen him into putting me away. To-morrow, I will disguise myself as a slave-girl and follow thee to his shop, where do thou say to him," O master, I went to-day into the khan of E1 Yesirjiyeh, where I saw this damsel and bought her for a thousand dinars. Look at her and tell me whether she was cheap or dear at that price." Then uncover to him my face and breasts and show me to him; after which do thou carry me back to thy house, whence I will go to my chamber by the secret passage, so I may see the issue of our affair with him.'

Then they passed the night in mirth and converse and pleasance and good cheer and dalliance and delight till the morning, when she returned to her own place and sent the maid to arouse the two men. So they arose and prayed the morning-prayer and broke their fast and drank coffee, after which Ubeid repaired to his shop and Kemerezzeman betook himself to his own house. Presently, in came Helimeh to him by the underground passage, in the disguise of a slave-girl, and indeed she was a slave-girl by birth. Then he went out and she followed him, till he came to the jeweller's shop and saluting him, sat down and said, 'O master, I went into the khan of El Yesirjiyeh to-day, to look about me, and saw this damsel in the broker's hands. She pleased me; so I bought her for a thousand diners and I would have thee look upon her and see if she be cheap at that price or no.' So saying, he uncovered her face and the jeweller saw her to be his own wife, dressed in her richest clothes and tricked out in her finest

ornaments and adorned with kohl and henna, even as she was wont to adorn herself before him in the house.

He knew her but too well by her face and clothes and trinkets, for that he had wrought the latter with his own hand, and he saw on her fingers the rings he had newly made for Kemerezzeman, whereby he was certified that she was indeed his wife. So he said to her, 'What is thy name, O slave-girl?' And she answered, 'Helimeh,' naming to him her own name; whereat he was amazed and said to Kemerezzeman, 'For how much didst thou buy her?' 'For a thousand dinars,' answered he. 'Then,' rejoined the jeweller, 'thou hast gotten her for nothing; for her rings and clothes and trinkets are worth more than that.' 'May God rejoice thee with good news!' said Kemerezzeman. 'Since she pleases thee, I will carry her to my house.' And Ubeid answered, 'Do thy will. So he carried her to his house, whence she passed through the secret passage to her own apartment and sat there.

Meanwhile, fire flamed in the jeweller's heart and he said to himself, 'I will go see my wife. If she be at home, this slave-girl must be her counterpart, and glory be to Him who [only] hath no counterpart! But, if she be not at home, it is she herself without a doubt.' Then he set off, running, and coming to his house, found his wife sitting in the same clothes and ornaments he had seen upon her in the shop; whereupon he beat hand upon hand, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' 'O man,' said she, 'art thou mad or what aileth thee? It is not thy wont to do thus, and it must be that something hath befallen thee.' 'If thou wilt have me tell thee,' answered he, 'be not vexed.' 'Say on,' quoth she. So he said, 'Our friend the merchant hath bought a slave-girl, whose shape is as thy shape and her height as thy height; moreover, her name is even as thine and her apparel is the like of thine apparel. Brief, she resembles thee in all her attributes, and on her fingers are rings like thy rings and her trinkets are like unto thy trinkets. So, when he showed her to me, methought it was thyself and I was perplexed about my case. Would we had never seen this merchant nor companied with him and would he had never left his own country and we had not known him, for he hath troubled my life, that before was serene, causing unkindness to succeed good faith and making doubt to enter into my heart!' 'Look in my face,' said she. 'Belike I am she who was with him and he is my lover and I disguised myself as a slave-girl and agreed with him that he should show me to thee, so he might lay a snare for thee.' 'What words are these?' answered he. 'Indeed, I never thought that thou wouldst do the like of this thing.'

Now this jeweller was unversed in women's wiles and knew not
How they do with men, nor had he heard the saying of the poet:
A heart that is eath of moving hath carried thee off in chase
Of the fair, when youth hath left thee and hoariness comes apace.
Leila to me is costly and her enjoyment remote
And many a foe and peril 'twixt her and me have place.
If thou wouldst ask of women and question of their concerns,
Lo, I am versed in their fashions, a leach well skilled in their case.
When a man's head grows grizzled or for the nonce his wealth
Fails from his hand, believe me, he hath no part in their grace.

Nor that of another:

Gainsay women; he obeyeth Allah best, who saith them nay
And he prospers not who giveth them his bridle-rein to sway;
For they'll hinder him from winning to perfection in his gifts,
Though a thousand years he study, seeking after wisdom's way.

And a third:

Women are very devils, made to work us dole and death:
Refuge I seek with God Most High from all their craft and scaith.
Prime source are they of all the ills that overtake mankind,
Both in the fortunes of this world and matters of the faith.

'Here am I sitting in my chamber,' said she. So go thou to him forthright and knock at the door and make shift to go in to him quickly. If thou see the damsel with him, it is a slave-girl of his who resembles me, and glory be to Him who hath no like! But, if thou see no slave-girl with him, then am I myself she whom thou sawest with him in the shop, and thine ill thought of me will be confirmed.' 'True,' answered Ubeid and went out, whereupon she passed through the hidden way and seating herself by Kemerezzeman, told him what had passed, saying, 'Open the door quickly and show me to him.'

As they were talking, there came a knocking at the door. Quoth Kemerezzeman, ' Who is at the door?' 'I, thy friend,' answered the jeweller; 'thou showedst me thy slave-girl in the bazaar, and I rejoiced in her for thee: but my joy in her was not completed; so open the door and let me look at her again.' 'So be it,' rejoined Kemerezzeman and opened the door to him, whereupon he saw his wife sitting by him. She rose and kissed their hands; and he looked at her. Moreover, she talked with him awhile and he saw her not to be distinguished from his wife in aught and said, 'God createth what He will.' Then he went away, more perplexed than ever, and returned to his own house, where he found his wife sitting in her chamber, for she had foregone him thither by the secret passage. Quoth she, 'What hast thou seen?' 'I found her with her master,' answered he; 'and she resembleth thee.' Then said she, 'Go to thy shop and let this suffice thee of suspicion and never again deem ill of me.' 'So be it,' replied he; 'bear me not malice for what is past.' 'God pardon thee!' said she; whereupon he kissed her right and left and went back to his shop.

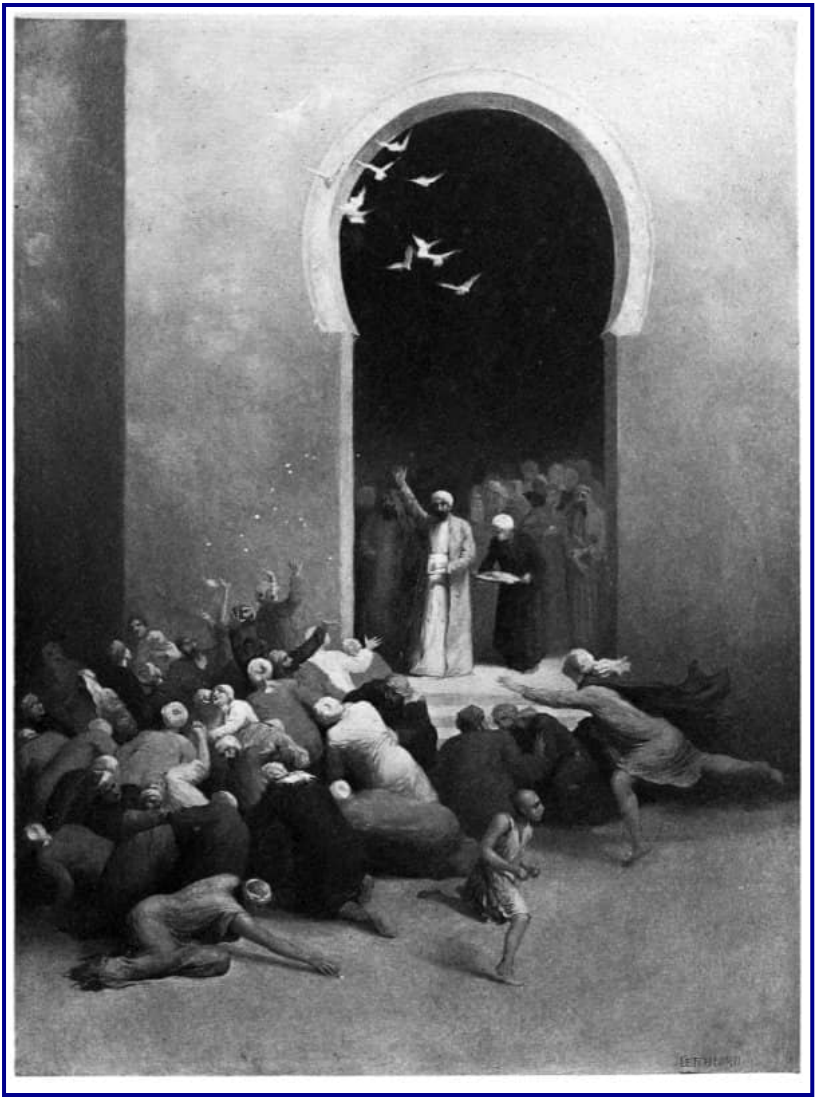
No sooner was he gone than she again betook herself to Kemerezzeman through the underground passage, with four bags of money, and said to him, 'Equip thyself for present departure and be ready to carry off the treasure without delay, against I put in action for thee the device I have in mind.' So he went out forthright and bought mules and loaded them and made ready a travelling litter. Moreover he bought slaves and servants and sending the whole without the city, returned to Helimeh and said to her, 'I have made an end of my affairs.' Quoth she, 'And I too am ready; for I have transported to thy house all the rest of his money and treasures and have left him nothing, little or much, whereof he may avail himself. All this is of my love for thee, O darling of my heart, for I would sacrifice to thee a thousand husbands. But now thou must go to him and take leave of him, saying, "I purpose to depart after three days and

am come to bid thee farewell. So do thou reckon what I owe thee for the rent of the house, that I may send it to thee and acquit my conscience." Note his reply and return to me and tell me; for I can no more. I have done my utmost, by cozening him, to anger him with me and cause him divorce me, but find him still infatuated with me. So nothing will serve us but to depart to shine own country.' 'O rare!' replied he. 'If but the dreams prove true!'

Then he went to the jeweller's shop and sitting down by him, said to him, 'O master, I set out for home in three days' time, and am come to take leave of thee. So I would have thee reckon what I owe thee for the hire of the house, that I may give it to thee and acquit my conscience.' 'What talk is this?' answered Ubeid. 'Verily, it is I who am indebted to thee. By Allah, I will take nothing from thee for the rent of the house, for thou hast brought down blessings upon us! But thou desolatest me by thy departure, and but that it is forbidden to me, I would certainly oppose thee and hinder thee from returning to thy country and family.' Then he took leave of him, whilst they both wept exceeding sore, and the jeweller shut his shop, saying in himself, 'Needs must I bring my friend on his way.'

So, as often as he went on an occasion, the jeweller went with him, and when they entered Kemerezzeman's house, they found Helimeh there, and she stood before them and served them; but, when Ubeid entered his own house, he found her sitting there; nor did he cease to see her thus in each house in turn, for the space of three days, at the end of which time she said to Kemerezzeman, 'Now have I transported to thee all that he hath of treasures and carpets and things of price, and there remains with him but the slave-girl, who used to come in to you with the night drink: but I cannot part with her, for that she is my kinswoman and confidant and she is dear to me. So I will [feign to] beat her and be wroth with her and when my husband comes home, I will say to him, " I will no longer put up with this slave-girl nor abide in the house with her; take her and sell her." So he will sell her and do thou buy her, that we may carry her with us.' 'Good,' answered he. So she beat the girl and when the jeweller came in, he found her weeping and asked her why she wept. Quoth she, 'My mistress hath beaten me.' So he went in to his wife and said to her, 'What hath that accursed girl done, that thou hast beaten her?' 'O man,' answered she, 'I have but one word to say to thee, and it is that I can no longer brook the sight of this girl; so take her and sell her, or else divorce me.' Quoth he, 'I will sell her, for I may not cross thee in aught.' So, when he went out to go to the shop, he took her and passed with her by Kemerezzeman.

No sooner had he gone out than his wife slipped through the underground passage to Kemerezzeman, who placed her in the litter, before her husband reached him. When he came up and Kemerezzeman saw the slave-girl with him he said to him, 'What girl is this?' 'It is my slave girl,' answered Ubeid, 'who used to serve us with wine; she hath disobeyed her mistress, who is wroth with her and hath bidden me sell her.' Quoth Kemerezzeman, 'If her mistress have taken an aversion to her, there is no abiding for her with her; but sell her to me, that I may smell your scent in her, and I will make her handmaid to my slave Helimeh.' 'Good,' answered Ubeid 'Take her.' 'What is her price?' asked Kemerezzeman. But the jeweller said, 'I will take nothing from thee, for thou hast been bountiful to us.'



So he accepted her from him and said to Helimeh, 'Kiss thy lord's hand.' Accordingly, she came out from the litter and kissing Ubeid's hand, remounted, whilst he looked at her. Then said Kemerezzeman, 'I commend thee to God, O Master Ubeid! Acquit me of responsibility.' 'God acquit thee,' answered the jeweller, 'and bring thee in safety to thy family!' Then he bade him farewell and went to his shop, weeping, and indeed it was grievous to him to part from Kemerezzeman, for that he had been his friend and friendship hath its claims; yet he rejoiced in the dispelling of the doubts that had betided him concerning his wife, since the young man was now gone and his suspicions had not been confirmed.

Meanwhile Helimeh said to her lover, 'If thou wish for safety, travel by other than the accustomed road.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and taking a road other than that commonly used, fared on, without ceasing, till he reached the confines of Egypt and sent his father a letter by a runner. Now Abdurrehman was sitting in the market among the merchants, with a heart on fire for separation from his son, for that no news of the latter had reached him, since the day of his departure, when the runner came up and said, 'O my lords, which of you is called the merchant Abdurrehman?' 'What wouldst thou with him?' asked they; and he said, 'I have a letter for him from his son Kemerezzeman, whom I left at El Arish.

At this Abdurrehman rejoiced and his heart was lightened and the merchants rejoiced for him and gave him joy of [his son's] safety. Then he opened the letter and read as follows: 'From Kemerezzeman to the merchant Abdurrehman. Peace be upon thee and upon all the merchants! If ye ask concerning us, to God be the praise and the thanks! Indeed we have sold and bought and profited and are come back in health and wealth and safety.' Whereupon Abdurrehman opened the chapter of rejoicing and made banquets and gave feasts and entertainments galore, sending for instruments of music and addressing himself to hold high festival after the rarest fashion When Kemerezzeman came to Es Salehiyeh,' his father and all the merchants went forth to meet him, and Abdurrehman embraced him and strained him to his bosom and wept till he swooned away. When he came to himself, he said, 'O my son, [this is] a blessed day, since the Omnipotent Protector hath reunited us with thee!' And he repeated the following verses:

The loved one's return is the crowning of glee
And the joy-cup between us once more circles free.
So welcome, fair welcome and full to the light
Of the time, the lull moon of full moons, still say we.

Then, for excess of joy, the tears flowed from his eyes and he recited these verses also:

The moon o' the time, unveiling, in splendour doth appear,
Whenas, his travels ended, to us he draweth near.
Even as the night of his absence his hair in colour is,
But yet the sun's uprising is from his collars' sphere.

Then the merchants came up to Kemerezzeman and saluting him, saw with him many loads and servants and a travelling litter enclosed in a spacious canopy. So they

took him and carried him home; and when Helimeh came forth from the litter, his father saw her a ravishment to all who beheld her. So they opened her an upper chamber, as it were a treasure from which the talismans had been loosed; and when his mother saw her, she was ravished with her and deemed her a queen of the wives of the kings. So she rejoiced in her and questioned her; and she answered, saying, 'I am thy son's wife.' 'Since he is married to thee,' rejoined the other, 'we must make thee a splendid bride-feast, that we may rejoice in thee and in my son.'

When the folk had dispersed and each had gone his way, Abdurrehman foregathered with his son and said to him, 'O my son, what is this slave-girl thou hast brought with thee and for how much didst thou buy her?' 'O my father,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'she is no slave- girl; but it is she who was the cause of my going abroad. 'How so?' asked his father, and he said, 'It is she whom the dervish described to us the night he lay with us; for indeed my hopes clove to her from that hour and I sought not to travel but on her account. The wild Arabs came out upon me by the way and stripped me and took my goods, so that I entered Bassora alone and there befell me there such and such things;' and he went on to relate to him all that had befallen him from beginning to end.

When he had made an end of his story, his father said to him, 'O my son, and after all this didst thou marry her?' ' No,' answered Kemerezzeman; 'but I have promised her marriage.' 'Is it thine intent to marry her?' asked Abdurrehman and he replied, 'If thou bid me marry her, I will do so; otherwise, I will not marry her.' Quoth his father, 'If thou marry her, I am quit of thee in this world and the next, and I shall be sore incensed against thee. How canst thou marry her, seeing that she hath dealt thus with her husband? For, even as she did with him for thy sake, so will she do the like with thee for another's sake, because she is a traitress and there is no trusting in a traitor. Wherefore, if thou disobey me, I shall be wroth with thee; but, if thou give ear to my word, I will seek thee out a girl handsomer than she, who shall be pure and virtuous, and marry thee to her, though I spend all my wealth upon her. Moreover, I will make thee a wedding without equal and will glory in thee and in her; for it is better that folk should say, "Such an one hath married such an one's daughter," than that they should say, "He hath taken to wife a slave-girl without birth or worth."' And he went on to persuade his son to give up marrying her, supporting his arguments by citing saws and proofs and stories and examples and verses and moral instances, till Kemerezzeman said, 'Since the case is thus, it boots not that I marry her.' Whereupon his father kissed him between the eyes, saying, 'Thou art my true son, and as I live, O my son, I will assuredly marry thee to a girl who hath not her equal!'

Then he set the jeweller's wife and her maid in an upper chamber, appointing a black slave-girl to carry them their meat and drink Moreover, he said to Helimeh, 'Ye shall abide imprisoned in this chamber, thou and thy maid, till I find one who will buy you, when I will sell you to him. And if ye resist, I will kill you both, for thou art a traitress, and there is no good in thee.' 'Do thy will,' answered she. 'I deserve all thou canst do with me.' Then he locked the door on them and gave his women a charge respecting them, saying, 'Let none go up to them nor speak with them, save the black slave-girl, who shall give them their meat and drink through the chamber-window.' So

she abode with her maid, weeping and repenting her of that which she had done with her husband.

Meanwhile Abdurrehman sent out the marriage-brokers, to look out a wife of rank and worth for his son, and they ceased not to make search, and as often as they saw one girl, they heard of a fairer than she, till they came to the house of the Sheikh el Islam and saw his daughter. Now she had no equal in Cairo for beauty and grace and symmetry, and she was a thousand times handsomer than the jeweller's wife. So they told Abdurrehman and he and the notables repaired to her father and sought her in marriage of him. Then they drew up the contract and made her a splendid wedding. Moreover, Abdurrehman gave bride-feasts and held open house forty days.

On the first day, he invited the doctors of the law and they held a splendid nativity On the morrow, he invited all the merchants, and so on during the rest of the forty days, making a banquet every day to one or other class of folk, till he had bidden all the men of learning and emirs and beys and magistrates, whilst the drums beat and the flutes sounded and the merchant sat to receive the guests, with his son by his side, that he might divert himself by gazing on the folk, as they ate from the tables. Every night Abdurrehman illuminated the street and the quarter with lamps and there came all the mimes and jugglers and mountebanks and played all manner sports; and indeed it was a peerless wedding. On the last day he invited the poor and needy, far and near, and they came in troops and ate, whilst the merchant sat, with his son by his side.

Presently, behold, Ubeid the jeweller entered, with a company of poor folk, and he was naked and weary and bore on his face the marks of travel. When Kemerezzeman saw him, he knew him and said to his father, 'Look, O my father, at yonder poor man that is but now come in.' So he looked and saw him clad in worn clothes and on him a patched gown worth two dirhems: his face was pale and he was covered with dust and was as he were an offcast of the pilgrimage. He was groaning as groans the sick man and the needy, walking with a tottering gait and swaying right and left, and indeed there was realized in him the saying of the poet:

Lack-gold abaseth man and cloth his worth away,
Even as the setting sun that pales with ended day.
He passeth 'mongst the folk and fain would hide his head;
And when alone, he weeps with tears that never stay.
Absent, none taketh heed to him or his concerns;
Present, he hath no part in life or pleasance aye.
By, Allah, whenas men with poverty are cursed,
But strangers midst their kin and countrymen are they!

And that of another:

All to the poor man's contrary, a hindrance and a woe;
The whole world shuts its doors on him, wherever he doth go.
Thou seest him in abhorrence held, though he no culprit be;
He sees hostility, the cause whereof he may not know.
Even the dogs, when they behold a man of fortune, straight
Do follow him and fawn on him and wag their tails, I trow;

But if, one day, they see a poor and miserable wight,
They bark at him incontinent and eke their teeth they show.

And yet another:

So but a man be blessed with luck and power and sway,
Calamities and woes still turn from him away.
The loved one to him comes without a rendezvous,
Unsought, and eke the spy the pimp for him doth play.
The folk as singing rate the rumbling of his guts
And when he letteth wind, " He smelleth sweet," they say.

'O my son,' said the merchant, 'who is this?' And Kemerezzeman replied, 'This is Master Ubeid the jeweller, husband of the woman who is imprisoned with us.' Quoth Abdurrehman, 'Is this he of whom thou toldest me?' 'Yes,' answered his son; 'and indeed I know him well.'

Now the manner of Ubeid's coming thither was on this wise. When he had taken leave of Kemerezzeman, he went to his shop, where there came to him a job of work and he wrought at it all day. At eventide he locked up his shop and going home, laid his hand on the door, whereupon it opened and he entered and found neither his wife nor the slave-girl, but saw the house in the sorriest of plights, realizing the saying of the poet:

Once was it as a beehive stocked and full of bees galore;
But, when they left it, it became devoid of all its store.
It seems to-day as ff it ne'er had been inhabited Or as if
Death had taken those who dwelt therein of yore

When he saw the house empty, he turned right and left and went round about the place, like a madman, but found no one. Then he opened the door of his treasure-closet, but found therein nought of his money nor his treasures; whereupon he awoke from his delusion and shook off his infatuation and knew that it was his wife herself who had given him the change and outwitted him with her wiles. He wept for that which had betided, but kept his affair secret, so none of his enemies might exult over him nor any of his friends be troubled, knowing that, if he dis- covered his secret, it would bring him nought but affront and blame from the folk; wherefore he said to himself, 'O Ubeid, conceal that which hath befallen thee of trouble and affliction; it behoveth thee to do in accordance with the saying of the poet:

If a man's breast be straitened with a secret he cloth hide, Yet straiter's his who to the folk his secret cloth confide.'

Then he locked up his house and gave his shop in charge of one of his journeymen, to whom said he, 'My friend the young merchant hath invited me and my wife to accompany him to Cairo, that we may divert ourselves with the sight of the city, and swears that he will not depart except he carry us with him. So, O my son, I make thee my steward in the shop, and if the king ask for me, say thou to him, "He is gone with his wife to the Holy House of God [at Mecca]."' Then he sold some of his effects and bought mules and camels and slaves. Moreover, he bought a slave-girl and

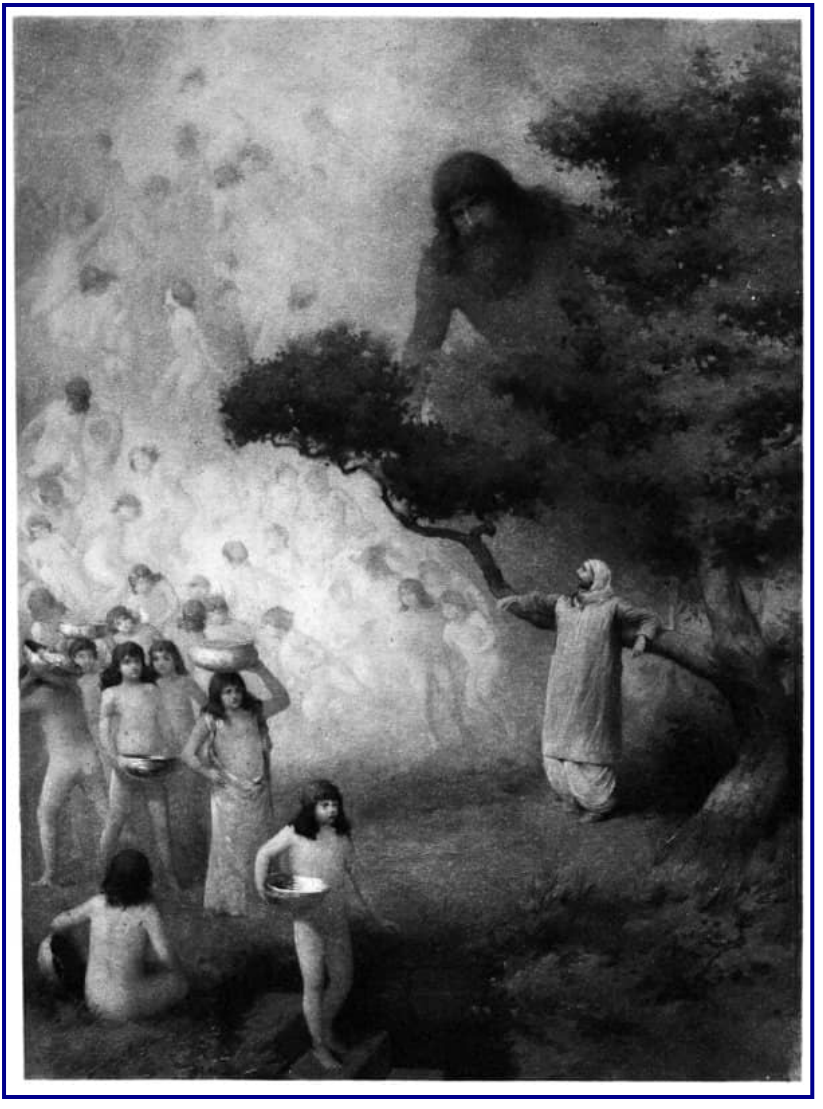
placing her in a litter, set out from Bassora after ten days. His friends took leave of him and none doubted but that he had taken his wife and gone on the pilgrimage, and the folk rejoiced in this, for that God had delivered them from being shut up in the mosques and houses every Friday. Quoth some of them, 'God grant he may never return to Bassora, so we may no more be shut up in the mosques and houses every Friday!' For that this usage had caused the people of Bassora exceeding vexation. Quoth another, 'Methinks he will not return, by reason of the praying of the people of Bassora against him.' And yet another, ' If he return, it will not be but in reversed case.'

So the folk rejoiced with an exceeding joy in the jeweller's departure, after they had been in sore chagrin, and even their cats and dogs were eased. When Friday came round, however, the crier proclaimed as usual that the people should repair to the mosques two hours before the time of prayer or else shut themselves up in their houses, together with their cats and dogs; whereat their breasts were straitened and they all assembled and betaking themselves to the king's divan, stood before him and said, 'O king of the age, the jeweller hath taken his wife and departed on the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God: so the cause of our restraint hath ceased to be, and why therefore are we now shut up?' Quoth the king, 'How came this traitor to depart without telling me? But, when he comes back from his journey, all will be well: so go ye to your shops and sell and buy, for this [restriction] is removed from you.'

Meanwhile the jeweller fared on ten days' journey, and as he drew near Baghdad, there befell him that which had befallen Kemerezzeman, before his entry into Bassora; for the wild Arabs came out upon him and stripped him and took all he had and he only escaped by feigning himself dead. As soon as they were gone, he rose and fared on, naked as he was, till he came to a village, where God inclined to him the hearts of certain charitable folk, who covered his nakedness with some old clothes, and he begged his way from town to town, till he reached the city of Cairo the [God-]guarded. Being racked with hunger, he went about begging in the markets, till one of the townsfolk said to him, 'O poor man, get thee to the house of the wedding-festival and eat and drink; for to-day they hold open house for poor folk and strangers.' Quoth he, me and I will show it to thee.' So he followed him, till he brought him to Abdurrehman's house and said to him, 'This is the house of the wedding; enter and fear not, for there is no doorkeeper at the door of the festival.'

So he entered and Kemerezzeman knew him and told his father, who said, 'O my son, leave him awhile: belike he is hungry; so let him eat his fill and recover himself, and after we will look to him.' So they waited till Ubeid had eaten his fill and washed his hands and drunk coffee and sherbets of sugar flavoured with musk and ambergris and was about to go out, when Abdurrehman sent one after him, who said to him, 'Come, O stranger, and speak with the merchant Abdurrehman.' 'Who is he?' asked Ubeid; and the man said, 'He is the master of the feast.' So the jeweller turned back, thinking that he meant to give him largesse, and coming up to Abdurrehman, saw his friend Kemerezzeman and was like to lose his senses for shame before him. But Kemerezzeman rose to him and embracing him, saluted him and they both wept sore. Then he seated him by his side and Abdurrehman said to his son, 'Lack-courtesy that thou art, this is no way to receive friends! Send him first to the bath and send after him a suit of clothes that shall befit him; and after sit with him and talk with him.' So

he called some of his men and bade them carry the jeweller to the bath and sent him a suit of clothes of the choicest, worth a thousand dinars. Accordingly they carried him to the bath, where they washed his body and clad him in a suit, and he became as he were Provost of the Merchants.



Meanwhile, the bystanders questioned Kemerezzeman of him, saying, 'Who is this and whence knowest thou him?' Quoth he, 'This is my friend, who lodged me in his house and to whom I am indebted for favours without number, for that he entreated me with exceeding kindness. He is a man of fortune and condition and by trade a jeweller, in which craft he hath no equal. The king of Bassora loves him greatly and holds him in high esteem and his word is law with him.' And he went on to enlarge to them on his praises, saying, 'He did with me thus and thus and I have shame of him and know not how to requite him his generous dealing with me.' Nor did he leave to vaunt him, till his worth was magnified to the bystanders and he became venerable in their eyes. So they said, 'We will all do him homage and honour him for thy sake. But we would fain know why he hath departed his native land and come hither and what God hath done with him, that he is come to this plight.' 'O folk,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'marvel not: for a son of Adam is still subject to Fate and destiny, and what while he abideth in this world, he is not safe from calamities. Indeed, he speaks truly who says:

Time still devours mankind and lies in wait on them to prey:
So be not thou of those whom rank and honours lead astray;
Nay, but beware of slips and faults and sorrow still forswear
And know the attributes of time are ruin and decay.
How many a fortune by the least adverseness is undone!
All in itself hath that shall cause it change and pass away.

Know that I entered Bassora in yet sorrier plight and worse distress than this man, for that he entered Cairo with his nakedness covered with rags; but I came into his town, with my nakedness uncovered, one hand before and another behind; and none availed me but God and this excellent man. Now the reason of this was that the Bedouins stripped me and took my camels and mules and baggage and slew my men; but I lay down among the slain, and they thought that I was dead and went away and left me. Then I arose and walked on, naked, till I came to Bassora, where this man met me and clothed me and lodged me in his house. Moreover, he furnished me with money, and all I have brought back with me I owe to God's goodness and his. When I departed, he gave me great store of wealth and I returned home, with a heart at ease. I left him in luck and lordship, and belike there hath befallen him some calamity of the calamities of fortune, that hath enforced him leave his folk and country, and there hath happened to him by the way the like of what happened to me. There is nothing extraordinary in this; but now it behoveth me to requite him his generous dealing with me and do according to the saying of him who saith:

Thou that of Fortune deemest hopefully,
Dost thou thee know what she will do with thee?
Whate'er thou dost, do good; for to a man,
Even as he meteth, shall it meted be.'

As they were talking, up came Ubeid, as he were Provost of the Merchants; whereupon they all rose to salute him and seated him in the place of honour. Then said Kemerezzeman to him, 'O my friend, verily, thy day is blessed and fortunate! There is no need to relate to me a thing that befell me before thee. If the Bedouins

have stripped thee and robbed thee of thy wealth, verily our money is the ransom of our lives; so let not thy soul be troubled; for I entered thy city naked and thou clothedst me and entreatedst me generously, and I owe thee many a kindness. But I will requite thee and do with thee even as thou didst with me, nay, more: so be of good heart and cheerful eye.' And he went on to soothe him and hinder him from speech, lest he should name his wife and what she had done with him; nor did he cease to ply him with saws and moral instances and verses and conceits and stories and anecdotes and console him, till he took the hint and kept silence concerning the past, diverting himself with the stories and witticisms ho heard and repeating [in himself] the following lines:

On Fortune's forehead is a script, which if on careful wise
Thou ponder, very tears of blood 'twill draw from out thine eyes.
Fortune, indeed, with its right hand saluteth none that be,
But with the, cup or dole and teen its left hand still him plies.

Then Kemerezzeman and his father took Ubeid and carrying him into the saloon of the harem, shut themselves up with him; and Abdurrehman said to him, 'We did but hinder thee from speaking before the folk, for fear of dishonour to thee and to us: but now we are private; so tell me all that hath passed between thee and thy wife and my son.' So he told him all, from beginning to end, and when he had made an end of his story, Abdurrehman said to him, 'Was the fault with my son or with thy wife?' 'By Allah,' answered Ubeid, 'thy son was not to blame, for men [naturally] lust after women, and it behoveth Women to defend themselves from men. So the fault lies with my wife, who played me false and did with me these things.'

Then Abdurrehman arose and taking his son aside, said to him, 'O my son, we have proved his wife and know her to be a traitress; and now I mean to prove him and see if he be a man of worth and honour or a wittol.' 'How so?' asked Kemerezzeman; and Abdurrehman said, 'I mean to urge him to make peace with his wife and if he consent and forgive her, I will smite him with a sword and kill him and kill her after, her and her maid, for there is no good in the life of a whore and a wittol; but, if he turn from her with aversion, I will marry him to thy sister and give him more than that thou tookest from him of wealth'

Then he went back to Ubeid and said to him, 'O master, verily, the commerce of women calls for patience and he who loves them hath need of longanimity, for that they order themselves ill towards men and maltreat them, by reason of their superiority over them in beauty and grace, wherefore they magnify themselves and belittle men. Especially is this the case when their husbands show them affection; for then they requite them with pride and coquetry and foul dealing of all kinds. But, if a man be wroth whenever he seeth in his wife aught that misliketh him, there can be no fellowship between them, nor can any hit it off with them who is not magnanimous and long-suffering; and except a man bear with his wife and requite her ill-doing with forgiveness, he shall get no good of her society. Indeed, it hath been said of women, "Were they in the sky, the necks of men would incline to them;" and he who hath the power and spareth, his reward is with God.

Now this woman is thy wife and thy companion and she hath long companied with thee; wherefore it behoveth that there be in thee indulgence for her, for that indulgence in fellowship is of the essentials of success. Moreover, women lack wit and religion, and if she have done ill, she repenteth and God willing, she will not again return to that which she did aforetime. So it is my counsel that thou make peace with her and I will restore thee more than thy good [that thou hast lost]; and if it please thee to abide with me, thou art welcome, thou and she, and ye shall know nought but what shall rejoice you both; but, if thou seek to return to thine own country, I will give thee what shall content thee, and yonder is the litter ready; so mount thy wife and her maid therein and journey to shine own land. For that which falls out between a man and his wife is manifold, and it behoves thee to be indulgent and not take the road of rigour.'

'O my lord,' said the jeweller, 'and where is my wife? 'She is in yonder upper chamber,' answered Abdurrehman 'Go up to her and be easy with her, for my sake, and trouble her not; for, when my son brought her hither, he would have married her, but I forbade him from her and shut her up in yonder chamber, saying in myself, "Peradventure her husband will come and I will deliver her to him; for she is fair of favour, and when a woman is like unto this one, it may not be that her husband will let her go." What I counted on is come about and praised be God the Most High for thy reunion with thy wife! As for my son, I have sought him another woman in marriage and married him to her. These feasts and rejoicings are for his wedding, and to-night I bring him in to his wife. So here is the key of the chamber where thy wife is. Take it and open the door and go in to her and her maid and make merry with her. There shall be brought you meat and drink and thou shalt not come down from her till thou have had thy fill of her.' 'May God requite thee for me with all good, O my lord!' exclaimed Ubeid and taking the key, went up, rejoicing.

The merchant thought his words had pleased him and that he assented thereto; so he took the sword and following him, unseen, stood to see what should happen between him and his wife. When the jeweller came to the chamber-door, he heard his wife weeping sore for that Kemerezzeman had married another than her, and the maid saying to her, 'O my lady, how often have I warned thee and said to thee, "Thou wilt get no good of this youth: so do thou leave his company." But thou heededst not my words and spoiledst thy husband of all his goods and gavest them to him. Then thou forsookest thy place, of thine infatuation for him, and camest with him to this country. And now he hath cast thee out from his thought and married another and hath made the issue of thine infatuation for him to be imprisonment.' 'Be silent, O accursed wench!' answered Helimeh. 'Though he be married to another, yet needs must I occur to his thought some day. I cannot forget [the nights I have spent in] his company and in any case I console myself with the saying of the poet:

O lords, cloth it betide you to give a thought to one
Unto whose thought none other occurs save you alone?
Now God forbid that mindless you of his case should be
Whom thought of your condition distracteth from his own!

It cannot be but he will bethink him of our loves and ask of me; wherefore I will not turn from loving him nor change from passion for him, though I die in prison, for

he is my love and my physician, and my hope is in him that he will yet return to me and deal graciously with me.'

When the jeweller heard his wife's words, he went in to her and said to her, " O traitress, thy hope in him is as the hope of Iblis in Paradise. All these vices were in thee and I knew not thereof; for, had I been ware of one of them, I had not kept thee with me an hour. But now I am certified of this in thee, it behoveth me to kill thee, though they put me to death for thee, O traitress!' And he seized her with both hands and repeated the following verses:

O fair ones, ye fordid my love so warm and true
With sin nor had regard for what was right and due.
How long to you, indeed, with doting love I clave!
But, after this my woe, 1 1oathe the love of you.

Then he pressed upon her windpipe and broke her neck, whereupon her maid cried out, saying, 'Alas, my mistress!' 'O harlot,' said he, 'it is thou who art to blame for all this, for that thou knewest this vice to be in her and toldest me not.' Then he seized upon her and strangled her.

When he had done this, apprehensions flocked upon him and he feared the issue of his affair and said in himself, 'When the merchant knows that I have killed them in his house, he will surely slay me; but I beseech God that He appoint the taking of my life to be according to the Law.' And he abode bewildered about his case and knew not what to do; but, as he was thus, in came Abdurrehman, who had stood all this while, sword in hand, without the door, looking with his eyes and hearkening with his ears, and said to him, '[Fear not:] no harm shall befall thee, for indeed thou deservest safety. See this sword in my hand. I had it in mind to slay thee, hadst thou made peace with her and taken her back into favour, and I would have slain [her and] the maid, to boot. But, since thou hast done this thing, welcome to thee and again welcome! And thy reward shall be that I will marry thee to my daughter, Kemerezzeman's sister.' Then he carried him down and sent for the woman whose office it was to wash the dead: whereupon it was noised abroad that Kemerezzeman had brought with him two slave-girls from Bassora and that they were both dead. So the people began to condole with him, saying, 'May thy head live!' and, 'May God compensate thee!' And they washed and shrouded them and buried them, and none knew the truth of the matter.

Then Abdurrehman sent for the Sheikh el Islam and all the notables and said to the former, 'Draw up the contract of marriage between my daughter Kaukeb es Sebah and Master Ubeid the jeweller and [set down that] her dowry hath been paid me in full.' So he drew up the contract and Abdurrehman gave the company to drink of sherbets, and they made one wedding festival for the two brides and paraded them in one litter on one and the same night; after which they carried Kemerezzeman and Ubeid in procession together and brought them in to their brides. When the jeweller went in to Abdurrehman's daughter, he found her handsomer than Helimeh and lovelier a thousandfold. So he did away her maidenhead and on the morrow, he went to the bath with Kemerezzeman.

Then he abode with them in pleasance and delight awhile, till he began to yearn after his native land: so he went in to Abdurrehman and said to him, 'O uncle, I long

for my own country, for I have there estates and effects, which I left in charge of one of my journeymen; and I have it in mind to journey thither, that I may sell my possessions and return to thee. So wilt thou give me leave to go to my country to that end?' 'O my son,' answered the merchant, 'I give thee leave to do this, and no blame to thee for these words, for that love of country is a part of religion; and he who hath not good in his own land hath none in other folks' land. But, peradventure, if thou depart without thy wife, when thou art once come to thy native place, it may seem good to thee to abide there, and thou wilt be divided between returning to thy wife and sojourning in thine own country; so it were the better counsel that thou carry thy wife with thee; and after, if thou be minded to return to us, return and welcome to you both; for we are folk who know not divorce and no woman of us marries twice, nor do we lightly discard a man.' Quoth Ubeid, 'O uncle, I fear me thy daughter will not consent to depart with me to my own country.' 'O my son,' replied Abdurrehman, 'we have no women amongst us who gainsay their husbands nor know we a wife who is wroth with her husband.'

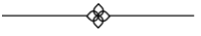
'May God bless you and your women!' exclaimed the jeweller and going in to his wife, said to her, 'I am minded to go to my country: what sayst thou?' Quoth she, 'My father still had the governance of me, whilst I was a maid, and when I married, the governance all passed into my husband's hand, nor will I gainsay him.'

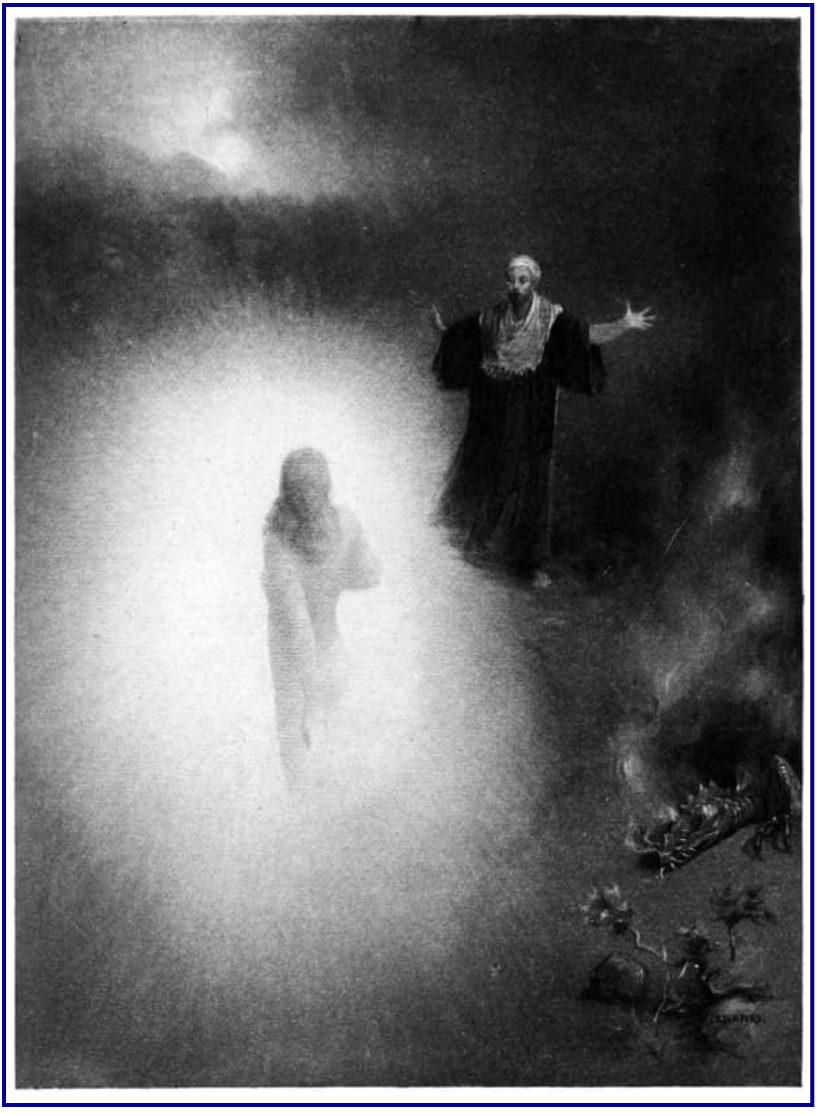
'May God bless thee and thy father,' rejoined Ubeid, 'and have mercy on the womb that bore thee and the loins that begat thee!' Then he cut his thongs and betook himself to making ready for his journey. His father-in- law gave him much substance and they took leave of one another, after which Ubeid and his wife journeyed on without ceasing, till they reached Bassora, where his friends and kinsmen came out to meet him, doubting not but that he had been in the Hejaz. Some rejoiced at his return, whilst other some were vexed, and the folk said one to another, 'Now will he straiten us again every Friday, as before, and we shall be shut up in the mosques and houses, even to our cats and dogs.'

When the King of Bassora heard of his return, he was wroth with him and sending for him, chid him and said to him, 'Why didst thou depart, without letting me know? Was I unable to give thee somewhat wherewith thou mightest have succoured thyself in thy pilgrimage to the Holy House of God?' 'Pardon, O my lord!' replied the jeweller. 'By Allah, I went not on the pilgrimage! But there have befallen me such and such things.' And he told him all that had befallen him with his wife and with the merchant Abdurrehman of Cairo and how the latter had given him his daughter to wife and he had brought her to Bassora. 'By Allah,' said the king, 'did I not fear God the Most High, I would slay thee and marry this noble lady after thy death, though I spent treasuries of money on her, for that she befitteth none but kings. But God hath appointed her of thy portion and may He bless thee in her! So look thou use her well' Then he bestowed largesse on the jeweller, who went out from before him and abode with his wife five years, after which he was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High.

The king sought his widow in marriage; but she refused, saying, 'O king, never was woman among my kindred who married again after her husband's death; wherefore I will never take another husband, nor will I marry thee, no, though thou kill me.'

Then he sent to say to her, 'Dost thou seek to go to thy native land?' And she answered, ' If thou do good, thou shalt be requited therewith.' So he collected for her all the jeweller's possessions and added unto her of his own, after the measure of his rank Moreover he sent with her one of his viziers, a man renowned for goodness and piety, and an escort of five hundred horse, who journeyed with her, till they brought her to her father, with whom she abode, without marrying again, till she died and they died all. So, if this woman would not consent to replace her dead husband with a Sultan, how shall she be evened with one who replaced her husband, whilst he was yet alive, with a youth of unknown extraction and condition, more by token that this was in lewdness and not by way of lawful marriage? So he who deemeth all women to be alike, there is no remedy for the disease of his madness. And glory be to Him to whom belongeth the empire of the Seen and the Unseen, the [Ever-]Living One, who dieth not!





Abdallah Ben Fazil and His Brothers.

THE Khalif Haroun er Reshid was one day examining the tributes of the various provinces of his empire, when he observed that the tributes of all the countries and regions had come into the treasury, except that of Bassora, which had not arrived that year. So he held a Divan because of this and sending for the Vizier Jaafer, said to him, 'The tributes of all the provinces have come into the treasury, save that of Bassora, no part whereof hath arrived.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'belike there hath befallen the governor of Bassora somewhat that hath diverted him from sending the tribute.' Quoth the Khalif, 'The time of the coming of the tribute was twenty days [ago]; what, then, can be his excuse for that, in this time, he hath neither sent it nor sent to show cause for not doing so?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'if it please thee, we will send him a messenger.' 'Send him Abou Ishac el Mausili, the boon-companion,' rejoined the Khalif, and Jaafer said, 'Hearkening and obedience to God and to thee, O Commander of the Faithful!'

Then he returned to his house and summoning Abou Ishac, wrote him a royal letter and said to him, 'Go to Abdallah ben Fazil, Viceroy of Bassora, and see what hath diverted him from sending the tribute. If it be ready, do thou receive it from him in full and bring it to me in haste, for the Khalif hath examined the tributes of the provinces and finds that they are all come in, except that of Bassora: but if thou find it not ready and he make an excuse to thee, bring him back with thee, that he may with his own tongue acquaint the Khalif with his excuse.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Abou Ishac and taking with him five thousand horse, set out for Bassora.

When Abdallah heard of his approach, he went out to meet him with his troops and carried him to his palace, whilst the escort encamped without the city, where he furnished them with all of which they stood in need. Abou Ishac entered the audience-chamber and sitting down on the throne, seated the governor beside himself, whilst the notables sat round him, according to their several ranks. After the salutation, Abdallah said to him, 'O my lord, is there any cause for thy coming to us?' 'Yes,' answered Abou Ishac, 'I come to seek the tribute; for the Khalif enquireth of it and the time of its coming is past.' 'O my lord,' rejoined Abdallah, 'would thou hadst not wearied thyself nor taken upon thyself the fatigue of the journey! For the tribute is ready in full and I had purposed to despatch it to-morrow. But, since thou art come, I will deliver it to thee, after I have entertained thee three days; and on the fourth day I will bring the tribute before thee. But now it behoveth us to offer thee a present in part requital of thy kindness and that of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'There is no harm in that,' said Abou Ishac.

So Abdallah dismissed the Divan and carrying him into a saloon, that had not its match, set a table of food before him and his companions. They ate and drank and made merry, after which the table was removed and there came coffee and sherbets. They sat conversing till a third part of the night was past, when they spread Abou Ishac a bed on a couch of ivory, inlaid with glittering gold. So he lay down and the viceroy lay down beside him on another couch; but wakefulness possessed Abou Ishac and he fell to meditating on the metres of verse and composing poetry, for that he was one of

the chief of the Khalif's boon-companions and was eminently skilled in composing verses and pleasant stories; nor did he leave to lie awake and make verses till half the night was past. Presently, Abdallah arose, thinking Abou Ishac asleep, and girding his middle, opened a cupboard, whence he brought out a whip; then, taking a lighted candle, he went forth by the door of the saloon. When Abou Ishac saw this, he marvelled and said, 'Whither goeth Abdallah ben Fazil with that whip? Belike he is minded to punish some one. But needs must I follow him and see what he will do this night.' So he arose and went out softly after him, so that he saw him not, and presently saw him open a closet and take thence a tray containing four dishes of meat and bread and a gugglet of water. Then he went on, carrying the tray and followed by Abou Ishac, till he came to another saloon and entered, whilst Abou Ishac stood behind the door and looking through the chink, saw a spacious saloon, richly furnished and having in its midst a couch of ivory plated with glittering gold, to which two dogs were made fast with chains of gold.

Abdallah set down the tray in a corner and tucking up his sleeves, loosed the first dog, which began to struggle in his hands and put its muzzle to the ground, as it would kiss the ground before him, whining the while in a low, weak voice. Abdallah tied its paws behind its back and throwing it on the ground, drew forth the whip and beat it without mercy. The dog struggled, but could not get free, and Abdallah ceased not to beat it till it left groaning and lay without motion. Then he took it and tied it up in its place, and unbinding the second dog, did with him as he had done with the first; after which he pulled out a handkerchief and fell to wiping away their tears and comforting them, saying, 'Bear me not malice; for, by Allah, this is not of my will, nor is it easy to me! But it may be God will grant you relief and issue from your affliction.' And he prayed for them, what while Abou Ishac stood hearkening with his ears and watching with his eyes, and indeed he marvelled at this case.

Then Abdallah brought the dogs the tray of food and fell to feeding them with his own hand, till they had enough, when he wiped their mouths and lifting up the gugglet, gave them to drink; after which he took up the tray and gugglet and candle and made for the door. But Abou Ishac forewent him and making his way back to his couch, lay down; so that he saw him not neither knew that he had followed him and watched him. Then the governor replaced the tray and the gugglet in the closet and returning to the saloon, opened the cupboard and laid the whip in its place; after which he put off his clothes and lay down. But Abou Ishac passed the rest of the night pondering this affair nor did sleep visit him, for excess of wonder, and he ceased not to say in himself, 'I wonder what can be the meaning of this!' Nor did he leave wondering till the morning, when they arose and prayed the morning prayer. Then they set breakfast before them and they ate and drank coffee, after which they went out to the divan. Abou Ishac's thought was occupied with this enigma all day, but he concealed the matter and questioned not Abdallah thereof. Next night, he again followed the governor and saw him do with the two dogs as on the previous night, first beating them and then making his peace with them and giving them to eat and to drink; and on like wise he did the third night.

On the fourth day he brought the tribute to Abou Ishac, who took it and departed, without opening the matter to him. He fared on, without ceasing, till he

came to Baghdad, where he delivered the tribute to the Khalif, who questioned him of the cause of the delay. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied he, 'I found that the governor of Bassora had made ready the tribute and was about to despatch it; and had I delayed a day, it had met me on the road. But, O Commander of the Faithful, I had a rare adventure with Abdallah ben Fazil; never in my life saw I its like.' 'And what was it, O Abou Ishac?' asked the Khalif. So he acquainted him with that which he had seen the governor do with the two dogs, adding, 'On this wise I saw him do three nights following, first beating the dogs, then making his peace with them and comforting them and giving them to eat and drink, what while I watched him, whereas he saw me not.' 'Didst thou question him of the cause of this?' asked the Khalif. 'No, as thy head liveth, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Abou Ishac.

Then said Er Reshid, 'O Abou Ishac, I command thee to return to Bassora and bring me Abdallah ben Fazil and the two dogs.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied he, 'excuse me from this; for indeed Abdallah entreated me with the utmost hospitality and I chanced upon this thing without design and acquainted thee therewith. So how can I go back to him and bring him to thee? Verily, if I return to him, I shall find no countenance for shame of him; wherefore it were meet that thou send him another than myself, with a letter under thine own hand, and he shall bring him to thee, him and the two dogs.' Quoth the Khalif, 'If I send him other than thyself, most like he will deny the whole affair and say, "I have no dogs." But, if I send thee and thou say to him, "I saw them with mine own eyes," he will not be able to deny it. Wherefore nothing will serve but that thou go and fetch him and the two dogs; else will I put thee to death.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Abou Ishac. 'God is our sufficiency and good is He in whom we trust. He spoke sooth who said, "The calamity of man is from the tongue," and it is I who sinned against myself in telling thee. But write me a royal letter and I will go to him and bring him back to thee.' So the Khalif wrote him a royal letter and he took it and repaired to Bassora. When he came in to the governor, the latter said, 'God keep us from the mischief of thy return, O Abou Ishac! How comes it that I see thee return in haste? Belike the tribute is deficient and the Khalif will not accept it?' 'O Amir Abdallah,' answered Abou Ishac, 'my return is not on account of the deficiency of the tribute, for it is full measure and the Khalif accepts it; but I hope that thou wilt excuse me, for that I have sinned against thee, and indeed this that I have done was decreed of God the Most High.' 'And what hast thou done, O Abou Ishac?' asked Abdallah. 'Tell me; for thou art my friend and I will not reproach thee.' 'Know thee,' answered Abou Ishac, 'that, when I was with thee, I followed thee three nights in succession and saw thee rise at midnight and beat the dogs and return; whereat I marvelled, but thought shame to question thee thereof. When I came back to Baghdad, I told the Khalif of thine affair, casually and without design, whereupon he charged me return to thee, and here is a letter under his hand. Had I known that the affair would lead to this, I had not told him, but this was fore-ordained to happen.' And he went on to excuse himself to him.

Quoth Abdallah, 'Since thou hast told him this, I will bear thee out with him, lest he deem thee a liar, for thou art my friend. Were it other than thou, I had denied the affair and given him the lie. But now I will go with thee and carry the two dogs with

me, though in this be my own ruin and the ending of my term of life.' 'God will protect thee,' rejoined Abou Ishac, 'even as thou hast veiled my face with the Khalif!' Then Abdallah took a present beseeming the Khalif and mounting the dogs with him, each on a camel, bound with chains of gold, journeyed with Abou Ishac to Baghdad, where he went in to the Khalif and kissed the earth before him. He bade him sit; so he sat down and brought the two dogs before Er Reshid, who said to him, 'What are these dogs, O Amir Abdallah?' Whereupon they fell to kissing the ground before him and wagging their tails and weeping, as if complaining to him.

The Khalif marvelled at this and said to the governor, 'Tell me the history of these two dogs and the reason of thy beating them and after entreating them with honour.' 'O Vicar of God,' replied Abdallah, 'these are no dogs, but two handsome young men, endowed with grace and shapeliness and symmetry, and they are my brothers and the sons of my father and my mother.' 'How is it,' asked the Khalif, 'that they were men and are become dogs?' Quoth Abdallah, 'If thou give me leave, O Commander of the Faithful, I will acquaint thee with the truth of the case.' 'Tell me,' said the Khalif, 'and beware of leasing, for it is of the fashion of the hypocrites, and look thou tell truth, for that it is the ark of safety and the characteristic of the virtuous.' 'O Vicar of God,' rejoined Abdallah, 'when I tell thee the story of these dogs, they will both bear witness against me.' Quoth the Khalif, 'These are dogs; they cannot speak nor answer; so how can they testify for thee or against thee?' So Abdallah said to them, 'O my brothers, if I speak an untrue word, do ye lift your heads and stare with your eyes; but, if I speak truth, hang down your heads and lower your eyes.'

Then said he to the Khalif, 'Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that we are three brothers by one father and mother. Our father's name was Fazil and he was thus named for that his mother bore two sons at one birth, one of whom died forthright and the other remained [alive], wherefore they named him Fazil. His father brought him up and reared him well, till he grew up, when he married him to our mother and died. Our mother conceived a first time and bore this my first brother, whom my father named Mensour; then she conceived again and bore this my second brother, whom he named Nasir; after which she conceived a third time and bore me, whom he named Abdallah. My father reared us all three till we came to man's estate, when he died, leaving us a house and a shop full of coloured stuffs of all kinds, Indian and Greek and Khurasani and what not, besides threescore thousand dinars. We washed him and buried him to the mercy of his Lord, after which we builded him a splendid monument and let pray for him prayers for the deliverance of his soul from the fire and held recitations of the Koran and gave alms on his behalf, till the forty days were past; at the end of which time I called together the merchants and nobles of the folk and made them a sumptuous entertainment.

When they had eaten, I said to them, "O merchants, verily this world is fleeting, but the world to come is eternal, and extolled be the perfection of Him who endureth after His creatures have passed away! Know ye why I have called you together this blessed day?" And they answered, "Extolled be the perfection of God, who [alone] knoweth the hidden things." Quoth I, "My father died, leaving much good, and I fear lest any have a claim against him for a debt or a pledge [left in his hands] or what not else, and I desire to discharge my father's obligations towards the folk. So whoso hath

any claim on him, let him say, 'He oweth me so and so, and I will satisfy it to him, that I may acquit my father's responsibility."

"O Abdallah," replied the merchants, "verily the goods of this world stand not in stead of those of the world to come, and we are no fraudful folk, but all of us know the lawful from the unlawful and fear God the Most High and abstain from devouring the substance of the orphan. We know that thy father (may God have mercy on him!) still let his good lie with the folk, nor did he suffer any one's claim on him to go unquitted, and we have often heard him say, 'I am fearful of the people's substance.' He used always to say, when he prayed, 'O my God, Thou art my stay and my hope! Let me not die in debt.' And it was of his wont that, if he owed any one aught, he would pay it to him, without asking, and if any owed him aught, he would not dun him, but would say to him, 'At thy leisure.' If his debtor were poor, he would forgive him the debt and acquit him of responsibility; and if he were not poor and died [without paying], he would say, 'God forgive him what he owed me!' And we all testify that he owed no one aught."

"May God bless you!" said I. Then I turned to these my brothers and said to them, "O my brothers, our father owed no man aught and hath left us much money and stuffs, besides the house and shop. Now we are three brothers and each of us is entitled to one third part. So shall we agree to forego division and abide copartners in our property and eat together and drink together, or shall we divide the money and the stuffs and take each his part?" Said they, "We will divide them and take each his share."' Then Abdallah turned to the two dogs and said to them, 'Did it happen thus, O my brothers?' And they bowed their heads and lowered their eyes, as who should say, 'Yes.' 'So,' continued Abdallah, 'I called in a departitor from the Cadi's court and he divided amongst us the money and the stuffs and all our father's effects, allotting the house and shop to me in exchange for a part of the money and stuffs to which I was entitled. We were content with this; so the house and shop fell to my share, whilst my brothers took theirs in money and stuffs. I opened the shop and stocking it with [my part of] the stuffs, bought others with the money allotted to me, over and above the house and the shop, till the latter was full, and I sat selling and buying. As for my brothers, they bought stuffs and chartering a ship, set out on a voyage to foreign parts. Quoth I, "God aid them! As for me, my livelihood is ready to my hand and peace is priceless."

I abode thus a whole year, during which time God prospered me and I made great profits, till I became possessed of the like of that which our father had left us. One day, as I sat in my shop, with two fur pelisses on me, one of sable and the other of miniver, for it was the winter season and the time of the great cold, there came up to me my two brothers, each clad in nothing but a ragged shirt, and their lips were white with cold and they were shivering. When I saw them in this plight, it was grievous to me and I mourned for them and my reason fled from my head. So I rose and embraced them and wept over their condition. Then I put on one of them the pelisse of sable and on the other that of miniver and carrying them to the bath, sent them thither each a suit of apparel such as befitted a merchant worth a thousand purses. When they had washed and donned each his suit, I carried them to my house, where, seeing them to be sore anhungred, I set a tray of food before them and ate with them, caressing them and

comforting them. Then he turned to the two dogs and said to them, 'Was this so, O my brothers?' And they bent their heads and lowered their eyes.

'Then, O Vicar of God,' continued Abdallah, 'I said to them, "What hath befallen you and where are your goods?" Quoth they, "We fared up the river, till we came to a city called Cufa, where we sold for ten dinars the piece of stuff that had cost us half a dinar and that which cost us a dinar for twenty. So we profited greatly and bought Persian stuffs at the rate of ten dinars the piece of silk worth forty in Bassora. Thence we removed to a city called El Kerkh, where we sold and bought and made great profit and amassed store of wealth." And they went on to set forth to me the places [they had visited] and the profits [they had made]. So I said to them, "Since ye had such good luck, how comes it that I see you return naked?" They sighed and answered, "O our brother, some one must have belooked us with the evil eye and there is no security in travel. When we had gotten together these riches and goods, we freighted a ship therewith and set sail, intending for Bassora. We fared on three days and on the fourth day we saw the water rise and fall and roar and foam and swell and rage, whilst the waves clashed together, striking out sparks like fire. The winds blew contrary for us and our ship struck upon the point of a rock, where it broke up and plunged us into the river, and all we had with us was lost in the water. We abode struggling on the surface a day and a night, till God sent us another ship, whose crew picked us up and we begged our way from town to town, suffering sore hardships and selling our clothes piecemeal, to buy us food, till we drew near Bassora; nor did we win thither till we had endured a thousand miseries. But, had we come off in safety with that which was with us, we had brought back riches that might vie with those of the king: but this was ordained of God to us."

"O my brothers," said I, "let not your hearts be troubled, for wealth is the ransom of bodies and safety is [to be accounted] gain. Since God hath written you of the saved, this is the end of desire, for poverty and riches are but as it were illusions of dreams, and gifted of God is he who saith:

So but a man may win to save his soul alive from death, But as the paring of his nail his wealth he reckoneth.

O my brothers," continued I, "we will put it that our father died to-day and left us all this money that is with me, for I am willing to share it with you equally." So I fetched a departitor from the Cadi's court and brought out to him all my money, which he divided into three equal parts, and we each took one. Then said I to them, "O my brothers, God blesseth a man in his livelihood, if he be in his own country: so let each of you open a shop and sit therein to get his living; and he to whom ought is ordained in the secret purpose of God, needs must he get it." Accordingly, I helped each of them to open a shop and stocked it for him with goods, saying to them, "Sell and buy and keep your monies and spend nought thereof, for I will furnish you with all ye need of meat and drink and so forth."

I continued to entreat them generously and they fell to selling and buying by day and lay the night in my house nor would I suffer them to spend aught of their own monies. But, whenever I sat talking with them, they would praise travel and vaunt its charms and set out the gains they had made therein; and they ceased not to urge and

tempt me and importune me thus till, to please them, I agreed to travel with them.' Then he said to the dogs, 'Was this so, O my brothers?' And they confirmed his speech by bowing their heads and lowering their eyes. 'Then, O Vicar of God,' continued Abdallah, 'I entered into a contract of partnership with them and we chartered a ship and packing up all manner of precious stuffs and merchandise of all kinds, freighted it therewith; after which we embarked therein all that we needed [of victual and what not else for the voyage] and setting sail from Bassora, launched out into the surging sea, swollen with clashing billows, into which whoso entereth is lost and from which whoso cometh forth is as a new-born child.

We sailed on till we came to a city of the cities, where we sold and bought and made great profit. Thence we went on to another city, and we ceased not to pass from land to land and city to city, selling and buying and profiting, till we had gotten us great wealth and much gain. Presently, we came to a mountain, where the captain cast anchor and said to us, "O passengers, go ye ashore; ye shall be saved from this day, and make search; it may be ye shall find water." So we all landed and dispersed about the island in search of water.

As for me, I climbed to the top of the mountain, and as I went along, I saw a white snake fleeing and a black dragon, foul of favour and frightful to look upon, pursuing her. Presently he overtook her and pressing straitly upon her, seized her by the head and wound his tail about hers, whereupon she cried out and I knew that he purposed to ravish her. So I was moved to pity for her and taking up a flint-stone, five pounds or more in weight, threw it at the dragon. It smote him on the head and crushed it, and before I knew, the snake changed and became a handsome young woman, full of grace and brightness and symmetry, as she were the shining full moon, who came up to me and kissing my hands, said to me, "May God veil thee with two veils, one [to protect thee] from reproach in this world and the other from the fire in the world to come on the day of the great upstanding, the day when wealth shall not avail neither children, [nor aught] but that one come to God with a whole heart! O mortal," continued she, "thou hast saved my honour and I am beholden to thee for kindness, wherefore it behoveth me to requite thee."

So saying, she signed with her hand to the earth, which opened and she descended into it. Then it closed up again over her and by this I knew that she was of the Jinn. As for the dragon, fire was kindled in him and consumed him and he became a heap of ashes. I marvelled at this and returned to my comrades, whom I acquainted with that which I had seen, and we passed the night [in the island]. On the morrow the captain weighed anchor and spread the sails and coiled the ropes and we sailed till we lost sight of land. We fared on twenty days, without seeing land or bird, till our water came to an end and the captain said to us, "O folk, our fresh water is spent." Quoth we, "Let us make for land; peradventure we shall find water." "By Allah," answered he, "I have lost my way and I know not what course will bring me to the land!"

When we heard this, there betided us sore chagrin and we wept and besought God the Most High to guide us into the right course. We passed that night in the sorriest case: but gifted of God is he who saith:

How many a night have I passed in dismay
And in grief that might well-nigh cause sucklings grow gray,
But no sooner broke morn than came succour from God;
Ay, and help near at hand was vouchsafed me with day.

On the morrow, when the day arose and gave forth its light and shone, we caught sight of a high mountain and rejoiced therein. When we came [to the island wherein] it [was], the captain said to us, "O folk, go ashore and seek for water." So we all landed and sought for water, but found none, whereat we were sore afflicted. As for me, I climbed up to the hill-top and on the other side thereof I saw a spacious enclosure, an hour's journey or more in breadth. So I called my companions and said to them, "Look at yonder enclosure, behind this mountain; for I see therein a lofty and strong-built city, [girt about] with walls and towers and hills and meadows, and doubtless it wants not for water and good things. So let us go thither and fetch water therefrom and buy what we need of meat and fruit and [other] victual and return." But they said, "We fear lest the inhabitants of the city be unbelievers, ascribing partners to God, and enemies of the faith and lay hands on us and take us captive or else slay us; so were we the means of the loss of our own lives, having cast ourselves into destruction and evil emprise. Indeed, the presumptuous man is never praiseworthy, for that he goeth still in danger of calamities, even as saith of him one of the poets:

Whilst earth is earth and sky is sky, the rash presumptuous wight, No commendation meriteth, although he 'scape outright.

Wherefore we will not expose ourselves to peril." "O folk," answered I, "I have no authority over you; so I will take my brothers and go to the city." But my brothers said to me, "We also fear this thing and will not go with thee." Quoth I, "I am resolved to go thither; and I put my trust in God and accept whatsoever He shall decree to me. Do ye therefore await me, whilst I go thither and return to you."

Then I left them and walked on till I came to the gate of the place and saw it a city rare of building and magnificent of proportion, with lofty walls and strong-builded towers and palaces soaring high into the air. Its gates were of Chinese iron, curiously gilded and graven on such wise as confounded the wit. I entered the gateway and saw there a stone bench, whereon sat a man, with a chain of brass on his arm, to which hung fourteen keys; wherefore I knew him to be the porter of the city and that it had fourteen gates. So I drew near him and said to him, "Peace be on thee!" But he returned not my greeting and I saluted him a second and a third time; but he made me no reply. So I laid my hand on his shoulder and said to him, "O man, why dost thou not return my greeting? Art thou asleep or deaf or other than a Muslim, that thou refusest to return the salutation?" But he answered me not neither stirred; so I considered him and saw that he was stone. Quoth I, "Strange! This is a stone wroughten in the likeness of a man and wanting nothing but speech!"

Then I left him and entering the city, saw a man standing in the road. I went up to him and examined him and found him stone. Presently, I met an old woman with a bundle of clothes on her head, ready for washing, so I went up to her and examining her, saw that she was stone, and the bundle of clothes on her head was stone also. Then I came to the market, where I saw a chandler, with his scales set up and various kinds

of wares before him, such as cheese and so forth, all of stone. Moreover, I saw all manner of tradesmen seated in their shops and men and women and children, some standing and some sitting; but they were all stone. Then I entered the merchants' bazaar, where I saw each merchant seated in his shop and the shops full of various kinds of merchandise, all stone; but the stuffs were like spiders' webs. I amused myself with looking upon them, and as often as I laid hold upon a piece of stuff, it fell to dust in my hands.

Presently, I saw some chests and opening one of them, found it full of gold in bags; so I laid hold upon the bags, but they crumbled away in my grasp, whilst the gold abode unchanged. I took of it what I could carry and said to myself, "Were my brothers here, they might take their fill of this gold and possess themselves of these treasures that have no owner." Then I entered another shop and found therein more than this, but could carry no more than I had: so I left this market and went on to another and thence to another and another, diverting myself with the sight of all manner creatures of various kinds, all stone, even to the cats and the dogs, till I came to the goldsmiths' bazaar, where I saw men sitting in their shops, with their wares about them, some in their hands and others in trays of wicker-work. When I saw this, I threw down the money and loaded myself with goldsmiths' ware, as much as I could carry. Then I went on to the jewel market and saw there the jewellers, every one of them stone, seated in their shops, each with a tray before him, full of all manner precious stones, jacinths and diamonds and emeralds and balass rubies and so forth; whereupon I threw away the goldsmiths' ware and took as many jewels as I could carry, regretting that my brothers were not with me, so they might take what they would thereof.

Then I left the jewel market and went on till I came to a great door, gilded and decorated after the fairest fashion, within which were benches and in the porch sat eunuchs and guards and horsemen and footmen and officers of police, all clad in the richest of raiment; but they were all stones. I touched one of them and his clothes crumbled away from his body like cobwebs. Then I entered and saw a palace without equal for its building and the goodliness of its ordinance and of the curious works that were therein. Here I found an audience-chamber, full of grandees and viziers and officers and emirs, seated upon chairs and every one of them stone. Moreover, I saw a throne of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels, and seated thereon a man arrayed in the most sumptuous raiment and bearing on his head an imperial crown, set with precious stones, that shed a light like the light of the day; but, when I came up to him, I found him stone.

Then I went on to the gate of the harem and entering, found myself in the queen's presence-chamber, wherein I saw a throne of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels, and the queen seated thereon. On her head she wore a crown diademed with precious jewels, and round about her were women like moons, seated upon chairs and clad in the most sumptuous raiment of all colours. There also stood eunuchs, with their hands upon their breasts, in the attitude of service, and indeed this hall confounded the beholder's wits with what was therein of gilding and rare painting and carving and magnificent furniture. There hung the most brilliant pendants of limpid crystal, and in every hollow of the crystal was an unique jewel, to whose price money might not avail. So I threw down that which was with me and fell to taking of these jewels what I could

carry, bewildered as to what I should take and what I should leave, for indeed I saw the place as it were a treasure of the treasures of the cities.

Presently, I espied a little door open and within it stairs: so I entered and mounting forty stairs, heard a human voice reciting the Koran in a low voice. I followed the sound till I came to a silken curtain, laced with wires of gold, whereon were strung pearls and coral and rubies and emeralds, that gave forth a light like the light of the stars. The voice came from behind the curtain: so I raised it and discovered a gilded door, whose beauty amazed the mind. I opened the door and found myself in a saloon, as it were an enchanted treasure-house upon the surface of the earth, and therein a girl as she were the shining sun amiddleward the cloudless sky. She was clad in the costliest of raiment and decked with the most precious jewels, and withal she was of surpassing beauty and grace, full of symmetry and elegance and perfection, with slender waist and heavy buttocks and spittle such as heals the sick and languorous eyelids, as it were she of whom the poet would speak, when he saith:

My salutation to the shape that through the wede doth show
And to the roses in the cheeks' full-flowering meads that blow!
It is as if the Pleiades upon her forehead hung
And all night's other stars did deck her breast, like pearls arow.
An if a wede of purest rose she donned, the leaves for sure
Would from her body's fresh-plucked fruits enforce the blood to flow;
And if into the salt sea's flood one day she chanced to spit,
Sweeter than honey to the taste its briny tides would grow.
If to a graybeard, leant upon a staff, she deigned her grace
To grant, a lion-tamer straight he would become, I trow.

When I saw her, I fell passionately in love with her and going straight up to her, found her seated on a high couch, reciting from memory the Book of God, to whom belong might and majesty. Her voice was like the sound of the gates of Paradise, when Rizwan opens them, and the words fell from her lips like a shower of jewels; whilst her face was of surpassing beauty, bright and blossom-white, even as saith the poet of the like of her:

O thou whose speech and fashions charm with their seductive grace,
Longing and wistfulness for thee increase on me apace.
Two things in thee the votaries of passion still consume,
David his tones melodious and Joseph's lovely face.

When I heard her melodious voice reciting the sublime Koran, my heart recited from her assassinating glances, "Peace, a word from a compassionate Lord;" but I hesitated in my speech and could not say the salutation aright, for my mind and sight were confounded and I was become as saith the poet:

Love-longing moved me not to err in speech nor entered
I The camp but that the shedding of my blood I might aby;
Nor do I hearken to a word spoken by our censurers,
But unto her whom I adore in words I testify.

Then I braced myself against the stress of passion and said to her, "Peace be upon thee, O noble lady and treasured jewel! May God cause the foundations of thy fair fortune to endure and uplift the pillars of thy glory!" "And on thee from me be peace and salutation and honour, O Abdallah, O son of Fazil!" answered she. "Welcome and fair welcome to thee, O my beloved and solace of my eyes!" "O my lady," rejoined I, "whence knowest thou my name and who art thou and what aileth the people of this city, that they are become stones? I would have thee tell me the truth of the case, for indeed I am wondered at this city and its folk and that I have found none [alive] therein but thee. So, God on thee, tell me the cause of all this, according to the truth!" Quoth she, "Sit, O Abdallah, and God willing, I will talk with thee and acquaint thee in full with the truth of my case and that of this city and its people; and there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!"

So I sat down by her side and she said to me, "Know, O Abdallah, (may God have mercy on thee!) that I am the daughter of the king of this city and that it is my father whom thou sawest seated on the high throne in the divan, and those who are about him were the grandees of his realm and the officers of his household. He was a king of exceeding prowess and had under his hand a thousand thousand and six-score thousand troopers. The number of the emirs of his realm was four-and-twenty thousand, all of them governors and dignitaries. He ruled over a thousand cities, besides towns and hamlets and fortresses and citadels and villages, and the amirs of the [wild] Arabs under his hand were a thousand in number, each ruling over twenty thousand horse. Moreover, he had riches and treasures and precious stones and jewels and things of price, such as eye never saw nor ear heard of. He used to conquer kings and do to death champions and warriors in battle and in the listed field, so that the mighty feared him and the Chosroës humbled themselves to him. For all this, he was a misbeliever, ascribing partners to God and worshipping idols, instead of his Lord, and his troops were all idolaters like himself.

One day, as he sat on the throne of his kingship, compassed about with the grandees of his realm, there came in to him a man, whose face lighted up the whole divan with its brightness. My father looked at him and saw him clad in a green habit, tall of stature and with hands that reached below his knees. He was of reverend and majestic aspect and light shone from his face. Quoth he to my father, 'O rebel, O idolater, how long wilt thou be deluded to worship idols and leave the service of the All-knowing King? Say, "I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His servant and His apostle," and embrace Islam, thou and thy people, and put away from you the worship of idols, for they neither advantage nor intercede. None is worshipworth save God alone, who raised up the heavens without pillars and spread out the earths, in mercy to His creatures.'

'Who art thou,' asked my father, 'O man that rejectest the worship of idols, that thou sayst thus? Fearest thou not that they will be wroth with thee?' 'The idols are stones,' answered the stranger; 'their wrath cannot hurt me nor their favour profit me. So do thou send for thine idol which thou worshippest and bid all thy people bring each his idol: and when they are all present, do ye pray them to be wroth with me and I will pray my Lord to be wroth with them, and ye shall see the difference between the anger of the creature and that of the Creator. For your idols, ye fashioned them

yourselves and the devils clad themselves therewith as with a garment, and they it is who speak to you from within the bellies of the idols, for your idols are made and my God is the maker, to whom nought is impossible. If the True appear to you, do ye follow it, and if the False, do ye leave it.' Quoth they, 'Give us a proof of thy god, that we may see it. And he answered, 'Give me proof of your gods.' So the king bade every one who had an idol bring it, and all the troops brought their idols to the divan.

Now I was sitting behind a curtain, whence I could look upon my father's divan, and I had an idol of emerald, the bigness of a man. My father demanded it, so I sent it to the divan, where they set it up beside that of my father, which was of jacinth, whilst the vizier's idol was of diamond. As for those of the grandees and notables, some were of ruby and some of cornelian, others of coral or Comorin aloes-wood and yet others of ebony or silver or gold; and each had his own idol, after the measure of that which he could afford; whilst the idols of the common soldiers and of the people were some of granite, some of wood, some of pottery and some of mud; and they were all of various colours, yellow and red and green and black and white. Then said the stranger to my father, 'Pray your idol and these idols to be wroth with me.'

So they ranged the idols in a divan, setting my father's idol on a chair of gold at the upper end, with mine by its side, and ranking the others each according to the condition of him who owned it and worshipped it. Then my father arose and prostrating himself to his own idol, said to it, 'O my god, thou art the Bountiful Lord, nor is there among the idols a greater than thou. Thou knowest that this man cometh to me, attacking thy divinity and making mock of thee; yea, he avoucheth that he hath a god stronger than thou and biddeth us leave worshipping thee and worship his god. So be thou wroth with him, O my god!' And he went on to supplicate the idol; but it returned him no answer neither bespoke him with aught; whereupon quoth he, 'O my god, this is not of thy wont, for thou usest to answer me, when I speak to thee. How cometh it that I find thee silent and speaking not? Art thou unheeding or asleep? Awake; succour me and speak to me!' And he shook it with his hand; but it spoke not neither stirred from its stead.

Quoth the stranger, 'What aileth thine idol that it speaketh not?' And the king replied, 'Methinks he is unheeding or asleep.' 'O enemy of God,' exclaimed the other, 'how canst thou worship a god that speaketh not nor availeth unto aught and not worship my God, who is a speedy answerer of prayer and who is ever present and never absent, never unheeding nor sleeping, whom conjecture may not apprehend, who seeth and is not seen and who is able unto all things? Thy god is powerless and cannot ward off hurt from itself; and indeed an accursed devil hath clothed himself therewith as with a garment, that he might lead thee astray and delude thee. But now hath its devil departed; so do thou worship God and testify that there is no god but He and that none is worshipful nor worshipworth save He, nor is there any good but His good. As for thy god, he cannot ward off hurt from himself; so how shall he ward it from thee? See with thine own eyes his impotence.'

So saying, he went up to the idol and dealt him a buffet on the neck, that he fell to the ground; whereupon the king waxed wroth and said to the bystanders, 'This heretic hath smitten my god. Slay him!' So they would have arisen to smite him, but none of them could avail to stir from his place. Then he propounded Islam to them;

but they refused to become Muslims and he said, 'I will show you the wrath of my Lord.' Quoth they, 'Let us see it.' So he spread out his hands and said, 'O my God and my Lord, Thou art my stay and my hope; answer Thou my prayer against these froward folk, who eat of Thy bounty and worship other than Thee. O Thou the Truth, O Almighty One, O Creator of Night and Day, I beseech Thee to turn these people into stones, for Thou art omnipotent, nor is aught impossible to Thee, and Thou art able unto all things!' And God transformed the people of this city into stones; but, as for me, when I saw the manifest proof of His deity, I submitted myself to Him and was saved from that which befell the rest.

Then the stranger drew near unto me and said to me, 'Felicity was fore-ordained to thee of God and He had a purpose in this.' And he went on to instruct me and I took unto him the oath and covenant. I was then seven years of age and am now thirty years old. Then said I to him, 'O my lord, all that is in the city and all its folk are become stones, by thine effectual prayer, and I am saved, for that I embraced Islam at thy hands. Wherefore thou art become my sheikh; so do thou tell me thy name and extend to me thy succour and provide me with that whereon I may subsist.' Quoth he, 'My name is Aboulabbas el Khizr;' and he planted me a pomegranate-tree, which grew up forthright and putting out leaf, flowered and fruited and bore one pomegranate; whereupon quoth he, 'Eat of that wherewith God the Most High provideth thee and worship Him with the worship that is His due.'

Then he taught me the tenets of Islam and the canons of prayer and the way of worship, together with the recital of the Koran, and I have now worshipped God in this place three-and-twenty years. Each day the tree yields me a pomegranate and I eat it and am sustained thereby from day to day. Moreover, every Friday, El Khizr (on whom be peace!) comes to me and it is he who acquainted me with thy name and gave me the glad tidings of thy coming hither, saying to me, 'When he cometh, entreat him with honour and give ear unto his commandment and gainsay him not; but be thou his wife and he shall be thy husband, and go with him whither he will.' So, when I saw thee, I knew thee, and this is the story of this city and of its people, and peace be on thee!" Then she showed me the pomegranate-tree, whereon was one pomegranate, which she took and eating one-half thereof herself, gave me the other to eat, and never did I taste aught sweeter or more delicious than this pomegranate or more satisfying.

After this, I said to her, "Art thou content, as the Sheikh el Khizr charged thee, to be my wife and go with me to my own country and abide with me in the city of Bassora?" "Yes," answered she, "if it please God the Most High. I hearken to thy word and obey thy commandment, without gainsaying." Then I made a binding covenant with her and she carried me into her father's treasury, whence we took what we could carry and going forth the city, fared on till we came to my brothers, whom I found searching for me. "Where hast thou been?" asked they. "Indeed thou hast tarried long from us, and our hearts were troubled for thee." And the captain of the ship said to me, "O merchant Abdallah, the wind has been fair for us this great while, and thou hast hindered us from setting sail." "There is no harm in that," answered I. "Assuredly delay is good and my absence hath wrought us nothing but profit; for indeed, there hath betided me therein the attainment of [our] hopes and gifted of God is he who saith:

When to a land I fare in quest of good, perdie,
I know not of the twain, which fortune mine shall be;
Whether 'twill prove the good whereafter I do seek
Or else the evil hap that seeketh after me."

Then said I to them, "See what hath fallen to me in my absence." And I showed them that which was with me of things of price and told them what I had seen in the City of Stone, adding, "If ye had hearkened to me and gone with me, ye had gotten great good thereby." But they said, "By Allah, had we gone, we had not dared to go in to the king of the city!"

Then I said to my brothers, "No harm shall befall you; for that which I have will suffice us all and I will share it with you." So saying, I divided my booty into four parts and gave one to each of my brothers and to the captain, taking the fourth for myself, [after setting aside] somewhat [which] I gave to the servants and sailors, who rejoiced and blessed me: and all were content with what I gave them, save my brothers, who changed countenance and rolled their eyes. I perceived that covetise had gotten possession of them; so I said to them, "O my brothers, methinketh what I have given you doth not content you; but we are brothers and there is no difference between us. My good and yours are one [and the same] thing, and if I die, none will inherit of me but you." And I went on to soothe them.

Then I carried the lady on board the ship and lodged her in the cabin, where I sent her somewhat to eat and we sat talking, I and my brothers. "O our brother," said they, "what wilt thou do with yonder damsel of surpassing beauty?" And I answered, "I mean to marry her, as soon as I reach Bassora, and make a splendid wedding and go in to her there." "O my brother," said one of them, "verily, this young lady excelleth in beauty and grace and the love of her is fallen on my heart; wherefore I desire that thou give her to me and I will marry her." "I too desire this," said the other. "Give her to me, that I may marry her." "O my brothers," answered I, "she took of me an oath and a covenant that I would marry her myself; so, if I give her to one of you, I shall be false to my oath and to the covenant between her and me, and belike she will be broken-hearted, for she came not with me but on condition that I should marry her. So how can I give her to wife to other than myself? As for your loving her, I love her more than you, for she is my treasure-trove, and as for my giving her to one of you, that is a thing that may not be. But, if we reach Bassora in safety, I will look you out two girls of the best of the damsels of Bassora and demand them for you in marriage and pay the dower of my own monies and make one wedding and we will all three go in to our brides on one [and the same] night. But leave this damsel, for she is of my portion."

They held their peace and I thought they were content with that which I had said. Then we fared on towards Bassora, and every day I sent meat and drink to the lady, who came not forth of the cabin, whilst I lay with my brothers on the deck. We sailed thus forty days, till we sighted the city of Bassora and rejoiced in that we were come near thereunto. Now I trusted in my brothers and was at my ease with them, for none knoweth the hidden things save God the Most High; so I lay down to sleep that night; but as I abode drowned in slumber, I found myself caught up by my brothers, one seizing me by the legs and the other by the arms, for they had taken counsel together

to drown me in the sea, because of the damsel. When I saw myself in this case, I said to them, "O my brothers, why do ye this with me?" And they answered, saying, "Lack-courtesy that thou art, wilt thou barter our aproof for a girl? We mean to cast thee into the sea, because of this." So saying, they threw me over-board.'

Here Abdallah turned to the two dogs and said to them, 'O my brothers, is this that I have said true or not?" And they bowed their heads and fell a-whining, as if confirming his speech; whereat the Khalif wondered. 'O Commander of the Faithful,' continued Abdallah, 'I sank to the bottom of the sea; but the water bore me up again to the surface, and before I could think, a great bird, the bigness of a man, swooped down upon me and snatching me up, flew up with me into the height of the air. [I swooned away and] when I opened my eyes, I found myself in a strong and high-builded palace, adorned with magnificent paintings and pendants of jewels of all shapes and colours. Therein were damsels standing with their hands on their breasts and in their midst was a lady seated on a throne of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, and clad in apparel whereon no mortal might open his eyes, for the lustre of the jewels with which they were decked. About her waist she wore a girdle of jewels beyond price, and on her head a triple crown, amazing thought and wit and dazzling heart and sight.

Then the bird that had carried me thither shook and became a young lady, as she were the shining sun. I fixed my eyes on her and behold, it was she whom I had seen on the mountain in the guise of a snake and had rescued from the dragon. Then said to her the lady who sat upon the throne, "Why hast thou brought this mortal hither?" "O my mother," answered she, "this is he who was the means of veiling my honour among the maidens of the Jinn." Then said she to me, "Knowest thou who I am?" And I answered, "No." Quoth she, "I am she who was on such a mountain, where the black dragon strove with me and would have forced my honour, but thou slewest him." And I said, "I saw but a white snake with the dragon." "It is I who was the white snake," answered she; "but I am the Red King's daughter of the Jinn and my name is Saïdeh. She who sits there is my mother and her name is Mubarekeh, wife of the Red King. The black dragon who would have done away my honour was the Black King's Vizier, Derfil by name, and he was foul of favour. It chanced that he saw me and fell in love with me; so he sought me in marriage of my father, who sent to him to say, 'Who art thou, O scum of viziers, that thou shouldst wed with kings' daughters?' Whereupon he was wroth and swore an oath that he would assuredly do away my honour, to spite my father.

Then he fell to tracking my steps and following me whithersoever I went, designing to ravish me; wherefore there befell between him and my father fierce wars and sore troubles, but my father could not prevail against him, for that he was a mighty man of war and a crafty cheat, and as often as my father pressed hard upon him, he would escape from him, till my father was at his wits' end. Every day I was forced to take some new shape; for, as often as I assumed a shape, he would assume its contrary, and to whatsoever land I fled, he would snuff my scent and pursue me thither, so that I suffered sore affliction of him. At last I took the form of a snake and betook myself to the mountain where thou sawest me; whereupon he took the shape of a dragon and pursued me, till I fell into his hands, when he strove with me and I with him, till he wearied me and overrode me, meaning to do his will of me: but thou

camest and smotest him with the stone and slewest him. Then I returned to my own shape and showed myself to thee, saying, 'I am beholden to thee for a service such as is not lost save with the base-born.' So, when I saw thy brothers do with thee this treachery and cast thee into the sea, I hastened to thee and saved thee from destruction, and now it behoveth my father and mother to do thee honour."

Then she said to the Queen, "O my mother, do thou honour him as he deserveth who saved my honour." So the queen said to me, "Welcome, O mortal! Indeed thou hast done us a service that meriteth honour." Then she ordered me a treasure-suit, worth much money, and store of jewels and precious stones, and said, "Take him and carry him in to the king." So they carried me in to the king in his divan, where I found him seated on his throne, with his Marids and guards before him; and when I saw him, my eyes were dazzled for that which was upon him of jewels; but when he saw me, he rose to his feet and all his officers rose also, to do him worship. Then he saluted me and bade me welcome, entreating me with the utmost honour, and gave me of that which was with him of good things; after which he said to some of his followers, "Take him and carry him back to my daughter, that she may restore him to the place whence she brought him." So they carried me back to the princess Saïdeh, who took me up and flew away with me and my treasures.

Meanwhile, the captain of the galleon, being aroused by the splash [of my fall], when my brothers threw me into the sea, said, "What is that which hath fallen overboard?" Whereupon my brothers fell to weeping and beating their breasts and answered, "Alas, for our brother's loss! He thought to do an occasion in the ship's side and fell into the water!" Then they laid their hands on my good, but there befell strife between them because of the lady, each saying, "None shall have her but I." And they abode disputing with one another and remembered not their brother nor his drowning and their mourning for him ceased. As they were thus, behold, Saïdeh alighted with me in the midst of the galleon; and when my brothers saw me, they embraced me and rejoiced in me, saying, "O our brother, how hast thou fared in that which befell thee? Indeed our hearts have been occupied with thee." Quoth Saïdeh, "Had ye any bowels for him or had ye loved him, ye had not cast him into the sea; but choose now what death ye will die."

Then she seized on them and would have slain them but they cried out, saying, ["We throw ourselves] on thy mercy, O our brother!" And I said to her, "I beseech thee, kill not my brothers." Quoth she, "Needs must I slay them, for they are traitors." But I ceased not to speak her fair and intercede with her, till she said, "To content thee, I will not kill them, but I will enchant them." So saying, she brought out a cup and filling it with sea-water, pronounced over it words that might not be understood; then she sprinkled them with the water, saying, "Quit this human shape for that of a dog;" and immediately they became dogs, as thou seest them, O Vicar of God.' Then he turned to the dogs and said to them, 'Have I spoken the truth, O my brothers?' And they bowed their heads, as who should say, 'Thou hast spoken truly.'

'Then,' continued he, 'she said to those who were in the galleon, "Know ye that Abdallah ben Fazil here present is become my brother and I shall visit him once or twice every day: so, whoso of you thwarteth him or gainsayeth his commandment or doth him hurt with hand or tongue, I will do with him like as I have done with these

two traitors and turn him into a dog, and he shall end his days in that shape, nor shall he find deliverance." And they all said to her, "O our lady, we are all his slaves and his servants and will not gainsay him in aught." Moreover, she said to me, "When thou comest to Bassora, examine all thy property and if there lack aught thereof, tell me and I will bring it thee, in whose hands and wheresoever it may be, and will change him who took it into a dog. When thou hast laid up thy goods, clap a collar of iron on the neck of each of these two traitors and tie them to the leg of a couch and shut them up by themselves. Moreover, every night, at midnight, do thou go down to them and beat each of them till he swoon away; and if thou suffer a single night to pass, without beating them, I will come to thee and swinge thee soundly, after which I will beat them." And I answered, "I hear and obey." Then said she, "Tie them up with ropes till thou come into Bassora." So I tied a rope about each dog's neck and bound them to the mast, and she went her way.

On the morrow we entered Bassora and the merchants came out to meet me and saluted me, and none enquired of my brothers. But they looked at the dogs and said to me, "What wilt thou do with these two dogs thou hast brought with thee?" Quoth I, "I reared them on the voyage and have brought them home with me." And they laughed at them, knowing not that they were my brothers. When I reached my house, I put the dogs in a closet and busied myself with the unpacking and disposition of the bales of stuffs and jewels I had with me. Moreover, the merchants were with me, because of salutation; wherefore I was occupied with them and forgot to beat the dogs or chain them up. Then I lay down to sleep, but hardly had I done so, when there came to me the Red King's daughter Saïdeh and said to me, "Did I not bid thee clap chains on their necks and give each of them a beating?" So saying, she seized me and pulling out a whip, beat me till I swooned away, after which she went to the place where my brothers were and beat them till they came nigh upon death.

Then said she to me, "Beat each of them thus every night, and if thou let a night pass without doing this, I will beat thee;" and I answered, "O my lady, to-morrow I will put chains on their necks, and next night I will beat them nor will I leave them one night unbeaten." And she charged me straitly to beat them [and disappeared]. When the day came, it being grievous to me to put fetters of iron on their necks, I went to a goldsmith and bade him make them collars and chains of gold. He did this and I put the collars on their necks and chained them up, as she bade me; and next night I beat them in mine own despite. This befell in the Khalifate of El Mehdi, third of the sons of Abbas, and I ingratiated myself with him by sending him presents, wherefore he invested me with the government and made me viceroy of Bassora.

On this wise I abode some time and after awhile, I said in myself, "It may be her wrath is grown cool;" and left them a night unbeaten, whereupon she came to me and gave me a beating the pain whereof I shall never forget so long as I live. So, from that time to this, I have never left them a single night unbeaten; and when El Mehdi died and thou camest to the throne, thou sentest to me, confirming me in the government of Bassora. These twelve years past have I beaten them every night, against my will, and after I have beaten them, I excuse myself to them and comfort them and give them to eat and drink; and they have remained shut up, nor did any of the creatures of God know of them, till thou sentest Abou Ishac the boon-companion to me, on account of

the tribute, and he discovered my secret and returning to thee, acquainted thee therewith. Then thou sentest him back to fetch me and them; so I answered with "hearkening and obedience" and brought them before thee, whereupon thou questionedst me and I told thee the truth of the case; and this is my history.'

The Khalif marvelled at the case of the two dogs and said to Abdallah, 'Hast thou now forgiven thy two brothers the wrong they did thee, ay or no?' 'O my lord,' answered he, 'may God forgive them and acquit them of guilt in this world and the next! Indeed, it is I who stand in need of their forgiveness, for that these twelve years past I have beaten them grievously every night!' 'O Abdallah,' rejoined the Khalif, 'God willing, I will endeavour for their release and that they may become men again, as they were before, and I will make peace between thee and them; so shall you live the rest of your lives as loving brothers; and like as thou hast forgiven them, so shall they forgive thee. But now take them and go down with them to thy lodging and this night beat them not, and to-morrow all shall be well.' 'O my lord,' answered Abdallah, 'as thy head liveth, if I leave them one night unbeaten, Saïdeh will come to me and beat me, and I have no body to brook beating.' 'Fear not,' quoth the Khalif; 'for I will give thee a writing under my hand. If she come to thee, do thou give her the scroll and if, when she has read it, she spare thee, the favour will be hers; but, if she obey not my commandment, commit thine affair to God and let her beat thee and suppose that thou hast forgotten to beat them for one night and that she beats thee because of that: and if it fall out thus and she gainsay me, as sure as I am Commander of the Faithful, I will be even with her.'

Then he wrote her a letter on a piece of paper, two fingers broad, and sealing it, gave it to Abdallah, saying, 'O Abdallah, if she come, say to her, "The Khalif, king of mankind, hath commanded me to leave beating them and hath written me this letter for thee; and he saluteth thee." Then give her the warrant and fear no hurt.' And he took of him a solemn pledge that he would not beat them. So he took the dogs and carried them to his lodging, saying in himself, 'I wonder what the Khalif will do with the King's daughter of the Jinn, if she disobey him and beat me to-night! But I will run the risk of a beating for once and leave my brothers at peace this night, though I suffer torture for their sake.' Then he bethought himself awhile, and his reason said to him, 'Did not the Khalif rely on some great support, he had not forbidden me from beating them.' So he entered his lodging and did off the collars from the dogs' necks, saying, 'I put my trust in God,' and fell to comforting them and saying, 'No harm shall befall you; for the Khalif, fifth of the sons of Abbas, hath undertaken for your deliverance and I have forgiven you. If it please God the Most High, the time is come and ye shall be delivered this blessed night; so rejoice ye in the prospect of peace and happiness.'

When they heard his words, they fell awhining, after the fashion of dogs, and rubbed their jowls against his feet, as if praying for him and humbling themselves before him. He mourned over them and fell to stroking their backs till supper time; and when they set on the evening meal, he bade the dogs sit. So they sat down and ate from the tray, whilst his officers stood gaping and marvelling at his eating with dogs and saying, 'Is he mad or are his wits deranged? How can the Viceroy of Bassora, he who is greater than a vizier, eat with dogs? Knoweth he not that the dog is unclean?' And they stared at the dogs, as they ate with him on decorous wise, knowing not that

they were his brothers; nor did they leave staring at them, till they had made an end of eating, when Abdallah washed his hands and the dogs also put out their paws and washed; whereupon all who were present fell alaughing at them and saying, one to another, 'Never in our lives saw we dogs eat and after wash their paws!'

Then the dogs sat down on the divans beside Abdallah, nor dared any question him of this; and thus the case abode till midnight, when he dismissed the attendants and lay down to sleep and the dogs with him, each on a couch; whereupon the servants said to each other, 'Verily, he hath lain down to sleep and the dogs with him.' Quoth another, 'Since he hath eaten with the dogs from the [same] tray, there is no harm in their sleeping with him; and this is nought but the fashion of madmen.' Moreover, they ate not anydele of the food that remained in the tray, saying, 'How shall we eat of dogs' leavings?' And they took the tray, with what was therein, and threw it away, saying, 'It is unclean.'

As for Abdallah, ere he could think, the earth clove in sunder and out came Saïdeh, who said to him, 'O Abdallah, why hast thou not beaten them this night and why hast thou done off the collars from their necks? Hast thou done this to thwart me and in mockery of my commandment? But now I will beat thee and change thee into a dog like unto them.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I conjure thee by the graving upon the ring of Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), have patience with me till I tell thee the reason [of this] and after do with me what thou wilt.' 'Say on,' quoth she; and he said, 'The king of mankind, the Commander of the Faithful, the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, commanded me not to beat them this night and took of me oaths and covenants to that effect; and he saluteth thee and hath committed to me a mandate under his own hand, which he bade me give thee. So I obeyed his commandment, for it is obligatory to obey the Commander of the Faithful; and here is the mandate. Take it and read it and after do thy will.'

So he gave her the letter and she opened it and read as follows, 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful! From the king of mankind, Haroun er Reshid, to Saïdeh, daughter of the Red King!' Then, after the usual salutations, 'Verily, this man hath forgiven his brothers and hath let drop his claim against them, and we have enjoined them to reconciliation. Now, when reconciliation cometh about, punishment is remitted, and if you [of the Jinn] thwart us in our commandments, we will thwart you in yours and traverse your ordinances; but, if ye obey our bidding and execute our commandments, we will do the like with yours. Wherefore I bid thee do them no hurt, and if thou believe in God and in His Apostle, it behoveth thee to obey him to whom the commandment is committed. So, if thou spare them, I will requite thee with that whereunto my Lord shall enable me; and the token of obedience is that thou remove thine enchantment from these two men, so they may come before me to-morrow, free. But, if thou release them not, I will release them in thy despite, by the aid of God the Most High.'

When she had read the letter, she said, 'O Abdallah, I will do nought till I go to my father and show him the mandate of the king of mankind and return to thee in haste.' So saying, she signed to the earth, which opened, and she disappeared therein, whilst Abdallah's heart was transported for joy and he said, 'God advance the Commander of the Faithful!' As for Saïdeh, she went in to her father and acquainting

him with that which had passed, gave him the Khalif's letter, which he kissed and laid on his head. Then he read it and said, 'O my daughter, verily, the ordinance of the king of mankind hath course with us and his commandments are executory amongst us, nor can we gainsay him: so go thou and release the two men forthwith and say to them, "Ye are [free] by the intercession of the king of mankind." For, should he be wroth with us, he would destroy us to the last of us: so do not thou impose on us that whereto we are unable.'

'O my father,' said she, 'if the king of mankind were wroth with us, what could he do with us?' Quoth he, 'He hath power over us for several reasons. In the first place, he is a man and hath thus pre-eminence over us; secondly, he is the Vicar of God; and thirdly, he is constant in praying the two-bow prayer of the foredawn; wherefore, if all the tribes of the Jinn assembled together against him from the seven worlds, they could do him no hurt. But he, should he be wroth with us, he would pray the two-bow prayer of the foredawn and cry out upon us one cry, whereupon we should all present ourselves before him obediently and be before him as sheep before the butcher. If he would, he could command us to depart our abiding-places to a desert country wherein we might not sojourn; and if he desired to destroy us, he would bid us destroy ourselves, whereupon we should destroy one another. Wherefore we may not disobey his commandment, for, if we did this, he would consume us, nor could we flee from before him. Thus is it with every true believer who is diligent in praying the two-bow prayer of the foredawn; his commandment is effectual over us: so be not thou the means of our destruction, because of two mortals, but go forthright and release them, ere the anger of the Commander of the Faithful fall upon us.'

So she returned to Abdallah and acquainted him with her father's words, saying, 'Kiss me the hands of the Commander of the Faithful and seek his approof for us.' Then she brought out the cup and filling it with water, conjured over it and spoke words that might not be understood; after which she sprinkled the dogs with the water, saying, 'Quit the form of dogs and return to that of men!' Whereupon they became men as before and the spell of the enchantment was dissolved from them. Quoth they, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!' And fell on their brother's feet and hands, kissing them and beseeching his forgiveness: but he said, 'Do ye forgive me.' Then they both repented with a sincere repentance, saying, 'Verily, Satan the Accursed tempted us and covetise deluded us: but our Lord hath requited us after our deserts, and forgiveness is of the fashion of the generous.' And they went on to supplicate their brother and weep and profess repentance for that which they had done.

Then said he to them, 'What did ye with my wife whom I brought from the City of Stone?' Quoth they, 'When Satan tempted us and we cast thee into the sea, there befell strife between us, each saying, "I will have her to wife." Which when she heard, she came up from the cabin and said to us, "Contend not because of me, for I will not belong to either of you. My husband is gone into the sea and I will follow him." So saying, she cast herself overboard and died.' 'Verily,' exclaimed Abdallah, 'she died a martyr! But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then he wept sore for her and said to his brothers, 'It was not well of you to do this thing and bereave me of my wife!' And they answered, 'Indeed, we have sinned, but our

Lord hath requited us our deed and this was a thing that God decreed unto us, ere He created us.' And he accepted their excuse; but Saïdeh said to him, 'Have they done all these things to thee and wilt thou forgive them?' 'O my sister,' answered he, 'whoso hath power and spareth, his reward is with God.' Then said she, 'Be on thy guard against them, for they are traitors.' And she took leave of him and went away.

Abdallah and his brothers passed the rest of the night in eating and drinking and merriment and good cheer, and on the morrow, he sent them to the bath and clad each of them, on his coming forth, in a suit worth much money. Then he called for the tray of food and they set it before him and he ate, he and his brothers. When his attendants saw the latter and knew them for his brothers, they saluted them and said to him, 'O our lord, may God give thee joy of thy reunion with thy dear brothers! Where have they been this while?' Quoth he, 'It was they whom ye saw in the guise of dogs; praised be God who hath delivered them from prison and grievous torment!'

Then he carried them to the Khalif's Divan and kissing the earth before the prince, wished him continuance of honour and fortune and cease of evil and enmity. 'Welcome, O Amir Abdallah!' said the Khalif. 'Tell me what hath befallen thee.' 'O Commander of the Faithful (whose power God increase!),' replied he, 'when I carried my brothers home to my lodging, my heart was at rest concerning them, for that thou hadst pledged thyself to their release and I said in myself, "Kings fail not of aught for which they endeavour, for the divine favour aideth them." So I did off the collars from their necks, putting my trust in God, and ate with them from the [same] tray, which when my attendants saw, they made light of my wit and said to each other, "He is surely mad! How can the governor of Bassora, who is greater than the vizier, eat with dogs?" Then they threw away what was in the tray, saying, "We will not eat the dogs' leavings." And they went on to impeach my reason, whilst I heard what they said, but made them no answer, because of their ignorance that the dogs were my brothers. When the hour of sleep came, I sent them away and addressed myself to sleep; but, ere I could think, the earth clave in sunder and out came Saïdeh, the Red King's daughter, enraged against me, with eyes like fire.' And he went on to relate to the Khalif what had passed between him and her and her father and how she had restored his brothers to human form, adding, 'And here they are before thee, O Commander of the Faithful!'

The Khalif looked at them and seeing two young men like moons, said, 'God requite thee for me with good, O Abdallah, for that thou hast acquainted me with an advantage whereof I knew not! Henceforth, God willing, I will never leave to pray these two inclinations before the breaking of the dawn, what while I abide on life.' Then he reproved Abdallah's brothers for that wherein they had sinned against him of time past and they excused themselves before the Khalif, who said, 'Join hands and forgive one another and God pardon what is past!' After which he turned to Abdallah and said to him, 'O Abdallah, make thy brothers thine assistants and be careful of them.' Then he charged them to be obedient to their brother and bade them return to Bassora, after he had bestowed on them abundant largesse. So they went down from the divan, whilst the Khalif rejoiced in this advantage that he had gotten by the fashion aforesaid, to wit, his assiduity in praying two inclinations before dawn, and said, 'He spoke truth who said, "The misfortunes of some folk profit others."'

Abdallah and his brothers departed from Baghdad in all honour and worship and increase of dignity, and fared on till they drew near Bassora, when the notables and chief men of the place came out to meet them and brought them into the city in state that had not its match. Moreover, they adorned the city in their honour and all the folk shouted out blessings on Abdallah, whilst he scattered gold and silver amongst them. But none took heed to his brothers; wherefore jealousy and envy entered their hearts, for all he tendered them as one tenders an ailing eye; but the more he cherished them, the more they redoubled in hatred and envy of him: and indeed it is said on the subject:

I seek to win me the good will of all folk, small and great,
But hardly him who envieth me I may conciliate.
How shall a man conciliate him who envieth him a good,
Since but the ceasing of that good will satisfy his hate?

Then he gave each of them a concubine, that had not her like, and slaves and servants, black and white and male and female, forty of each kind. Moreover, he gave each of them fifty thoroughbred horses and they got them guards and followers. And he assigned to them revenues and appointed them stipends and allowances and made them his assistants, saying to them, 'O my brothers, you and I are equal and there is no distinction between us and after God and the Khalif, the commandment is mine and yours. So rule you in Bassora in my absence and in my presence, and your commandments shall be executory; but look that ye fear God in your ordinances and beware of oppression, for oppression, if it endure, ruineth [a country]; and apply yourselves unto justice, for justice, if it endure, maketh [a country] to flourish. Oppress not the believers, or they will curse you and your report will come to the ears of the Khalif, wherefore dishonour will betide both you and me. Go not therefore about to oppress any, but whatsoever ye covet of the goods of the folk, take it from my goods, over and above that whereof ye have need; for it is not unknown to you what is handed down of unequivocal verses [of the Koran] on the subject of oppression, and gifted of God is he who saith:

Oppression in man's soul doth latent sit
And nought but lack of power concealeth it.
A man of sense no business undertakes
Until he sees the time therefor is fit.
The wise man's tongue is in his heart, but in
His mouth the heart of him who lacketh wit.
He who's not greater than his wit is slain
Of the least stress that unto him is writ.
Men may their lineage hide, but it appears
Still in the things they do and they omit
Whoso in origin is aught but good,
No word of good his lips shall e'er emit.
He is his peer in folly, to a fool
Who doth the ordering of his deeds commit;
And who reveals his secret to the folk

His enemies awakens unto it.
With his own business be a man content
Nor mell with what concerneth him no whit.'

And he went on to admonish his brothers and enjoin them to justice and forbid them from oppression, doubting not but they would love him the better for his lavishment of good counsel upon them, and he trusted in them and entreated them with the utmost honour; but, for all his generosity to them, they only waxed in hatred and envy of him, till, one day, the two being together [alone], Nasir said to Mensour, 'O my brother, how long shall we be subject to our brother Abdallah, and he in this estate of lordship and commandment? After being a merchant, he is become an Amir, and from being little, he is grown great: but we, we grow not great nor is there aught of rank or worth left us; for, behold, he laugheth at us and maketh us his assistants! What is the meaning of this? Is it not that we are his servants and under his commandment? But, what while he abideth on life, our rank will never be raised nor shall we be of any account; wherefore we shall not attain to our wish, except we slay him and take his good, nor will it be possible to take his good, save after his death. So, when we have killed him, we shall become lords and will take all that is in his treasuries of jewels and [other] things of price and divide them between us. Then will we send the Khalif a present and demand of him the government of Cufa, and thou shalt be governor of Bassora and I of Cufa, or thou shalt be governor of Cufa and I of Bassora. On this wise each of us shall have a rank and a condition, but we shall never compass this, except we do away with him.'

'Thou sayest sooth,' answered Mensour; 'but how shall we do to kill him?' Quoth Nasir, 'We will make an entertainment in the house of one of us and bid him thereto and serve him with the utmost assiduity. Then will we watch the night with him in converse and tell him stories and jests and anecdotes, till his heart is dissolved with watching, when we will spread him a bed, that he may lie down to sleep. When he is asleep, we will kneel upon him and strangle him and cast him into the river; and on the morrow, we will say, "His sister the Jinniyeh came to him, as he sat talking with us, and said to him, 'O scum of mankind, who art thou that thou shouldst complain of me to the Commander of the Faithful? Deemest thou that we are afraid of him? If he be a king, we too are kings, and if he mend not his manners with us, we will kill him by the foulest of deaths. But meantime I will kill thee, that we may see what the Commander of the Faithful can do.' So saying, she caught him up and the earth opened and she disappeared with him; which when we saw, we swooned away. Then we came to ourselves and we know not what is become of him." Then will we send to the Khalif and tell him of this and he will invest us with the government in his room. After awhile, we will send him a rich present and seek of him the government of Cufa, and one of us shall abide in Bassora and the other in Cufa. So shall the land be pleasant to us and we will subdue the people and attain our desire.' 'Thou counsellest well, O my brother,' answered Mensour and they agreed upon this thing.

So Nasir made an entertainment and said to Abdallah, 'O my brother, verily I am thy brother, and I would have thee and my brother Mensour heal my heart and eat of my guest-meal in my house, so I may glory in thee and that it may be said, "The Amir Abdallah hath eaten of his brother Nasir's guest-meal;" whereby my heart will be

solaced.' 'So be it, O my brother,' answered Abdallah. 'There is no distinction between me and thee, and my house is thy house; but since thou biddest me, none refuseth hospitality save the churl.' Then he turned to Mensour and said to him, 'Wilt thou go with me to thy brother Nasir's house and eat of his guest-meal and ease his heart?' 'As thy head liveth, O my brother,' replied Mensour, 'I will not go with thee, except thou swear to me that, after thou comest forth of my brother Nasir's house, thou wilt enter my house and eat of my banquet! Is Nasir thy brother and am not I thy brother? So, even as thou healest his heart, do thou heal mine.' 'With all my heart,' answered Abdallah. 'When I come out from Nasir's house, I will enter thine, for thou art my brother even as he.' So Nasir kissed his hand and going forth of the divan, made ready his banquet.

On the morrow, Abdallah took horse and repaired, with his brother Mensour and a company of his officers, to Nasir's house, where they sat down, he and Mensour and his company. Then Nasir set the table of food before them and bade them welcome; so they ate and drank; after which the tray and the platters were removed and they washed their hands. They passed the day in eating and drinking and merry-making and good cheer till night-fall, when they supped and prayed the prayers of sundown, and evensong. Then they sat carousing, and Nasir and Mensour fell to telling stories, first one and then the other, whilst Abdallah hearkened. Now they three were alone in a pavilion, the rest of the company being in another place, and they ceased not to tell tales and jests and pleasant traits and anecdotes, till Abdallah's heart was dissolved within him for watching and sleep overcame him. So they spread him a bed and he put off his clothes and lay down.

They lay down beside him on another couch and waited till they saw that he was drowned in sleep, when they arose and knelt upon him: whereupon he awoke and seeing them kneeling on his breast, said to them, 'What is this, O my brothers?' 'We are no brothers of thine,' answered they, 'nor do we know thee, lack-courtesy that thou art! Thy death is become better than thy life.' Then they gripped him by the throat and throttled him till he lost his senses and abode without motion, so that they deemed him dead. Now the pavilion in which they were overlooked the river; so they cast him therein; but, when he fell, God sent to his aid a dolphin, which was wont to come under the pavilion, for that the kitchen had a window that gave upon the water, and as often as they killed any beast there, it was their wont to throw the offal into the river and the dolphin came and picked it up from the surface of the water; wherefore it still resorted to the place. That day they had cast out much offal, by reason of the banquet; so the dolphin ate more than of wont and gained strength. When it heard the splash of Abdallah's fall, it hastened to the spot, where it saw a man, and God guided it, so that it took him on its back and crossing the river, made with him for the other bank, where it cast him ashore.

Now the place where the dolphin cast him up was a beaten way, and presently up came a caravan and finding him lying on the river-bank, said, 'Here is a drowned man, whom the river hath cast up.' Now the chief of the caravan was a man of worth and sound judgment, skilled in all sciences and versed in the art of medicine: so he said to them, 'O folk, what is to do?' And they answered, saying, 'Here is a drowned man.' Whereupon he went up to Abdallah and examining him, said to them, 'O folk, there is

yet life in this young man, who is a person of condition and a nursling of honour and fortune, and God willing, there is still hope in him.' Then he took him and clothing him in warm apparel, nursed him and tended him three days' journey, till he revived; but he was exceeding weak, by reason of the shock, and the chief of the caravan proceeded to medicine him with such simples as he knew, what while they fared on, without ceasing, till they had travelled thirty days' journey from Bassora and came to a city in the land of the Persians, by name Auj. Here they alighted at a khan and spread Abdallah a bed, where he lay groaning all night and disturbing the folk with his groans.

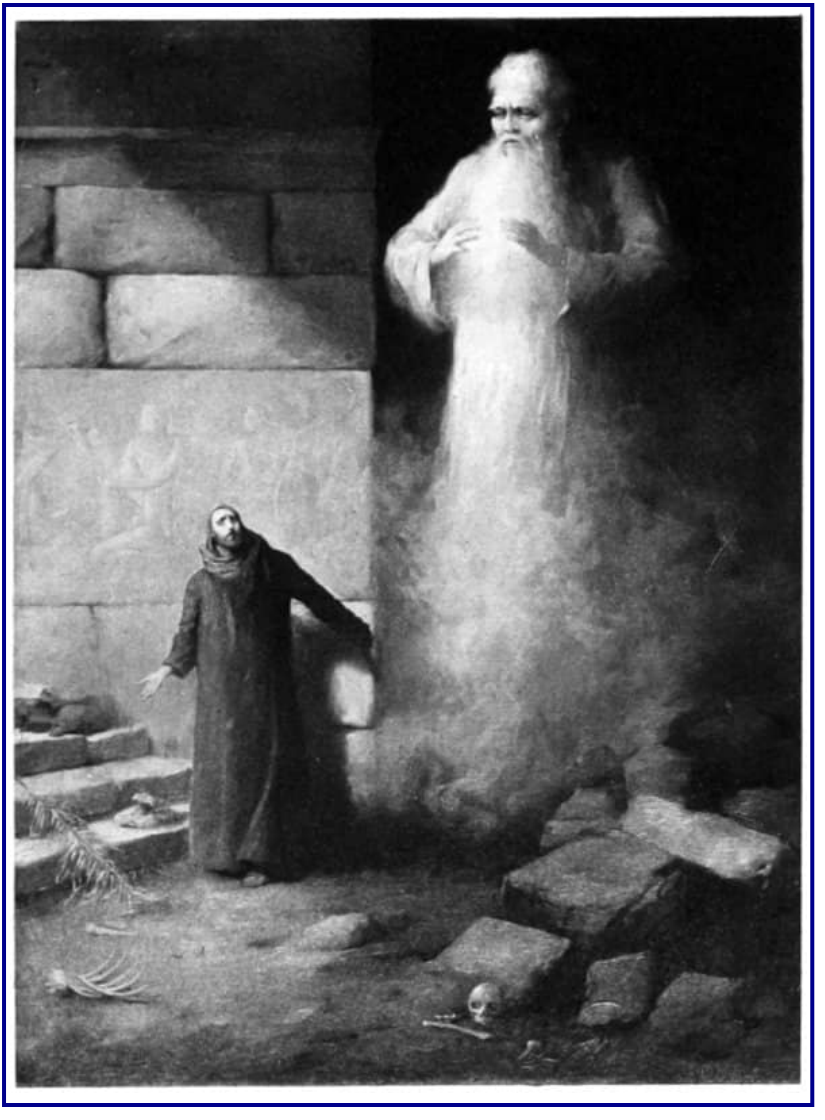
On the morrow the porter of the khan came to the chief of the caravan and said to him, 'What is this sick man thou hast with thee? Verily, he disturbeth us.' Quoth the chief, 'I found him by the way, shipwrecked and cast up by the river, and have tended him, but to no effect, for he recovereth not.' 'Show him to the Sheikheh Rajiheh,' said the porter. 'Who is she?' asked the chief of the caravan, and the porter answered, saying, 'There is with us a holy woman, a comely and clean maid, called Rajiheh, to whom they carry whoso hath any ailment; and he lies the night in her house and awakes on the morrow, whole and ailing nothing.' Quoth the chief, 'Direct me to her;' and the porter said, 'Take up thy sick man. So he took up Abdallah and the porter forewent him, till he came to a hermitage, where he saw folk entering with votive offerings and other folk coming forth, rejoicing. The porter went in, till he came to the curtain, and said, 'Permission, O Sheikheh Rajiheh! Take this sick man.' Quoth she, 'Bring him within the curtain.' And the porter said to Abdallah, 'Enter.'

So he entered and looking upon the holy woman, saw her to be his very wife whom he had brought from the City of Stone. She also knew him and saluted him and he her. Then said he, 'Who brought thee hither?' And she answered, 'When I saw that thy brothers had cast thee overboard and were contending concerning me, I threw myself into the sea; but my sheikh El Khizr took me up and brought me to this hermitage, where he gave me leave to heal the sick and made proclamation in the city, saying, "Whoso hath any ailment, let him repair to the Sheikheh Rajiheh." Moreover he said to me, "Abide in this hermitage till the time be accomplished, and thy husband shall come to thee here." So all the sick used to come to me and I rubbed them and kneaded them and they awoke on the morrow, whole and well. On this wise the report of me became noised abroad among the folk, and they brought me votive gifts, so that I have with me good galore. Moreover, I live here in all honour and worship, and all the people of these parts seek my prayers.'

Then she rubbed him and by the ordinance of God the Most High he became whole. Now El Khizr used to come to her every Friday night, and it chanced that the day of Abdallah's coming was a Friday. So, when the night darkened, they made the evening meal of the richest meats, he and she, and sat awaiting the coming of El Khizr, who made his appearance anon and carrying them forth of the hermitage, set them down in Abdallah's palace at Bassora, where he left them and went his way. As soon as it was day, Abdallah examined the palace and knew it for his own; then, hearing the folk in clamour [without], he looked forth of the window and saw his brothers crucified, each on his own cross.

Now the reason of this was as follows. When they had thrown him into the Tigris, they arose on the morrow, weeping and saying, 'The Jinniyeh hath carried off our brother!' Then they made ready a present and sent it to the Khalif, acquainting him with these tidings and seeking of him the government of Bassora. He sent for them and questioned them and they told him the story aforesaid, whereupon he was exceeding wroth [with Saïdeh]. So that night he prayed a two-bow prayer before daybreak, as of his wont, and called upon the tribes of the Jinn, who came before him obediently, and he questioned them of Abdallah; but they swore to him that none of them had done him aught of hurt and said, 'We know not what is come of him.' Then came Saïdeh, daughter of the Red King, and acquainted the Khalif with the truth of Abdallah's case, and he dismissed the Jinn.

On the morrow, he caused beat Nasir and Mensour, till they confessed, one against the other: whereupon the Khalif was enraged with them and bade carry them to Bassora and crucify them there before Abdallah's palace. As for the latter, when he saw his brothers crucified, he commanded to bury them, then took horse and repairing to Baghdad, acquainted the Khalif with that which his brothers had done with him, from first to last [and told him how he had recovered his wife]; whereat Er Reshid marvelled and summoning the Cadi and the witnesses, let draw up the contract of marriage between Abdallah and the damsel whom he had brought from the City of Stone. So he went in to her and abode with her at Bassora, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies; and extolled be the perfection of the [Ever-] Living One, who dieth not!



Marouf the Cobbler and His Wife Fatimeh.

THERE dwelt once in the city of Cairo the [God-]guarded a cobbler, [who lived by] mending old shoes. His name was Marouf and he had a wife called Fatimeh, whom the folk had nicknamed 'The Shrew,' for that she was a worthless, ill-conditioned wretch, little of shame and a sore mischief-maker. She ruled her husband and used to revile him and curse him a thousand times a day, and he feared her malice and dreaded her mischief; for that he was a man of sense and careful of his repute, but poor of estate. When he earnt much, he spent it on her, and when he earnt little, she revenged herself on his body that night, leaving him no peace and making his night like her book; for she was even as saith the poet of [the like of] her:

How many a night have I spent with my wife
In the sorriest of plights for contention and strife!
Would God I had given her poison the night
Of our wedding and so made an end of her life!

One day she said to him, 'O Marouf, I wish thee to bring me this night vermicelli dressed with bees' honey.' 'So God the Most High vouchsafe me its price,' answered he, 'I will bring it thee. By Allah, I have no money to-day, but our Lord will provide.' 'I have nothing to do with that,' rejoined she. 'Whether He provide1 or not, look thou come not to me save with the vermicelli and bees' honey thereon; else will I make thy night like unto thy fortune whenas thou marriedst me and fellest into my hand.' Quoth he, 'God is bountiful!' and went out, full of trouble. He prayed the morning prayer and opened his shop, saying, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me the price of the vermicelli and save me from the mischief of yonder wicked woman this night!'

He sat in the shop till midday, but no work came to him and his fear of his wife redoubled. So he arose and shutting his shop, went out, knowing not how he should do in the matter of the vermicelli, for that he had not [even] wherewithal to buy bread. Presently he came to the shop of the vermicelli-seller and stood before it, perplexed, whilst his eyes filled with tears. The cook glanced at him and said, 'O Master Marouf, why dost thou weep? Tell me what ails thee?' So he acquainted him with his case, saying, 'My wife is a curst shrew and would have me bring her vermicelli; but I have sat in my shop half the day and have gotten nought, not even the price of bread; wherefore I am in fear of her.' The cook laughed and said, 'No harm shall come to thee. How many pounds wilt thou have?' 'Five pounds,' answered Marouf. So the cook weighed him out five pounds of vermicelli and said to him, 'I have butter, but no bees' honey. Here is drip-honey, however, which is better than bees' honey; and where will be the harm, if it be with drip-honey?'

Marouf was ashamed to object, because the cook was to have patience with him for the price, and said, 'Give it me with drip-honey.' So he fried it for him with butter and drenched it with drip-honey, till it was fit to present to kings. Then he said to him, 'Dost thou want bread and cheese?' And Marouf answered, 'Yes.' So he gave him four paras' worth of bread and one of cheese, and the vermicelli was ten paras. Then said he, 'Know, O Marouf, that thou owest me fifteen paras, so go to thy wife and make merry

and take this para for the bath; and thou shalt have credit for a day or two or three till God provide thee. And straiten not thy wife, for I will have patience with thee till such time as thou shalt have money to spare.' So Marouf took the vermicelli and bread and cheese and went away, with a heart at ease, blessing the cook and saying, 'Extolled be Thy perfection, O my Lord! How bountiful art Thou!'

When he came home, his wife said to him, 'Hast thou brought the vermicelli?' 'Yes,' answered he and set it before her. She looked at it and seeing that it was dressed with cane-honey, said to him, 'Did I not bid thee bring it with bees' honey? Wilt thou do contrary to my wish and have it dressed with cane-honey?' He excused himself to her, saying, 'I bought it not save on credit;' but she answered, 'This talk is idle; I will not eat it, save with bees' honey.' And she was wroth with it and threw it in his face, saying, 'Begone, thou cuckold, and bring me other than this!' Then she dealt him a buffet on the chops and knocked out one of his teeth. The blood ran down upon his breast and for stress of anger he smote her one slight blow on the head; whereupon she clutched his beard and fell to crying out and saying, '[Help,] O Muslims!'

So the neighbours came in and freed his beard from her clutch and beset her with blame and reproved her, saying, 'We are all content to eat vermicelli with cane-honey. Why, then, wilt thou oppress this poor man thus? Verily, this is disgraceful in thee!' And they went on to soothe her till they made peace between him and her. But, when the folk were gone, she swore that she would not eat of the vermicelli, and Marouf, being consumed with hunger, said in himself, 'She swears that she will not eat; so I will eat.' Then he ate, and when she saw him eating, she said, 'If it be the will of God, may the eating of it be poison to destroy some one's body!' Quoth he, 'It shall not be as thou sayest,' and went on eating, laughing and saying, 'Thou swearest that thou wilt not eat of this; but God is bountiful, and to-morrow night, if it be His will, I will bring thee vermicelli dressed with bees' honey, and thou shalt eat it alone.' And he addressed himself to appease her, whilst she called down curses upon him; and she ceased not to rail at him and revile him till the morning, when she bared her arm to beat him. Quoth he, 'Give me time and I will bring thee other vermicelli.'

Then he went out to the mosque and prayed; after which he betook himself to his shop and opening it, sat down; but hardly had he done this when up came two officers from the Cadi's court and said to him, 'Come, speak with the Cadi, for thy wife hath complained of thee to him and her favour is thus and thus.' He knew her [by their description] and saying, 'May God the Most High torment her!' accompanied them to the Cadi's presence, where he found Fatimeh standing, weeping and wiping away her tears, with her arm bound up and her face-veil besmeared with blood. 'Harkye, sirrah,' said the Cadi, 'hast thou no fear of God the Most High? Why hast thou beaten this good woman and broken her arm and knocked out her tooth and entreated her thus?' 'If I beat her or put out her tooth,' answered Marouf, 'sentence me to what thou wilt; but in truth the case was thus and thus and the neighbours made peace between me and her.' And he told him the story from first to last.

Now this Cadi was a benevolent man; so he brought out to him a quarter dinar, saying, 'O man, take this and get her vermicelli with bees' honey and do ye make peace, thou and she.' Quoth Marouf, 'Give it to her.' So she took it and the Cadi made peace between them, saying, 'O wife, obey thy husband, and thou, O man, deal kindly

with her.' Then they left the court, reconciled at the Cadi's hands, and she went one way, whilst her husband returned by another way to his shop and sat there, when, behold, the [two] serjeants came up to him and said, 'Give us our fee.' Quoth he, 'The Cadi took not of me aught: on the contrary, he gave me a quarter dinar.' But they answered, saying, 'It is none of our concern whether the Cadi took of thee or gave to thee, and if thou give us not our fee, we will take it in despite of thee.' And they fell to dragging him about the market. So he sold his tools and gave them half a dinar, whereupon they let him go and went away, whilst he put his hand to his cheek and sat sorrowful, for that he had no tools to work withal.

Presently, up came two ill-looking fellows and said to him, 'Come, O man, and speak with the Cadi; for thy wife hath complained of thee to him.' Quoth he, 'He made peace between us [but now].' But they answered, 'We come from another Cadi, and thy wife hath complained of thee to our Cadi.' So he arose and went with them to the [second] Cadi, calling on God for succour against her; and when he saw her, he said to her, 'Did we not make peace, good woman?' But she said, 'There abideth no peace between thee and me.' So he came forward and told the Cadi his story, adding, 'And indeed the Cadi such an one made peace between us but now.' Whereupon the Cadi said to her, 'O strumpet, since ye have made peace with each other, why comest thou to me complaining?' Quoth she, 'He beat me after that.' But the Cadi said, 'Make peace with one another, and thou, [O man] beat her not again, and she will cross thee no more.' So they made peace and the Cadi said to Marouf, 'Give the serjeants their fee.' So he gave them their fee and going back to his shop, opened it and sat down, as he were a drunken man for excess of chagrin.

Presently, a man came up to him and said, 'O Marouf, hide thyself, for thy wife hath complained of thee to the High Court and the men of violence are after thee.' So he shut his shop and fled towards the Gate of Victory. He had five paras left of the price of the lasts and gear; so he bought four paras' worth of bread and one of cheese, as he fled from her. Now it was the winter season and the hour of afternoon-prayer; so, when he came out among the rubbish-heaps, the rain descended upon him, as [from] the mouth of water-skins, and his clothes were drenched. So he entered the Aadiliyeh, where he saw a ruined place and therein a deserted cell, without a door, and took shelter there from the rain. The tears streamed from his eyes and he fell to complaining of what had befallen him and saying, 'Whither shall I flee from this vile woman? I beseech Thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me one who shall bring me to a far country, where she shall not know the way to me!'

As he sat weeping, behold, the wall opened and there came forth to him therefrom one of tall stature, whose aspect caused the flesh to creep, and said to him, 'O man, what aileth thee that thou disturbest me this night? These two hundred years have I dwelt here and have never seen any enter this place and do as thou dost. Tell me what thou wishest and I will accomplish thy need, for compassion for thee hath gotten hold upon my heart.' Quoth Marouf, 'Who and what art thou?' And he answered, 'I am the haunter of this place.' So Marouf told him all that had befallen him with his wife and he said, 'Wilt thou have me carry thee to a country, where thy wife shall know no way to thee?' 'Yes,' answered Marouf; and the genie said, 'Then mount my back.' So he mounted on his back and he flew with him from nightfall till daybreak, when he set

him down on the top of a high mountain and tit said to him, 'O mortal, descend this mountain and thou wilt see the gate of a city. Enter it, for thy wife cannot come at thee there.' So saying, he left him and went his way, whilst Marouf abode in amazement and perplexity till the sun rose, when he said in himself, 'I will arise and go down into the city, for there is no profit in my abiding here.'

So he descended to the mountain-foot and saw a high-walled city, full of lofty palaces and richly-decorated buildings, a delight to those who looked upon it. He entered in at the gate and found it a city such as lightened the grieving heart; but, as he walked through the streets, the townsfolk stared at him and gathered about him, marvelling at his dress, for it was unlike theirs. Presently, one of them said to him, 'O man, art thou a stranger?' And he answered, 'Yes.' 'What countryman art thou?' asked the other; and Marouf said, 'I am from the city of Cairo the Happy.' Quoth the townsman, 'And when didst thou leave Cairo?' 'I left it yesterday,' answered Marouf, 'at the hour of afternoon-prayer.' Whereupon the man laughed at him and cried out, saying, 'Come hither, O folk, and look at this man and hear what he says!' Quoth they, 'What does he say?' 'He pretends,' replied the other, 'that he comes from Cairo and left it yesterday at the hour of afternoon-prayer!' At this they all laughed and gathering round Marouf, said to him, 'O man, art thou mad to talk thus? How canst thou pretend that thou leftest Cairo at mid-afternoon yesterday and foundest thyself this morning here, seeing that between our city and Cairo is a full year's journey?' Quoth he, 'None is mad but you. As for me, I speak sooth, for here is bread that I brought with me from Cairo, and see, it is yet fresh.' Then he showed them the bread and they stared at it and marvelled at it, for it was unlike their country bread.

The crowd increased about him and they said to each other, 'This is Cairo bread: look at it.' So he became a gazing stock in the city and some believed him, whilst others gave him the lie and made mock of him. Presently, up came a merchant, riding on a mule and followed by two black slaves, and pressed through the people, saying, 'O folk, are ye not ashamed to mob this foreigner and make mock of him and laugh at him?' And he went on to rate them, till he drove them away from Marouf, and none could make him any answer. Then he said to Marouf, 'Come, O my brother. No harm shall betide thee from these folk. Verily they have no shame.' So he took him and carrying him to a spacious and richly-decorated house, seated him in a guest-chamber fit for a king, whilst he gave an order to his slaves, who opened a chest and brought out to him a dress such as might be worn by a merchant worth a thousand purses. He clad him therein and Marouf, being a well-favoured man, became as he were provost of the merchants.

Then his host called for food and they set before them a tray of all manner rich meats. They ate and drank and the merchant said to Marouf, 'O my brother, what is thy name?' 'My name is Marouf,' answered he, 'and I am a cobbler by trade and mend old shoes.' 'What countryman art thou?' asked the merchant, and the cobbler said, 'I am from Cairo.' 'What quarter?' asked the other. Quoth Marouf, 'Dost thou know Cairo?' And the merchant replied, 'I am of its children.' So Marouf said, 'I come from the Red Street.' 'And whom dost thou know in the Red Street ?' asked his host. 'I know such an one and such an one,' answered Marouf and named several people to him. Quoth the other, 'Knowest thou Gaffer Ahmed the druggist?' 'He was my next

neighbour, wall for wall,' replied the cobbler. 'Is he well?' asked the merchant and Marouf said, 'Yes.' 'How many sons hath he?' asked the merchant. 'Three,' replied Marouf, 'Mustafa, Mohammed and Ali.' Quoth the other, 'And what hath God done with them?' 'As for Mustafa,' answered Marouf, 'he is well and he is a learned man, a professor.' Mohammed is a druggist and opened him a shop beside that of his father, after he had married, and his wife hath borne him a son named Hassan.' 'God gladden thee with good news!' said the merchant.

'As for Ali,' continued Marouf, 'he was my friend, when we were boys, and I still played with him. We used to go in the guise of the children of the Nazarenes and enter the church and steal the books of the Nazarenes and sell them and buy food with the price. It chanced once that the Christians caught us with a book; whereupon they complained of us to our folk and said to Ali's father, "An thou hinder not thy son from troubling us, we will complain of thee to the king." So he appeased them and gave Ali a drubbing; wherefore he ran away none knew whither and he hath now been absent twenty years and none hath brought news of him.' Quoth the host, 'I am that very Ali, son of Gaffer Ahmed the druggist, and thou art my playmate Marouf.' So they saluted each other and Ali said, 'Tell me why thou camest from Cairo to this city.'

So Marouf told him all that had befallen him with his wife Fatimeh the Shrew and said, 'So, when her mischief waxed on me, I fled from her towards the Gate of Victory [and went forth the city]. Presently, the rain descended on me; so I entered a ruined cell in the Aadiliyeh and sat there, weeping; whereupon there came forth to me the haunter of the place, to wit, an Afrit of the Jinn, and questioned me. I acquainted him with my case and he took me on his back and flew with me all night between heaven and earth, till he set me down on yonder mountain and gave me to know of the [neighbourhood of this] city. So I came down from the mountain and entered the city, whereupon the people crowded about me and questioned me. I told them that I had left Cairo yesterday, but they believed me not, and presently thou camest up and driving the folk away from me, carriedst me to this house. This, then, is how I came to leave Cairo; and thou, how camest thou hither?'

Quoth Ali, 'Restlessness got hold upon me, when I was seven years old, from which time I wandered from land to land and city to city, till I came to this city, the name whereof is Ikhtiyan el Khuten. I found its people kindly and hospitable folk, trusting in the poor man and giving him credit and believing all that he said. So I said to them, "I am a merchant and have foregone my baggage and I need a place wherein to bestow it." And they believed me and assigned me a lodging. Then I said to them, "Is there any of you will lend me a thousand dinars, till my baggage arrives, when I will repay it to him? For I am in want of certain things, ere my goods come." They gave me what I asked and I went to the merchants' bazaar, where, seeing goods, I bought them and sold them next day at a profit of fifty dinars and bought others. Moreover, I consorted with the folk and entreated them liberally, so that they loved me, and I continued to buy and sell, till I grew rich. And know, O my brother, that the proverb says, "The world is made up of ostentation and trickery: and the land where none knoweth thee, there do whatsoever thou wilt." If thou say to all who ask thee, "I am a poor man, a cobbler by trade, and fled from my wife and left Cairo yesterday," they will not believe thee and thou wilt be a laughing-stock among them as long as thou

abidest in the city; whilst, if thou say, "An Afrit brought me hither," they will take fright at thee and none will come near thee; for they will say, "This man is possessed of an Afrit and harm will betide whoso approacheth him." And this report will be dishonouring both to thee and to me, for that they know I come from Cairo.'

'How then shall I do?' asked Marouf. 'I will tell thee how thou shalt do,' answered Ali, 'so it please God the Most High. To-morrow I will give thee a thousand dinars and a mule to ride and a black slave, who shall go before thee and bring thee to the gate of the merchants' bazaar; and do thou go in to them. I will be there sitting amongst them, and when I see thee, I will rise to thee and salute thee and kiss thy hand and make much of thee. Whenever I ask thee of any kind of stuff, saying, "Hast thou brought with thee aught of such a kind?" do thou answer, "Abundance." And if they question me of thee, I will praise thee and magnify thee in their eyes and say to them, "Get him a store-house and a shop." Moreover, I will give thee out for a man of great wealth and generosity; and if a beggar come to thee, give him what thou mayst; so will they put faith in what I say and believe in thy greatness and generosity and love thee. Then will I bid thee to an entertainment and bid all the merchants on thine account and bring thee and them together, so they may all know thee and thou them and thou shalt buy and sell and give and take with them; nor will it be long ere thou become a man of wealth.'

So on the morrow he gave him a thousand dinars and a suit of clothes and a black slave and mounting him on a mule, said to him, 'God give thee quittance of all this: for thou art my friend and it behoves me to deal generously with thee. Have no care; but put away from thee the thought of thy wife and name her not to any.' 'May God requite thee with good!' answered Marouf and rode on, preceded by the black slave, till the latter brought him to the gate of the merchants' bazaar, where they were all seated, and Ali amongst them. When the latter saw him, he rose and threw himself upon him, saying, ['This is indeed] a blessed day, O merchant Marouf, O man of good works and kindness!' And he kissed his hand before the merchants and said to them, 'O my brothers, I commend to you the merchant Marouf.' So they saluted him, and Ali signed to them to make much of him, wherefore he was magnified in their eyes.

Then Ali helped him to dismount and saluted him; after which he took the merchants apart, one after another, and vaunted Marouf to them. 'Is this man a merchant?' asked they. 'Yes,' answered he; 'and indeed he is the chiefest of merchants, there lives not a wealthier than he; for his wealth and that of his father and forefathers are notorious among the merchants of Cairo. He hath partners in Hind and Sind and Yemen and is high in repute for generosity. So know ye his rank and make much of him and do him service, and know also that his coming hither is not for the sake of traffic, but to divert himself with the sight of foreign countries; for he hath no need to travel for the sake of gain and profit, having wealth that fires cannot consume, and I am one of his servants.' And he went on to extol him, till they set him above their heads and began to tell one another of his qualities.

Then they came round about him and offered him pastry and sherbets, and even the Provost of the Merchants came to him and saluted him; whilst Ali proceeded to say to him, in the presence of the merchants, 'O my lord, belike thou hast brought with thee somewhat of such and such a stuff?' And Marouf answered, 'Abundance.' Now Ali

had that day shown him various kinds of costly stuffs and had taught him the names of the different stuffs, cheap and dear. Then said one of the merchants, 'O my lord, hast thou brought with thee yellow cloth?' And Marouf said, 'Abundance.' 'And gazelles' blood red?' asked the other. 'Abundance,' replied the cobbler; and as often as he asked him of aught, he made him the same answer. So the other said, 'O merchant Ali, [methinks] if thy countryman had a mind to transport a thousand loads of costly stuffs, he could do so.' 'He would take them from one of his store-houses,' answered Ali, 'and miss nought thereof.'

Presently, up came a beggar and went the round of the merchants. One gave him a para and another a doit, but most of them gave him nothing, till he came to Marouf, who pulled out a handful of gold and gave it to him, whereupon he blessed him and went away. The merchants marvelled at this and said, 'Verily, this is a king's giving, for he gave the beggar gold without count; and except he were a man of vast wealth, he had not given a beggar a handful of gold.' After awhile, there came to him a poor woman and he gave her a handful of gold; whereupon she went away, blessing him, and told the other beggars, who came to him, one after another, and he gave them each a handful of gold, till he had made an end of the thousand dinars.

Then he smote hand upon hand and said, 'God is our sufficiency and excellent is He in whom we trust!' Quoth the Provost, 'What ails thee, O merchant Marouf?' And he answered, 'It seems that the most part of the people of this city are poor and miserable: had I known this, I would have brought with me a large sum of money in my saddle-bags and given alms thereof to the poor. I fear me I may be long abroad and it is not in my nature to refuse a beggar; and I have no money left: so, if a poor man come to me, what shall I say to him?' 'Say, "God provide thee"' said the Provost; but Marouf replied, 'That is not of my wont and I am vexed because of this. Would I had other thousand dinars, wherewith to give alms till my baggage arrive!' 'Have no care for that,' 'said the Provost and sending one of his men for a thousand dinars, gave them to Marouf, who went on giving them to every beggar who passed till the call to midday prayer.

Then they entered the mosque and prayed the noonday prayers, and what was left him of the thousand dinars he scattered on the heads of the worshippers. This drew the people's attention to him and they called down blessings upon him, whilst the merchants marvelled at the abundance of his generosity and openhandedness Then he turned to another merchant and borrowing of him other thousand dinars, gave these also away, whilst Ali looked on at what he did, but could not speak. He ceased not to do thus till the call to afternoon-prayer, when he entered the mosque and prayed and distributed the rest of the money. On this wise, by the time they shut the gate of the bazaar, he had borrowed five thousand dinars and given them away, saying to every one of whom he took aught, 'Wait till my baggage arrives, when, if thou desire gold, I will give thee gold, and if thou desire stuffs, thou shalt have stuffs; for I have great plenty.'

At eventide Ali invited Marouf and the rest of the merchants to an entertainment and seated him in the place of honour, where he talked of nothing but stuffs and jewels, and whenever they made mention to him of aught, he said, 'I have abundance of it.' Next day, he again repaired to the bazaar, where he improved his acquaintance with the merchants and borrowed of them more money, which he gave to the poor: nor did

he leave to do thus twenty days, till he had borrowed threescore thousand dinars, and still there came no baggage, no, nor a burning plague [to rid the people of him]. At last the folk began to clamour for their money and say, 'The merchant Marouf's baggage cometh not. How long will he take people's monies and give them to the poor?' And one of them said, 'Methinks we should do well to speak to his countryman Ali.' So they went to the latter and said to him, 'O Ali, the merchant Marouf's baggage cometh not.' 'Have patience,' answered he; 'it cannot fail to come soon.'

Then he took Marouf aside and said to him, 'O Marouf, what fashion is this? Did I bid thee toast the bread or burn it? The merchants clamour for their money and tell me that thou owest them threescore thousand dinars, which thou hast borrowed and given away to the poor. How wilt thou satisfy the folk, seeing that thou neither buyest nor sellest?' 'What matters it?' answered Marouf 'And what are threescore thousand dinars? When my baggage comes, I will pay them in stuffs or in gold and silver, as they will.' 'God is most great!' replied Ali. 'Hast thou then any baggage?' And he said, 'Abundance.' 'God and the saints requite thee thine impudence!' cried Ali. 'Did I teach thee this saying, that thou shouldst repeat it to me? But I will acquaint the folk with thee.' 'Begone and prate not,' answered Marouf. 'Am I a poor man? I have abundance in my baggage and as soon as it comes, they shall have their money's worth, two for one; I have no need of them.'

At this Ali waxed wroth and said, 'Unmannerly churl that thou art, I will teach thee to lie to me and be not ashamed!' 'Do thy worst,' rejoined Marouf. 'They must wait till my baggage comes, when they shall have their due and more.' So Ali left him and went away, saying in himself, 'I praised him before and if I blame him now, I make myself out a liar and become of those of whom it is said, "He who praises and [then] blames lies twice."'1 And he knew not what to do. Presently, the merchants came to him and said, 'O Ali, hast thou spoken to him?' 'O folk,' answered he, 'I am ashamed to speak to him, though he owes me a thousand dinars Ye consulted me not, when ye lent him your money; so ye have no claim on me. Dun him yourselves, and if he pay you not, complain of him to the king of the city, saying, "He is an impostor, who hath imposed upon us." And he will quit you of him.'

So they repaired to the king and told him what had passed, saying, 'O king of the age, we are perplexed concerning this merchant, whose generosity is excessive; for he doth thus and thus, and all he borrows, he gives away to the poor by handsful. Were he a man of nought, his heart would not suffer him to lavish gold thus; and were he a man of wealth, his good faith had been made manifest to us by the coming of his baggage; but we see none of his baggage, albeit he avoucheth that he hath a baggage-train and hath foregone it; and whenever we name this or that kind of stuff to him, he answereth, "I have great plenty of it." Now some time hath past, but there appeareth no sign of his baggage-train, and he oweth us threescore thousand dinars, all of which he hath given away in alms.' And they went on to praise him and extol his generosity.

Now this king was a very covetous man, more covetous than Ashab; and when he heard tell of Marouf's generosity and openhandedness, covetise got the better of him and he said to his vizier, 'Were not this merchant a man of immense wealth, he had not shown all this munificence. His baggage-train will assuredly come, whereupon these merchants will flock to him and he will lavish unto them wealth galore. Now I

have more right to this than they; wherefore I have a mind to make friends with him and profess love for him, so that, when his baggage comes, I shall get of him what the merchants would have had; and I will give him my daughter to wife and join his wealth to mine.' 'O king of the age,' answered the vizier, 'methinks he is nought but an impostor, and it is the impostor who ruins the house of the covetous.' 'O vizier,' rejoined the king, 'I will prove him and know if he be an impostor or a man of good faith and whether he be a nursling of fortune or not.' 'And how wilt thou prove him?' asked the vizier. Quoth the king, 'I will send for him and make much of him and give him a jewel which I have. If he know it and know its price, he is a man of worth and fortune; but, if he know it not, he is an impostor and an upstart and I will slay him after the foulest fashion.'

So he sent for Marouf, who came and saluted him. The king returned his salutation and seating him beside himself, said to him, 'Art thou the merchant Marouf?' 'Yes,' answered he. Quoth the king, 'The merchants pretend that thou owest them threescore thousand dinars. Is this true?' And Marouf said 'Yes.' 'Then why dost thou not give them their money?' asked the king. 'Let them wait till my baggage comes,' replied Marouf, 'and I will repay them two for one. If they wish for gold, they shall have gold; and if they wish for silver, they shall have silver; or if they prefer merchandise, I will give them merchandise. Moreover, him to whom I owe a thousand I will give two thousand in requital of that wherewith he hath veiled my face before the poor: for I have abundance.'

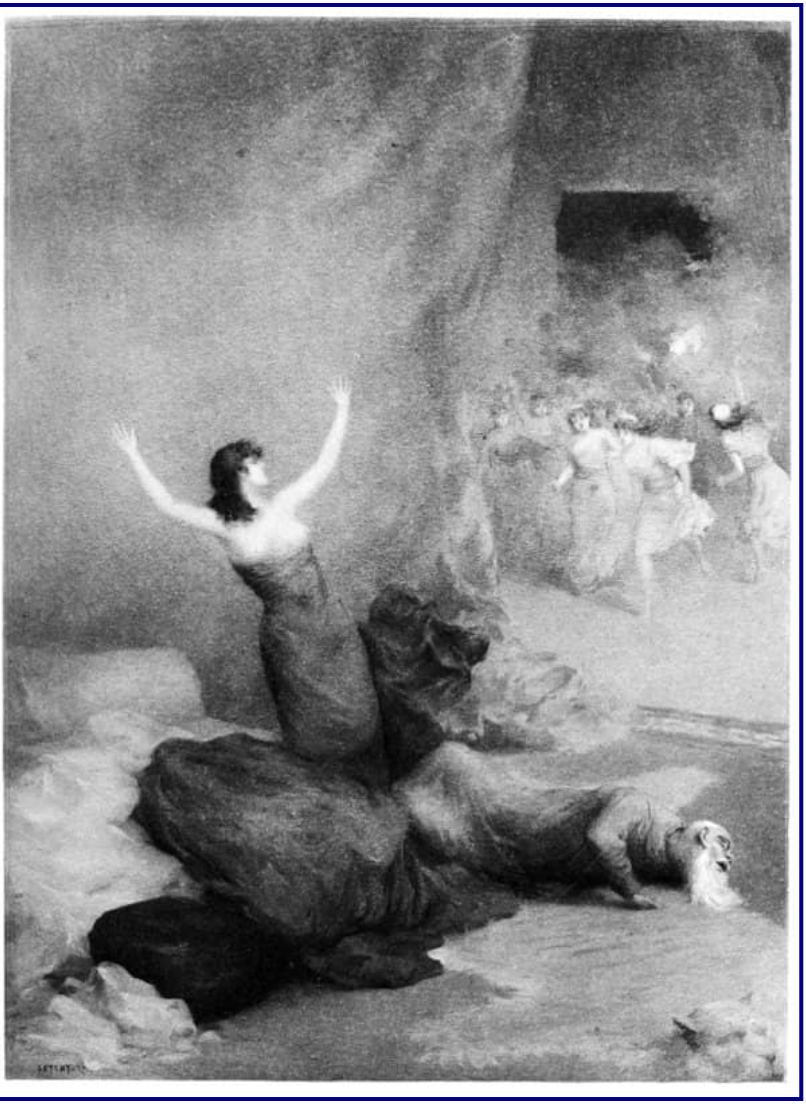
Then said the king, 'O merchant, take this and look what is its kind and value.' And he gave him a jewel the bigness of a hazel-nut, by which he set great store, for that he had bought it for a thousand dinars and had not another. Marouf took it and pressing it between his forefinger and thumb, broke it, for it was brittle and would not brook [pressure]. Quoth the king, 'Why hast thou broken the jewel?' And Marouf laughed and said, 'O king of the age, this is no jewel. This is but a piece of stone worth a thousand dinars; why dost thou style it a jewel? A jewel, save the mark, is such as is worth threescore and ten thousand dinars, and this is called but a piece of stone. A jewel that is not of the bigness of a walnut hath no value in my eyes and I take no account thereof. How comes it, then, that thou, who art a king stylest this a jewel, when it is but a piece of stone worth a thousand dinars? But ye are excusable, for that ye are poor and have not in your possession things of price.' 'O merchant,' said the king, 'hast thou jewels such as those whereof thou speakest?' And he answered, 'Abundance.' Whereupon covetise overcame the king and he said, 'Wilt thou give me real jewels?' 'When my baggage-train comes,' replied Marouf, 'I will give thee jewels galore; and all that thou canst desire I have in plenty and will give thee, without price.'

At this the king rejoiced and said to the merchants, 'Go your ways and have patience with him, till his baggage arrives, when do ye come to me and receive your monies from me.' So they went away and the king turned to his vizier and said to him, 'Caress the merchant Marouf and give and take with him in talk and bespeak him of my daughter, that he may marry her and so we gain these riches of his.' 'O king of the age,' answered the vizier, 'this man's fashion liketh me not and methinks he is an impostor and a liar: so do thou leave this whereof thou speakest, lest thou lose thy daughter for nought.'

Now this vizier had urged the king aforetime to give him his daughter to wife and he was willing to do so, but she consented not to marry him. So the king said to him, 'O traitor, thou desirest no good for me, for that aforetime thou soughtest my daughter in marriage, but she would none of thee; so now thou wouldst stop the way of her marriage and wouldst have her lie fallow, that thou mayst take her; but hear from me this word, once for all. Thou hast no concern with this matter. How can he be an impostor and a liar, seeing that he knew the price of the jewel, even that for which I bought it, and broke it, for that it pleased him not? He hath jewels galore, and when he goes in to my daughter and sees her to be fair, she will captivate his reason and he will love her and give her jewels and things of price: but, as for thee, thou wouldst forbid my daughter and myself these good things.'

The vizier was silent, for fear of the king's anger, and said to himself, 'Set the dogs on the oxen!' Then he betook himself to Marouf and said to him, 'His highness the king loveth thee and hath a daughter, a fair and lovesome lady, to whom he is minded to marry thee. What sayst thou?' 'I will well,' answered Marouf; 'but let him wait till my baggage comes, for the dowry of kings' daughters is large and their rank demandeth that they be not endowed save with a dowry befitting their station. At present I have no money with me till the coming of my baggage, for I have wealth galore and needs must I make her marriage-portion five thousand purses. Then I shall need a thousand purses to distribute amongst the poor and needy, on my wedding-night, and other thousand to give to those who walk in the bridal procession and yet other thousand wherewith to provide victual for the troops and others. Moreover, I shall want a hundred jewels to give to the princess on the wedding morning and other hundred to distribute among the slave-girls and eunuchs, for I must give each of them a jewel in honour of the bride; besides wherewithal to clothe a thousand naked poor folk, and alms too must be given. All this cannot be done till my baggage comes; but I have abundance, and once it is here, I shall make no account of all this expense.'

The vizier returned to the king and told him what Marouf said, whereupon quoth he, 'Since this is his wish, how canst thou style him an impostor and a liar?' 'And I cease not to say this,' replied the vizier. But the king chid him angrily and berated him, saying, 'As my head liveth, if thou leave not this talk, I will slay thee! Go back to him and fetch him to me and I will settle with him myself.' So the vizier returned to Marouf and said to him, 'Come and speak with the king.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Marouf and went in to the king, who said to him, 'Thou shalt not put me off with these excuses, for my treasury is full; so take the keys and spend all thou needest and give what thou wilt and clothe the poor and do thy desire and have no care for the girl and the waiting-women. When thy baggage comes, do what thou wilt with thy wife, by way of generosity, and we will have patience with thee for the marriage-portion till then, for there is no manner of difference betwixt me and thee.'



Then he sent for the Sheikh el Islam and bade him draw up the contract of marriage between his daughter and the merchant Marouf, and he did so; after which the king gave the signal for the commencement of the wedding festivities and commanded to decorate the city. The drums beat and the tables were spread with meats of all kinds and there came mimes and mountebanks and players. Marouf sat upon a throne in a gallery and the mimes and mountebanks and jugglers and dancing-men and posture-makers and acrobats came before him, whilst be called out to the treasurer and said to him, 'Bring gold and silver.' So he brought gold and silver and Marouf went round among the merrymakers and gave to each performer by the handful. Moreover, he gave alms to the poor and needy and clad the naked and it was a clamorous festival. The treasurer could not bring money fast enough from the treasury, and the vizier's heart was like to burst for rage; but he dared not say a word, whilst Ali marvelled at this waste of wealth and said to Marouf, 'God and the saints [visit this] upon thy head! Doth it not suffice thee to squander the merchants' money, but thou must squander that of the king to boot?' 'It is none of thy concern,' replied Marouf; 'when my baggage comes, I will requite the king manifold.' And he went on lavishing money and saying in himself, 'A burning plague! What will happen will happen and there is no escape from that which is decreed.'

The festivities ceased not for the space of forty days, and on the one-and-fortieth day, they made the bride's procession and all the amirs and troops walked before her. When they brought her in before Marouf, he fell to scattering gold on the people's heads, and they made her a magnificent procession, whilst Marouf expended in her honour vast sums of money. Then they brought him in to her and he sat down on the high divan; after which they let fall the curtains and shut the doors and withdrew, leaving him alone with his bride; whereupon he smote hand upon hand and sat awhile sorrowful and saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Till the princess said to him, 'O my lord, God preserve thee! What ails thee, that thou art troubled?' Quoth he, 'And how should I be other than troubled, seeing that thy father hath embarrassed me and done with me that which is like the burning of green corn?' 'And what hath my father done with thee?' asked she. 'Tell me.' And he answered, 'He hath brought me in to thee before the coming of my baggage, and I wanted at least a hundred jewels to distribute among thy women, to each a jewel, so she might rejoice therein and say, "My lord gave me a jewel on the night of his going in to my lady." This would I have done in honour of thy station and for the increase of thy dignity; and I have no need to stint myself in lavishing jewels, for I have great plenty of them.' 'Be not concerned for that,' rejoined she. 'Trouble not thyself about me, for I will have patience with thee till thy baggage comes, and as for my women, have no care for them. Rise, put off thy clothes and take thine ease; and when the baggage comes, we shall get the jewels and the rest.'

So he arose and putting off his clothes, sat down on the bed and sought dalliance and they fell to toying with each other. He laid his hand on her knee and she sat down in his lap and thrust her lip into his mouth, and that hour was such as maketh man forget father and mother. So he took her in his arms and strained her fast to his breast and sucked her lip, till the honey ran out into his mouth; and he laid his hand under her left armpit, whereupon his bowels and hers yearned unto coition. Then he clapped

her between the breasts and his hand slid down between her thighs and she girdled [him] with her legs, whereupon he made proof of the two members and crying out, 'O father of the chin-veils!' applied the priming and kindling the linstock, set it to the touch-hole and gave fire and breached the citadel of the four buttresses; so there befell the event concerning which there is no asking and she cried the cry that needs must be cried.

So he did away her maidenhead and that night was one not to be reckoned among lives for that which it comprised of the enjoyment of the fair, clipping and dallying and sucking [of lips] and cricketing till the morning, when he arose and entered the bath, whence, after donning a suit of royal apparel, he betook himself to the king's divan. All who were there rose to him and received him with honour and worship, giving him joy and calling down blessings upon him; and he sat down by the king's side and said, 'Where is the treasurer?' 'Here he is, before thee,' answered they, and he said to him, 'Bring dresses of honour for all the viziers and amirs and dignitaries and clothe them therewith.' The treasurer brought him all he sought and he sat giving to all who came to him and handselling every man, according to his station.

On this wise he abode twenty days, whilst no baggage appeared for him nor aught else, till the treasurer was straitened by him to utterance and going in to the king, as he sat alone with the vizier in Marouf's absence, kissed the earth before him and said, 'O king of the age, needs must I tell thee somewhat, lest thou blame me for that I acquainted thee not therewith. Know that the treasury is [well-nigh] exhausted; there is but a little money left in it and in ten days more we shall shut it upon emptiness.' Quoth the king to the vizier, 'O vizier, verily my son-in-law's baggage-train tarrieth long and there appeareth no news thereof.' The vizier laughed and said, 'God be gracious to thee, O king of the age! Verily, thou hast dealt but heedlessly with respect to this lying impostor. As thy head liveth, there is no baggage for him, no, nor a plague to rid us of him! Nay, he hath but imposed on thee without cease, so that he hath wasted thy treasures and married thy daughter for nought. How long therefore wilt thou be heedless of this liar?'

Then said the king, 'O vizier, how shall we do to learn the truth of his case?' 'O king of the age,' answered the vizier, 'none may come at a man's secret but his wife; so send for thy daughter and let her come behind the curtain, that I may question her of the truth of his estate, to the intent that she may make proof of him and acquaint us with his case.' Quoth the king, 'There is no harm in that; and as my head liveth, if it appear that he is a liar and an impostor, I will slay him by the foulest of deaths!' Then he carried the vizier into the sitting-chamber and sent for his daughter, who came behind the curtain, her husband being absent, and said, 'What wouldst thou, O my father?' Quoth he, 'Speak with the vizier.'

So she said, 'What is thy will, O vizier?' 'O my lady,' said he, 'thou must know that thy husband hath squandered thy father's substance and married thee without a dower; and he ceases not to promise us and fail of the fulfilment of his promises, nor comes there any tidings of his baggage; wherefore we would have thee inform us concerning him.' 'Indeed,' answered she, 'his words are many, and he still comes and promises me jewels and things of price and costly stuffs; but I see nothing.' 'O my lady,' said the vizier, 'canst thou this night give and take with him in talk and say to

him, "Tell me the truth and fear nothing from me, for thou art become my husband and I will not transgress against thee. So acquaint me with the truth of the matter and I will contrive thee a device whereby thou shalt be set at rest." And do thou play fast and loose with him and profess love to him and win him to confess and after tell us the true state of his case.' And she answered, 'O father mine, I know how I will make proof of him.'

Then she went away and after nightfall, her husband came in to her, according to his wont, whereupon she rose to him and took him under the armpit and wheedled him full featly, for women are never at a loss for wiles, whenas they would aught of men. She ceased not to caress him and beguile him with speech sweeter than honey till she stole his reason; and when she saw that he altogether inclined to her, she said to him, 'O my beloved, O solace of my eyes and fruit of my entrails, may God not bereave [me] of thee nor Time sunder us twain! Indeed, the love of thee hath taken up its abode in my entrails and my heart is consumed with the fire of passion; never will I forsake thee nor transgress against thee: but I would have thee tell me the truth, for that the devices of falsehood profit not, nor do they gain credit at all seasons. How long wilt thou impose upon my father and lie to him? Indeed, I fear lest thine affair be discovered to him, ere we can contrive a device thereunto, and he lay violent hands upon thee. So tell me the truth of the case and fear not aught of harm, for nought shall betide thee save that which shall rejoice thee. How much longer wilt thou pretend that thou art a merchant and a man of wealth and hast a baggage-train? This long while past thou sayest, "My baggage! my baggage!" but there appeareth no sign of thy baggage, and anxiety on this account is visible in thy face. So, if there be no truth in thy words, tell me and I will devise thee a means whereby, God willing, thou shalt come off safe.'

'O my lady,' answered he, 'I will tell thee the truth, and do thou whatever thou wilt.' 'Speak,' rejoined she, 'and look thou speak truly; for truth is the ark of safety, and beware of falsehood, for it dishonoureth him who speaketh it, and gifted of God is he who saith:

Truth-speaking on thee is incumbent, although
It bring thee to burn on the brazier of woe.
Seek God's favour: who angers the Lord and contents
The slave is the silliest of mortals, I trow.'

'Know, then, O my lady,' said he, 'that I am no merchant and have no baggage, no, nor a burning plague; nay, I was but a cobbler in my own country and had a wife called Fatimeh the Shrew, with whom there befell me this and that.' And he told her his story from beginning to end; whereat she laughed and said, 'Verily, thou art skilled in the practice of lying and imposture!' And he answered, saying, 'O my lady, may God the Most High preserve thee to veil faults and dispel troubles!'

'Know,' rejoined she, 'that thou imposedst upon my father and deceivedst him by thy much boasting and ostentation, so that of his covetousness he married me to thee. Then thou squanderedst his wealth and the vizier bears thee a grudge for this. How many a time hath he spoken against thee to my father, saying, "Indeed he is an impostor and a liar!" But my father hearkened not to his speech, for that he sought me aforetime in marriage and I consented not to be his wife. However, the time grew long

upon my father and he became straitened and said to me, "Make him confess." So I have made thee confess and that which was covered is discovered. Now my father purposes thee mischief, because of this; but thou art become my husband and I will never abandon thee nor transgress against thee. If I told my father what I have learnt from thee, he would be certified of thy falsehood and imposture and that thou imposest upon kings' daughters and squanderest their wealth: so would thine offence find no pardon with him and he would slay thee without recourse: wherefore it would be noised among the folk that I had married a man who was a liar and an impostor and this would dishonour me. Moreover, if he kill thee, most like he will require to marry me to another, and to that I will never consent, no, not though I die.

So rise now and don a slave's habit and take these fifty thousand dinars of my monies, and mount a swift charger and get thee to a land over which my father hath no dominion. Then do thou set up for a merchant and send me a letter by a courier, who shall bring it me privily, that I may know where thou art, so I may send thee all I can lay my hand on. Thus shall thy wealth wax great and if my father die, I will send for thee, and thou shalt return in honour and worship; and if we die, thou or I [and depart] to the mercy of God the Most High, the Resurrection will unite us. This, then, is the right counsel: and what while we both abide [alive and] well, I will not leave to send thee letters and monies. Arise, ere the day break upon thee and thou be confounded and perdition encompass thee.'

'O my lady,' said he, 'I beseech thee of thy favour to bid me farewell with thine embracement.' And she answered, 'I will well.' So he swived her and made the [complete] ablution; then, donning a slave's habit, he bade the grooms saddle him a thoroughbred horse. So they saddled him a courser and he mounted and taking leave of his wife, rode forth the city at the last of the night, whilst all who saw him deemed him one of the Sultan's slaves going abroad on an errand.

Next morning, the king and his vizier repaired to the sitting-chamber and sent for the princess, who came behind the curtain; and her father said to her, 'O my daughter, what sayst thou?' Quoth she, 'I say, may God blacken thy vizier's face, for that he would have blackened my face in my husband's eyes!' 'How so?' asked the king; and she said, 'He came in to me yesterday; but before I could name the matter to him, in came Ferej the eunuch, with a letter in his hand, and said, "Ten white slaves stand under the window and have given me this letter, saying, 'Kiss for us the hands of our lord the merchant Marouf and give him this letter, for we are of his servants with the baggage, and it is told us that he hath married the king's daughter, wherefore we are come to acquaint him with that which befell us by the way.'" So I took the letter and read as follows: "From the five hundred slaves to his highness our lord the merchant Marouf. To proceed. We give thee to know that, after thou quittedst us, the Arabs came out upon us and attacked us. They were two thousand horse and we five hundred servants and there befell a sore battle between us and them. They took from us of the baggage two hundred loads of stuffs and slew of us fifty men. Moreover, they hindered us from the road thirty days and this is the cause of our tarrying from thee."

When my husband heard this, "God disappoint them!" quoth he. "What ailed them to wage war with the Arabs for the sake of two hundred loads of merchandise? What are two hundred loads? It behoved them not to tarry on that account, for the

value of the two hundred loads is but some seven thousand dinars. But needs must I go to them and hasten them. As for that which the Arabs have taken, it will not be missed from the baggage, nor doth it concern me a jot, for I reckon it as if I had given them an alms thereof." Then he went down from me, laughing and taking no concern for the loss of his goods nor the slaughter of his slaves. As soon as he was gone, I looked out from the lattice and saw the ten slaves who had brought him the letter, as they were moons, each clad in a suit worth two thousand dinars, there is not with my father a slave to match one of them. He went forth with them to bring up his baggage and praised be God who hindered me from saying to him aught of that thou badest me, for he would have made mock of me and thee, and belike he would have looked on me with the eye of disparagement and hated me. But the fault is all with thy vizier, who speaketh against my husband words that beseem him not.' 'O my daughter,' replied the king, 'thy husband's wealth is indeed immense and he recks not of it; for, from the day he entered our city, he hath done nought but give alms to the poor. God willing, he will speedily return with the baggage, and great good shall betide us from him.' And he went on to appease her and chide the vizier, being duped by her device.

Meanwhile Marouf fared on into the open country, perplexed and knowing not to what land he should betake himself; and for the anguish of parting and the pangs of passion and love-longing, he lamented and recited the following verses:

Fortune hath played our union false and rent our loves in twain;
My heart's dissolved and all on fire for separation's pain.
Mine eyes with many a tear-drop rain for my belovéd's loss;
This, then, is severance; ah, when shall meeting be again?
O shining full-moon face, I'm he whose entrails for thy love
Thou leftest torn with waste desire, a love-distracted swain.
Would I had never met with thee, since, after the delight
Of thy possession, needs the cup of misery I must drain!
Marouf will never cease to be for Dunya's love distraught:
Still may she live, though he should die, of very passion slain!
O thou whose visage radiant is as the resplendent sun,
Succour his heart that's all consumed with love-longing in vain.
Will Fate, I wonder, e'er reknit our separated loves
And shall we ever of the days union and gladness gain?
Shall my love's mansion reunite us two in joy and
I The sapling of the sands once more in my embraces strain?
Bright visage of the moon at full, ne'er may thy countenance,
The sun of me thy lover, leave with charms to shine amain!
With passion and its cares content am I, since happiness
In love's the butt whereat ill-fate to shoot its shafts is fain.

Then he wept sore, for indeed the ways were blocked up in his sight and death seemed to him better than life, and he fared on, like a drunken man for excess of perplexity, and stayed not till noontide, when he came to a little town and saw a husbandman hard by, ploughing with a yoke of bulls. Now hunger was sore upon him; so he went up to the ploughman and said to him, 'Peace be on thee!' The peasant

returned his salutation and said to him, 'Welcome, O my lord! Art thou one of the Sultan's officers?' 'Yes,' answered Marouf; and the other said, 'Alight with me, that I may entertain thee.' Whereupon Marouf knew him to be a liberal man and said to him, 'O my brother, I see with thee nought wherewith thou mayst feed me: how is it, then, that thou invitest me?' 'O my lord,' answered the peasant, 'good is at hand. Alight here: the town is near at hand and I will go [thither] and fetch thee the noon-meal and fodder for thy horse.' 'Since the town is near at hand,' rejoined Marouf, 'I can go thither as quickly as thou and buy me what I have a mind to in the market and eat.' 'O my lord,' answered the peasant, 'the place is but a little village and there is no market there, neither selling nor buying. So, I conjure thee by Allah, alight here with me and heal my heart, and I will go thither and return to thee in haste.'

So he alighted and the peasant left him and went off to the village, to fetch him the noonday meal, whilst Marouf abode awaiting him. Presently he said to himself, 'I have diverted this poor man from his work; but I will arise and plough in his stead, till he come back, to make up for having hindered him from his work.' So he took the plough and starting the bulls, ploughed a little, till the share struck against something and the beasts stopped. He urged them on, but they could not move the plough; so he looked at the share and finding it caught in a ring of gold, cleared away the soil therefrom and saw that it was set amiddleward an alabaster flag, the bigness of the nether millstone. He strove at the stone till he pulled it from its place, when there appeared beneath it an underground stair. So he descended the stair and came to a place like a bath, with four raised recesses, the first full of gold, from floor to roof, the second full of emeralds and pearls and coral, the third of jacinths and rubies and turquoises and the fourth of diamonds and all manner other precious stones. At the upper end of the place stood a coffer of pure crystal, full of unique jewels, each the size of a walnut, and thereon lay a casket of gold, the bigness of a lemon.

When he saw this, he marvelled and rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said in himself, 'I wonder what is in this casket?' So he opened it and found therein a seal-ring of gold, whereon were graven names and talismans, as they were ant-tracks. He rubbed the ring and immediately a voice said, 'Here am I, at thy service, O my lord! Ask and it shall be given unto thee. Wilt thou build a town or lay waste a city or kill a king or dig a river or aught of the kind? Whatsoever thou seekest, it shall come to pass, by leave of the Omnipotent King, Creator of night and day.' 'O creature of my Lord,' asked Marouf, 'who and what art thou?' Quoth the other, 'I am the servant of the ring, abiding in the service of him who possesseth it. Whatsoever he seeketh, that accomplish I unto him, and I have no excuse in that he biddeth me do; for that I am Sultan over two-and-seventy tribes of the Jinn, each two-and-seventy thousand in number, every one of whom ruleth over a thousand Marids, each Marid over a thousand Afrits, each Afrit over a thousand Satans and each Satan over a thousand Jinn: and they are all under my commandment and may not gainsay me. As for me, I am enspelled to this seal-ring and may not gainsay him who possesseth it. Now, behold, thou hast gotten possession of it and I am become thy servant; so ask what thou wilt, for I hearken to thy word and obey thy commandment; and if thou have need of me at an, time, by land or by sea, rub the ring and thou wilt find me with thee. But beware of rubbing it twice in succession, or thou wilt consume me with the fire of

the names [graven thereon]; so wouldst thou lose me and after regret me. Now have I acquainted thee with my case and peace be on thee!'

'What is thy name?' asked Marouf, and the genie answered, 'Aboussaadat.' 'O Aboussaadat,' said Marouf, 'what is this place and who enchanted thee in this casket?' 'O my lord,' replied he, 'this is a treasure called the Treasure of Sheddad son of Aad, him who builded Irem of the Columns, the like whereof was not made in the lands. I was his servant in his lifetime and this is his seal-ring, which he laid up in his treasure; but it is thy lot.' Quoth Marouf, 'Canst thou transport that which is in the treasure to the surface of the earth?' 'Yes,' answered the genie. 'Nothing easier.' 'Then,' said Marouf, 'bring it forth and leave nothing.' So the genie signed with his hand to the ground, which clove asunder, and he descended and was absent a little while. Presently, there came forth young and graceful boys, with fair faces, bearing golden baskets full of gold, which they emptied out and going away, returned with more: nor did they cease to transport the gold and jewels, till, in a little, they said, 'There is nought left in the treasure.' Whereupon out came Aboussaadat and said to Marouf, 'O my lord, thou seest that we have brought forth all that was in the treasure.'

'Who are these beautiful boys?' asked Marouf, and the genie answered, 'They are my sons. This affair merited not that I should call together the Marids for it, wherefore my sons have done thine occasion and are honoured by serving thee. So ask what thou wilt beside this.' Quoth Marouf, 'Canst thou bring me mules and chests and fill the chests with the treasure and load them on the mules?' 'Nothing easier,' answered Aboussaadat and gave a great cry; whereupon his sons presented themselves before him, to the number of eight hundred, and he said to them, 'Let some of you take the form of mules and others of muleteers and servants and handsome white slaves, the like of the least of whom is not found with any of the kings.' So seven hundred of them changed themselves into pack mules and other hundred took the form of servants. Then Aboussaadat called upon his Marids, who presented themselves before him, and he commanded some of them to assume the semblance of horses saddled with saddles of gold set with jewels. [They did as he bade them], which when Marouf saw, he said, 'Where are the chests?' They brought them before him and he said, 'Pack the gold and the jewels, each kind by itself.' So they packed them and loaded three hundred mules with them.

Then said Marouf, 'O Aboussaadat, canst thou bring me some loads of costly stuffs?' Quoth the genie, 'Wilt thou have Egyptian stuffs or Syrian or Persian or Indian or Greek?' 'Bring me a hundred loads of each kind,' answered Marouf, 'on five hundred mules.' 'O my lord,' said Aboussaadat, 'grant me time that I may dispose my Marids for this and send a company of them to each country to fetch a hundred loads of its stuffs and then take the form of mules and return, carrying the stuffs.' 'What time dost thou want?' asked Marouf. 'The time of the blackness of the night,' answered Aboussaadat, 'and day shall not dawn ere thou have all thou seekest.' 'I grant thee this time,' said Marouf and bade them pitch him a tent. So they pitched him a tent and he sat down therein and they brought him a table of food. Then said Aboussaadat to him, 'O my lord, abide thou in this tent and these my sons shall guard thee: so fear thou nothing; for I go to assemble my Marids and send them to do thy desire.' So saying, he

departed, leaving Marouf seated in the tent, with the table before him and the genie's sons in attendance upon him, in the guise of slaves and servants.

Presently up came the husbandman, with a great platter of lentils and a nose-bag full of barley, and seeing the tent pitched and the slaves standing, with their hands upon their breasts, thought that the Sultan was come and had halted there. So he stood confounded and said in himself, 'Would I had killed a pair of chickens and fried them with butter for the Sultan!' And he would have turned back to kill the chickens, to regale the Sultan withal; but Marouf saw him and cried out to him and said to the slaves, 'Bring him hither.' So they brought him and his load before Marouf, who said to him, 'What is this?' 'This is thy noon-meal and thy horse's fodder,' replied the peasant. 'Excuse me, for I thought not that the Sultan would come hither; and had I known this, I would have killed a pair of chickens and entertained him handsomely.' Quoth Marouf, 'The Sultan is not come. I am his son-in-law and I was vexed with him. However, he hath sent his officers to make his peace with me, and now I am minded to return to the city. But thou hast made me this guest-meal, without knowing me, and I accept it from thee, lentils though it be, and will not eat save of thy cheer.'

So he bade him set the platter midmost the table and ate of it till he had enough, whilst the husbandman filled his belly with those rich meats. Then Marouf washed his hands and gave the servants leave to eat. So they fell upon the remains of the meal and ate: and when the platter was empty, he filled it with gold and gave it to the peasant, saying, 'Carry this to thy dwelling and come to me in the city, and I will entreat thee with honour.' So he took the platter full of gold and returned to the village, driving the bulls before him and deeming himself kin to the king. Meanwhile, they brought Marouf girls of the brides of the treasure, who smote on instruments of music and danced before him, and he passed the night in joyance and delight, a night not to be reckoned among lives.

Hardly had the day dawned when there arose a great cloud of dust, which, presently lifting, discovered seven hundred mules laden with stuffs and attended by muleteers and baggage-tenders and linkmen. With them came Aboussaadat, riding on a mule, in the guise of a caravan-leader, and before him was a travelling-litter, with four volutes of glittering red gold, set with jewels. When Aboussaadat came up to the tent, he dismounted and kissing the earth, said to Marouf, 'O my lord, thine occasion hath been accomplished in full, and in the litter is a treasure-suit that hath not its match among kings' raiment: so do thou don it and mount the litter and command us what thou wilt.' 'O Aboussaadat,' said Marouf, 'I wish thee to go to the city of Ikhtiyan el Khuten and carry a letter, which I will write thee, to my father-in-law the king; and go thou not in to him but in the guise of a mortal courier.' And he answered, 'I hear and obey.'

So Marouf wrote the letter and sealed it and Aboussaadat took it and set out to deliver it to the king. When he arrived, he found the king saying, 'O vizier, indeed my heart is concerned for my son-in-law and I fear lest the Arabs slay him. Would he had told me whither he was bound, that I might have followed him with the troops!' 'May God have mercy on this thy heedlessness!' answered the vizier. 'As thy head liveth, the fellow saw that we were awake to him and feared exposure and fled, for he is nothing but a lying impostor!' At this moment in came the courier and kissing the earth before

the king, wished him abiding glory and prosperity and length of life. Quoth the king, 'Who art thou and what is thy business?' 'I am a courier,' answered the genie, 'whom thy son-in-law sendeth to thee with a letter, and he is come with the baggage.' So he took the letter and read therein these words, 'Peace to the utterest upon our father-in-law the glorious king! Know that I am at hand with the baggage-train: so come thou forth to meet me with the troops.'

Quoth the king, 'God blacken thy face, O vizier! How often wilt thou asperse my son-in-law's honour and call him a liar and an impostor? Behold, he is come with the baggage-train and thou art but a traitor.' The vizier hung his head in shame and confusion and said, 'O king of the age, I said this but because of the long delay of the baggage and because I feared the loss of the wealth he hath spent.' 'O traitor,' answered the king, 'what matter my riches, now that his baggage is come? For he will give me great plenty in their stead.' Then he bade decorate the city and going in to his daughter, said to her, 'Good news for thee! Thy husband will be here anon with his baggage; for he hath sent me a letter to that effect and I am now going forth to meet him.' The princess marvelled at this and said to herself, 'This is a strange thing! Was he laughing at me and making mock of me, or had he a mind to try me, when he told me that he was a poor man? But praised be God for that I failed not of my duty to him!'

Meanwhile, Ali the Cairene saw the decoration of the city and asked the cause thereof, when they said to him, 'The baggage-train of the merchant Marouf, the king's son-in-law, is come.' 'God is most great!' cried he. What a calamity is this man. He came to me, fleeing from his wife, and he was a poor man. Whence then should he get a baggage-train? But belike this is a device that the king's daughter hath contrived him, for fear of disgrace, and kings can do anything. May God the Most High screen him and not expose him!' And all the merchants rejoiced and were glad for that they would get their money. Then the king assembled his troops and rode forth, whilst Aboussaadat returned to Marouf and acquainted him with the accomplishment of his errand. Quoth Marouf, 'Bind on the loads.' So they bound them on and he mounted the litter and donning the treasure-suit, became a thousand times greater and more majestic than the king.

Then he set forward; but, when he had gone half-way, the king met him with the troops, and seeing him riding in the litter and clad in the dress aforesaid, threw himself upon him and saluted him and greeted him with the greeting of peace. Moreover, all the grandees of the realm saluted him and it was made manifest that he had spoken the truth and that there was no falsehood in him. Then he entered the city in such state as would have caused the gall-bladder of the lion to burst and the merchants pressed up to him and kissed his hands, whilst Ali said to him, 'Thou hast played off this trick and it has prospered to thy hand, O Sheikh of impostors! But thou deservest it, and may God the Most High increase thee of His bounty!'

Marouf laughed and entering the palace, sat down on the throne and said, 'Carry the loads of gold into the treasury of my uncle the king and bring me the bales of stuffs.' So they brought him the bales and opened them before him, bale after bale, till they had opened the seven hundred loads; whereupon he chose out the best and said, 'Carry these to the princess, that she may distribute them among her women; and carry her also this coffer of jewels, that she may distribute them among her women and

eunuchs.' Then he proceeded to give the merchants to whom he was indebted stuffs in payment for their debts, giving him, whose due was a thousand, stuffs worth two thousand or more; after which he fell to distributing to the poor and needy, whilst the king looked on and could not hinder him; nor did he leave giving till he had made an end of the seven hundred loads, when he turned to the troops and proceeded to distribute amongst them emeralds and rubies and pearls and coral and other jewels by handsful, without count, till the king said to him, 'Enough of this giving, O my son! There is but little left of the baggage.' Quoth Marouf, 'I have abundance;' and indeed, his good faith was become manifest and none could belie him more; and he had come to reck not of giving, for that the servant of the ring brought him whatsoever he sought.

Presently, the treasurer came in to the king and said, 'O king of the age, the treasury is full and will not hold the rest of the loads. Where shall we lay that which is left of the gold and jewels?' And he assigned to him another place. As for the princess, when she saw this, her joy redoubled and she marvelled and said in herself, 'How came he by all this wealth?' In like manner the merchants rejoiced in that which he had given them and blessed him; whilst Ali wondered and said in himself, 'How hath he lied and swindled, that he hath gotten him all these treasures? But how excellent is the saying of him who saith:

Whenas the King of Kings presents,
Forbear to question why or whence.
God gives to whom He will; so keep
Within the bounds of reverence.'

The king also marvelled passing measure at that which he saw of Marouf's generosity and openhandedness in the lavishment of wealth. Then he went in to his wife, who met him, smiling and joyful, and kissed his hand, saying, 'Didst thou mock me or hadst thou a mind to try me with thy saying, "I am a poor man and a fugitive from my wife?" Praised be God for that I failed not of my duty to thee! For thou art my beloved and there is none dearer to me than thou, whether thou be rich or poor. But I would have thee tell me what thou soughtest by these words.' 'I wished to try thee,' answered Marouf, 'and see whether thy love were sincere or for the sake of wealth and the lust of worldly good. But now it is become manifest to me that thy love is sincere, so welcome to thee! I know thy worth.'

Then he went apart into a place by himself and rubbed the ring, whereupon Aboussaadat presented himself and said to him, 'Here am I, at thy service! Ask what thou wilt.' Quoth Marouf, 'I want a treasure-suit and treasure-trinkets for my wife, including a necklace of forty unique jewels.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the genie and brought him what he sought, whereupon Marouf dismissed him and carrying the dress and ornaments in to his wife, laid them before her and said, 'Take these and put them on and welcome!' When she saw this, her reason fled for joy, and she found among the ornaments a pair of anklets of gold, set with jewels, of the handiwork of the magicians, and bracelets and earrings and a girdle such as no money could buy. So she donned the dress and ornaments and said to Marouf, 'O my lord, I will treasure these up for state occasions and festivals.' But he answered, 'Wear them always, for I have others in

plenty.' And when she put them on and her women beheld her, they rejoiced and kissed his hands.

Then he left them and going apart by himself, rubbed the ring, whereupon the genie appeared and he said to him, 'Bring me a hundred suits of apparel, with their ornaments of gold.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Aboussaadat and brought him the hundred suits, each with its ornaments within it. Marouf took them and called the slave-girls, who came to him, and he gave them each a suit. They donned them and became like unto the black-eyed girls of Paradise, whilst the princess shone amongst them as the moon among the stars. One of them told the king of this and he came in to his daughter and saw her and her women [thus splendidly arrayed and] dazzling all who beheld them; whereat he wondered exceedingly.

Then he went out and calling his vizier, said to him, 'O vizier, such and such things have happened; what sayst thou [now] of this affair?' 'O king of the age,' answered he, 'this is no merchant's fashion; for a merchant keepeth a piece of linen by him for years and selleth it not but at a profit. How should a merchant have such generosity as this and whence should he get the like of these riches and jewels, whereof but a small matter is found with kings? So how should loads thereof be found with merchants? Needs must there be a cause for this; but, if thou wilt hearken to me, I will make the truth of the case manifest to thee.' 'O vizier,' answered the king, 'I will do thy bidding.' 'Then,' rejoined the vizier, 'do thou foregather with thy son-in-law and make a show of love to him and talk with him and say, "O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, thou and I and the vizier, no more, to a garden, that we may take our pleasure there." When we come to the garden, we will set on the table of wine, and I will ply him therewith and make him drink, will he, nill he; for, when he shall have drunken, he will lose his reason and his judgment will forsake him. Then will we question him of the truth of his case and he will discover to us his secrets, for wine is a traitor and gifted of God is he who saith:

When we had drunken of the wine awhile and it crept near
The stead of secrets, "Hold," quoth I thereunto, of my fear
Lest its disordering influence should overcome my wit
And to my boon-companions so my secrets should appear.

When he hath told us the truth, we shall know his case and may do with him as we will; for I fear for thee the issues of this his now fashion, for it may be he will covet the kingship and win over the troops by generosity and the lavishment of money and so depose thee and take the kingdom from thee.' 'True,' answered the king, and they passed the night on this agreement.

On the morrow the king went forth and sat in the guest-chamber, when behold the grooms and serving-men came in to him in dismay. Quoth he, 'What hath befallen you?' And they answered, 'O king of the age, the grooms curried the horses and foddered them and the mules that brought the baggage; but, when we arose in the morning, we found that [thy son-in-law's] servants had stolen the horses and mules [and made off with them]. We searched the stables, but found neither horse nor mule; so we entered the servants' lodging and saw none therein, nor know we how they fled.' The king marvelled at this, knowing not that the mules and horses and servants were

all Afrits, the subjects of the servant of the spell, and said to the grooms, 'O accursed ones, how could a thousand beasts and five hundred slaves and servants, to boot, flee, without your knowledge?' 'We know not how it happened,' answered they; and he said, 'Go, and when your lord comes forth of the harem, tell him the case.'

So they went out from before the king and abode bewildered, till Marouf came out and seeing them troubled, said to them, 'What is to do?' They told him what had happened and he said, 'What is their worth that ye should be concerned for them? Go your ways.' And he sat laughing and was neither angry nor troubled concerning the matter; whereupon the king looked in the vizier's face and said to him, 'What manner of man is this, with whom wealth is of no account? Needs must there be a reason for this.' Then they talked with him awhile and the king said to him, 'O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, thou and I and the vizier, to a garden, where we may divert ourselves.' 'I will well,' said Marouf. So they went forth to a garden, wherein were two kinds of every sort of fruit, and it was full of running waters and tall trees and carolling birds. There they entered a pavilion, whose sight did away sorrow from the heart, and sat talking, whilst the vizier entertained them with rare stories and merry jests and mirth-provoking sayings and Marouf listened, till the time of the noon-meal came, when they set on a tray of meats and a pitcher of wine.

When they had eaten and washed their hands, the vizier filled the cup and gave it to the king, who drank it off; then he filled a second and gave it to Marouf, saying, 'Take the cup of the drink to which the reason bows its neck in reverence.' 'What is this, O vizier?' asked Marouf. Quoth he, 'This is the hoary virgin and the old maid long kept in the house, the giver of joy to hearts, whereof saith the poet:

The feet of the sturdy renegades went trampling it of yore,
And so of the Arabs' heads its wreak it taketh evermore.
Let one of the sons of the infidels, a moon o' the dark, whose looks
To disobedience still invite, the grape-juice to thee pour.

And gifted of God is he who saith:

'Tis as if wine and he, indeed, who doth the goblet bear,
When to the boon-companions all he doth display it, were
The dancing morning sun, whose face the full moon of the dark
Had handselled with the Gemini, that shining starry pair.
So clear and eke so subtle is its essence that, as 'twere
The life itself, through every vein and member it doth fare.

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:

The moon of the full of beauty lay the night in my embrace
And the sun in the sphere of the cups was not eclipsed a moment's space;
And still I gazed on the fire, whereto the Magians them prostrate,
As from the flagon it did prostrate itself before my face.

And that of another:

Through all the joints it runneth, as in one, Who hath been sick, the tides of healing run.

And yet another:

I marvel at those who first pressed it and tried, How they left us the water of life and yet died!

And yet goodlier is the saying of Abou Nuwas:

Have done and leave to blame me, for blame but angers me,
And give me that, for med'cine, that caused my malady;
A yellow one, whose precincts nor grief nor sorrow haunt,
And if a stone but touch her, 'tis straightway moved to glee.
She cometh in her flagon, midmost the darksome night,
And by her light the dwelling illumined straight we see.
From a kaze-owner take it, attired as if she had
A yard; two lovers, wencher and sodomite, hath she; –
She goeth round midst younglings, to whom Fate bows, submiss,
And none with aught betideth, save that he hath in gree;
And say to who pretendeth to excellence in love,
"One thing, thou'st learnt, but many are still concealed from thee."

But best of all is the saying of Ibn El Mutezz :

God water the tree-shaded island and the convent Abdoun that hight
With a constant dropping of rain-clouds, that cease not, day or night!
How oft for the draught of the morning awakened me there of yore,
In the forefront of dawn, when the swallow had not yet taken to flight,
The voice of the monks of the convent, indeed, and the sound of their chant,
As they crooned o'er their prayers in the gloaming, with their tunics of black bedight!
How many a loveling among them, eye-painted with languor, abode,
Whose eyelids on eyes shut that glittered with lustrous black and white,
Who came forth to visit me, shrouding himself in the cloak of the night,
And hastened his steps, as he wended, for caution and fear and affright!
Then rose I and laid in his pathway my cheek, as a carpet it were,
For abjection, and trailed o'er my traces my skirts, to efface them from sight.
But, lo, the new moon rose and shone, like a nailparing cleft from the nail,
And all but discovered our loves with the gleam of her meddlesome light;
And then there betideth between us what I'll not discover, i' faith;
So question no more of the matter and deem not of ill or upright.

And gifted of God is he who saith:

The richest of mortals am I; In gladness rejoiceth my soul.
Liquid gold without stint I possess, And I measure it out by the bowl.

And how goodly is the saying of the poet;

By Allah, there's no alchemy, except in this it be,
And all is false that they avouch of other alchemy!
Upon a hundredweight of woe a carat pour of wine
And straight it is transformed and changed to gladness and to glee.

And that of another:

The glasses, when we'er empty, are heavy; but forthright
When with pure wine we fill them, unblent, they grow as light
As air and eke for transport they're like to fly away;
And bodies in like manner are lightened by the spright.

And yet another:

Wine and the cup to worship have claims more than can be said,
Nor is it right in us to leave their claims unhonoured.
Whenas I die, beside a vine I prithee bury me,
So of its veins I still may drink, e'en after I am dead;
Yea, in the desert waterless, I charge you, lay me not,
For sore after my death to taste no more of wine I dread.'

And he ceased not to incite him to drink, naming to him such of the virtues of wine as he thought well and repeating to him what occurred to him of verses and pleasant anecdotes on the subject, till Marouf addressed himself to sucking the lips of the cup and cared no longer for aught else. The vizier ceased not to fill for him and he to drink and enjoy himself and make merry, till he lost his reason and could not distinguish right from wrong. When the vizier saw that drunkenness had attained in him to utterance and overpassed the limit, he said to him, 'By Allah, O merchant Marouf, it wonders me whence thou gottest these jewels whose like the kings of the Chosroës possess not! In all our lives never saw we a merchant possessed of riches like unto shine or more generous than thou, for thy fashion is the fashion of kings and not the fashion of merchants. So, God on thee, do thou acquaint me with this, that I may know thy rank and condition.' And he went on to ply him with questions and cajole him, till Marouf, being bereft of reason, said to him, 'I am neither merchant nor king,' and told him his whole story from first to last.

Then said the vizier, 'I conjure thee by Allah, O my lord Marouf, show us the ring, that we may see its fashion.' So, in his drunkenness, he pulled off the ring and said, 'Take it and look upon it.' The vizier took it and turning it over, said, 'If I rub it, will the genie appear?' 'Yes,' replied Marouf. 'Rub it and he will appear to thee, and do thou divert thyself with the sight of him.' So the vizier rubbed the ring and immediately the genie appeared and said, 'Here am I, at thy service, O my lord I Ask and it shall be given to thee. Wilt thou lay waste a town or build a city or slay a king? Whatsoever thou seekest, I will do for thee, without fail.' The vizier pointed to Marouf and said, 'Take up yonder knave and cast him down in the most desolate of desert lands, where he shall find nothing to eat nor drink, so he may die of hunger and perish miserably, and none know of him.'

So the genie snatched him up and flew up with him betwixt heaven and earth, which when Marouf saw, he gave himself up for lost and wept and said, 'O Aboussaadat, whither goest thou with me?' 'Dolt that thou art,' replied the genie, 'I go to cast thee down in the desert quarter of the world. Shall one have the like of this talisman and give it to the folk to look upon? Verily, thou deservest that which hath befallen thee; and but that I fear God, I would let thee fall from a height of a thousand

fathoms, nor shouldst thou reach the earth, till the winds had torn thee in pieces.' Marouf was silent and did not again bespeak him till he reached the desert quarter of the world and casting him down there, went away and left him in that horrible place.

Meanwhile, the vizier said to the king, 'How deemest thou now? Did I not tell thee that this fellow was a liar and an impostor, but thou wouldst not credit me?' 'Thou wast in the right, O my vizier,' replied the king. 'God grant thee health! But give me the ring, that I may look upon it.' The vizier looked at him angrily and spat in his face, saying, 'O dullard, how shall I give it to thee and abide thy servant, after I am become thy master? But I will spare thee no more.' Then he rubbed the ring and said to the genie, 'Take up this churl and cast him down by his son-in-law the impostor.' So the genie took him up and flew off with him, whereupon quoth the king to him, 'O creature of my Lord, what is my crime?' 'I know not,' answered Aboussaadat; 'but my lord hath commanded me unto this and I cannot disobey him who possesseth the enchanted ring.' Then he flew on with him, till he came to the desert quarter and casting him down whereas he had cast Marouf, returned and left him. The king, hearing Marouf weeping, went up to him and acquainted him with his case; and they sat weeping over that which had befallen them and found neither meat nor drink.

As for the vizier, he went forth from the garden and summoning all the troops, held a court and told them what he had done with the king and Marouf and acquainted them with the affair of the ring, adding, 'Except ye make me Sultan over you, I will bid the servant of the ring take you all up and cast you down in the desert quarter of the world, where you shall die of hunger and thirst.' 'Do us no hurt,' answered they; 'for we accept thee to Sultan over us and will not any wise gainsay thy commandment.' So they agreed, in their own despite, to his being Sultan over them, and he bestowed on them robes of honour, seeking all he had a mind to of Aboussaadat, who brought it to him forthright. Then he sat down on the throne and the troops made submission to him; and he sent to the king's daughter, saying, 'Make thee ready, for I mean to come in to thee this night, because I long for thee.'

When she heard this, she wept, for [the loss of] her husband and father was grievous to her, and sent to him, saying, 'Have patience with me till my days of widowhood are accomplished: then draw up thy contract of marriage with me and go in to me according to law.' But he sent back to say to her, 'I know neither days of widowhood nor delay, and I need not a contract nor know I lawful from unlawful; but needs must I go in to thee this night.' So she answered him, saying, 'So be it, then, and welcome to thee!' But this was a trick on her part. When the answer reached the vizier, he rejoiced and his heart was gladdened, for that he was passionately enamoured of her. So he bade set food before all the folk. saying, 'Eat; this is my bride-feast; for I purpose to go in to the princes this night.' Quoth the Skeikh el Islam, 'It is not lawful for thee to go in to her till her days of widowhood be accomplished and thou have drawn up thy contract of marriage with her.' But he answered, 'I know neither days of widowhood nor delay; so multiply not words on me.' So the Sheikh was silent, fearing his mischief, and said to the troops, 'Verily, this man is infidel and hath neither faith nor religion.'

As soon as it was night, he went in to her and found her clad in her richest raiment and decked with her goodliest ornaments. When she saw him, she came to

meet him, laughing, and said, '[This is] a blessed night! But, hadst thou slain my father and my husband, it had been better to my mind.' And he said, 'Needs must I slay them.' Then she made him sit down and began to jest with him and make a show of love to him, caressing him and smiling in his face, whereupon his reason fled; but she did but cajole him on this wise that she might get possession of the ring and change his joy into calamity on his bead; nor did she deal thus with him but after the counsel of him who saith:

Indeed, I have won by my sleight
What swords had not compassed nor might,
And with spoil I return, whose plucked fruits
Are sweet to the taste and the sight.

When he saw her caress him and smile upon him, desire stirred in him and he besought her of dalliance; but, when he drew near her, she started back from him, saying' 'O my lord, seest thou not the man looking at us? I conjure thee by Allah, screen me from his eyes! How canst thou have to do with me what while he looketh on us?' When he heard this, he was angry and said, 'Where is the man?' 'There he is, in the beazel of the ring,' answered she, 'putting out his head and looking at us.' He thought that the genie was looking at them and said laughing, 'Fear not; this is the servant of the ring, and he is at my commandment.' Quoth she, 'I am afraid of Afrits; pull it off and throw it afar from me.' So he pulled it off and laying it on the cushion, drew near to her, but she dealt him a kick in the stomach and he fell over on his back, senseless: whereupon she cried out to her attendants, who came to her in haste, and said to them, 'Lay hold on him.'

So forty slave-girls seized him, whilst she snatched up the ring from the cushion and rubbed it; whereupon Aboussaadat presented himself, saying, 'Here am I, at thy service, O my mistress.' 'Take up yonder infidel,' said she, 'and clap him in prison and shackle him heavily.' So he took him and laying him in strait prison, returned and told her. Quoth she, 'Whither wentest thou with my father and my husband?' And he answered, ' I cast them down in the desert quarter of the world.' Then said she, 'I command thee to fetch them to me forthwith.' 'I hear and obey,' replied he and taking flight at once, stayed not till he reached the desert quarter, where he lighted down upon them and found them sitting weeping and complaining to each other. Quoth he, 'Fear not, for relief is come to you.' And he told them what the vizier had done, adding, 'Indeed I imprisoned him with my own hand, in obedience to her commandment, and she hath bidden me carry you back.' And they rejoiced in his news. Then he took them up and flew back with them; nor was it more than an hour before he brought them in to the princess, who rose and saluted them. Then she made them sit down and brought them food and sweetmeats, and they passed the rest of the night [with her].

On the morrow, she clad them in rich apparel and said to the king, 'O my father, sit thou on thy throne and be king as before and make my husband thy Vizier of the Right and acquaint thy troops with that which hath happened. Then send for the vizier out of prison and slay him and after burn him, for that he is an infidel and would have gone in to me in the way of lewdness, without marriage-rites, and he hath testified against himself that he is an infidel and believeth in no religion. And do thou tender

thy son-in law, whom thou makest thy Vizier of the Right.' 'I hear and obey, O my daughter,' answered he. 'But give me the ring or give it to thy husband.' Quoth she, 'It behoveth not that either thou or he have it. I will keep it myself, and belike I shall be more careful of it than you. Whatsoever ye want, seek it of me and I will demand it for you of the servant of the ring. So fear no harm so long as I live, and after my death, do as ye will with the ring.' This is well seen, O my daughter,' rejoined the king and taking Marouf, went forth to the divan.

Now the troops had passed the night in sore concern for the princess and that which the vizier had done with her, in going in to her after the way of lewdness, without rite of marriage, and for his ill-usage of the king and Marouf, and they feared lest the law of Islam be dishonoured, because it was manifest to them that he was an infidel. So they assembled in the divan and fell to reproaching the Sheikh el Islam, saying, 'Why didst thou not forbid him from going in to the princess in the way of lewdness?' 'O folk,' answered he, 'the man is an infidel and hath gotten possession of the ring and you and I can avail nothing against him. But God the Most High will requite him his deed, and be ye silent, lest he slay you.' As they were thus engaged, in came the king and Marouf, and when the troops saw the former, they rejoiced in his return and rising to their feet, kissed the earth before him. He sat down on his throne and told them what had passed, whereupon their chagrin ceased from them.

Then he commanded to decorate the city and sent to fetch the vizier from the prison. [So they brought him], and as he passed by the troops, they cursed him and reviled him and upbraided him, till he came to the king, who commanded to put him to the vilest of deaths. So they slew him and after burned his body, and he went to Hell, after the sorriest of fashions; and right well quoth one of him:

God to the tomb wherein his bones are laid no mercy show And Munker and Nekir therein be present evermo'!

The king made Marouf his Vizier of the Right and the times were pleasant to them and their joys untroubled. They abode thus five years, till, in the sixth year, the king died and the princess made Marouf Sultan in her father's stead, but gave him not the ring. During this time she had conceived by him and borne him a boy of surpassing loveliness, excelling in beauty and perfection, who was reared in the laps of the nurses till he reached the age of five, when his mother fell ill of a mortal sickness and calling her husband to her, said to him, 'I am ill.' Quoth he, 'May God preserve thee, O beloved of my heart!' 'Belike,' said she, 'I shall die and thou needest not that I commend thy son to thy care: wherefore I charge thee but be careful of the ring, for thine own and the boy's sake.' And he answered, 'No harm shall befall him whom God preserveth!' Then she pulled off the ring and gave it to him, and on the morrow she was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High, whilst Marouf abode in possession of the kingship and applied himself to the governance.

One day, he shook the handkerchief and [dismissed the divan, whereupon] the troops withdrew to their places and he betook himself to the sitting-chamber, where he sat till the day departed and the night came with the darkness Then came in to him his boon-companions of the notables [of the kingdom], according to their wont,, and sat with him, by way of solace and diversion, till midnight, when they craved leave to

withdraw. He gave them leave and they retired to their houses; after which there came in to him a slave-girl affected to the service of his bed, who spread him the mattress and doing off his apparel, clad him in his sleeping-gown Then he lay down and she kneaded his feet, till he tell asleep; whereupon she withdrew to her own chamber and slept.

Presently, he felt something beside him in the bed and starting up in alarm, said, 'I seek refuge with God from Satan the Stoned!' Then he opened his eyes and seeing by his side a woman foul of favour, said to her, 'Who art thou?' 'Fear not,' answered she. 'I am thy wife Fatimeh.' Whereupon he looked in her face and knew her by her misshapen form and the length of her dog teeth: so he said to her, 'Whence camest thou in to me and who brought thee to this country?' Quoth she, 'In what country art thou at this present?' And he said, 'In the city of Ikhtiyan el Khuten. But thou, when didst thou leave Cairo?' 'But now,' answered she. 'How can that be?' asked he. 'Know,' said she 'that, when I fell out with thee and Satan prompted me to do thee a mischief, so that I complained of thee to the magistrates, they sought for thee and the Cadis enquired of thee, but found thee not. When two days were past, repentance get hold upon me and I knew that the fault was with me; but repentance availed me not, and I abode awhile weeping for thy loss, till what was in my hand failed and needs must I beg my bread. So I fell to begging of all, rich and poor, and since thou leftest me, I have eaten of the humiliation of beggary and have been in the sorriest of plights. Every night I sat weeping for thy loss and for that which I suffered, since thy departure, of contempt and humiliation and abjection and misery.'

And she went on to tell him what had befallen her, whilst he stared at her in amazement, till she said, 'Yesterday, I went about all day, begging, but none gave me aught; and as often as I accosted any one and begged of him a morsel of bread, he reviled me and gave me nought. When night came, I went to bed supperless, and hunger consumed me and sore on me was that which I suffered, and I sat weeping. Presently, one appeared to me and said, "O woman, why weepest thou?" Quoth I, "I had a husband who used to provide for me and fulfil my wishes; but he is lost to me and I know not whither he is gone and have been in sore straits since he left me." "What is thy husband's name?" asked he, and I answered, "His name is Marouf." "I know him," said he. "Know that thy husband is now Sultan in a certain city, and if thou wilt, I will carry thee to him." Quoth I, "I conjure thee of thy bounty to bring me to him!" So he took me up and flew with me between heaven and earth, till he brought me to this pavilion and said to me, "Enter yonder chamber, and thou wilt see thy husband asleep on the couch." So I entered and found thee in this estate or lordship. Indeed, I thought not that thou wouldst forsake me, who am thy mate, and praised be God who hath united me with thee!'

Quoth Marouf, 'Did I forsake thee or thou me? Thou complainedst of me from Cadi to Cadi and endedst by denouncing me to the Supreme Court and bringing down on me the men of violence from the citadel: so I fled in my own despite.' And he went on to tell her all that had befallen him and how he was become Sultan and had married the king's daughter and how the latter had died, leaving him a son, who was then seven years old. Quoth she, That which happened was fore-ordained of God the

Most High; but I repent me and cast myself on thy generosity, beseeching thee not to forsake me, but suffer me eat bread with thee by way of alms.'

And she ceased not to humble herself to him and supplicate him till his heart relented towards her and he said to her, 'Repent from mischief and abide with me, and nought shall betide thee save what shall pleasure thee: but, if thou do any wickedness, I will slay thee and fear no on. And think not that thou canst complain of me to the Supreme Court and that the men of violence will come down on me from the citadel; for I am become Sultan and the folk fear me: but I fear none save God the Most High, for that I have an enchanted ring, which when I rub, the servant of the ring appeareth to me His name is Aboussaadat, and whatsoever I demand of him he bringeth to me. So, if thou desire to return to thine own country, I will give thee what shall suffice thee all thy life and will send thee thither speedily; but, if thou desire to abide with me, I will assign thee a palace and furnish it with the choicest of silks and appoint thee twenty slave girls to serve thee and provide thee with dainty food and sumptuous apparel, and thou shalt be a queen and live in all delight, till thou or I die. What sayst thou of this?' 'I wish to abide with thee,' answered she and kissed his hand and made profession of repentance from wickedness. So he assigned her a palace for her sole use and gave her slave-girls and eunuchs, and she became a queen.

The young prince used to visit her, even as he visited his father; but she hated him for that he was not her son; and when the boy saw that she looked on him with the eye of despite and hatred, he shunned her and took an aversion to her. As for Marouf, he occupied himself with the love of fair slave-girls and bethought him not of his wife Fatimeh, for that she was grown a grizzled old woman, foul of favour and bald-headed, loathlier than the speckled snake, the more that she had beyond measure evil entreated him aforetime; and as saith the adage, 'Ill-usage rooteth up desire and soweth hatred in the soil of hearts ;' and gifted of God is he who saith:

Be careful not to hurt men's hearts nor work them aught of dole,
For hard it is to bring again a once estranged soul;
And hearts, the love whereof hath ta'en alarm and fled away,
Are like a broken glass, whose breach may never be made whole.

And indeed he had not given her shelter by reason of any praiseworthy quality in her, but he dealt with her thus generously only of desire for the approval of God the Most High; wherefore he occupied not himself with her by way of marriage. When she saw that he held aloof from her bed and occupied himself with others, she hated him and jealousy gat the mastery of her and Satan prompted her to take the ring from him and kill him and make herself queen in his stead. So she went forth one night from her pavilion, intending for that in which was her husband the king; and it chanced, by the ordinance of fate and written destiny, that Marouf lay that night with one of his favourites, a damsel endowed with beauty and grace and symmetry.

Now it was his wont, of the excellence of his piety, that, when he was minded to have to do with a woman, he would put off the enchanted ring from his finger, in reverence to the holy names engraved thereon, and lay it on the pillow, nor would he don it again till he had purified himself [according to the law]. Moreover, when he had lain with a woman, he was used to bid her go forth from him [before daybreak], of his

fear for the ring; and when he went forth to the bath, he locked the door of the pavilion till his return, when he put on the ring, and after this, all were free to enter as of wont. Fatimeh knew of all this and went not forth from her place till she had certified herself that the case was as we have said. So she sallied out, purposing to go in to him, whilst he was drowned in sleep, and steal the ring, unseen of him.

Now it chanced at this time that the kings son had gone out, without light, to the draught-house, to do an occasion, and sat down on the jakes in the dark, leaving the door open. Presently, he saw Fatimeh come forth of her pavilion and make stealthily for that of his father and said in himself, 'What ails this witch to leave her lodging in the dead of the night and make for my father's pavilion? Needs must there be some reason for this.' So he went out after her and followed in her steps unseen of her. Now he had a short sword of watered steel, which he held dear, so that he went not to his father's divan, except he were girt therewith; and his father used to laugh at him and say, 'What God will! This is a fine sword of thine, O my son! But thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head therewith.' Whereupon the boy would reply, 'I will not fail to cut off with it some head worth the cutting.' And Marouf would laugh at his words.

So he drew the sword from its sheath and followed her till she came to his father's pavilion and entered, whilst he stood and watched her from the door. He saw her searching about and heard her say [to herself], 'Where hath he laid the ring?' Whereby he knew that she was looking for the ring and waited till she found it and said, 'Here it is.' Then she picked it up and turned to go out; but he hid behind the door. As she came forth, she looked at the ring and turning it about in her hand, was about to rub it, when he raised his hand with the sword and smote her on the neck; and she gave one cry and fell down dead.

With this Marouf awoke and seeing his wife lying on the ground, with her blood flowing, and his son standing with the drawn sword in his hand, said to him, 'What is this, O my son?' 'O my father,' answered the prince, 'how often hast thou said to me, "Thou hast a fine sword; but thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head." And I have answered thee, saying, "I will not fail to cut off with it a head worth the cutting." And now, behold, I have cut off for thee therewith a head worth the cutting!' And he told him what had yessed. Marouf sought for the ring, but found it not; so he searched the dead woman's body till he saw her hand closed upon it; whereupon he took it from her hand and said to the boy, 'Thou art indeed my very son, without doubt; may God ease thee in this world and the next, even as thou hast eased me of this vile woman! Her endeavour led but to her own destruction, and gifted of God is he who saith:

When God His aid unto a. man vouchsafes, good hap is his
And still his wish of everything he cloth fulfil, ywis;
But' if the Almighty's countenance to any be denied,
The first to against the wight his own endeavour is.'

Then he called to some of his attendants, who came in haste, and he told them what his wife Fatimeh had done and bade them take her and lay her in a place till the morning. They did as he bade them and [on the morrow] he gave her in charge to a

number of eunuchs who washed her and shrouded her and made her a tomb and buried her. Thus her coming from Cairo was but to her grave, and gifted of God is he who saith:

We tread the steps to us of destiny forewrit;
For he to whom a way is decreed must needs submit
To walk therein, and he whose death is fore-ordained
To be in such a land shall die in none but it

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:

When to a land I fare in quest of good, perdie,
I know not, of the twain, which fortune mine shall be;
Whether the good 'twill prove, "hereafter I do seek,
Or else the evil hap that seeketh after me.

After this, he sent for the husbandman, whose guest he had been, when he was a fugitive, and made him his Vizier of the Right and his chief counsellor. Then, learning that he had a daughter of surpassing beauty and grace, of noble parts and high of worth and birth, he took her to wife; and in due time he married his son. So they abode awhile in all delight and solace of life and their days were serene and their joys untroubled, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies, he who layeth waste flourishing houses and orphaneth sons and daughters. And glory be to the [Ever-]Living One who dieth not and in whose hand are the keys of the Seen and the Unseen!"

* * * * *

Now, during this time, Shehrzad had borne the King three male children: so, when she had made an end of the story of Marouf, she rose to her feet and kissing the earth before him, said, "O king of the age and unique pearl of the time and the day, I am thine handmaid and these thousand nights and one have I entertained thee with stories of foregone peoples and admonitory instances of the ancients. May I then make bold to crave a boon of Thy Majesty?" "Ask, O Shehrzad," answered he, "and it shall be given unto thee." Whereupon she cried out to the nurses and the eunuchs, saying, "Bring me my children." So they brought them to her in haste, and they were three male children, one walking, one crawling and one sucking [at the breast]. She took them and setting them before the King, kissed the ground and said, "O king of the age, these are thy children and I crave that thou release me from the doom of death, for the sake of these infants; for, if thou slay me, they will become motherless and will find none among women to rear them aright."

When the King heard this, he wept and straining the children to his bosom, said, "By Allah, O Shehrzad, I pardoned thee before the coming of these children, for that I found thee chaste, pure, noble and pious! May God bless thee and thy father and thy mother and thy root and thy branch! I take God to witness against me that I exempt thee from aught that can harm thee." So she kissed his hands and feet and rejoiced with an exceeding joy, saying, "May God make thy life long and increase thee in reverence and majesty!" Therewith joy spread throughout the palace of the King and

the good news was bruited abroad in the city; it was a night not to be counted among lives and its colour was whiter than the face of day.

On the morrow, the King arose, full of joy and contentment, and summoning all his troops, bestowed on his vizier Shehrzad's father, a rich and splendid robe of honour and said to him, "God protect thee, for that thou gavest me to wife thy noble daughter, who hath been the means of my repentance from slaying the daughters of the people. Indeed, I have found her noble, pure, chaste and virtuous, and God hath vouchsafed me three male children by her; wherefore praised be He for this exceeding bounty!" Then he bestowed dresses of honour upon all his viziers and amirs and the grandees of his realm and bade decorate the city thirty days; nor did he put one of the townsfolk to aught of charge on account thereof, but the whole of the expenditure was from the Kings treasury. So they decorated the city in splendid fashion, never before was seen the like thereof, and the drums beat and the pipes sounded, whilst all the mimes and mountebanks and players plied their various arts and the King lavished on them gifts and largesse. Moreover, he gave alms to the poor and needy and extended his bounty to all his subjects and the people of his realm. And he and they abode in pleasance and delight and happiness and contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies So glory be to Him whom the vicissitudes of time waste not away nor cloth aught of change betide Him? whom one case diverteth not from other and who is unique in the attribute of perfection! And blessing and pea e upon the High Priest of His Majesty and His Elect among His creatures, our lord MOHAMMED, the chief of mankind, through whom we beseech Him for a goodly end!

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The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night: Its History and Character.

I.

It is now a hundred and eighty years since M. Antoine Galland first introduced to the notice of European readers the most popular collection of narrative fiction in existence, by his translation, published in the year 1704, of an Arabic manuscript alleged to have been procured by him from Syria, which contained something less than a quarter of the tales that compose the work known as "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night." M. Galland was aware of the imperfection of the MS. used by him, and (unable to obtain a more perfect copy) he seems to have endeavoured to supply the place of the missing portions by incorporating in his translation a number of Persian, Turkish and Arabic tales, which had no connection with his original and for which it is generally supposed that he probably had recourse to various Oriental MSS. (as yet unidentified) contained in the Royal Libraries of Paris. These interpolated tales occupy more than a third part of the entire work known as the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" and comprise some of the most popular portions of the work, as will be seen from the following list of them.

1. The History of Prince Zeyn Alasnam and the King of the Genii.
2. The History of Codadad and the Princess of Deryabar.
3. The Story of the Sleeper Awakened.
4. Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp.
5. The Story of the Blind Man Baba Abdalla.
6. The Story of Sidi Nouman.
7. The Story of Cogia Hassan Alhabbal.
8. Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.
9. Ali Cogia, the Merchant of Baghdad.
10. Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari-Banou.
11. The Sisters who envied their younger Sister.

Of these, the Story of the Sleeper Awakened is the only one which has been traced to an Arabic original, existing either separately or in connection with the Thousand Nights and One Night, and is found in the Breslau edition of the complete work, printed by Dr. Habicht from a manuscript of Tunisian origin, apparently of much later date than the other known copies. It also occurs in a MS. copy in the British Museum and will be found translated among the stories from printed texts of the Thousand Nights and One Night (not contained in my standard text or in the Boulac edition) which it is proposed to issue as a supplement to the present work. Galland himself cautions us that the stories of Zeyn Alasnam and Codadad do not belong to the Thousand and One Nights and were published (how he does not explain) without his authority; and the concluding portion of his MS., presumably containing the larger

half of Camaralzaman, the whole of Ganem and the Enchanted Horse, as well as all the intercalated tales (that is to say, nearly one-half of the French translation), being unfortunately lost, it appears impossible to ascertain the precise source from which he drew the latter. Opinions differ upon this point, some Orientalists holding (with De Sacy) that the originals of the added tales were found by Galland in the public libraries of Paris (whence, however, no researches have as yet availed to unearth them), and others (with the late Mr. Chenery) that he procured them from the recitation of story-tellers in the bazaars of Smyrna and other towns in the Levant, during his travels there. It was stated by the late Professor Palmer that he found the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves current, in a slightly different form, among the Bedouins of Sinai; but, although the names of the personages of the story (Ali, Abdallah, Mustafa, Morgiana (*Merjaneh*), Cassim, Hussein) are purely Arabic, the use of the Persian titles *Baba* and *Cogia* (see post) seems to point to a Turkish or Persian origin, and it will be noted that the scene is laid in "a city of Persia" and that the story differs widely in style and character from any known to belong to the genuine text. Mr. Palmer also expressed a doubt whether the most popular story of the old book, Aladdin, was an Eastern story at all; but the only evidence we possess upon the subject, that of the tale itself, does not appear to offer any reasonable confirmation of his scepticism. The names (Mustafa, Alaeddin, Bedrulbudour, Fatimeh, etc.) are without exception Arab, and the story follows the familiar lines of Arabic fiction, of which, in particular, the introduction of the African (or Persian) magician, the finding of the enchanted treasure and ring, the marriage of the finder with the King's daughter, the magical building of the palace, the discovery of the unknown by geomancy, the loss of the talisman through the heedlessness of a third party and its recovery by stratagem, the disgrace of the hero at the instance of the envious vizier, the drugging of the magician and the assumption of the disguise of a devotee for the vilest purposes, are all familiar incidents and find their counterparts in many genuine stories of the Thousand and One Nights, whilst the manners and customs described, allowing for the extreme licence and looseness of Galland's version, do not seem essentially to differ from those pourtrayed in tales of unquestioned authenticity, such as Camaralzaman or Beder. It may also be observed that there is a considerable resemblance between the plan and details of the story, as given by Galland, and those of Jouder and his brothers (Vol. VI.) and Marouf (in the present volume) and that Scott's meagre abstract (published in 1811) of a few of the unknown tales contained in the Wortley Montague MS. of the Thousand Nights and One Night includes the skeleton of a story ("The Fisherman's Son"), which bears some resemblance to Aladdin and a still greater one to the well-known German Mährchen of the White Stone; but, in my opinion, this story is a modern fabrication and has no connection with the original work. The Wortley Montague MS., indeed, appears to be, as a whole, of doubtful authenticity, if we may judge from Scott's translations from it and the detailed account given (in Ouseley's Oriental Collections) of its contents by the translator himself, who states that it bears at end a note to the effect that it was written (or transcribed) in the year 1178 of the Hegira (A.D. 1766) by Omar es Sufti (Sufta). Sufta (popularly *Softa*) signifies, in Turkish, a divinity student, and this, together with the evidently modern style of the copy, the incoherent jumble of adventure of which the stories (as rendered by Scott) appear to consist and which is much more characteristic of modern Turkish fiction than of the more artistic kind peculiar to the

Arabs, and the frequent correspondence of the incidents with German and other popular stories, (a correspondence which, only in the most rudimentary form, is found in the genuine work), appear to stamp this MS. as being, at least as far as the latter portion (which differs greatly from any other copy known to myself) is concerned, as a modern Turkish rifacimento.

Of the remaining six interpolations, the tenth and eleventh (Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Pari-Banou and The Three Sisters) are evidently Persian and comparatively modern (as a Yankee would say) "at that." The use of the Persian prefix, "Cogia" (*Khwajeh*, master or lord, Arabic equivalent *ustadh* or *muallim*), improperly applied to a ropemaker and a merchant of Baghdad, would also point to a Persian or Turkish origin of Nos. 7 and 9 (Cogia Hassan Alhabbal and Ali Cogia), as also the title "Baba" (Gaffer, Daddy, Arabic equivalent *Sheikh*) given to the blind man Abdalla[h] in No. 5, and the general tone of these three stories, as well as that of Sidi Nouman (No. 6), testifies to the probability of their having been composed, at a comparatively recent period, by a person not an inhabitant of Baghdad, in imitation of the legends of Haroun er Reshid and other well-known tales of the original work. It is possible that an exhaustive examination of the various MS. copies of the Thousand and One Nights known to exist in the public libraries of Europe might yet cast some light upon the question of the origin of the interpolated tales; but, in view of the strong presumption afforded by internal evidence that they are of modern composition and form no part of the authentic text, it can hardly be expected, where the result and the value of that result are alike so doubtful, that any competent person will be found to undertake so heavy a task, except as incidental to some more general enquiry. The only one of the eleven, which seems to me to bear any trace of possible connection with the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, is Aladdin, and it may be that an examination of the MS. copies of the original work within my reach will yet enable me to trace the origin of this favourite story.

Having at his command the earlier portion only of the collection, Galland was in some measure compelled to invent a denouement, in which he represents the Sultan as pardoning Sheherazade, in consideration of the pleasure her story-telling talents had afforded him. If we turn to the authentic text, we find a totally different version. It appears that Sheherazade had (somewhat irreconcileably) during the progress of the story-telling (extending over nearly three years) borne the Sultan three male children; and in concluding the story of the thousand and first night, she presents these latter to him, begging him to spare her life and not leave her infants motherless. To this he consents in the most gracious fashion, telling her that he had, before their birth, resolved to spare her, in consideration of the great qualities of virtue, wisdom and nobility of mind he had discovered in her (an assertion, by the way, completely borne out by the record of Night cxlviii, in which he is represented as informing Sheherazade that she has by her wise saws and moral instances put him out of conceit with his kingdom and made him repent of having killed so many women and girls), and concludes by bestowing high honours on her father the Vizier, for having given him a wife of such worth and intelligence, and ordering the city to be decorated and general rejoicings to be celebrated. A rather amusing trait in this conclusion is the empliasis with which the author insists upon the gratifying fact that the whole cost of the

rejoicings was defrayed from the royal treasury, and that not a penny came out of the pockets of the Sultan's subjects; no doubt a sufficiently remarkable exception to the practice of Oriental despots like his hero Haroun er Reshid, who was generally careful to make some unfortunate or other provide the money which he lavished upon his favourites or flung away on the caprices, sometimes laudable, but more often extravagant and senseless, that have won him his most ill-deserved reputation.

It is much to be regretted that the French translator, in accordance with the literary licence of an age in which the principles of the art of translation were perhaps less generally understood than at any known literary epoch, should have thought himself entitled to deal with the original text in a manner which in the present day, more strict upon the question of fidelity and local colouring, would certainly have been visited with the severest repro bation. Both in abridgment and amplification of the original, his sins of omission and commission are innumerable; and he permits himself not unfrequently the most inexplicable and apparently wilful perversions, as in the story of the Merchant and the Genie, where he makes the former throw away the *shell*, instead of the stone, of the date (which of course has no shell), and in that of Bedreddin Hassan, where he substitutes a cream-tart for the true corpus delicti, a mess of pomegranate-seed (a dish repeatedly mentioned in the Nights), and represents the hero as going to bed in his trousers, going out of his way solemnly to assure us, in a special footnote, that the Eastern nations invariably sleep in those garments, although it is distinctly stated in the text that Bedreddin, before getting into bed, took off his trousers, wrapped up in them the purse of a thousand dinars he had received of the Jew and placed them under the pillow of the couch, retaining only one garment, a shirt of fine silk. These are a fair specimen of the many inexcusable alterations he permits himself, and in addition to this he did not scruple to correct and adorn what doubtless seemed to him the frequently repulsive artlessness and crude simplicity of the original, expanding, abridging, amplifying and substituting in the most wholesale and uncompromising manner. To give only one example, where I might cite many, of the liberties he allowed himself in this kind, there is perhaps no passage in the old version more generally admired than the description of Egypt contained in the story of the Jewish Physician. I quote the passage as it stands in the old translation of Galland's version, edited by Scott:

"My father joined in opinion with those of his brothers who had spoken in favour of Egypt; which filled me with joy. Say what you will, said he, the man that has not seen Egypt has not seen the greatest rarity in the world. All the land there is golden; I mean, it is so fertile, that it enriches its inhabitants. All the women of that country charm you by their beauty and their agreeable carriage. If you speak of the Nile, where is there a more wonderful river? What water was ever lighter or more delicious? The very slime it carries along, in its overflowing, fattens the fields, which produce a thousand times more than other countries that are cultivated with the greatest labour. Observe what a poet said of the Egyptians, when he was obliged to depart from Egypt: 'Your Nile loads you with blessings every day; it is for you only that it runs from such a distance. Alas! in removing from you, my tears will flow as abundantly as its waters; you are to continue in the enjoyment of its sweetness, while I am condemned to deprive myself of them against my will.' If you look, added my

father, towards the island that is formed by the two greatest branches of the Nile, what variety of verdure | What enamel of all sorts of flowers | What a prodigious number of cities, villages, canals, and a thousand other agreeable objects! If you turn your eyes on the other side, up towards Ethiopia, how many other subjects of admiration | I cannot compare the verdure of so many plains, watered by the different canals of the island, better than to brilliant emeralds set in silver. Is not Grand Cairo the largest, the most populous, and the richest city in the world? What a number of magnificent edifices, both public and private! If you view the pyramids, you will be filled with astonishment at the sight of the masses of stone of an enormous thickness, which rear their heads to the skies! You will be obliged to confess, that the Pharaohs, who employed such riches, and so many men in building them, must have surpassed in magnificence and invention all the monarchs who have appeared since, not only in Egypt, but in all the world, for having left monuments so worthy of their memory: monuments so ancient, that the learned cannot agree upon the date of their erection; yet such as will last to the end of time. I pass over in silence the maritime cities of the kingdom of Egypt, such as Damietta, Rosetta, and Alexandria, where nations come for various sorts of grain, cloth, and an infinite number of commodities calculated for accommodation and delight. I speak of what I know; for I spent some years there in my youth, which I shall always reckon the most agreeable part of my life."

The reader, who is not acquainted with the original Arabic, will doubtless be surprised to hear that this eloquent passage is almost entirely due to the fluent pen of the French translator. Here is the plain and unadorned foundation upon which he reared so extensive an edifice of imaginative description. I translate from the Breslau text, which appears, due allowance being made for errors of transcription, etc, to be almost identical with that of Galland's MS. and in which I have corrected several mistakes, clerical or typographical. The version of the Macnaghten and Boulac Editions is (as will be seen by reference to Vol. I. p-1) yet more concise and to my mind more effective.

"Quoth my father, 'Who hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world: its dust is gold and its women puppets; its Nile is a wonder, its waters light and sweet and its mud a commodity and a medicine, as saith of it one in verse, "The waxing of your Nile profiteth you to-day, And to you alone it cometh with profit. The Nile is nought but my tears after [separation from] you: Yours is fair fortune and none is forlorn but I." And if your eyes saw its earth and the adornment thereof with flowers and the embroidery of it with all manner blossoms and the island[s] of the Nile and how much is therein of wide prospect, and if ye turned the sight to the Birket el Hebesh, your eyes would not revert free from astonishment nor would ye see [a match] for that goodly prospect, and indeed the arms of the Nile encompass its verdure, as it were chrysolites set in filagrees of silver. And what is there to compare with the Observatory and its beauties, whereof saith the beholder, whenas he draweth near and looketh, "Verily this comprehendeth all manner goodliness!" And if thou speak of the Night of the Waxing [of the Nile], give the bow, take it and distribute the water to its channels; and if thou sawest the Garden in the evenings and the shadow sloping over it, thou wouldst behold a marvel and wouldst be cheered by the like thereof, and wert thou by the river-side of

Cairo, when the sun is going down and the river dons hauberk and coat of mail to its vestments, its gentle breeze would quicken thee and its bland and copious shade.'"

Again, it cannot be denied that, either out of a mistaken deference to the literary tastes and prejudices of his age or from a want of sufficient acquaintance with Oriental manners and literature (a somewhat improbable defect in the case of one who was a well-known scholar and had made three voyages to the Levant), M. Galland to a certain extent failed in producing a fair transcript of the original, so far as the exact detail of the manners and customs of the people whose life it describes is concerned, as will be evident (to give one instance out of many) from the way in which he makes the Jewish physician, in the story above quoted, express surprise at the presentation to him by the young man of Mosul of his left hand, not for the true reason, as stated in the original, *i.e.* the want of good breeding evinced in offering the *left* hand (which, being used for certain ablutions, is considered among Mohammedans unclean or unworthy), but because "This, thinks I, is a gross piece of ignorance that he does not know that people present their right hand and not their left to a physician."

Nevertheless, in spite of the defects I have cited and numerous others of various kinds, it cannot but be evident to the impartial reader, who does not look at Oriental literature solely from the narrow scholastic point of view, that in M. Galland's translation, fragmentary as it is, he is in presence of a monumental literary work and one that is destined to live from its intrinsic artistic value, whatever the future may bring forth in the way of more perfect and more conscientious reproduction of the original it professed to represent. Numerous as are the mistakes and inaccuracies, wilful and involuntary, that deface it, there lives in it, if not the letter, emphatically the true spirit of Oriental romance, as seen by European observers through the intervening media of distance and difference; and the translator's charming style, the fine flower of the literary manner of the eighteenth century, partaking at once of Voltaire and Diderot, of Manon Lescaut and Les Bijoux Indiscrets, uniting in itself simplicity and boldness, strength and grace, equally capable of expressing naïveté without vulgarity and of rising to the pathetic and the majestic without undue emphasis, atones for many an error and covers, with the seduction of its bright and perfect movement, many an omission and many an audacious distortion of fact and intention. Indeed, it seems to me that this first effort, imperfect as it was, to transplant into European gardens the magic flowers of Oriental imagination, can never entirely be superseded and that other workers in the same field can only hope to supplement and not to efface it. The value of Galland's achievement was at once recognised by the public, notwithstanding the obbligato sneers of his brother savants and the doubts cast by critics and men of letters upon the authenticity of the work, and his book was almost immediately translated into most European languages. Nine years after the first publication of the French version, we find the fourth English edition already reached; and since then its popularity has continued to increase, until it has become one of the few standard works dear to all, young and old, and whose editions, becoming year by year more numerous, can only be numbered by hundreds, if not by thousands.

Considering the immense vogue thus obtained by this first imperfect version and the interest it has naturally excited in the original work, it is a curious and somewhat inexplicable fact that, during the lapse of nearly two centuries, so little should have

been discovered concerning the origin and history of the collection whose outlines are so well known to all. It has never yet even been ascertained who was its author or compiler, nor has the date to which its composition may be referred been fixed with any degree of certitude. The origin of the work has, indeed, been the subject of much surmise and research, although to no great result; and the first half of the present century witnessed an animated and somewhat acrimonious discussion upon the subject between the two greatest Orientalists of France and Germany. From the first it had been a favourite theory, founded chiefly on the prevalence of Persian names among the personages of the Introduction, that the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night was merely a translation into Arabic of a work supposed to have been originally written in ancient Persian or Pehlevi, and this theory Baron von Hammer-Purgstall adopted and improved, bringing forward in support arguments of considerable weight and plausibility, founded upon passages in the works of Arabic and Persian authors of repute, such as the magnum opus of the celebrated Baghdadi geographer and historian, Ali Aboulhusn el Mesoudi, the *Murouj edh dheheb* or Golden Meadows, published at Bassora in the middle of the tenth century, and the great Arabic compendium, the *Fihrist* of Aboulferej Abou Ishac en Nedim, about forty years later. In the work above mentioned, Mesoudi states, in a passage that is a mainstay of Von Hammer's theory, that there existed in his time a book of Persian stories, called *Hezar Efsan* or The Thousand Romances, being the history of an Indian King, his Vizier, the Vizier's daughter Shirzad and her nurse or duenna Dunyazad, and adds that the book in question had been translated into Arabic and was called in that language The Thousand Tales or (more commonly) The Thousand Nights. He also mentions, as similar Persian or Indian collections, the story of Jelkand (Jelyaad) and Shimas, or the Indian King and his Ten Viziers, and Sindibad, and allows us to suppose that the Hezar Efsan was translated into Arabic by order of El Mensour (grandfather of Er Reshid and second Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty), who reigned from A.D. 754 to A.D. 775. It would appear also, from a preface to the great epic poem of Persia, the Shah nameh of Firdausi, and from other sources, that the original authorship of the Hezar Efsan was attributed to a Persian litterateur in the service of one of the early sovereigns of Persia, for whom he composed it, a semimythical personage by name Queen Humai, daughter of Ardeshir Behman (Artaxerxes Longimanus, B.C 465-425) and mother of Darab (Darius) II. (B.C 423) and that the prose original was in the eleventh century versified (or perhaps only rearranged) by a certain Rasti, court poet to the Ghaznevide Sultan Mehmoud of Persia. The passage from the Fihrist which Von Hammer afterwards brought forward, in confirmation of his citation from Mesoudi, is (briedy) to the following effect. "The first who composed tales and made books of them were the ancient Persians. The Arabs translated them and the learned took them and embellished them and *composed others like them*. The first book of the kind made was that called Hezar Efsan (or Efsaneh), and the manner thereof was on this wise. One of the kings of the Persians was wont, whenas he took a woman to wife and had lain one night with her, to put her to death on the morrow. Now he married a girl endowed with wit and knowledge, by name Shehrzad, and she fell to telling him tales and used to join the story, at the end of the night, with what should induce the king to spare her alive and question her next night of the ending thereof, till a thousand nights had passed over her. Meanwhile he lay with her, till he was vouchsafed a child by her,

when she discovered to him the device she had practiced upon him. Her wit pleased him and he inclined to her and spared her life. And the king had a duenna named Dinarzad (or Dunyazad) who was of accord with her concerning this. The book comprises a thousand nights, but less than two hundred stories, for a story is often told in a number of nights."

These passages suffice to establish, beyond reasonable doubt, the fact that the first idea of the work was taken from the Hezar Efsan, to which it owes the scheme of the introduction and external thread of story and the system of nights which serves as a frame for the various stories told by Shehrzad, and it will be noted that the names of the personages of the introduction and the general skeleton of the story appear to have been preserved almost without alteration, standing out in sharp contrast to the rest of the work. Even the number of the stories contained in the Thousand and One Nights in some measure corresponds with Aboulferej's account of the Hezar Efsan, being (if we leave out of the question the numerous incidental tales) less than two hundred in all, and had Hammer-Purgstall contented himself with stating the legitimate consequences of the evidence he adduced, his position would have been unassailable; but, as is not unusual with German scholars, he went to an extravagant length in the deductions he drew from the passages above cited, insisting that the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, in its original form, was identical with the Thousand Tales or Nights mentioned by Mesoudi, *i.e.* was a mere translation from the Persian, and that its foundation was no other than the wild and fascinating Persian tales which appear to have been popular in Arabia proper, at the time of Mohammed, and to have, by the seduction of their brilliant and picturesque imagery, become so serious a stumbling-block in the Prophet's way that, not content with having evidently assimilated part of them for his own purposes, he thought it necessary to caution his followers against their dangerous attractions and to exhort them to be satisfied with the delightful tales that God had told them in the Koran. To this original nucleus or foundation afforded by the old Arabic version of the Hezar Efsan, Von Hammer was of opinion that the Arabs added the anecdotes of the Ommiade and Abbaside Khalifs, of such frequent occurrence in the collection, as well as certain tales of evidently later origin, and that the work grew by additon after addition till it assumed its present dimensions; that it was finally rearranged and (so to speak) edited by a native of Egypt and that its definitive production in its present form cannot be referred to an earlier period than the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, since one of the tales mentions the Egyptian Khalif Hakim bi-amrillah, A.D. 1261. Unfortunately both prose and rhymed versions of the Hezar Efsan appear to be irrecoverably lost and we have no traces of them save what may exist in the Thousand and One Nights, wherein it is at least a singular fact that not a single reference to the ancient romantic heroes of Persia (Sam Neriman, Feridoun, Rustem, Zal Zer, Isfendiyar, etc.) nor to such fabulous monsters of Iranian romance as the Simurgh (griffin), Anca (phœnix), etc, occurs, as would certainly not have been the case, were Von Hammer's theory true. Had the book "Sindibad," mentioned by Mesoudi in the passage cited above, been the well-known Voyages of Sindbad (as erroneously assumed by Von Hammer), its existence in Persian would have been a powerful argument in support of his theory. But this is not the case. The book is mentioned by Mesoudi as "Sindibad" only, and is stated to be similar to the story of the Indian King and his Ten

Viziers, to which nothing can be more unlike than the Voyages of Sindbad, a work purely Arab in form, although doubtless containing many incidents derived from Greek, Indian, Persian and perhaps even European sources, and it has now been definitely shown that the work referred to was one which is known in perhaps more numerous versions than any other popular fiction, *i.e.* "The Story of a King, his Seven Viziers, his Son and his Favourite," written by one Sindibad, said to have been chief of the Brahmans under Korech, third King of Northern India after Porus, the celebrated adversary of Alexander the Great.

Von Hammer's theory, as soon as advanced, was disputed by the still greater French Orientalist, Silvestre de Sacy, who (whilst allowing the possibility and even probability of the original Arabic compiler having used a slight thread of connecting narrative adapted from the external scheme of the Hezar Efsan, on which to string the immense succession of fictions provided by himself and his successors) definitely establishes the fact that no trace whatever exists of any considerable body of præ-Mohammedan or non-Arabic fiction in the extant texts of the Thousand and One Nights. He points out that the language of the collection is in no respect classical, containing many words in common and modern (as opposed to literary) use, that it is generally of a character to be referred to the decadence of Arabic literature and that all the tales, even when dealing with events supposed to have occurred and persons to have dwelt in Persia, India and other non-Arabic countries and in præ-Mohammedan epochs, invariably, with the naïvest anachronism, confine themselves to depicting the inhabitants, manners and customs of such cities as Baghdad and Cairo and are throughout impregnated with the strongest and most zealous spirit of Mohammedanism, and especially that the men and manners described are almost exclusively those of the epoch of the Abbaside Khalifs. Galland himself, in his preface, attributes the work to an unknown Arabic author; and the Sheikh Ahmed Shirwani, editor of the unfinished Calcutta edition of 1814-18, states in his introduction his belief that the author was a Syrian Arab, who wrote in a simple conversational style, which was not of the purest. Von Hammer himself allows that the first complete version could not have been finished till the beginning of the eleventh century, and it therefore could not have been known either to Mesoudi or the author of the Fihrist. Relying upon these and other arguments of equal weight, M. de Sacy concludes that the book was originally written in Syria, about five centuries ago, in the vulgar Arabic tongue; that it was left unfinished by the author or (more probably) authors, who had possibly adopted the framework of exterior or connecting narrative suggested by the Hezar Efsan in the same manner as the scheme of the old Indian work of "Sindibad," already mentioned, was adopted by the authors of "The Seven Wise Masters," "Dolopathos," "Syntipas," etc., etc., as an excuse for the composition of works to all practical intent completely original; that the work was finished by other hands, probably copyists, who completed it by adding stories of foreign origin, such as Jelyaad and Shimas and the Malice of Women; that several persons undertook the task in company, each supplying tales of his own composition or transcription; and finally, in view of the general resemblance of the style to the modern Egyptian dialect and to the prevalence throughout of descriptions of modern Egyptian manners, that the work received its final revision at the hands of some Egyptian or Egyptians of the fifteenth century, the absence of any mention of firearms, tobacco and coffee forbidding to

ascribe it to any more recent period. M. de Sacy's opinion has now, I believe, been generally adopted by the Oriental scholars of Europe. The late eminent English Orientalist, Mr. Lane, whose death has been so grievous a loss to Arabic lexicography, at first seemed inclined to side with Von Hammer, but afterwards with certain reservations adopted De Sacy's views and declared that the Thousand and One Nights can only be said to be borrowed from the Hezar Efsan, in the same sense as that in which the Æneid is said to be borrowed from the Odyssey, suggesting (with great probability) that the actual name, "The Thousand and One Nights," was deliberately adopted, partly for the purpose of differentiating the work from the Arabic translation of the Hezar Efsan, which, as we learn from Mesoudi, was known as 'The Thousand Tales or Nights,' and partly to avoid the use of even numbers, always considered unlucky by the Arabs, or perhaps to constitute a specially auspicious title by the addition of the primary number one to the cabalistic number 1000.

The principal points upon which Mr. Lane differed from De Sacy were (1) the question whether the original work was the composition of one or of several persons, (2) the date and (3) the locale of the composition itself and of the definitive compilation or redaction to which it is generally agreed that it owes its present form. Mr. Lane was of opinion that the whole work was the composition of one person, who had re-written the old tales comprised in the collection and completed it by the addition of new stories composed or arranged by himself for the purpose. I believe I am correct in stating that Mr. Lane stood alone in holding this opinion and for my own part, I cannot understand how any one can peruse the Arabic text of the work and fail to come to the conclusion that we are in presence, not of the homogeneous work of a single writer, but of a collection of separate stories, written in widely differing styles and bearing manifest signs of having been composed by many different authors at various times and under various circumstances. The difference of the language employed in the various parts of the collection, some tales or sets of tales, for instance, abounding in Persian, Turkish and other foreign or provincial words, whilst others are comparatively free from them, and the variety of the formulas and style, apparent to the observant reader, would alone, it seems to me, suffice to negative Mr. Lane's theory, to say nothing of the almost equally material fact that the various extant copies, both MS. and printed, of the work differ widely both in the outline and the detail of their contents. Again, Mr. Lane held that the composition of the work, in its earliest complete form, must be referred to a much later date than that attributed to it by De Sacy, to wit, the middle of the sixteenth century, and upon this point much is to be said. De Sacy abstained from setting out in detail his reasons for believing the work to have been composed in the fourteenth century, contenting himself with adducing, as his principal argument, the nature of the language or dialect in which it appears to be mainly written and certain peculiarities of diction which characterize the general style; but, as this (though possibly sufficient evidence in the case of a limited and thoroughly sifted subject such as Greek or Roman literature) can hardly be held to suffice, in the absence of corroborative proof, when the question in dispute ranges over so wide an area as the boundless and comparatively unexplored fields of Oriental philology, it may be well, by way of endeavouring, in some measure, to ascertain the reasons unparticularized or but lightly hinted at by the great French scholar and without assuming definitely to pronounce upon the matter, to touch upon the principal points

for and against his theory which have been raised by modern scholars or have occurred to myself in the course of my labours upon the foregoing translation.

As a first step towards any enquiry into the age and land of origin of the Thousand and One Nights, it is evident that we must endeavour to ascertain of what the original nucleus or primitive body of tales, upon which the complete work was built by aggregation and which, for the sake of convenience, I shall hereafter call "the original work," consisted; and to this end, our manifest course is to enquire which of the tales comprised in the complete collection are common to every copy known. Proceeding thus, we find that the following exist (with such unimportant differences only of general style and detail as warrant us in treating them as copies from one common original, owing their variations to the differing ages and nationalities of their respective transcribers), in the four printed editions, *i.e.* the two of Calcutta (1814-18 and 1839-42), that of Boulac and that of Breslau and (according to Caussin de Perceval, Gauttier, Habicht, Scott, Hammer-Purgstall, De Sacy and other scholars) in at least a dozen MS. copies, complete or fragmentary, of the work, including that used by Galland. (In these copies, both printed and MS., the other portions of the collection differ widely, both in the number and nature of the tales contained in each and in the detail of the stories common to all, as will appear from a comparison of (*e.g.*) the Boulac Edition with that of Breslau and the Wortley-Montague MS. now in the Bodleian Library.)

1. Introduction (Story of King Shehriyar and his brother) and the incidental story (The Ox and the Ass).
2. The Merchant and the Genie and the three incidental stories.
3. The Fisherman and the Genie and the four incidental stories.
4. The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad and the six incidental stories.
5. The Three Apples.
6. Bedreddin Hassan.
7. The Hunchback and the eleven incidental stories.
8. Noureddin and Enis el Jelis.
9. Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar.

These form about an eighth part of the whole collection, and if we add the stories of Ghanim ben Eyoub, Kemerez-zeman and Budour, The Enchanted Horse and Julnar, which occur, in substantially identical form, in all the editions and MSS. mentioned above, except the unfinished Calcutta edition of 1814-18 (from which, however, we see no reason to suppose that they would have been excluded, had the publication been completed), and we get what is evidently the nucleus or original of the work, comprising (roughly) a fifth part of the whole. The stories contained in this portion, though bearing evident traces of the work of different authors, offer such general similarity in style and diction as to warrant us in supposing them to have been composed or arranged and adapted to the framework of the external fable by several persons of the same nationality acting in concert and at one and the same time. It is practically useless to enquire what portion of this original is a survival of the Hezar Efsan, as it is at once evident that such features of the old Pehlevi work as might

possibly have been borrowed by the authors of the Thousand and One Nights must have been so disfeatured by the radical process of adaptation and remodelment to which they appear to have subjected all foreign material employed by them, as to defy identification: even in the Introduction, which is certainly (with the exception, perhaps, of the Enchanted Horse) the oldest portion of the original, the remains of the old Persian cadre are evidently confined to the names of the principal personages (Shehriyar, Shahzeman, Shehrzad or Shirzad, Dunyazad or Dinarzad), the period (the reign of a king of the Benou Sasan or Sassanians), the localities (the islands, *i.e.* peninsulas, of India and China and the kingdom of Samarcand) and of the merest thread of incident whereon to string a fable wholly Muslim in colour and circumstance. The same remarks apply to the first story, that of the Merchant and the Genie, which is probably contemporary (or nearly so) with the Introduction, but contains no trace of præ-Mohammedan colour.

In enquiring into the age of this nucleus or original of the work, we are at once confronted by two dates, between which we must fix the period of its composition. In the Tailor's Story, a speech of the meddlesome barber identifies the day of his adventure with the unfortunate young man of Baghdad as the 10th of the month Sefer, A.H. 653 (*i.e.* the 25th March, A.D. 1255), that is to say, in the 14th year of the reign of El Mustazim Billah, the last Khalif of the house of Abbas, and only three years before the storm of Baghdad by Hulagou and the extinction of the Khalifate. This date is that given by three texts, *i.e.* those of Calcutta (1839-42) and Breslau and Galland's MS., which agree in making the barber, by way of confirmation, date his own story in the reign of the penultimate Khalif of the Abbaside dynasty, El Mustensir Billah (father of El Mustazim), A.H. 623-640 (A.D. 1225-1242), and state that, after his expulsion from Baghdad by the latter, he did not return till he heard he was dead and another Khalif (*i.e.* El Mustazim) come to the throne. The Calcutta Edition of 1814-18 is silent as to both date and reign, whilst the Boulac Edition gives the former as A.H. 763 (A.D. 1362), a time when both Baghdad and Bassora, the two cities in which the scene of the tale is laid, were in possession of the successors of Genghiz Khan, and makes the latter the (six months') reign of the parricide El Muntesir Billah, A.H. 247-8 (A.D. 861-2). The first is an evident error, as the barber is described in the sequel of the Tailor's Story as an old man past his ninetieth year and he speaks of himself in his own story as already an old man at the time of his adventure with the Khalif in question; so that, even if we suppose him to have been then sixty years old, this would only bring us back (after making some necessary allowance for the space which must have elapsed between the flight of the lame youth from Baghdad and his encounter with his persecutor at Bassora) to (say) the year of the Hegira 743 (A.D. 1343), at earliest, or nearly a hundred years after the fall of the Khalifate. The second date is also a manifest error, as, putting aside the fact that the time covered by the story of the barber must be estimated at (at least) some years, the Khalif who banished the barber is described by the latter as a prince "who loved the poor and needy and companied with the learned and the pious," a description which, though exactly tallying with the character of the good and wise El Mustensir, as given by Arab historians, is in no way applicable to the melancholy madman El Muntesir. It may, therefore, be safely assumed that the date (A.D. 1255) given by Galland's MS. and by the Breslau and Macnaghten Editions is the correct one. For the reasons above stated, the Hunchback's adventure can hardly be

dated earlier than ten years later, *i.e.* A.D. 1265, or seven years after the fall of Baghdad, and in view of the fact (inexplicable, if we suppose the story to have been written at or soon after this date) of the absence of any reference to the terrible event of the sack of the capital by the Tartars and of the occupation, in immediate succession, of Bassora and the other towns of Irak Arabi and Mesopotamia, events which must for a time, at least, have agitated the whole Muslim world, we may fairly suppose some half century or more to have intervened before the composition of the story. This brings us to the second decade of the fourteenth century as the earliest period at which the Hunchback's story, and therefore the rest of the original part of the work, (of which it may be taken as a fair specimen,) could have existed in its present form, and Galland's MS., which is stated by a note appended thereto to have been read by a Christian scribe of Tripoli or Syria (who wishes long life to its possessor), in the year 1548, supplies us with the second date above mentioned, *i.e.* that of the latest period at which it could have been written or rearranged. I have said that I consider the story of the Hunchback fairly representative of the original work, so far as age is concerned, and it would not be difficult approximately to prove, from internal evidence, that the other stories are practically contemporary with it. For instance, the introduction, in the Story of the Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad, of the Three Calenders (*Carendeliyeh*), an order of religious mendicants, so called after their founder, the Sheikh Carendel, not instituted (or at least not known under that name) until the early part of the thirteenth century, and the absence of any explanation of the name (such as would probably have been volunteered by the story-teller, had the order been, at the date of writing, of recent institution), assign the composition of this story to the same date at earliest as that of the Hunchback, as does also the mention in the same tale of Sultani peaches, *i.e.* peaches from Sultaniyeh in Persian Irak, a town not founded till the middle of the thirteenth century; and in Bedreddin Hassan the mention of a cannon (*midfaa*), by way of metaphor, warrants us in drawing a like conclusion as to the age of this latter story. On the other hand, the absence from the stories of the original work of all mention of coffee (which, according to Abdulcadir el Ansari, was first drunk in Arabia early in the fifteenth century and the use of which spread all over the East within the next hundred years) would prove that it must have been composed before A.D. 1500, at latest. Again (except in the story of Bedreddin Hassan, where, as before mentioned, the passage in question is not improbably apocryphal), firearms are nowhere named or alluded to in the original work, although cannon are several times referred to in the later stories of the collection. Cannon were first used in Europe at the battle of Crecy in 1346, but the researches of modern scholars have proved that their use was known to the Arabs nearly a century and a half earlier and was perhaps learnt from them by the Crusaders. Gunpowder is believed to have been known to the Chinese (and probably also to the Indians) from time immemorial, though they did not employ it for warlike purposes, except by way of mines and war-rockets or fusees, which latter the Arabs (who under the early Khalifs were in constant communication with both China and India) appear to have early adopted from them and (in all probability) used at the destructive sieges of Mecca in the years A.D. 683 and 691-2. The Greek fire, mentioned by Joinville and other Christian historians of the Crusades and described as exploding in mid-air with a terrible noise, may be reasonably supposed to have been rather some war-rocket of this kind than the (incendiary) composition of naphtha, etc., known by the name.

According to Arab chroniclers, bombards or wooden cannon were used at the siege of a town in Africa as early as A.D. 1205, and Ibn Khaldoun and other historians testify that the use of firearms became general among the Moors of Northern Africa and Spain by the end of the 13th century. The "perfervidum ingenium" of the subtle and keen-witted Arab, quickened into abnormal productivity by the religious and political system of Islam, so well suited to the character of the race, carried him, as regarded the arts and sciences, far in advance of his European contemporaries, and if the inhabitants of the metropolitan provinces of the Khalifate did not perhaps altogether keep pace, in re militart, at least with their more adventurous Spanish and African brethren, there can be little doubt that they became acquainted with the use of firearms long before it was known in Europe; but, even if we suppose the introduction of the new weapons to have been simultaneous in the two continents, the absence of all authentic mention of them would limit the most recent date to which it is possible to ascribe the definitive composition of the original work to the middle of the fourteenth century.

Among other arguments that have been put forward in support of the theory referring the composition of the original to a later date, it has been conjectured that the colours of the fish in the story of the Enchanted Youth were suggested by the yellow, blue and red turbans worn by the Jews, Christians and Samaritans of Egypt, in obedience to an edict, issued early in the fourteenth century, of the Memlouk Sultan Mohammed ibn Kelaoun and that the story-teller appropriated the colour red to the fish into which the Magian inhabitants of the City of the Black Islands had been transformed, because the Samaritan religion (as described by an Arab writer) was a mixture of Judaism and Magism; but the theorist forgot that the enforced wearing of distinctive colours by the non-Muslim subjects of the Mohammedan empire dates from the taking of Jerusalem in A.D. 636 by the Khalif Omar ben el Khettab, whose ordinance nearly two centuries later Haroun er Reshid revived, commanding the Jews to wear a yellow, the Christians a blue and the Magians a black galloon on their surcoats, and the red colour given by the story-teller to the fishy representatives of the latter sect was probably suggested by that of the fire worshipped by them, the colour white being that of the Ommiade dynasty and having been from time immemorial appropriated to the true-believer. It has also been argued that the occurrence in Bedreddin Hassan of the word *sahib* (lit. friend or comrade, but colloquially equivalent to our "Sir"), as applied to the Vizier Shemseddin, and the use of the word *midfaa* (cannon), said not to have been employed in that sense in Egypt until the year 1383, prove this tale to have been composed after the end of the fourteenth century, at which time the aforesaid title is asserted to have been first applied to viziers; but both these objections are also founded upon error, as it appears from the historians Mirkhond and Ibn el Athir that the title *Sahib* was given to Ismail ibn Ebbad, the great and good Vizier of the Buyide Prince Fekhreddauleh, who died A.D. 995, and the word *midfaa*, used in the contested sense, is found in a recipe for the preparation of gunpowder given by an Arabic MS. of the thirteenth century (discovered by M. Reinaud in the Royal Library of St. Petersburg), in which the text is explained and confirmed by an illustration showing the gunner firing a ball from the *midfaa* or hand-cannon, by means of a flame applied to the touch-hole. Another objection is founded upon the anachronism alleged to be committed in most of the stories of the original in the

application of the title of Sultan, which is stated not to have come into use as applied to sovereign princes until after the twelfth century; but this argument in its turn appears to be groundless, as the title was first assumed by the Ghaznevide prince Mehmoud ben Sebektigin (as also by a Buyide prince) early in the eleventh century, and repeated instances of this use of the word Sultan occur in the ancient Arab historians, *e.g.* Et Teberi, who lived in the ninth century and who not unfrequently applies the title (which properly belongs to a viceroy or sovereign prince invested with the *temporal* power only, to the exclusion of the spiritual) to the various Khalifs, as also does another ancient writer, cited by Ibn Khellikan. Yet another argument, put forward as tending to prove that the collection dates from the end of the fifteenth century at earliest, is the fact that the women figuring in the stories, even those of high rank and repute, are frequently represented as uncovering their faces before strange men and otherwise behaving with more licence and immodesty than is recorded of Muslim females of an earlier age and that Es Suyouti, a writer who flourished at the period above named, expressly complains of the loose and immodest carriage of the (Egyptian) women of his time. Complaints of this kind, however, are found in earlier historians than Es Suyouti, *e.g.* Ibn el Athir before quoted, who flourished at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, and who mentions the (to the Muslim Puritan) shameful custom of going abroad with unveiled faces, that prevailed among the women of Northern Africa (even to those belonging to the royal household), under the rule of the Almoravides, in the early part of the eleventh century. The above are the more cogent of the arguments that have been advanced in support of the theory of the late date of composition of the original work: others are founded mainly upon doubtful particularities of manners and customs and discrepancies of reckoning and description (almost certainly attributable to the carelessness or ignorance of transcribers or of the persons from whose dictation they wrote), and seem to me to carry little weight, especially when allowance is made for the close similarity (conceded by the advocates of the theory in question) of the manners and customs of the metropolitan countries of the Muslim ermpire (and particularly of Irak Arabi, under the Khalifs of Baghdad), to those of Cairo, under the fainéant princes of the second Abbaside dynasty, and the well-known tendency of successive copyists gradually to corrupt a work handed down in MS. by the introduction, conscious or unconscious, of names and details belonging to the language, manners and customs of their own time; suffice it to say that it seems to me, in the highest degree, improbable that the stories should (as is contended) have been composed by an Egyptian of the sixteenth century, (*i.e.* after the Turkish conquest in 1517), and that yet no mention, direct or indirect, should be found in them of any of the Memlouk Sultans or fainéant Khalifs or indeed of any sovereign of Egypt (Khalif or Sultan) later than the Eyoubite Saladin at the end of the twelfth century.

As for the contrary theory of the remote origin of the work, it is, I think, now pretty generally allowed that De Sacy satisfactorily disposed of Von Hammer's arguments; but, since the date of the controversy, fresh evidence has been adduced in its support. This consists of a passage from the great work of the Arab historian of Spain, Aboulabbas Ahmed ben Mohammed el Meccari, entitled "Windwafts of Perfume from the branches of Andalusia (Spain) the Blooming" (A.D. 1628-9), to the

following effect. I translate directly from the Arabic text as edited by the greatest (since De Sacy) of modern Arabic scholars, the late M. Dozy.

"Ibn Saïd (may God have mercy on him!) sets forth in his book El Muhella bi-s-shaar, quoting from El Curtubi, the story of the building of the Houdej in the Garden of Cairo, the which was of the magnificent pleasaunces of the Fatimite Khalifs, the rare of ordinance and surpassing, to wit, that the Khalif El Aamir bi-ahkham-illah let build it for a Bedouin woman, the love of whom had gotten the mastery of him, in the neighbourhood of the Chosen Garden and used to resort often thereto and was slain, as he went thither; and it ceased not to be a pleasuring-place for the Khalifs after him. The folk abound in stories of the Bedouin maid and Ibn Meyyah of the sons of her uncle and what hangs thereby of the mention of El Aamir, so that the tales told of them on this account became like unto the story of El Bettal and the Thousand Nights and One Night and what resembleth them."

Aboulhusn Ali Ibn Saïd ben Mousa el Ghernati, a celebrated Spanish historian, poet and (especially) topographer, was born at Ghernateh (Granada) A.D. 1218 and died at Tunis A.D. 1286. He had travelled in Egypt and lived at Cairo in the middle of the thirteenth century, and the above passage, which occurs in a description of the latter city, is quoted by El Meccari from a work of his which is not now extant, so that it is impossible to verify the citation. The surname El Curtubi was common to several Spanish-Arabic authors, but the one from whom Ibn Saïd in his turn quotes is apparently Abou Jaafer ibn Abdulhecc el Khezraji, author of a history of the Khalifs. He flourished in the middle of the twelfth century, but no work of his is, to the best of my knowledge, extant for reference. On the strength of this passage, it is argued that the collection existed, as a well-known work, in the middle of the twelfth century, and this argument is supported by the statement that the same quotation (from Ibn Saïd) occurs in the Khitet of El Mecrizi, the Egyptian historian and topographer, who died A.D. 1444 ; but the evidence adduced is deprived of much (if not all) of its value by the fact that the passage in the Khitet relates (as I find by reference to a MS. copy of that work in the British Museum) to the Thousand Nights, *not* the Thousand and One Nights. The following is a translation of the passage in question:

"The Khalif El Aamir bi-ahkam-illah set apart, in the neighbourhood of the Chosen Garden of the island Er Rauzeh, a place for his beloved the Bedouin maid [Aaliyeh], which he named El Houdej. Quoth Ibn Saïd, in the book El Muhella bi-l-ashar, from the History of El Curtubi, concerning the traditions of the folk of the story of the Bedouin maid and Ibn Menah [Meyyah] of the sons of her uncle and what hangs thereby of the mention of the Khalif El Aamir bi-ahkam-illah, so that their traditions [or tales] upon the garden became like unto El Bettal and the *Thousand Nights* and what resembleth them."

El Aamir bi-ahkam-illah (A.D. 31101-2g) was the seventh Fatimite Khalif of Egypt, and had El Mecrizi mentioned the Thousand Nights and One Night, as he mentions the Thousand Nights, this would have been pretty conclusive proof of the existence of the former collection in the thirteenth, if not in the twelfth century; but, as the passage stands, the work referred to appears to be the lost Arabic version of the lost Hezar Efsan. El Mecrizi, who lived but a hundred and fifty years after Ibn Said, is much less likely than El Meccari, whom more than twice that time separated from the age of the

Granadan historian, to have erred in citing from the latter's work, and the reasons before stated in support of the theory that the Thousand and One Nights were originally composed in the fourteenth century appear to me to preclude the possibility that the discrepancy in the two passages quoted is owing to an error on the part of the author or copyist of the Khitet and that the work referred to in the latter as the Thousand Nights could have been the extant collection. The fact that Hajji Khelfeh, in his great Bibliographical Dictionary, composed at the end of the seventeenth century, names (and only names) the Thousand Nights and makes no mention of the Thousand and One, which has been adduced as an argument in favour of the probability of the identity of the two works, seems to me rather to tell against the theory, as it is evident, from the note appended to Galland's MS. and from El Meccari's history, that the collection known as the Thousand and One Nights bore that name long before Hajji Khelfeh's time, whilst the latter, with the proverbial contempt of the Oriental (and too often, indeed, of the European) savant for romantic literature, would have been almost certain to discard the comparatively modern Thousand and One Nights as a mere collection of "silly stories" (to quote the words of the author of the Fihrist apropos of the; Hezar Efsan), whilst conceding to the sheer antiquity of the Thousand Nights the barren honour of a bare mention in his learned pages.

The third question, to wit, the nationality of the person or persons to whom the original work is due, appears to me to have been generally confounded by the opponents of De Sacy's theory with that of the supposed reviser or editor of the completed collection, who is pretty generally allowed to have been an Egyptian, as suggested by the great French Orientalist, and no considerable objection appears to have been raised to the latter's conclusion that the original work was written in Syria; but from internal evidence it seems probable that one or more of its authors belonged to Irak Arabi or Mesopotamia and especially to Mosul, of the peculiar dialect of which place (as well as of Aleppo) the composition, in the opinion of competent judges, bears considerable trace, and the very objections raised, as before stated, to De Sacy's theory of the age of the original, on the ground that it is characterized by the employment of names and titles which were not in use in Egypt until a later period than that assigned by internal evidence to the work, but which appear to have been early employed in the disputed sense in the metropolitan or home provinces of the Khalifate, seem to me to tell strongly in favour of this latter hypothesis.

After its original composition, which (as I have said) I believe De Sacy to have been justified in assigning to the 14th century, the work appears to have been gradually swollen to its present bulk by the addition. at various times and by various hands, of tales and anecdotes of all kinds and drawn from a variety of sources, some having been expressly composed or rewritten for the purpose, whilst others are in whole or in part borrowed or adapted from independent works. Some of these additions, such as The Malice of Women (almost the only survival in which story of the old Book of Sindibad appears to be the framework, the short stories for the introduction of which it serves as an excuse being, with occasional exceptions, purely Arabic in character and bearing signs of a comparatively modern redaction, subject, of course, to the limitation implied in the absence of any mention of firearms or coffee), Jelyaad and Shimas (apparently an old Indian story which has undergone comparatively little alteration) and Seif el

Mulouk are proved to have existed in an independent form before the middle of the eleventh century. The Queen of the Serpents is also, in all probability, a very old story of Persian origin, largely altered (especially in the two incidental tales, the Adventures of Beloukiya and the Story of Janshah) by the Arab author or authors in the process of adaptation to Muslim manners and customs, and the History of Gherib and his brother Agib is, to all appearance, a rearrangement of some old Bedouin romance, notwithstanding the mention therein of arquebuses, by which word, in deference to lexicographic authority, I have rendered the modern Arabic *bundukiyat*, although it is not improbable that it was inserted by some modern copyist in the place of *benadic* or *kisiy el benadic*, pellet-bows, as opposed to quarrel-bows (*khetatif*). The word *bundukiyeh* (sing. of *bundukiyat*) means literally an implement for throwing pellets (*bunduc*) of clay or lead, and (although I cannot find any example of its use in any sense other than that of "gun") was doubtless originally synonymous with *caus el bunduc* (sing. of *kisiy el benadic*), a stone or pellet bow, as was the earlier name of the hand-gun, *bunduc*, so used metonymically for *caus el bunduc*. The names of the old *armes de jet* were, on the introduction of firearms, transferred to the new weapons, e.g. *midfaa*, a cannon, lit. a pushing implement, hence a spring and (by metonymy) the tube in which the spring worked, a spring-gun, even as the word *arquebuse* itself appears to have been originally applied to the *arbalest* or pellet-bow, *arcubalista*, from which latter word or the Italian arcibugio (bow-hole or tube) it is much more probable that it had its derivation than from the German *haken-büchse* or the Dutch *haekbus*. The Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor, though forming part of almost all known copies of the complete collection, are, as I have before observed, an independent work and are so treated by the Editor of the (unfinished) Calcutta edition of 1814-118, who inserts them at the end of his two hundredth (and last) night, dividing them, not into nights, but into seven tales or voyages, as in Galland's MS. Some Oriental scholars are of opinion that this tale is of Persian extraction and describes the voyages (attributed, as is often the case in popular tales, to a single person) of a colony of Persians, who are known to have of old settled on the East Coast of Africa, to Ceylon, Sumatra and other islands of the Indian Sea; but, whatever may have been the primitive derivation of the incidents described in the work known to us as the Voyages of Sindbad, it appears almost certain that it was suggested by and mainly composed of extracts and adaptations from the writings of well-known Arab geographers and cosmographers, such as El Edrisi, El Cazwini and Ibn el Werdi, who flourished respectively in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, and it may, therefore, in all likelihood, be attributed to an Arab author of (at earliest) the beginning of the fifteenth century. The History of King Omar ben Ennuman and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan, with the exception of the interpolated story of Taj el Mulouk and that (probably Egyptian) of Aziz and Azizeh, may probably be attributed to a native of Syria, where the memories of the Ommiade Khalifs (with anecdotes of whom, to the exclusion of their rivals and successors of the house of Abbas, the story abounds), long tenaciously survived, and appears to have been written before the introduction of firearms, although the gross anachronisms with which it swarms would seem to point to a later date. Uns el Wujoud affords internal evidence of Egyptian and comparatively modern origin and is one of the stories that are known to exist in an independent form. The same maybe said of The Rogueries of Delileh and the Adventures of Quicksilver Ali (practically one and the same tale), in which the

constant employment of Egyptian words, such as *kaak* (gimblet-cakes), *khelbous* (buffoon), *mehremeh* (for *mendil*, handkerchief), etc., etc., is especially notable. The mention of the firing of cannon, as a signal or salute, by the Genoese Corsair-captain in Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat brings the date of this story down to the fifteenth century, whilst the anachronisms (e.g. the making the tomb of the dervish-saint Abdulcadir el Jinani, who died in the latter part of the twelfth century, exist at Baghdad in the time of Haroun er Reshid), which characterize it, point to its having been composed at a comparatively recent period, when the memories of the time of which it treats had become confused, and the author would appear, from internal evidence, to have been a foreigner to Baghdad, probably an inhabitant of Cairo. Ardeshir and Heyat en Yofous, as well as its apparent prototype Taj el Mulouk, would seem to be a story of Persian origin, composed or remodelled shortly after the date of the original work by an Arab of the metropolitan provinces, and the same remark applies to Hassan of Bassora, which is apparently (in part at least) an adaptation of Janshah. Ali Shar and Zumurrud may perhaps also be referred to a like date and origin, but Taweddud is probably the work of some Egyptian savant of the Shafiy school, who used a conventional cadre of story, with the obbligato laying of scene in the court and time of Er Reshid, to exhibit his learning, the comparatively advanced views of anatomy, medicine, astronomy and other sciences pointing to a modern origin and the extracts (inter alia) from Coptic almanacks demonstrating, beyond reasonable doubt, the Egyptian nationality of the author. The City of Brass is in part a transcript or adaptation from Et Teberi and other Arabic historians and topographers, and the gross anachronisms which occur in it, (such, for instance, as the making the prae-Islamitic poet En Nabigheh edh Dhubyani a contemporay of the Ommiade Khalif Abdulmelik ben Merwan (A.D. 685-705) and attributing to the same time the discovery of an ancient tablet deploring the fate of "him who dwelt in Tenjeh (Tangiers) whilere," i.e. the last Edriside sovereign of Northern Africa, who was, early in the tenth century, dethroned and put to death, with all the members of his family, by the soi-disant Uehdi, Ubeidallah, founder of the Fatimite dynasty), point to its having been composed by a foreigner, probably a native of Spain or Northern Africa, at a comparatively late period. The mention, in Jouder and his Brothers, Kemerezzeman and the Jeweller's Wife and Marouf, of the Sheikh el Islam, an office said to have been first instituted by Mohammed II. in the fifteenth century, after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, brings the date of the composition of these stories down to the early part of the sixteenth century, after the establishment of the Turkish power in Egypt, and the second (Kemerezzeman and the Jeweller's Wife) is probably the latest of the three, coffee being mentioned in it with a frequency which shows that it had, at the time of the composition of the tale, been long in common use. In this latter story also occurs the only mention in the Nights of a watch and this may perhaps be taken as corroborative evidence of the comparative modernity of the tale, although the inference by no means follows as a matter of course. According to Beckmann, the first known mention of a watch occurs in a sonnet of the Italian poet Visconti in the last decade of the fifteenth century, but, as the Arabs early brought the clepsydra or water-clock to perfection (*teste* that said to have been presented by Er Reshid to Charlemagne and others yet more elaborate mentioned in Oriental works), and are known to have used weight-clocks striking the hours, at least as early as the

twelfth century, whereas such clocks were, as far as can be ascertained, not introduced into Europe till nearly two centuries later, to say nothing of the probability (supported by no despicable arguments) of their having been the first to apply the principle of the pendulum to horology, it seems only reasonable to suppose that they invented watches (or portable clocks) at a proportionately early period, say at the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. Abdallah ben Fazil and his Brothers (apparently a modern and greatly improved version or adaptation of the Eldest Lady's Story in Vol. I.) is also a story of non-Chaldxan authorship, as is manifest from mistakes such as the supposing El Kerkh (the well-known principal quarter of Baghdad) to be a city on the Euphrates, and the use of Egyptian words (such as *derfil* for *dukhes*, dolphin) stamps it as of Egyptian origin, whilst the mention of coffee establishes its comparative modernity. The same remarks apply to Ali Noureddin and the Frank King's daughter and the Haunted House in Baghdad, in both of which coffee is introduced, whilst the mention of tobacco (which was introduced into Europe by Jean Nicot in 1560 and the use of which did not probably become common in the East until (at earliest) the next century), stamps the (Egyptian) story of Aboukir and Abousir as the most modern of the whole collection. Zein el Mewasif is also an undoubtedly Egyptian and modern story, as well as the story of the Two Abdallahs, though the former appears to be somewhat less recent than the latter in date, whilst the Merchant of Oman, Ibrahim and Jemileh and Aboulhusn of Khorassan, all three of which are free from the gross anachronisms and historical and topographical errors that characterize so many of the stories whose scene is laid in Baghdad in the reign of Er Reshid and his immediate successors, may therefore, in the absence of any distinctive sign of foreign origin, be supposed to have been written by a native of one of the metropolitan provinces of the Khalifate, soon after the composition of the original work.

Many of the short stories and anecdotes of historical places and persons, Khalifs, Sultans, princes, princesses and men of letters and poets, appear to have been transcribed or adapted from the works of well-known historians and geographers and from such famous collections as the Helbeit el Kumeit and the Kitab el Aghani. For instance, the story of Yehya ben Khalid and the Forger (Vol. IV.) is found (in almost exactly the same terms) in Fekhreddin Razi, the anecdote of Omar ben el Khettab and the poor woman (Vol. II. p and 89) as well as the story of the Muslim Champion (Vol. V.) and others in Et Teberi, The City of Irem (Vol. III.) in El Mesoudi, The City of Lebtait (Vol. III.) in a Spanish-Arabic historian, The Khalif El Mamoun and the Pyramids (Vol. IV.) and The Justice of Providence (Vol. V.) as well as certain parts of the Voyages of Sindbad and Seif el Mulouk, in El Cazwini, Younus the Scribe (Vol. VI.), Musab ben ez Zubeir (Vol. IV.) and The Lovers of the Benou Udhreh (Vol. VI.) in the Kitab el Aghani, Ibrahim of Mosul and the Devil (Vol. VI.) in the Helbeit el Kumeit, The Devout Prince (Vol. IV.) in Ibn el Jauzi, Ibrahim ben el Mehdi and the Barber Surgeon (Vol. III.) in the Spanish historian Ibrahim el Andalousi, The Imam Abou Yousuf with Er Reshid and Jaafer (Vol. IV.) in the Mirat el Jenan, Abdurrehman the Moor's Story of the Roc (Vol. IV.) in Ibn el Werdi, etc., etc. To conclude this cursory sketch, I have but to mention that the fables and apologues, which form another considerable feature of the work, have apparently been added to the collection from

time to time and appear to be mostly derived from Greek, Persian and Indian sources, such as the Hitopadesa, the Fables of AEsop and Kelileh wa Dimneh.

II.

I have already cited Mr. Lane's opinion that the Thousand and One Nights can only be said to be borrowed from the Hezar Efsan in the sense in which the AEneid is said to be borrowed from the Odyssey; but even this comparison does not seem to me to do justice to the originality of the Arabic work, as there is certainly no trace in it of an influence exerted by any Persian writer in a similar manner to that exercised by Homer over Virgil; and putting aside the purely Arabic element, the foreign portion of the work appears to have been taken quite as freely from other sources, such as Greek, Indian and (perhaps) even Chinese and Japanese, as from Persian. Of this, well-known instances exist in the evident affinity of the incident of the cannibal giant in the Third Voyage of Sindbad and in Seif el Mulouk with the story of Ulysses and Polyphemus, and of the Arabian traveller's escape from the underground burial-place with the similar passage in Pausanias, relating the deliverance of the Messenian leader Aristomenes; in the stories of the Barber's Fifth Brother, the Prince and the Afrit's Mistress, the Merchant's Wife and the Parrot, the Fakir and the Pot of Butter, etc., which have been traced back to the Hitopadesa, Panchatantra, Kathasaritsagara, etc., in the apologue of the Hedgehog and the Pigeons, which has its apparent prototype in stories common to the Sanscrit, Chinese and Japanese languages, in the version of the legend of Susannah and the Elders, evidently borrowed from the Apocryphal Book of Daniel, in the fables of the Sparrow and the Eagle, the Cat and the Crow, the Falcon and the Birds, etc., apparently derived from AEsop (with whom, by the way, the celebrated Oriental fabulist Lucman or Lokman, quoted in the Koran, is supposed to be identical, though by some Arabic authors he is stated to have been a black slave, living in the time of David, and by others an Arab of the time of Job and a kinsman of that patriarch), and in numerous other fables, parables and legends of saints and hermits, evidently referable to Christian, Jewish, Brahman or Buddhist sources.

Nevertheless, numerous as are the instances in which the authors of the Thousand and One Nights have drawn upon foreign sources, the general tone of the work is distinctly and almost exclusively Arabic, and Arabic of Syria, Egypt and Chaldaea (or Irak-Arabi) ; whether the scene is laid in Persia, India, Anatolia, Armenia, Arabia, Greece, France, Genoa, Ceylon, Tartary, China or any other actually existing country or in such fantastic and imaginary portions of the ideal world as Jinnistan, the Mountain Caf, the White, Blue, Black or Green Countries, the Camphor, the Ebony, the Khalidan or the Wac-Wac Islands, and whether the persons who figure in the stories are men or Jinn, Afrits or Angels, Indians or Chinese, Christians or Jews, Magians or Idolaters, the scenery and manners described, the persons, things and way of thought and action are distinctly those of such cities as Baghdad, Bassora, Mosul and Cairo. Even in tales like the Queen of the Serpents, whose Persian origin is unmistakable and whose scene is laid in a remote prae-Mohammedan age, the Arab author has apparently most carefully everywhere substituted, for the traces of Zendic or Sabman formulas and doctrines that may be supposed to have existed in the original, the distinctive legends and catchwords of the Muslim faith and cosmogony, whilst avoiding a too obvious exposure to the charge of anachronism by such expedients as the substitution of

Solomon and Abraham for the greater prophet whose name is so constantly in the mouth of the personages of Arab fiction. And this adaptation of the scenes and persons of foreign countries to the illustration and glorification of Arab thought and Arab personality is still more accentuated by the fact that the men and manners represented are for the most part limited to those of the period of the early Baghdadi Khalifs of the house of Abbas, commencing with the second of that dynasty, Abou Jaafer el Mensour (A.D. 754) and practically ending with the sixteenth, his great-grandson's great-grandson Aboulabbas el Mutezid Billah, A.D. 892-922. Of this period far the most brilliant portion is that comprised between the years 786 and 809 and wholly occupied by the reign of the fifth Khalif of the house of Abbas, the celebrated Haroun er Reshid Billah, Aaron the Orthodox (or Well- advised) in or by God, *not* the just, as in most versions. (The first four successors of Mohammed, Aboubekr, Omar, Othman and Ali, are known as *el Khulfaa er rashidoun*, i.e. "the orthodox Khalifs.") This title was not, as is commonly supposed, adjudged to Haroun by his subjects in recognition of his qualities, as in the case of Louis XIII. of France, dubbed (wildly enough) "le Juste," but was conferred on him by his father El Mehdi, four years before his coming to the throne, on the occasion of his formal nomination as heir-presumptive (his brother El Hadi being heir-apparent) to the Khalifate, in conformity with the habit of the Khalifs, the ecclesiastical nature of whose dignity is peculiarly apparent in the hieratic titles assumed by them and answering to the *agnomina* bestowed (with the title of *Caesar*) by the Roman Emperors upon their successors-elect. Haroun, at all events, justified his title, for, if anything but just, he certainly was *orthodox*, at least in outward appearance, being a strict observer (in public at least) of the burdensome ritual of Muslim prayer and visiting offences against orthodoxy with the utmost rigour. He made eight or more pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina (all of which he is said to have performed *on foot*), attended by a splendid suite, and defrayed, on a princely scale, the expenses of some hundreds of pilgrims of the flower of the learned and orthodox of his time, in the years when he himself refrained from accomplishing the rite. He lavished money and gifts upon the inhabitants of the Holy Cities and expended infinite pains and wealth in assuring the pilgrim-track against the Bedouins. (His wife Zubeideh also was prodigal in her expenditure upon pilgrimages and the improvement and embellishment of Mecca and Medina, the great aqueduct that supplies the former with water having been built by her at an enormous cost.) In private, Er Reshid was a voluptuary, whom the prohibitions of religion availed not to restrain from the indulgence of his every passion: his physicians attributed his last illness and premature death to immoderate sexual commerce and there seems no doubt that he was an habitual wine-bibber, that is to say, a drinker to intoxication (after the manner of the Easterns, who conceive no other aim in the consumption of intoxicants than intoxication and have therefore always preferred spirits of various kinds, such as *seker* or date-brandy, etc., to wine) of strong drinks, and not, as pretended by his apologists, of the harmless *nebiz*, a very slightly fermented infusion of raisins, whose use is sanctioned by the example of Mohammed. The historian Shemseddin Yousuf Ibn el Jauzi (author of the great Chronicle, *Mirat ex Zeman*, the Mirror of Time) naively pleads, by way of excuse for Haroun's offending in this respect, that he never got drunk except behind a curtain, a trait which, if true, is sufficiently characteristic of the hypocritical nature of the Khalif.

This prince is undoubtedly the hero of "The Thousand and One Nights"; no other name occurs with a quarter of the same frequency and upon no other character is bestowed such wholesale laudation; indeed, we may well suspect, from the prominence that is given to him and the frequency with which anecdotes of his reign recur, that a portion of the collection was taken bodily from notes or compilations prepared at his especial instance, by the celebrated poets and musicians (for the two offices were frequently combined) who illustrated his court. Never was reputation so ill-deserved as that of the "good" Haroun er Reshid, who seems to have been a happy compound of the worst characteristics of such despots as Philip II. of Spain, Francis I. and Henry VIII., combining, with the superstitious bigotry of the first, the insatiable rapacity of the second and the ferocious sensuality of the third, a bloodthirsty savagery, peculiarly his own and only to be equalled by a king of Dahomey, and the almost hysterical sensitiveness to music, poetry and wit that distinguishes the Arab and has so often been found to exist side by side with the most complete lack of moral consciousness and the most refined excesses of unrelenting barbarity. This artistic sensibility he appears to have shared with the majority of his subjects (for there is no point in which there is such general consent in Arabic literature as the seemingly universal facility with which prince and peasant, merchant and Bedouin, courtier and water-carrier, alike appear to have at their command the resources of music and poetry, the poorest fisherman spontaneously reciting or composing the most elegant verses in moments of emotion or emergency and showing as exquisite a sensitiveness to the exercise of the two arts in others as the best educated and most refined noble) and to have carried to such an excess that the apposite repetition of a witty story or of a harmonious piece of verse, either remembered or extempore, frequently sufficed to secure for the astute reciter the highest honours at the Khalif's disposal or to save the greatest criminal or the most hated enemy from the consequences of the furious outbursts of passionate frenzy to which the monarch was subject. This characteristic it was which led him to encourage the arts and to select as his intimate companions the best-known poets and musicians of the time, (of whom two or three were always in attendance upon him at all hours of the day and night,) upon whom he lavished, with reckless prodigality, the immense sums he wrung from his subjects and from whose venal praises later historians drew the false data on which they moulded the imaginary character of the great and good Khalif of the "golden prime" of Islam, a character as fabulous as that of the Cid, whom modern research has proved to have been a sort of Schinderhannes-Dalgetty, a brutal and venal swashbuckler, "fighting for his own hand," under Arab or Spaniard, king or condottiere, as it paid him best, and solacing his leisures with the innocent pastimes of Jew-roasting and captive-baiting. Like Louis XIV., one of the most contemptible princes that ever sat on the throne of France, his memory is glorified by the borrowed lustre of the many men of genius and distinction who flourished in his reign. Quoth a MS. history cited by Dr. Weil, "Grave and pleasant people gathered to Er Reshid as to none other; the Barmecides the noblest men of the world, were his viziers; Abou Yousuf was his Cadi; Merwan Ibn Abi Hefseh, who in his century stood as high as earlier Jerir, was his poet ; Ibrahim el Mausili, unique in his time, his singer ; Zulzul and Bersoum his musicians."

Haroun's reign was indeed rich in great men; in addition to those named above and to the distinguished statesmen, generals and men of learning who surrounded him,

the poets En Nemri, Er Recashi, Dibil el Khuzai, Salih ben Tarif, El Asmal, Abou Nuwas, El Ettabi, Muslim ibn el Welid, Aboulatahiyeh, Abou Ubeideh and many others and the famous musician Isaac of Mosul, Ibn Jami and Mukharik adorned his court, and Baghdad swarmed with jurisconsults and legists of the highest distinction, who officiated as judges and to whose wise and impartial administration of the laws he owed his reputation for justice. He was the last Khalif who held, undiminished (with the exception of Spain, which was conquered A.D. 756 by the Ommiade Abdurrehman, who there founded the independent Khalifate of Cordova), the empire won by the early successors of Mohammed and the Benou Umeyyeh; even in his reign, the dominions of the Khalifate were curtailed by the defection of his governor of Africa, Ibrahim ibn Aghleb, and the revolt of the Alide Edris and the consequent foundation of independent kingdoms in Sicily and Northern Africa; under his successors province after province fell away, till the dominion of the last Abbaside Khalifs was practically limited to the city of Baghdad; hence his reign is not unnaturally chosen by the Muslim historian to represent the golden age of the Khalifate. Again, he was lavish in the decoration and enrichment of Baghdad (which under him attained its highest point of glory and prosperity), at the expense of the provinces, which were disaffected to him and continually in revolt against him; and these reasons, combined with the acts and character of the able ministers by whom the empire was ruled during the greater part of his reign and the fact that, like many other cruel and unscrupulous despots, he affected especially to cherish and be accessible to his humbler subjects, amply suffice to account for the most unmerited halo that has so long clung about his name.

As an instance of the enormous sums which Er Reshid lavished upon his favourites, during the heyday of their prosperity, a historian states that, in the accounts of the royal expenditure *for one year alone*, the sum of thirty millions of dirhems is entered as the aggregate amount bestowed, in money and goods, on Jaafer the Barmecide, and Fekhreddin Razi mentions (on the authority of the historian El Amrani), as occurring in a similar list shortly before Jaafer's death, the almost incredible item, "Four hundred thousand dinars for a dress of honour for the Vizier Jaafer ben Yehya," to be shortly followed by the entry, tragic in its terrible contrast, "Ten carats for naphtha and reeds for burning the body of Jaafer the Barmecide." Again, at the instance of his great vizier, he gave Abdulmelik es Salih a sum of four millions of dirhems; nor was he less lavish in his gifts to the poets, musicians and literati who tickled his intellectual palate with apropos recitals, songs, stories and pleasantries, as well as to the men of learning and chicane who extricated him by their ready wit from some dilemma of conscience or by a legal quibble enabled him to conciliate orthodoxy with the enjoyment of some prohibited pleasure. His wife Zubeideh was equally prodigal, especially in matters religious, having (according to Ibn el Jauzi) spent three millions of dinars, in the course of a single pilgrimage, in expenses, gifts to the learned men of Mecca and Medina and public works.

Notwithstanding his apparent liberality, Er Reshid was greedy and rapacious and procured the money for his prodigalities by a system of the most unscrupulous robbery and extortion. The legitimate income of the Khalifate is said to have been about twenty-six million dinars, yet so far did the treasures he accumulated, by fair means or

foul, under the mask of extravagant liberality, exceed the wealth he flung away upon his caprices that he is said to have left nearly a thousand millions of dinars, besides a fabulous quantity of precious stones and other effects (among the rest, thirty thousand beasts of burden, a hundred camel-loads of jewels and twenty thousand male slaves) representing, in all probability, a much larger sum; and these enormous riches it is evident from the accounts of Arabian chroniclers that he amassed by the vilest and most oppressive means. "He overwhelmed the people," says a modern historian, "with taxes and imposts and not infrequently despoiled his generals and governors of the wealth they had gained in his service." Abdulmelik es Salih, mentioned above, whom, at Jaafer's prpmpting, he had appointed governor of Egypt and married to his daughter, he shortly afterward, on pretence of his intention to aspire tot he Khalifate, stripped of all his property and cast into prison, where he remained till the death of the tyrant, when the latter's successor, El Amin, released him and made him governor of Syria, thus manifesting the utter groundlessness of the accusation. Mohammed ben Suleiman ben Ali, a distant cousin of the Khalif, died leaving property worth sixty millions of dirhems, apparently inherited from his father, and Haroun seized upon the whole estate, though near relatives came forward to claim it, justifying his high-handed dealing with the futile pretext that he had proof of the deceased's intention to revolt against his authority and was therefore entitled to confiscate his property. Again, the Viceroy of Khorassan, Ali ben Isa el Mahani, had, by oppression and extortion, wrung immense sums from his subjects, which coming to the ears of the Khalif, he summoned the offending governor before himself, but, instead of compelling him to make restitution, he compounded with him for the payment of a heavy bribe and continued him in his government. This criminal transaction he several times renewed, till, at last, finding probably that Ibn Mahan became more and more difficult to squeeze, he seized on his person by treachery and made himself master of his wealth (said to have amounted to eighty millions of dirhems in gold and plate alone, besides fifteen hundred camel-loads of precious stuffs), all of which, instead of restoring to its lawful owners, he applied to his own uses. These are a few instances only of the greed and rapacity with which his left hand still took back all and more than his right had given and of the criminal meanness by which he too often filled his treasuries, and so notorious, indeed, were the extortion and tyranny to which he owed his riches, that the celebrated ascetic Fuzail ibn Iyaz refused, though at the risk of his head, to accept a gift that the Khalif wished to bestow on him, alleging, as the ground of his refusal, that the giver's wealth had not been honestly come by.

The instances of his cruelty and treachery, that confront us in Muslim records, are no less numerous and flagrant; and the words of Sismondi, in his unsparing condemnation of the monster Alexander Borgia, we are warranted by historical evidence in applying to Er Reshid, who seems indeed to have been "a man whom no good faith bound in his engagements, no sentiment of justice checked in his policy, no compassion moderated in his vengeance." Every means was good to him to destroy his enemies, whether personal or political, and he thought nothing of violating the most solemn oaths, when he desired to rid himself of a hated or suspected person, hated and suspected often upon grounds that owed their existence to his own jaundiced imagination. He began his reign by putting to death the Amir Abou Isma, one of his brother's counsellors, nominally because he was one of those who had persuaded El

Hadi to proclaim his own son Jaafer heir-apparent to the Khalifate, to the exclusion of himself and in contravention of the will of their father El Mehdi, but really from one of the pettiest motives of personal spite, because the unlucky Abou Isma had, on one occasion, given Jaafer the precedence over Haroun, when the two princes were about to pass over a bridge. There can be little doubt that he was an accessory to the murder of his brother El Hadi by the contrivance of their mother Kheizuran ; but this latter crime may be said to have been committed in self-defence and therefore to some extent excusable, as El Hadi had resolved upon the assassination of Haroun, to remove him from his son's path. Another of the earliest acts by which he signalized his accession was to procure the poisoning of the Alide Edris ben Abdallah, who, after the failure of his kinsman Hussein ben Ali's attempt to seize the Khalifate at Medina and the death of the latter at the battle of Fakh (A.D. 786), fled to North-western Africa and there founded the Edriside kingdom of *Mughred* or Morocco; and not content with the success of his murderous plot, he caused put to death an Egyptian postmaster, Wezih by name, who had sheltered the fugitive and furthered his escape to Morocco, rewarding the poisoner, Shemmekh, with the latter's post. The Alide Mousa ben Jaafer, one of the most venerated elders of the Shiah sect, he cast into prison and caused to be secretly murdered, because, on a certain occasion, when both were visiting the Prophet's tomb at Medina, after Er Reshid had greeted Mohammed with "Peace be on thee, O cousin!" Mousa followed suit with "Peace be on thee, O father!" as was indeed his right, and his treatment of Yehya ben Abdallah, another descendant of Ali, was yet more dastardly and barbarous. Yehya, who was the uncle of Hussein ben Ali above mentioned and fought by his side at the disastrous battle of Fakh, fled, after the loss of that day, to Media, where he established himself so strongly and became so formidable that Er Reshid despatched against him El Fezl the Barmecide, who, with his usual politic mansuetude, succeeded in inducing the rebel to renounce his pretensions in favour of the regnant prince, on promise of fair treatment by the latter. A formal treaty, embodying the terms of compromise, being entered into and solemnly ratified by Er Reshid, Yehya proceeded to Baghdad and surrendered himself to the Khalif, who received him with all the external signs of distinguished honour, but shortly after, on pretext of some formal flaw in the contract, discovered by the crown lawyers (from whom the declaration is said to have been extorted by main force), cast the unlucky Alide into prison, committing him to the custody of Jaafer. The generous Barmecide, revolted at his master's signal ill faith, took pity on the prisoner and connived at his escape; but Er Reshid afterwards recaptured him and again cast him into prison, where he caused him to be secretly murdered, He put to death Abou Hureireh, Viceroy of Mesopotamia, because he had suffered defeat at the hands of the Kharijites, and caused the Khuramiyeh heretics, followers of the Persian socialist Mezdek, on the suppression of their revolt in Azerbijan by Abdallah ibn Malik, to be put to the sword and their women and children sold as slaves; nor was it without extreme difficulty that the sanguinary monarch was prevented from exterminating the inhabitants of Mosul and razing that great city to the ground, after the putting down of a popular rising led by Ettal ben Sufyan. During his last illness, having captured Beshr ibn Leith, brother of the rebel Refia ben Leith, who had established himself in Transoxania, he caused him to be dissected alive by a butcher, whom he summoned for that purpose, and bidding his attendants lay before him the fourteen pieces into which the unfortunate prisoner

had been divided, gloated over them till he fell into a swoon. This was the last public act of the "good" Haroun er Reshid, who expired three days later, after having, almost with his latest breath, ordered the execution, upon some trifling occasion of offence, of his physician the Christian Jebril (Gabriel) ibn Bekhtiyeshou. Jebril was however saved from his threatened doom by the death of his ferocious master in the night.

These are some of the enormities committed by the "good" Khalif, and these, although they sink into insignificance compared with the fiendish barbarity and ingratitude of his treatment of the Barmecides (an account of which I reserve for another page), suffice to show that he can lay no claim to the attributes of goodness, generosity and justice with which popular tradition has so persistently credited him, and I confess that, for my own part, I cannot discover any reason why he should be gratified, with the name of "Great," except upon the principle is accordance with which that title is awarded to the contemptible Louis XIV., whose only claim to greatness lay in the fact that great men lived and worked (and often starved) whilst he ate and drank and dallied with his titled harlots. In reality, he appears to have been a morose and fantastic despot, pursued, like Philip II. of Spain, by the spectres of his own crimes, tormented at once by superstitious remorse and jealous suspicion, which, while oppressing his waking hours and troubling his natural rest with the tortures of gloomy and foreboding thought, again and again impelled him to commit anew the misdeeds whose recollection embittered his existence and to deprive himself, at their malignant instance, of the only men about him on whom he could reckon for fidelity and ability combined. His fits of gloomy depression and his chronic restlessness by night and day are constantly referred to in "The Thousand and One Nights," and it was in endeavouring to shake off these haunting miseries that he seems to have met with the many adventures that are recorded of him and of which a considerable portion may fairly be supposed to have been invented and arranged for him by the distinguished poets who were his constant associates.

One of the latter, Abou Nuwas ibn Hani, is a curious figure in the history of literature. A debauchee of the most debased and sensual order, he, nevertheless, in addition to his undoubtedly high poetical genius, too often prostituted to the vilest purposes, seems to have been remarkably free from the servility that generally distinguishes the courtly poet and to have cherished a rude but real love of independence and a sense of the beauties of freedom which led him to prefer the rough licence of the wine-shop and the pleasure-garden to all the luxurious allurements of the Court; and we find the Khalif, who set on his society a value equivalent to the difficulty he found in procuring it, often reduced to all sorts of expedients to drag him from his favourite haunts. Like the great anacreontic poet of early mediaeval China, Li-tai-pe (with whom he was nearly contemporary), the messengers of his royal master were frequently compelled to force him from the taverns, where he revelled with his low associates, for the purpose of amusing the Khalif in his fits of depression or of advising him upon state and general matters; and long before Walter de Mapes or Hafiz, he declared his intention of ending his days in the exclusive worship of the divinities of wine and pleasure, rhyming in Arabian verse his version of "Mihi est propositum in taberna mori." Nor in this avowed devotion to the forbidden delights of conviviality was he alone among the denizens of the court of the Khalifs. Baghdad, in

the reign of Er Reshid, seems to have been preeminently a city of pleasure. Thither flocked from all parts of the Oriental world the most noted and capable poets, musicians and artificers of the time; and the first thought of the Arabian or Persian craftsman who had completed some specially curious or attractive specimen of his art was to repair to the capital of the Muslim world, to submit it to the Commander of the Faithful, from whom he rarely failed to receive a rich reward for his labours. Surrounded by pleasure-gardens and groves of orange, tamarisk and myrtle, refreshed by an unfailing luxuriance of running streams, supplied either by art or nature, the great city on the Tigris is the theme of many an admiring ode or laudatory ghazel; and the poets of the time all agree in describing it as being, under the rule of the great Khalif, a sort of terrestrial paradise of idlesse and luxury, where, to use their own expressions, the ground was irrigated with rose-water and the dust of the roads was musk, where flowers and verdure overhung the ways and the air was perpetually sweet with the many-voiced song of birds, and where the chirp of lutes, the dulcet warble of flutes and the silver sound of singing houris rose and fell in harmonious cadence from every corner of the streets of palaces that stood in vast succession in the midst of their gardens and orchards, gifted with perpetual verdure by the silver abundance of the Tigris, as it sped its arrowy flight through the thrice-blest town.

Baghdad, indeed, was in many respects emphatically a "città cortigiana," a sort of Vienna or Bucharest of the olden time, carried to the higher evolution correspondent with the more sensuous influences of the luxuriant East; and the state of public morality there was naturally of the laxest. Especially was this the case with the higher classes. Drunkenness and debauchery of the most uncompromising kind prevailed amongst them in despite of the precepts of the Koran; and men and women seemed to vie with each other in refinements of luxury and dissipation. As was the case in a period that offers no small analogy to that of which I speak, the epoch of the Roman decadence, the women of the upper classes, to whom was apparently allowed an amount of liberty, or rather licence, curiously at variance with our Western ideas of Eastern domestic polity, appear to have been especially corrupt; and many are the tales of their licentious habits and adventures found in the Thousand and One Nights, reminding us of the Memoirs of Casanova, although almost always redeemed by touches of pathos, poetry or romance, which are wanting to the tatter's dry and unattractive records of common-place galanterie. The Story of the Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad, that of the Barber's Second Brother and several others contained in the old version, give some idea of the licence of the time, and examples are still more abundant and circumstantial in the tales that compose the comparatively unknown portion of the collection.

As may well be supposed, under these circumstances, the upper classes of the time were not characterised by any especial fervour of religious devotion. Notwithstanding the fanatical orthodoxy of the Khalif and of his chief wife and cousin, Zubeideh, a woman as superstitious, as cruel and as cultivated as himself, the general religious sentiment of the Court of Baghdad appears to have been a sort of refined atheism, borrowed from Persia and having in all probability some affinity with Soufi quietism, which, whilst conforming in outward matters to Muslim observances, was yet, in the spirit of the Persian usage expressed by the word *ketman* (concealment), perfectly well

understood and recognised. This tendency had apparently its origin with the illustrious Barmecide (properly Bermeki) family; and their opinions, whilst not interfering with a professed conformity to the tenets of Islam, appear to have been shared by most of the great officers and nobles of the kingdom, in the same manner as the religious doctrine known as Bâbism is said at the present day to underlie the higher ranks of modern Persian society. Nevertheless, the lower and middle classes of the people were still profoundly and fanatically attached to the Faith of the Unity of God; nor were examples of Mohammedan fervour and zealotry wanting that would not have misbeseemed the strictest epochs of religious enthusiasm. Er Reshid himself was completely under ecclesiastical control, especially that of the Chief Imam of his reign, the Sheikh Abou Yousuf, who seems to have been more of a courtier than a priest and to have ingratiated himself with the Khalif by his audacious adroitness (of which at least one instance finds mention in The Thousand and One Nights) in twisting the interminable subtleties of Mohammedan ritual and dogma to suit the monarch's varying caprices and inclinations; and one of the most salient examples of ascetic devotion that mark the history of Islam is recorded in the person of the Khalif s own son, who, no doubt impelled by disgust at his father's cruelty and rapacity, as well as at the licence of his luxurious court, became a hermit, saint or "friend of God" (as the Muslims have it), under the circumstances detailed in the story of The Devout Prince.

Under Haroun er Reshid, Baghdad was undoubtedly the metropolis of Muslim civilisation. It is said to have been as populous as modern Paris, and the rapid growth of its manufactures and the immense trade attracted from all parts of the world by the presence of a brilliant and prodigal court, early resulted in making the great body of its population well-to-do and contented. It was one of the most orderly and well-governed cities in the world of its day, and such was the comparative quiet and security for life and property that reigned within its walls, (thanks to the astute administration of the Barmecide Viziers, who anticipated Fourier's doctrine of the "passionel" treatment of criminal inclinations, carrying out the theory of "set a thief to catch a thief" with the greatest success and effectually keeping under roguery and crime by employing certain selected rascals of high capacity, such as Ahmed ed Denef, Hassan Shouman and Ali Zibec, mentioned in the Thousand and One Nights, as subordinate prefects of police to coerce and checkmate their former comrades,) that the city was generally known by the sobriquet of *Dar es Selam* or Abode of Peace.

It was, indeed, to the great statesmen of the house of Bermek that the reigns of the early Abbaside Khalifs owed almost the whole of the prosperity and brilliancy that distinguished them. Of an ancient and noble Persian family, Khalid ben Bermek, the first of the house that appears upon the scene of Arabian history, became Vizier and Minister of Finance to the founder of the Abbaside dynasty, Aboulabbas the Blood-shedder, and after serving his successor El Mensour in a like capacity, was appointed to the government of Mosul and Azerbijan, which post he held till his death. Aboul abbas was the first to institute the office of Vizier and Khalid was the earliest of the great ministers who ruled the immense dominions of the Khalifs with almost regal power. During his long tenure of office he practically governed the empire, the Khalifs of the house of Abbas taking little personal part in the burdensome task of administration. He appears to have shown the highest talents for government and was particularly

successful in consolidating and setting in order the finances. It was under his direction that the city of Baghdad was built in the reign of El Mensour, when that prince elected to abandon the former capital of the Khalifs, Damascus, for a spot less impregnated with the memories of the fallen dynasty, and it is to his wise, just and liberal rule that the rapid prosperity of the new capital must be ascribed. According to El Mesoudi, Khalid surpassed, in prudence, bravery, learning, generosity and noble qualities and accomplishments, even his more celebrated descendants.

His son Yehya we first meet with as governor of Armenia under El Mensour. Under the tatter's successor, El Mehdi, he became Secretary of State and was entrusted by the Khalif with the charge of his son Haroun's education. Yehya was the foster-father of this prince, who was born nearly at the same time as his own son El Fezl, and an exchange of infants for some reason took place between the mothers, Kheizuran suckling Fezl and Zubeideh (Yehya's wife) Haroun. The two boys thus became foster-brothers (a quasi-relation which, though merely nominal in Europe, is invested by Mohammedan law with rights and obligations nearly akin to those of actual brotherhood), and in consequence of this and of the semi-paternal authority exercised over him by Yehya, in his capacity of governor, Haroun was wont to call the latter father. It was to the prudence and boldness with which, during the short and stormy reign of the crackbrained tyrant El Hadi, Yehya played the difficult and dangerous part of governor and adviser of the heir presumptive (a role to which he clave with extraordinary fidelity and magnanimity, under the most discouraging circumstances), that the latter owed his throne and indeed his life, and the Barmecide came near to paying dear for his loyalty to the youth whom his royal father had committed to his care, El Hadi, exasperated by the courage and skill with which he opposed his scheme for substituting his own son Jaafer for Haroun in the succession, having cast him into prison, where he would certainly have perished, but for the opportune intervention of Kheizuran, whose favourite he was and who procured the timely assassination of the Khalif. Immediately after El Hadi's death, Yehya was released and at once applied himself to securing the accession of his pupil, whom he succeeded in seating on the throne, without serious opposition. Haroun, thus become Khalif, hastened to acknowledge his obligations to Yehya and without delay appointed him his Chief Vizier, handing him (in token of investment with the executive power) his signet-ring, with the words, "My dear father, it is owing to the blessings and good fortune that attend you and to your excellent management that I am now seated on this throne, wherefore I confide to you the direction of affairs." Yeyha was the wisest statesman, the most benevolent and magnanimous man of his time. Quoth Ibn Khellikan, "He was perfect in talent, judgment and noble qualities, highly distinguished for wisdom, nobleness of mind and elegance of language." He is called by a contemporary man of letters "the president of the Divan (or Board) of generous actions," and Oriental writers agree in ascribing to him all noble qualities that can combine in a man to compel the love and reverence of his kind. From the time of Haroun's accession to that of the horrible catastrophe which extinguished the house of Bermek (i.e., — with an insignificant interregnum, during which, for some unexplained cause, El Fezl ben Rebya, the bitter and unscrupulous foe of the Barmecides, was entrusted with the Vizierate, — from A.D. 786 to A.D. 803), Yehya and his sons Fezl and Jaafer wielded, with practically uncontrolled authority, the sovereignty of the East, Er Reshid (who

seems from the moment of his sudden elevation to the throne to have devoted himself well-nigh exclusively to the curious mixture of debauchery and religious observances by which he endeavoured to conciliate his passion for all kinds of pleasure with the superstitious regard for the external appearances of orthodoxy that was no less pronounced a feature of his character and to have concerned himself little with the business of government), entirely devolving on them the executive power and endorsing all their acts and orders with a servility of which some singular instances are given in Muslim records. By his wise and high-minded administration, the great Vizier completely reorganized the vast empire of the Khalifs, still somewhat shattered by the intestine disorders that had troubled the last years of the Ommiade princes and the reigns of their immediate successors and raised it to a height of general prosperity which was the wonder of the world. He regulated the incidence of the taxes on a principle that, whilst benefiting the treasury by the increased return it occasioned, alleviated the burdens of the poorer classes, established a complete system of posts all over the empire, expended a great part of the revenue upon all sorts of magnificent public works, making roads and building mosques, caravanserais, bridges, etc., etc., on every side, improved and perfected the organization of the police, encouraged agriculture and industry, procuring the introduction and cultivation of new arts and dividing the various crafts into guilds or syndicates, charged with the office of regularizing trade and the prevention of fraud, and by proper regulations immensely augmented the yield of the mines and other sources of natural wealth, organized public education on a liberal basis, founding schools, colleges and libraries in profusion and extending the most lavish encouragement to scholars, literati and men of science, native and foreign, continuing and fostering the splendid civilisation of the Persians and Graeco-Latins and revivifying its partial effeteness with the quickening energy of the Arab genius; in short, he established and set in working order all the various and elaborate machinery of government that is necessary to the political and social economy of a great and heterogeneous empire, and founding law, order and justice everywhere, brought the dominions of the Khalifate to a pitch of civilisation and prosperity, moral and material, which Europe did not even begin to emulate till many centuries later and of which no country of that time, with the exception, perhaps, of China, then in the full flower of its civilisation, under the great dynasty of the Thangs, could offer even a partial example.

Yehya's four sons, Fezl, Jaafer, Mohammed and Mousa, were renowned for the same qualities and virtues as their illustrious father and all ordered their lives and actions in the spirit of his magnanimous saying, "This life is a series of vicissitudes and wealth is but a loan; let us, then, follow the models offered by our predecessors and leave a good example to those who come after." The Khalif el Mamoun is reported to have said, "Yehya ben Khalid and his sons had none [to equal them] in ability, in culture, in liberality and in bravery: it was well said by a poet, 'The sons of Yehya are four in number, like the elements: when put to the test, they will be found the elements of beneficence.' Quoth the poet Merwan ibn Abi Hefseh, 'The power of doing good is in the hands of princes; but the noble Barmecides did good and harmed not.' 'Their hands,' says Mohammed ibn Munadhir, 'were created for nought but deeds of beneficence and their feet for the boards of the pulpit;' and quoth El Atawi, 'The generous Barmecides learned beneficence and taught it to the human race; when they

planted, they watered, and they never let the edifice they founded fall into ruin; when they conferred favours on mankind, they clothed their bounties in a raiment that endured for ever.'" The romantic generosity of the Barmecides it would, indeed, be difficult to exaggerate. Incredible as the instances of their liberality given in the Thousand and One Nights may appear, they are but one or two of hundreds of similar and well-authenticated anecdotes of the munificence of this truly princely house, and it is hardly too much to say that the history of the world makes no mention of a family every member of which was distinguished by so extraordinary a combination of the noblest qualities of heart and head. No contemporary historian or poet can name them without breaking out into passionate praise of their nobleness and as passionate lament for their unmerited fate. "Alas for the sons of Bermek," cries Salih ben Tarif, "and the happy days of their power! With them the world was as a bride; but now it is widowed and bereft of its children." "The Barmecides," says Fekhreddin Razi, "were to their time as a plume to the brow, as a crown to the head. The world was requickened under their administration and the empire carried to the highest pinnacle of splendour. They were the refuge of the afflicted, the providence of the unfortunate." And all who speak of them echo the same strain. Each of the four sons was distinguished by some special quality, in addition to the virtues which were the general appanage of the family, and the only weak point in their character appears to have been the noble fault they shared with Julius Caesar and Napoleon III. and to which they, like their compeers of the West, in all probability owed their ruin, i.e. the generous magnanimity and high-souled mansuetude, which led them to regard with heroic indifference the miserable plots of the enviers and calumniators, the assassins and intrigants, the "fishers in troubled water," the Fezl ben Rebyas and Mohammed ibn Abi Leiths, the Cassii and Cascae, the Gambettas and Rocheforts, the professional seditionists and Bulgarian-Atrocity-mongers of their time, and forbade them to crush, by severe but just and necessary measures of repression, which, timely employed, might probably have preserved them for the general benefit of humanity, the dastardly intrigues which resulted in their destruction.

Uniformly gifted as were the four sons of Yehya, Jaafer appears to have surpassed his brothers in mental power and accomplishments, whilst in no way yielding to them in all the virtues and nobilities for which they were conspicuous, and to have been distinguished, in particular, by a sweetness of temper and a chivalrous courtesy of demeanour, which Fezl, eminently good and noble as he was, lacked, of his own confession, he having a certain abruptness of manner that made him, though more in appearance than in reality, savour somewhat of the *Burbero Benefice* (the beneficent curmudgeon) of Goldoni.

Jaafer was indeed a remarkable and attractive figure in the history of the time. To the virtues of liberality, beneficence and hospitality that distinguished almost to excess all the members of his illustrious house, he added accomplishments and qualities which were peculiarly his own and which make him by far the most loveable and attractive character of the many that live for us in The Thousand and One Nights. "In the high rank which he attained," says Ibn Khellikan, "and the great power which he wielded, in loftiness of spirit and in the esteem and favour shown him by the Khalif, he stood without a rival. His disposition was generous, his looks encouraging, his

demeanour kind; his liberality and munificence, the richness and prodigality of his donations are too well known to require mention." He had been educated with Er Reshid, and for some years after the latter's accession, served him as secretary of petitions, an arduous office (especially in the case of a monarch whose peculiar pretension it was to be always accessible to any of his subjects who had a request to make or a grievance to state), which he seems to have filled with the utmost brilliancy, showing, in particular, an intimate acquaintance with the bewildering subtleties of Mohammedan law and jurisprudence. He was a man of exquisite culture and was accounted the best stylist of his day. He seems, indeed, to have been possessed, in a remarkable degree, of all the accomplishments of his time; and in particular, his knowledge of and power of composition in classical Arabic was so extensive and so elegant that amateurs of the pure literary style are said to have purchased, for their weight in gold, the scraps of parchment on which, as secretary of petitions, he had been wont to inscribe his decisions. His knowledge of law and jurisprudence was phenomenal and in these branches of learning he had been the favourite pupil of the celebrated Abou Yousuf, the first legist of his time. "He expressed his thoughts with great elegance and was remarkable for his eloquence and command of language; it is recorded that one night he wrote, in presence of Er Reshid, upwards of a thousand decisions on as many memorials that had been presented to the Khalif and that not one of these deviated in the least from what was warranted by the law."

Universally gifted, he put down, by fair means, the troublesome tribal war in Syria, and as viceroy of all the provinces of the East, restored peace and good government to the sorely mismanaged African provinces, whilst his brother Fezl performed the like office for Khorassan and the Western provinces of the empire. He educated the young prince El Mamoun, who never forgot his wise and noble teachings and lived to honour them by proving the best and most high-minded monarch of the house of Abbas, and being, on the death of the queen-mother Kheizuran, appointed chief Vizier, continued during the remainder of his life to exercise the functions of that high office with as much wisdom, justice, generosity and benefit to the kingdom as his father, brother and grandfather. Compassionate and forgiving almost to excess, no trait is recorded of him that shows any bitterness against personal enemies, nor does he ever appear to have availed himself of his immense power to punish the attempts that were perpetually made to injure him by men jealous of his character and position. On the contrary, such was his mansuetude and sweetness of nature, that he was always ready to intercede for the culprits, in cases where they had exposed themselves to the Khalif's displeasure. His strength of mind and moral courage were no less remarkable than his patience; the innate nobility of the man shines out in every act and every word; and he was always ready, often at the imminent risk of his own life, to intervene between the royal tiger whom he served and the unfortunate people under his control. Kindly, generous and charitable to excess and at the same time a firm, just and far-sighted administrator, he was passionately beloved by the people of Baghdad, whose miseries he spared no pains to alleviate and whose general prosperity may, in no small degree, be attributed to the untiring courage and self-sacrifice with which he was always ready to shield them, to the utmost of his power, from the ferocity and rapacity of his royal master.

Fezl, as the foster-brother of Er Reshid, was originally his most intimate friend and the companion of his private pleasures, being his constant associate in the carouses in which the Khalif passed his evenings, in the midst of his favourite women and musicians. For some unexplained reason, he appears to have become converted to the renunciation of such enjoyments as wine-bibbing and listening to music and tale-telling (forbidden to the strict Muslim) and to have abruptly withdrawn from the intimacy of the Khalif and forsworn association in his pleasures. This conduct on Fezl's part being probably construed by the umbrageous monarch as an implied censure on himself, he transferred his especial favour to Jaafer, a man of more savoir-vivre and easier composition than his austerer brother and more richly gifted with those social qualities of wit and gay and gallant humour so highly prized by Eastern princes in the companions of their pleasures; and he presently further emphasized his displeasure with Fezl by transferring the seals of government from him to Jaafer, as soon as the death of his mother Kheizuran, whose favourite Fezl was, left him at liberty to do so, appointing the deposed minister, whose services were too necessary to the empire to be altogether dispensed with, to the most important extra-metropolitan post at his disposal, i.e. the government of Khorassan, an office involving the administration of nearly one-half of the dominions of the Khalifate. The manner in which this transfer of power was received by the Barmecides, as told by Ibn Khellikan, is strikingly illustrative of the magnanimity of the members of that illustrious house and their invincible attachment to one another. According to the famous biographer, Er Reshid said to Yehya, "Dear father, I wish to transfer to Jaafer the signet now held by my brother Fezl. I am ashamed to write that order to Fezl: do it for me." Yehya accordingly wrote to Fezl, saying, "The Commander of the Faithful commands that the signet be passed from thy right hand to thy left;" to which Fezl made answer in these words: "I hear and obey the word of the Commander of the Faithful concerning my brother. No favour is lost to me, which goes from me to Jaafer, and no rank is taken from me, when he receives it." On hearing this reply, Jaafer exclaimed, "What an admirable being is my brother! How noble is his soul!"

Naturally enough, Jaafer and his brilliant kinsmen were the objects of the bitterest jealousy and hatred to the courtiers and ecclesiastics of the day, — to the former especially for their Persian origin and for their commanding talents and popularity, and to the latter more particularly for their tolerance and their well-known, or at least shrewdly-suspected, adherence to some form of Persian Rationalism, — and many were the efforts, supported by lies and calumnies of the most unscrupulous character, made by the enemies of the Bermekis to induce Er Reshid to withdraw his favour from them. These were long unsuccessful and would doubtless have continued to prove so (for, morose and passionate despot as he was, Er Reshid seems to have cherished a real affection for the brave and brilliant companion of his youth and to have estimated, at his real value to himself, the just, wise and gentle counsellor of his mature years), but for a circumstance that quickened the smouldering distrust and jealousy of the tyrant into an irrepressible outburst of fury and caused him to commit an act of which he afterwards bitterly repented, when (in Arabic phrase) repentance might no longer profit him. The circumstance in question was of a curious character. Jaafer appears to have, by the brilliancy of his conversational and other accomplishments, rendered himself so indispensable to the Khalif as a companion, as well as a minister, that the latter could

not bear to be an hour without his company and for the purpose of having him always within call, insisted upon his occupying apartments within the private portion or serai of the palace; but, as royal etiquette, to which Er Reshid was devoutly attached, forbade the extension of this favour to any but actual members of the royal family, he conceived the plan of marrying Jaafer, pro formâ, to his favourite sister, the Princess Abbaseh. The marriage was concluded, but the Khalif, with the unreasonable pride of an Eastern despot, forbade the parties to cohabit, an injunction which Jaafer himself made no effort to disobey. Abbaseh, however, was an exceedingly beautiful woman and she and Jaafer (who was then in the prime of manhood and one of the handsomest men of his day) fell passionately in love with each other, nor was it long before mutual desire prevailed to overleap the prohibited bounds. The most probable account of the way in which this came about seems that of Jafei (the author of the Mirat el Jenan), who represents the princess as having prevailed, by mingled threats and persuasions, upon Jaafer's mother Ettabeh to present her to him, whilst under the influence of wine, in the guise of the female slave of whom it was her habit to make her son a gift every Friday. This was accordingly done, and Abbaseh, after having passed some time in Jaafer's company, discovered herself to him, whereupon alarm dispelled the fumes of the wine and he sought out his mother and said to her, "Mother, thou hast ruined me." His words were prophetic. Abbaseh proved with child and gave birth to twins, who were at once despatched to Mecca and there reared in secret by two devoted female attendants. The secret was kept from Er Reshid for about a twelvemonth, but was at last discovered to him in consequence of an incident peculiarly characteristic of the East. Abbaseh, with the unreflecting passion of Eastern ladies of high rank, beat one of her women with whom she was vexed, and the girl, in her spite, revealed the fatal secret to Zubeideh, who seized an early opportunity of gratifying her rancour against both her husband's favourite sister and the Barmecides (especially Yehya, who, as intendant of the palace, enforced the rules of harem discipline with a strictness that was far from pleasing to the imperious Sultana), by repeating it to Er Reshid. Haroun's mind would already appear to have been poisoned against the Barmecides, not only by the inherent jealousy of a mean nature against the overwhelming superiority of the family in all qualities that confer distinction on their possessors, but by the enormous popularity which their good deeds had won them and the venomous insinuations of those miserable reptiles that thrive by calumny and treachery, whose role has always been so considerable in Oriental, even more than in European, courts, and by whose reports he was (or feigned to be) persuaded that Yehya and his sons aspired to oust himself from the Khalifate, an accusation for which no shadow of reason appears. Other subjects of displeasure are mentioned by historians as probable reasons for his treatment of the Barmecides, such as the conduct of Fezl above mentioned and that of Jaafer in releasing the unhappy betrayed Alide Yehya; but there can be no doubt that Haroun's chief and indeed only reason was his jealousy of the great family to whom he owed life, kingdom and renown. As to this, contemporary authorities are unanimous; according to Ibn Khellikan, Said ben Salim (a well-known grammarian and traditionist of the time), when asked what crime the Barmecides had committed, answered, "Of a truth, they did nothing to warrant Er Reshid's conduct towards them; but their day had been long and that which continues long becomes irksome. There were persons of the best of men, who were fatigued with the length of the reign of the Khalif Omar [ibn el

Khettab], though its like was never seen for justice, security, wealth and victories; they also bore with impatience the sway of Othman, and both were murdered. Besides, Er Reshid saw that generosity was become their wont, that the people were loud in their praise and that men's hopes were fixed on them and not on himself. Less than this suffices to excite the jealousy of princes; so Er Reshid conceived ill will against them, wreaked his vengeance on them and tried to find out faults. Besides this, a certain degree of presumption was sometimes visible in the conduct of Jaafer and Fezl, although Yehya was exempt from this; for he had more solid experience than his sons and better skill in affairs. This induced some of their enemies, such as Fezl ben Rebya, [Mohammed ibn Abi Leith and others, to have recourse to Er Reshid, from whom they concealed the good done by the Barmecides and only told him of their faults, till they brought about what took place."

That the discovery of the disobedience of his orders by Jaafer and Abbaseh was not (as is contended by some historians) the real cause of Er Reshid's rage against the Barmecides, but only an additional element of exasperation and perhaps indeed a mere pretext, is evident from the deliberation with which he set about the ruin of the house, the time which he allowed to elapse between his discovery of the fatal secret and the execution of his vengeance and the sudden and treacherous manner in which he carried out his sanguinary purpose. Nearly a year would appear to have intervened between Zubeideh's malicious denunciation and the Khalif's return from Mecca, whither he had betaken himself, under pretence of pilgrimage, for the express purpose of verifying her disclosures. Here he found out Abbaseh's children and convinced by their resemblance to both parents of the truth of the story, caused them to be secretly conveyed to Irak, without letting any one know of the matter. With the Barmecides, meanwhile, he dissembled, showing them, if possible, more than his usual favour, till his return, when he halted at a place near Ambar, on the Euphrates, and after bestowing rich dresses of honour on the brothers and treacherously lulling to sleep any suspicions that Jaafer might have conceived by insisting upon his giving himself up to conviviality in his own tent, what while he himself indulged in wine and mirth in the royal pavilion, suddenly, in the dead of the night, summoned one of his pages, Yasir by name, and commanded him to go at once and bring him Jaafer's head. Yasir, greatly shocked, exclaimed, "Would I had died before this hour!" but dared not disobey and repaired to Jaafer's tent, where he found him carousing and acquainted him with his dreadful errand. Jaafer prevailed upon the messenger, who, like all the world, was indebted to him for many a favour, to return to the Khalif and tell him that he had put him to death. "If he expresses regret," said the Vizier, "I shall owe you my life; and if not, God's will be done." Yasir accordingly returned, leaving Jaafer without the tent, to Er Reshid, who said to him, "Well?" Whereupon he told him what had passed between himself and the Vizier. "Vile wretch," cried the Khalif, making use of the foulest imprecation known to the Arabs, "if thou answer me another word, I will send thee before him to the next world!" The page accordingly went out and striking off Jaafer's head, carried it to Er Reshid, who looked at it awhile, then bade him fetch two persons whom he named and whom, on their appearance, he commanded to strike off Yasir's head, alleging, with characteristic hypocrisy, that he could not bear the sight of Jaafer's murderer.

Before giving the order for Jaafer's execution, Er Reshid had despatched an express to his chief of the police at Baghdad, bidding him seize Yehya and Fezl, before the news got wind, and cast them into the *Hebs ez Zenadikeh* at Baghdad, and after secure the persons of their brothers, sons, grandchildren and all their other relatives and connections, even to their clerks. The order reached the Master of police in the middle of the night and he at once proceeded to execute it, securing the persons of the whole of the Barmecide family, as well as of their agents and dependents. According to Et Teberi, not a single person who had ever been connected with them was allowed to escape: every member of the family (with three exceptions) was put to death, even to their infant children, to the number, it is said, of over a thousand persons, and it need hardly be added that the "good" Haroun er Reshid confiscated to his own use the whole of their immense possessions. The race was absolutely exterminated, Yehya, Fezl and a brother of the former, Mohammed ben Khalid by name, being the only persons who appear to have survived this frightful massacre. The latter languished in prison during Er Reshid's life and was liberated by his successor. Some historians cast doubt upon this wholesale slaughter, but it is sufficient to ask, if it did not take place, how comes it that so numerous and notorious a family should all at once have so completely disappeared from the face of the earth as to leave no trace behind them?

The only members of the family whose fate is circumstantially related are Yehya and Fezl. With the former the sanguinary tyrant appears to have played as a cat with a mouse, hypocritically offering him his liberty; to which he replied that he preferred to remain with his son, with whom he was imprisoned, under circumstances of the greatest rigour, till his death, which occurred (A.D. 805) at the age of 74, after two years' imprisonmer . His foster-brother Fezl Er Reshid caused to be beaten till he was well-nigh dead, to wring from him a confession that he had secreted property beyond the immense amount that the Khalif had confiscated, but to no avail. Fezl was healed of the frightful wounds caused by this horrible treatment by a doctor, to whom, on his recovery, he sent twenty thousand dirhems that he had borrowed from a friend; but the doctor, though poor and in great distress, with rare magnanimity refused the money, saying, "I cannot accept payment for curing the greatest of the generous." In this wretched plight the two unfortunate survivors of the great Persian house displayed all the magnanimity for which they had been renowned in the days of their prosperity, supporting with high-souled patience and the noblest philosophy the miseries inflicted on them by the base rancour of the despot they had so faithfully served. The following touching anecdote will give some idea of the magnanimous spirit of the younger prisoner and Yehya yielded nothing to his son in the heroic long-suffering with which he bore his most unmerited woes. Fezl's love for his father was extreme: when in prison in winter they could not get warm water, which was necessary for Yehya, an old man over seventy, Fezl would take the copper ewer and apply it to his own stomach, so as in some measure to take off the chill for his father's use. He survived the latter three years and died in prison in November 808, four months only before the death of Er Reshid.

The mock repentance shown by the latter, as evinced in his unreasoning anger against the innocent minister of his vengeance upon Jaafer, did not prevent him from offering the last indignities to the great Vizier's remains. His head he caused to be hung up at one and his trunk at the other end of the bridge over the Tigris, opposite the,

part where the Serat, the canal on which Baghdad was originally built, joins that river, Here they remained for some months, till Er Reshid, being about to leave Baghdad, caused them to be taken down and burnt like those of the vilest criminal, the greatest indignity that could be offered to a Muslim, whose religion attaches the utmost importance to due burial and inculcates the necessity of appearing before God whole as at birth.

Authorities differ as to what became of Abbaseh, the hapless cause of this horrible tragedy ; but, according to the most credible accounts, she was shut up in a chest and thrown into a pit, which her terrible brother caused to be then and there dug under the floor of her apartment. Then he sent for her children, who (says the old chronicler) showed like two pearls, looked upon them pitifully and with tears in his eyes and commanded them to be cast alive into the pit, which he then caused to be closed up, weeping crocodile-tears the while. Thus a MS. history, whose writer is unknown, but other authorities state that he had the children burnt alive. Ibn el Jauzi relates that Yehya's wife Zubeideh, Haroun's fostermother, after with great difficulty forcing her way into his presence, showed him his milk teeth and the curls of hair that she had kept from his childhood and conjured him by these tokens of her claim upon him for fosterage (one of those most sacred to a Muslim) to spare her husband and son. The mean-minded Khalif was not to be moved, but offered to buy the relics of her; whereupon she, in her indignation, threw them down at his feet, saying, "I make thee a present of them." It is related by Mohammed ibn er Rehman, a contemporary *aalim* or man of learning and a member of the Khalif's family (the Hashimis), that he once saw at his mother's a woman of reverend mien, but poorly clad, who was introduced to him as the mother of Jaafer the Barmecide and said to him, "There was a time when four hundred female slaves stood awaiting my orders and yet I thought that my son did not provide for me in a manner adequate to my rank; but now my only wish is to have two sheepskins, one for a bed and the other for a covering." Mohammed gave her five hundred dirhems, and she well-nigh died for excess of joy.

Among the various pretexts put forward by Er Reshid to cover the real reason of his rancorous spite against the Barmecides, he caused it to be bruited abroad that they were, though Muslims in outward show, fire-worshippers, like their ancestors, at heart; but the futility of this accusation is evident from the single fact that Fezl, when governor of Khorassan, pulled down the ancient temple (i.e. the Noubehar before mentioned) of the Fire, of which his forefathers had been the officiating priests, and built a magnificent mosque, exceeding in splendour the Temple at Mecca, in its stead. A more probable accusation is that they were at heart Zendics or Mundanists, a sect of Epicurean freethinkers, whose opinions, after a more primitive and practical fashion, followed in much the same Positivist track as those of the disciples of Auguste Comte in the present day and to which many of the most distinguished and ablest men of the day belonged. It is, therefore, not impossible or improbable that the Barmecides belonged to this sect; but it is fair to state that no shadow of proof exists of this. On the contrary, although they did not carry out the observances of Muslim ritual with the same mechanical exactitude as the hypocritical and superstitious tyrant their master, who is said to have prayed a hundred inclinations (*rekaät*) a day, they seem to have in no way offended against the tenets of Mohammedanism and to have fulfilled

its external requirements with the moderate strictness of men of the world who made no pretension to pietism. Haroun attempted to give substance to this accusation by ordering Yehya and Fezl (as has been before mentioned) to the prison of the Zendics (*Hebs es Zenadikeh*).

The horror and discontent excited in Baghdad by the miserable fate of the much and justly loved family was extreme and neither the sanguinary edict issued by the tyrant, to the effect that all who mourned the Barmecides should share their fate, nor the executions that followed it, availed to silence the popular grief and indignation. Elegies were composed by hundreds upon the fallen house and all the poets of the time (even those attached to the court) mourned them. "It was a heavy blow for me," cries Er Recashi, one of Er Reshid's "boon companions," "to lose those princely stars by whose generous showers we were watered, when the skies withheld their rain. Let beneficence and the world say adieu to the glory of the Barmecides. By Allah, O son of Yehya, but for fear of spies and of the Khalif's eye, which sleeps not, we should compass thy gibbet [like the Kaabeh] and kiss it as men kiss the Sacred Stone!" "On seeing the sword fall on Jaafer," says Dibil el Khuzai, "and hearing the Khalif's crier proclaim vengeance on Yehya, I wept for the world and felt how true it is that the goal of man's life is the quitting it." And indeed it would be hard to name a poet of the day who did not tune his lyre to the same sorrowful strain.

The following anecdotes will give some idea of the violence of the popular mourning for the Barmecides. The Khalif, hearing that, despite his prohibition, an old man named Mundir used every day to take his station before one of their ruined houses and harangue the passers-by on the great and noble deeds of the fallen family, sent for him and sentenced him to death; but Mundir, obtaining leave to speak, drew so affecting a picture of the beneficence by which the Barmecides had rescued him from ruin and misery, that Haroun, moved to momentary repentance, not only pardoned him, but made him a present of a plate of gold, which the incorrigible old man received without a word of thanks, remarking only, "Yet another benefit that I owe to the Barmecides!" Abou Zekkar, a blind singer of Baghdad attached to Jaafer's household, who was present when Mesrour (or Yasir) cut off the letter's head, was instant with the executioner to slay him also and spare him (as he said) the misery of surviving his noble benefactor; which, being told to Haroun, he was touched by his fidelity and ordered him to be attached to his own suite, at the same salary as that allowed him by Jaafer. Ibrahim Ibn Othman ibn Nuheik was not so fortunate. Haroun, having heard of his lamentation for the Barmecides, invited him to the palace and after plying him freely with wine, drew from him, by hypocritical professions of regret for Jaafer's death, the avowal that he could not approve of his sovereign's treatment of so excellent a man and his opinion that it would be difficult to replace him; whereupon the treacherous tyrant threw off the mask and saying, "God damn thee!" ordered him to immediate execution.

After endeavouring in vain, by measures of the utmost rigour, to suppress the public manifestations of regret and love for the Barmecides, Er Reshid was ultimately compelled to desist and allow the people to give vent to their feelings as they pleased; but the popular indignation and disaffection rose to such a pitch that he thought it well to leave Baghdad (whither he never returned) and take up his residence at Rekkeh,

a city on the Euphrates, 115 miles E. of Aleppo. He soon felt the void left by the loss of his great ministers and gave way to bitter and unavailing remorse, in which, however, repentance had no part, it being merely sorrow for the results of the sin and not for the sin itself. "It is observed," says Price in his History of Mohammedanism, "that, on the extermination of the Barmecides, the affairs of Haroun fell into immediate and irretrievable confusion. Treason, revolt and rebellion assailed him in different parts of the empire [especially in Khorassan, where Fezl's beneficent government had not been forgotten and which was the native country of the family. He felt himself from disease (and natural incapacity) unequal to the cares of government and expiated, by a tardy and unavailing regret, his unfeeling cruelty to the lamented race of Bermek." Fezl ben Rebya, whose treacherous malice had been largely instrumental in procuring the fall of the Barmecides, succeeded to their honours, but proved utterly unable to supply their place, and of this Er Reshid himself soon became conscious, as is shown by the following anecdote, related by El Jihshyari in his History of the Viziers. "Er Reshid," says he, "repented of his conduct to the Barmecides and deeply regretted the manner in which he had treated them. He said, before some of his brothers, that, were he but assured of the fidelity [that is to say, of the forgiveness of Yehya and Fezl, he would reinstate them in their offices. He used also to say [alluding evidently to Fezl ben Rebya], "Some people prompted us to punish our ablest and most faithful advisers and made us believe that themselves were capable of replacing them; but, when we did their will, they were not of the least use to us." And he recited the following line

God curse your ancestors! Spare us your calumnies or fill their place.

The royal murderer appears never to have recovered his peace of mind; it is said that he never knew refreshing sleep after Jaafer's death and his confession is recorded that he would have given his whole realm to have called him back to life. According to Ibn Bedroun, his sister Uleiyeh once said to him, "My lord, I have not seen you enjoy a day of perfect happiness, since you put Jaafer to death. Why did you so?" To which Er Reshid replied, "If I thought my shirt knew the reason, I would tear it in pieces." When, after he had become convinced of the irreparableness of his loss, any blamed the Barmecides in his presence, he would say, "Perdition to your fathers! Cease to blame them or fill the void they have left." After the death of Jaafer and the imprisonment of Yehya and Fezl, he had no one in whom he could trust, having committed the fatal error of dividing his kingdom between his sons in his lifetime, and went in continual apprehension of being poisoned by the latter, fearing even to confide the knowledge of the lingering disease by which he died to his physicians, whom he suspected (not, it would seem, without cause) of being his sons' creatures, and it is said that even his old servant Mesrour, whom he had overwhelmed with bounties, but who was in the pay of El Amin, brought him during his last journey a bad (i.e. a hard-trotting camel), to the intent that his ailment might be aggravated thereby. When (in 805) his old and faithful servant and foster-father Yehya died in his prison, there was found in his pocket a paper on which he had written these words, "The accuser is gone before and the accused will soon follow: the Cadi will be that equitable judge who is never unjust and who hath no need of evidence." This paper was sent to Er Reshid, who wept the rest of the day, and his face for some days after bore striking marks of sorrow. In November, 808, the noble Fezl was also, at the age of forty-

six, released by death from his sufferings and the Khalif, on hearing of his decease, said, "My term is near unto his." His presentiments did not deceive him, for he survived the foster-brother and friend, to whom he was so deeply indebted and whom he had so cruelly wronged, but four months. His last act was to sentence to death, on some fancied slight, his physician Jebril ibn Bekhtiyeshou, but, having respited him till the morrow, he himself died in the night of the 23rd March, 809, at Tous in Khorassan, where the rapid progress of his disease had compelled him to suspend his campaign against the Transoxanian insurgents. He was forty-seven years of age and had reigned upwards of twenty-three. Such was the miserable end of the "great" Khalif.

III.

The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night contains two hundred and sixty-four stories of all lengths, from an anecdote of half a page to a "history" of several hundred pages. The stories are very unequally distributed over the different Nights, which again vary greatly in length, the first fifty or sixty being nearly three times the average length of those in the remaining portion of the work. The stories may be roughly divided into five principal categories, as follows

(I) "Histories" or long romances, founded or professing to be founded upon historical data and containing references to events which actually happened, such as the conquest of Syria and Persia by the Arabs and the wars between the Khalifs and the Emperors of Custentiniyeh or Constantinople. These are of comparatively rare occurrence, but comprise the longest stories in the collection, such as the history of King Omar ben Ennuman and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan (which alone occupies nearly an eighth part of the entire work and in which occur incidentally the subordinate stories of Taj el Mulouk and Aziz and Azizeh), and that of Gherib and his brother Agib, a romance of apparently Bedouin origin, much resembling such stories as Antar and Abou Zeid.

(2) Anecdotes and short stories dealing with historical personages and with incidents and adventures belonging to the actual every-day life of the periods to which they refer. These are very numerous and relate for the most part to the epoch of the Abbaside Khalifs. To this category belong the many stories and anecdotes in which Er Reshid, his wife Zubeideh, his sons El Amin, El Mamoun and Abou Isa, his brother Ibrahim ben el Mehdi, the poets and musicians Isaac of Mosul and his father Ibrahim, El Asmai, Abou Nuwas, etc., the Imam Abou Yousuf, the Barmecide princes Yehya, Fezl and Jaafer, and the various officers, governors and notables of the Khalifate, besides the Khosroes or ancient kings of Persia, Alexander the Great (Iskender the Two-horned, as the Orientals call him), and the Khalifs Omar ben el Khettab, Muawiyeh, Merwan, Abdulmelik, Suleiman, Omar ben Abdulaziz, Hisham and Welid ben Sehl (all of the house of Umeyyeh), the Abbaside Khalifs El Mensour, El Mutawekkil, El Mutezid and El Mustensir, the Fatimite Khalif El Hakim bi-amriliah, the Eyoubite Sultan El Melik en Nasir Selaheddin of Egypt (Saladin) and other historical personages figure. To this category also belong the stories (so common among the Arabs and Persians) celebrating the extravagant generosity and hospitality of such typical personages as Hatim Tai, Maan ben Zaideh and the princes of the house of Bermek, and short isolated fragments of description, dealing, from a curiously distorted and mythical point of view, with historical or quasi-historical events. Of these latter singular examples are the story of the Khalif El Mamoun and the Pyramids of Egypt and the very curious version of the legend of Don Rodrigo (the last Gothic King of Spain) and the Tower of Hercules, called the City of Lebtait and containing a description (evidently mythical) of the wonderful treasures and rarities (among others the enchanted table of Suleiman ben Daoud) found by the Arab conquerors in the city. The town in question is of course intended for Toledo, but it is always somewhat difficult to identify the European cities and places referred to in Arabic fiction, or

indeed history, as the Muslim conquerors were not content with Arabicizing the Spanish names, but actually (apparently moved by a sort of nostalgic impulse) applied to such cities as Seville, Granada, Jaen, Xeres, Murcia, Malaga, etc., the designations of towns and provinces in Egypt, Syria and other Mohammedan countries, such as Hems, Damascus, Kinesrin, Arden, Palestine, Misr (Egypt), Fustat (old Cairo), etc.

(3) Romances and romantic fictions, comprising three different kinds of tales. The first subdivision includes purely romantic stories of considerable length, referring to no particular historical epoch and generally making free use of supernatural persons and agencies; such as the stories of Kemerezzeman and Budour, Aziz and Azizeh, Uns el Wujoud and the Vizier's Daughter Rosebud, The Enchanted Horse, the Queen of the Serpents, Hassan of Bassora and the King's Daughter of the Jinn, Jouder and his Brothers, Seif el Mulouk and Bediya el Jemal, Marouf, etc., etc. Under the second head may be classed stories apparently purely fictitious, but whose scene is laid in some definite historical epoch, in which are introduced historical personages and whose incidents and descriptions reproduce the manners and local circumstance of such cities as Baghdad, Bassora, Mosul, Damascus and Cairo and such periods as those of the Khalifs of the Abbaside dynasty or the Eyoubite Sultans of Egypt. These also are for the most part of considerable length and comprise such tales as the Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad, Noureddin and the Fair Persian, Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar, Ghanim ben Eyoub, Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, The Voyages of Sindbad, Abdallah ben Fazil and his brothers, Ali Noureddin and the King's Daughter of the Franks, etc., etc. In this subdivision must also be included the stories or *nouvelles* detailing the doings of the rogues, sharpers and impostors of the time of the Khalifs and their encounters with the police of Baghdad and Cairo (who, by the by, appear like Vidocq and others, to have been drawn almost exclusively from the criminal classes and to have held their grades as the prizes of proved eminence in successful roguery), a class of fiction much favoured in the East, of which certain examples, eg. the stories of the Barber and his Brothers, the Rogueries of Delileh the Crafty and her Daughter Zeyneb the Trickstress and the Adventures of Quicksilver Ali of Cairo (all in the Thousand and One Nights,) forcibly remind one of such "picaresque" novels of Lesage, Quevedo, Aleman and others, as Guzman de Alfarache, Lazarillo de Tormes, El Gran Tacano, Gil Blas, etc., and from which indeed it is probable that these latter had in some respects an almost direct origin. The third subdivision embraces the most numerous section of the work, i.e. such altogether fictitious short stories and legends, romantic or sentimental, as may conveniently be classed under the general heading of contes fantastiques. To this class belong the stories of miracles and saints, in which Muslim literature is so rich, such as The Apples of Paradise, The Pious Black Slave, The Blacksmith who could handle fire without hurt, The Ferryman and the Hermit, etc., etc.; the equally favourite class of stories of unfortunate lovers, such as Otbeh and Reyya and The Mad Lover, and such purely fantastic tales as Abou Mohammed the Lazy, The Man who never laughed again, The Enchanted Springs, The House with the Belvedere, The City of Irem, the three stories of the Angel of Death, etc., etc.; and lastly, such "merry gestes" and Boccaccio-like "inventions" as Ali the Persian and the Kurd Sharper, The Man of Yemen and his Six Slave-girls, The Man who saw the Night of Power, The Simpleton and the Sharper, the three stories of foolish Schoolmasters, The Lady and her Five Suitors (one of many stories of trickery practised by women

upon their husbands or lovers), and most of the series of short tales known as "The Malice of Women." It is into this latter portion of the collection that European authors appear to have dipped most freely, many of the incidents in works of the Decameron and Heptameron kind and in such bodies of popular fiction as those collected or expanded by Grimm, Asbjornsen, Andersen, etc., etc., bearing unmistakable traces of affinity, immediate or derivative, with the Thousand and One Nights.

(4) Fables and apologues or short moral stories, such as The Cat and the Crow, The Birds and Beasts and the Son of Adam and the parables and moral instances of which the (Indian) story of Jelyaad and Shimas in great part consists.

(g) Tales, so called, such as Taweddud, the examination of Nuzhet ez Zeman before Sherkan (Vol. II. p-96), of Wird Khan before his father (Vol, VIII. p-243) and the pietistic exercitations of Dhat ed Dewahi and her damsels before Omar ben Ennuman (Vol. II p-134), in which. the slightest thread of story serves as an excuse for the display of the heterogeneous "learning" (as the Arabs understood the word) of the author and for endless dissertations upon all things human and divine and sundry others. This class of story, though undeniably curious from the student's point of view, has little or no interest for the general reader, who will probably be inclined to agree with De Sacy that, if, in a pertain light, edifying, it is "rien moms qu'amusant."

Perhaps the most salient characteristic of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night is the extreme simplicity of its style. Nothing can be more unlike the idea of barbaric splendour, of excessive and heterogeneous ornament, that we are accustomed to associate with the name, than the majority of the tales that compose the collection. The life described in it is mainly that of the people, those Arabs so essentially brave, sober, hospitable and kindly, almost hysterically sensitive to emotions of love and pity, as well as to artistic impressions, yet susceptible of being roused to strange excesses of ferocity and brutality, to be soon followed by bitter and unavailing repentance — a people whom extreme sensibility of the nervous tissue inclines to excess of sensuous enjoyment, yet who are capable of enduring without a murmur the severest hardships and of suffering patiently the most cruel vicissitudes of fortune, without other complaint than that implied in the utterance of the Koranic formula (pronouncing which the Prophet has promised that no true believer shall be confounded), "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" Especially in that portion which deals with the life and manners of the Arabs of Syria and Chaldaea, under the Khalifate of the house of Abbas, are there to be found stories that, in their bright simplicity or poignant pathos, remind one more of an old Mährchen than of what is generally known as Eastern fiction.

The Thousand and One Nights, composed, to all appearance, mainly of stories written from dictation and probably originally invented, in a quasi-extempore fashion, for public recitation, are necessarily for the most part confined to a purely conversational and so-called vulgar style. The crabbedness of classical Arabic, as exemplified in the Koran, with its abrupt abridgments and its mysterious hiatuses, is happily in general absent from its pages, nor are they often defaced by the still more terrible refinements of the ornate manner (*el bediya*, as it is technically called), of which a favourable specimen is the celebrated Mecamat of El Heriri and driven to extremity by the ingenious perversions of whose apostles, a savant cited by the learned author of

the "Prolegomena" asserts it to be the dearest wish of his heart to see the Euphuists, who cultivated the science of ornaments in prose and verse, well flogged in public, whilst a crier proclaimed aloud their misdeeds, for the edification of the literary classes. Mr. Lane, indeed, in the notes to his version, gives us the sinister intelligence that certain Egyptian rhetoricians, dissatisfied with what they considered the crude and vulgar style of the collection, had intimated their intention of revising and remodelling it; and I confess that to me such an undertaking seems as great a profanation as would be the remodelling of the Canterbury Tales or the Mort d'Arthur.

The splendour of description, the showers of barbaric pearl and gold, that are generally attributed to the work, exist but in isolated instances. The descriptions are usually of an extreme naive and sometimes almost childish kind and constantly involve repetitions and amplifications such as characterise a story told to a child. They run generally in the same grooves and have a sort of gamut of standard comparisons, out of which they rarely stray. A beautiful youth is always a full moon, a slender and graceful girl a willow-wand or a thirsty gazelle; a mole on the cheek is a globule of ambergris, the eyebrows are a bended bow, the nose a curved sabre, the lips coral or Solomon's seal; the forehead is the new moon rising from the night of the hair, the eyes are lakes of jet or narcissus, the cheeks roses or blood-red anemones, the browlocks scorpions, the ringlets chains of ambergris, upholding the lamp of the face, the shape a lance or a flowering cane set in a hill of sand, the breasts half pomegranates or caskets of ivory and the teeth a necklace of pearls, a spray of camomile petals or the glittering seeds of the pomegranate set in their ruby pulp; and emotions and sentiments are rendered in much the same kind of figurative shorthand. Nevertheless, the constant recurrence of the same elements of description does not produce monotony. Even as in music the multiform progressions of the various keys inform the unity of the unchanging gamut with limitless variations of combination and effect, so the play of sentiment and circumstance in the Arabian tales perpetually induces in the rigid scale of their ornaments fresh permutations of shifting colour and new harmonies of phantasy and expression.

The grace of pathos that hallows so many of its pages constitutes perhaps the chief charm of the collection, although the other features whose presence should contribute to the unity of a great romantic work are no less conspicuous, when the occasion calls for their display. What can be more poignant in its sad simplicity than The Mad Lover or The Lovers of the Benou Udhreh, more dramatic in its almost tragic intensity than The Scavenger and the Noble Lady of Baghdad, more engaging, in its homely pathos, than the story of the forlorn royal children in Jerusalem and their adventures with the rascal Bedouin and the kind simple-souled stoker? Where shall we find a more fervid *conts bleu* of devotion than The Apples of Paradise or The Devout Prince or "legendes dorées" more instinct with the austere poetry of asceticism than The Pious Black Slave, The Ferryman and the Hermit, or Abou Durraj and the Leper? For sustained romantic exultation, it would be hard to surpass The City of Brass or the legend of Many-columned Irem, and few languages can produce such masterpieces of melancholy beauty as The Blacksmith who could handle fire without hurt or The Man who never laughed again, strains that linger in the thought like the tones of that "alts, ernste Weise " which haunts the hearing of the dying Tristan in the greatest of musical

dramas. Nor is the power of effective poetical portraiture lacking, when required, *teste* the vivid picture of the Khalif's pleasure garden at Baghdad and the exquisitely imaginative description of the lute in Ali Noureddin and the Frank King's Daughter; and when the movement of the story calls for the exercise of an austerer faculty, as in the battle-scenes of Omar ben Ennuman or Gherib, the text quickens into a stern and nervous energy, a vivid and unfaltering concision, that could hardly be excelled by Homer or Dante. Equally remarkable is the wealth of humour and wit that characterizes the work, whether (as in Ali the Persian and the Kurd Sharper) it bring to mind the headlong horseplay of Rabelais or (as in the episode of the Stoker, of the Hashish-Eater in Ali Shar, or of Jaafer and the old Bedouin) the rough but effective burlesque of John Heywood and the mediaeval farce-writers, whether (as in the anecdotes of Abou Nuwas) it recall the cynical humour of Boccaccio, or (as in Kafour and Khelifeh) the cudgel strokes of drollery, half naive, half caustic, of Sancho or Sganarelle, or (as in the Man of Yemen and his Six Slave-girls) the deliberate wit of the Moyen de Parvenir, it is always apt and always effective, in utrumque paratus, equally at home with the rough and ready weapons of popular repartee and the more keenly attempered arms of satire and word-fence. The whole Oriental world of the Khalifate re-lives for us in these enchanted pages, from which nothing is rejected, nothing excluded as common or unclean, and in which all classes of the Muslim world are represented, king and slave, courtier and countryman, pietist and freethinker, learned and ignorant, wise and foolish, moralist and debauches. Satire and sentiment, love and lewdness, wit and wisdom, holiness and hypocrisy, chase each other through the shifting scenes of this magic lantern of the East, in which the pure and self-sacrificing tenderness of an Azizeh "sticks fiery off indeed" from the selfish sensuality of her rivals, and the strains of exalted morality and passionate devoutness, the traits of heroic faith and unwearying magnanimity, that jostle with the satyr- orgies of an Abou Nuwas and the fiendish treachery of an Aboukir, show but the goodlier for the blackness of the baseness that encompasses them.

One of the chief stumbling-blocks in the path of a translator of the Thousand and One Nights is the peculiar shapelessness of Arabic prose. Without stops, capital or other indications of breach of continuity and practically undivided into clauses or paragraphs, the text, if unbroken by verse, runs on in one long sentence, trailing after it a cumbrous train of accumulated "ands" and "thens," heedless of symmetry of phrase or clearness of expression and little careful to order the succession of the words in accordance with that of the sense, so that it is not uncommon to find some important member of a previous phrase cast up high and dry in the midst of a strange clause several lines in advance, for the Arab author, after he has apparently finished with one division of a subject and well entered another, thinks nothing of pulling short up and trying back for the purpose of making some addition of real or fancied necessity to the foregone passage of description or enumeration. To this most irritating peculiarity must be added a constant recurrence of useless repetitions and an all-pervading tautology, together with a habit of aggravating the (to the European ear) inherent incoherence of Eastern composition by a perpetual readiness to sacrifice directness and clarity of expression, if an outré turn of speech, a jingle of words or a trifling play of meanings can be secured by the employment of an obscure trope or a far-fetched synonym. One of the especial ornaments of Arabic prose (an excrescence born of the

excessive facilities for rhyme afforded by a language whose every speaker is a versifier and the extravagant sensibility of Eastern peoples to antithesis of all kinds, whether of sound or thought) is the use of what is called *seja* or rhyming prose, with whose jingling tags it is the summit of every Arab author's ambition to deck or disfigure (les deux se disent) his pages, and rare indeed is the virtue of the writer who carries self-denial so far as to neglect an opportunity of dragging in this figure, too often at the expense of sense and coherence. The Koran, which in the eyes of every true believer is impeccable and the model of all excellence, from the literary, as well as from the moral and religious point of view, is almost entirely written in this style, and as all post-Mohammedan literature, so far, at least, as the rules of composition are concerned, is modelled upon this all-sufficing volume, the use of the *seja* has, like a noxious water-weed that checks the current of a stream, overrun the native vigour of Arab prose and has by the sectaries of the *style fleuri* been carried to such an excess that its abuse has given rise to the irreverent dictum, *es seja feja*, rhyming prose is vexation of spirit. Happily, however, the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night is written in a socalled vulgar style and is therefore, though not free from the excrescence in question, less universally disfigured by it than works of more pretension to literary merit.

In presence of these difficulties, absolute literality is impossible to the translator who has any regard for style, and he is, therefore, compelled in some sort to remodel his original, phrase by phrase and even page by page, if, with all possible respect for fidelity to word and sense, he desire to spare his reader the weariness of wading through a jungle of phrases and sentences, in which the eye of the scholar alone can discern form and coherence.

The following passage, selected almost at random from the text of the Thousand and One Night, will give some idea of the literal style of the original. Many more flagrant specimens might have been chosen and it would not be difficult to quote passages in which the faults of the composition envelope the meaning in a confusion well-nigh inextricable, especially where (as in the case of the beleaguerment of Constantinople by the Muslims) the resource of comparison and collation with other texts of the story is wanting, the History of King Omar ben Ennuman being omitted from the Breslau Edition; but I prefer to cite one which offers no extravagant example of the defects of which I have spoken.

When the morning morrowed, he anointed the feet of him with the water the which they two had taken it from the herb and descended to the sea and went walking in it days and nights and he wondering at the horrors of the sea and the marvels of it and the rarities of it and he ceased not going upon the face of the water till he came to an island as indeed it [were] Paradise so Beloukiya went up to that island and became wondering at it and at the beauty of it and wandered in it and saw it a great island the dust of it saffron and the gravel of it of cornelian and precious stones and the hedges of it jessamine and the vegetation of it of the goodliest of the trees and the brightest of the sweet-scented herbs and the sweetest of them and in it springs running and the brushwood of it of the Comorin aloes and the Sumatra aloes and the reeds of it sugar-cane and around it the rose and the narcissus and the amaranth and the Billy-flower and the camomile and the lily and the violet and all that in it [were] kinds and colours and the birds of it warbled upon those trees and it was fair of attributes spacious of

sides abundant of good things indeed it comprised all of beauty and charms and the warbling of the birds of it [was] pleasanter than the tones [of the chanters] of the Koran and the trees of it tall and the birds of it speaking and the streams of it flowing and the springs of it running and the waters of it sweet and in it the gazelles frisked and the wild cattle came and went and the birds warbled on those branches and consoled the lover the love-afflicted.

A comparison of the above literal rendering with my previous translation (Vol. V.) of the passage will show that I have confined myself to arranging the disjecta membra of the original in their natural order, following the original wording as closely as is consistent with English idiom and the necessity of breaking up the endless phrases of the Arabic into convenient sentences and purging them from the excrescences of tautology and repetition that deface the text. Upon this principle I have throughout proceeded, endeavouring as far as possible to conciliate the claims of literality and fidelity to the characteristic idioms of the original with the genius of English prose and the exigencies of style. If, in this respect, some discrepancies should appear between the earlier and the latter parts of the translation, they must be attributed to the natural gradual change of method consequent on the experience gained in the course of the long labour of love which has occupied the leisure hours of seven years of a professional life and which I have now brought to an end, if not (in view of the enormous difficulties which the work of translation presents) with entire satisfaction to myself, at least, with the feeling that it is not for want of pains that I have, in many instances of which I am but too sensible, fallen short of my ideal.

The following is a specimen of the rhyming prose above mentioned, rendered in the jingle of the original. It is evident that it would have been by no means difficult to keep up the imitation throughout, but, upon consideration, I came, rightly or wrongly, to the conclusion that it was undesirable to do so, as it seemed to me that the *seja*-form was utterly foreign to the genius of English prose and that its preservation would be fatal to all vigour and harmony of style.

This letter is from him whom passion wastes away and whom desire doth slay and misery destroys him and dismay, him who of life despairs and looks for nought but death to end his cares, none is there to his mourning heart comfort or succour will impart, nor for his wakeful eye 'gainst care is helper nigh; his day is past in fire, his night in torment dire; his body for emaciation's wasted sore, and there comes to him no messenger from her he doth adore.

The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night contains a very large quantity of verse, unequally distributed throughout the various tales, and before proceeding to speak of this feature of the work, it may interest my readers if I give a brief outline of the general principles upon which the prosody of the Arabs is founded. The invariable unit, upon which Arabic (and Persian) verse is built, is the *beit* or line (usually but improperly rendered "couplet"). The word *beit* signifies literally "a house," but by analogy "a tent" (and from this we may fairly conclude at least this fundamenral part of Arabic prosody to have originated with the Bedouins or Arabs of the desert, as it is only they who would be likely to call a tent a house) the verse being whimsically regarded by the Arabs as an erection; and this simile is carried out in the nomenclature of the different parts of the line, one foot being called a "tent-pole," another a "tent-

peg" and the two hemistichs of the verse being known as the folds or leaves of the double door of the tent. Each beit is divided into two hemistichs of equal length, each containing three or four feet of two, three, four or five syllables, and the whole verse is known as a hexameter or octameter, according as it contains six or eight feet, or from sixteen to thirty-two syllables. A peculiarity of Arabic verse is the excess of long syllables over short and the absence of the dactyl and dibrach, the swiftest feet in use among Europeans, a characteristic which produces a graver and more stately movement of the rhythm than is common in European poetry. I should perhaps, however, observe that the qualifications "long" and "short" are somewhat empirically applied to the syllables of Arabic feet, as their quantities appear to be hardly appreciable by an European ear, the "long," in particular, being of a shifting character, so much so, indeed, that certain readers of the Koran are said to have been known to make use of no less than seven varieties of this quantity. This being the case, it has been suggested by the eminent French Orientalist, M. Stanislas Guiraud, that musical notation should be applied to the determining of the Arabic rhythms, but, notwithstanding the ingenuity and ability of his treatise on the subject, his tentatives do not as yet appear to have brought about any very definite result. Several Arabists of distinction, German and English, have indeed endeavoured, by the use of quantitative signs, to reproduce in their own languages the precise rhythm and accent of Arabic verse; but I confess that to myself, notwithstanding the ability and ingenuity displayed by the translators (who indeed have been the first to acknowledge the ill success of their experiments and to pronounce against the feasibility of representing the Oriental metres by a similar arrangement of feet and accents in European verse), the result seems still more unsatisfactory and inartistic than that of the many unsuccessful attempts to introduce Greek and Latin rhythms into English metre. The genius of the two languages (Arabic and English) belonging, as they do, to opposite groups of speech-form, presents no point of union; and it seems to me, therefore, that the only satisfactory way of rendering Arabic poetry in English verse is to content oneself generally with observing the exterior form of the stanza, the movement of the rhyme and (as far as possible) the identity in number of the syllables composing the beits.

The principal Arabic metres are sixteen in number, each subdivided by numerous variations; and it may, perhaps, be interesting to note here the somewhat whimsical names by which they are known in the East. The generic name given to them is *behr*, literally "sea," but, by analogy, the space comprised within the walls of a tent, thus continuing the metaphor before mentioned, and they are distinguished individually as the long, the extended, the open, the copious, the perfect, the trilling, the tremulous, the running, the swift, the flowing, the light, the analogous, the improvised, the curtailed, the approximative and the consecutive. The English reader will naturally suppose that these names are in some way descriptive and will doubtless be surprised to hear (and this fact alone will amply suffice to show how toto coelo the genius of Oriental prosody differs from that of the West) that, in the opinion of those scholars who have most radically studied the question, they have no analogy whatever with the character of the various metres, but were (as far, at least, as concerns the thirteen primitive metres) manufactured by the inventor, as a mere memoria technica, after the model (i.e. the grammatical measure) of the fundamental feet upon which the respective "circles" or groups of metres are based. I should perhaps mention here that

the system of Arabic prosody is said to have been invented by one Khelil, a grammarian, and to have been suggested to him by the strokes of a blacksmith's hammer upon an anvil, not the most promising combination of circumstance for the birth of so important a branch of art.

The principal form used in Arabic poetry (and that which most frequently occurs in the Thousand and One Nights) is the *Kesideh* or *Purpose-poem*; practically identical with the better-known (Persian) form of the Ghazel or love-song par excellence, with the exception that the latter is limited to eighteen beits or verses and must contain the name of the poet in the last beit. The Kesideh may be composed in any one of the sixteen metres and is built upon a single rhyme, the two hemistichs of the first beit rhyming with each other and with the second hemistich of each succeeding beit to the end of the poem, however long it may be. It is a curious fact that the same prohibition of *enjambement*, or the carrying on of the sense from one verse (or pair of hemistichs) to another, obtains in Arabic as in French classic verse, it being considered a fault not to complete the sense in the one verse. It is allowable to repeat the same rhyming word, but (according to the strict laws of prosody) not unless seven verses intervene. However, this and the preceding rule are constantly violated by Arab poets, who appear to have little scruple in repeating the rhyming word whenever it suits them, and in Persian verse (whose laws are essentially the same as those of Arabic prosody) the licence is still greater, the same word in the same sense being allowed to form the rhyme throughout a whole ghazel. The *Kitah* or Fragment, which is also of frequent occurrence in the work, is only a portion of a Kesideh, other than the *metla*, first or double-rhyme verse. The *Rubaï* or quatrain is also a common form. It consists of four hemistichs rhyming with each other. The only other verse-form that occurs with any frequency is the *Mukhemmes* or Cinquain, a succession of stanzas, each formed of two beits and a hemistich, the five hemistichs of the first stanza having the same rhyme, whilst the first four of each succeeding stanza take a new rhyme and the fifth rhymes with the first stanza to the end of the poem. Another form of the Mukhemmes differs only from the first in that the last hemistichs of the stanzas rhyme with each other only, independently of the other hemistichs of the first stanza. The *Murebbes* or foursome song occurs once only in the Nights and consists of a series of two-beit stanzas, the first three hemistichs of each of which rhyme with each other only, independently of the rest of the poem, and the fourth with that of every other stanza.

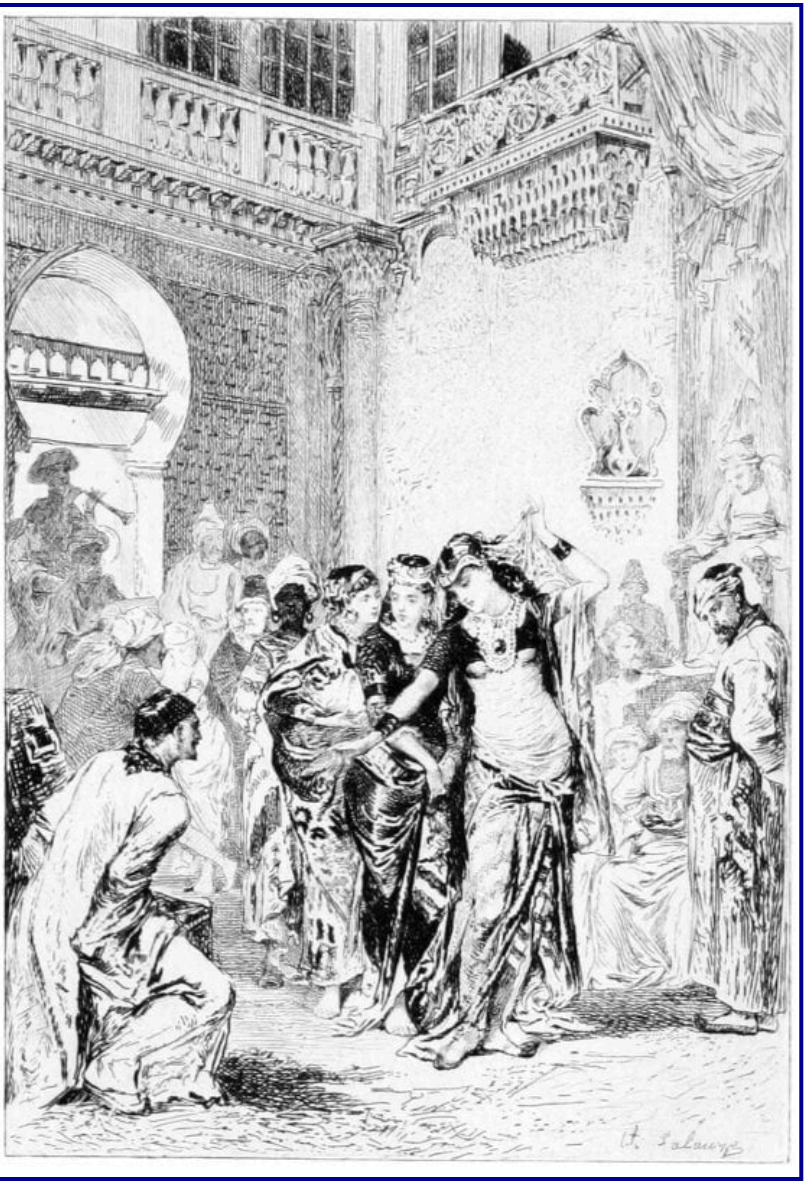
The *Muweshshih* or Ballad is another form which occurs once only in the Thousand and One Nights. It is, perhaps, the most elaborate verse-form in the language and is said to have been invented by the Muslim poets of Spain, shortly after the Conquest, and to have been adopted from them by their brethren of Egypt and Syria. It consists of a succession of three-line stanzas, in the first of which all six hemistichs end with the same rhyme. In the second and succeeding stanzas, the first line and the first hemistich of the second line take a new rhyme; but the second hemistich of the second line resumes the rhyme of the first stanza and is followed by the third line of the latter, serving as a refrain to each stanza of the poem, which is often of considerable length. Other forms of the Muweshshih exist, but the above is the only one found in the Thousand and One Nights. Single lines are of frequent occurrence, which are apparently "blank" (that is to say, the two hemistichs of which

do not rhyme with each other), but this is only apparent, as the verses in question are nothing more than an extract from a Kesideh, blank verse having no existence in Arab poetry.

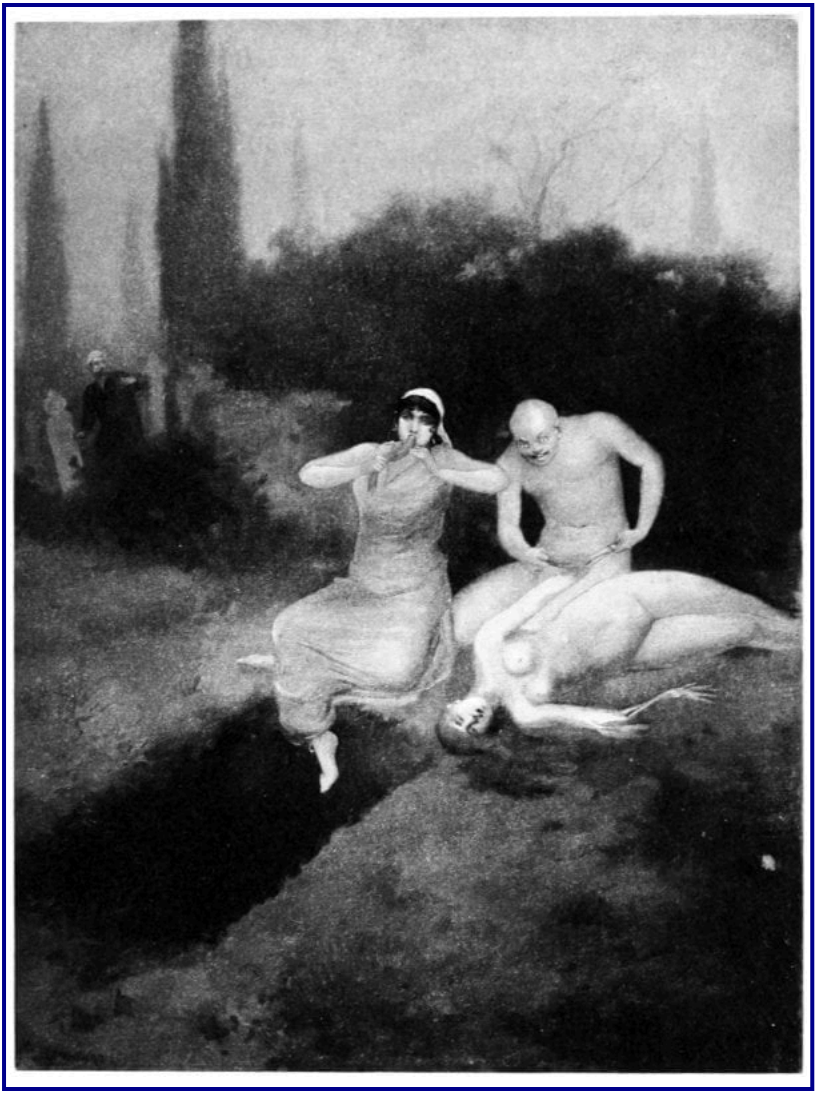
One of the chief characteristics of Arabic verse is ingenuity and it is indeed from the Muslim poets of Spain and Portugal that the Cavalier Marino, Gongora and our own Euphuists seem, more or less directly, to have borrowed the concetti and agudezas with which their pages bristle. The Arab poet appears too often to aim at making his verse a sort of logogriph, susceptible of more than one meaning, and this peculiarity, combined with a passion for obscure synonyms and doubtful metaphors and an excessive use of syntactical and rhetorical figures (particularly those of ellipsis, enallage, anacoluthon, hyperbaton, metonymy, synecdoche and paronomasia) and the national tendency to imitate the incoherent abruptness of the Koran, too often renders Arabic verse a tangled skein, to unravel which demands an amount of labour and consideration hardly to be estimated by the result, as it appears in the form of translation. Add to this the mechanical difficulty of the transfer of idiom and metrical form from one language to another having no point in common with it and the special crux established by the indispensable condition of the monorhyme (often carried to an extraordinary length, as in Vol. VIII. p-27, where one unlucky assonance must furnish forth no less than forty-eight rhymes), and it will be evident that the labour of rendering into isometrical English the vast body of verse contained in the Thousand and One Nights is one of no common hardship and that the translator who has, with perhaps too rash a confidence, undertaken so exacting a task, may fairly ask for no common indulgence towards the shortcomings of which he is himself abundantly conscious.

The Thousand and One Nights, apart from its attraction as the most comprehensive compendium of national romance in existence, is remarkable as presenting a singularly copious anthology of Arab verse. Almost all the great poets of the Khalifate, as well as many of those who preceded or were contemporaneous with the Prophet, are represented in its pages. Among the immense mass of metrical quotation contained in the various tales, I have been able, *currente calamo*, to identify selections from the works of no less than thirty-four of the chief poets of Islam, namely, Imrulcais, Elcameh ibn Abadeh, Antar, Adi ben Zeid, En Nabigheh edh Dhubyani, Amr ben Madi Kerib, Kab ben Zuheir, Jemil, Jerir, Uteiyeh, Abou Nuwas, Abou Temmam, El Asmai, El Mutenebbi, El Heriri, Behaeddin Zuheir, Beshr ibn Burd, Er Recashi, Abou Musab, El Buhturi, Es Senefi, En Naweji (author or compiler of the famous anacreontic collection, the *Helbeit el Kumeit* or Race Course of the Bay Horse), Dibil el Khuzai, Muslim ben el Welid el Ansari, En Nemri, El Hajiri, El Menazi, Ibn Ebbad, Aboulfiras el Hemdani, El Muhellebi, Ion Jami, Et Tughrai, Ibn Abdoun el Andalousi and Ibn el Mutezz, and a more minute examination would no doubt largely add to the above list. As far as I can judge, from a cursory inspection, the Egyptian and Spanish Arabic poets are less fully represented in the collection than their brethren of Irak, Syria and Arabia, and it is, by the way, a notable fact, and one which tells strongly against Von Hammer's theory of the Persian origin of the work, that no single extract or translation from Persian verse is, to the best of my belief, known to exist in it.

The verse in the Thousand and One Nights is of the most various quality, ranging from high beauty to the utmost baldness. It rarely answers to our idea of that usually inserted in narrative fiction and contains little that can be described as songs, Its quality is often rhetorical rather than lyrical, and it appears frequently to have been inserted somewhat in the same way as we should use engravings or woodcuts, to illustrate and explain the prose text, or as music is employed in melodrama. It is often made use of to express a sudden emotion or exaltation of sentiment on the part of the personages introduced, much as the prose in Shakespeare's and other plays of the Elizabethan era rises occasionally into blank or rhymed verse, under stress of increased elevation or intensity of thought and feeling. As may be expected from a list of contributors which includes so many of the most renowned singers of Muslim civilisation, we are often presented with poetry worthy of the name, whilst, on the other hand, many of the pieces are mere rhymed amplifications of the prose text and seem to have been composed for the purpose by the compilers or the various copyists through whose hands the work must have passed. Again, (as in Uns el Wujoud) the verse in some of the tales has evidently been written expressly for their illustration and (though naturally of very unequal value) is often by no means lacking in poetic beauty and vigour, thus proving that among the anonymous authors of the various parts of the work were poets of no mean ability.



VOLUME X.
Tales from the Arabic I



Asleep and Awake

THERE was once [at Baghdad], in the Khalifate of Haroun er Reshid, a man, a merchant, who had a son by name Aboulhusn el Khelia. The merchant died and left his son great store of wealth, which he divided into two parts, one of which he laid up and spent of the other half; and he fell to companying with Persians and with the sons of the merchants and gave himself up to good eating and good drinking, till all that he had with him of wealth was wasted and gone; whereupon he betook himself to his friends and comrades and boon-companions and expounded to them his case, discovering to them the failure of that which was in his hand of wealth; but not one of them took heed of him neither inclined unto him.

So he returned to his mother (and indeed his spirit was broken), and related to her that which had happened to him and what had betided him from his friends, how they, had neither shared with him nor requited him with speech. "O Aboulhusn," answered she, "on this wise are the sonsof this time: if thou have aught, they make much of thee, and if thou have nought, they put thee away [from them]." And she went on to condole with him, what while he bewailed himself and his tears flowed and he repeated the following verses:

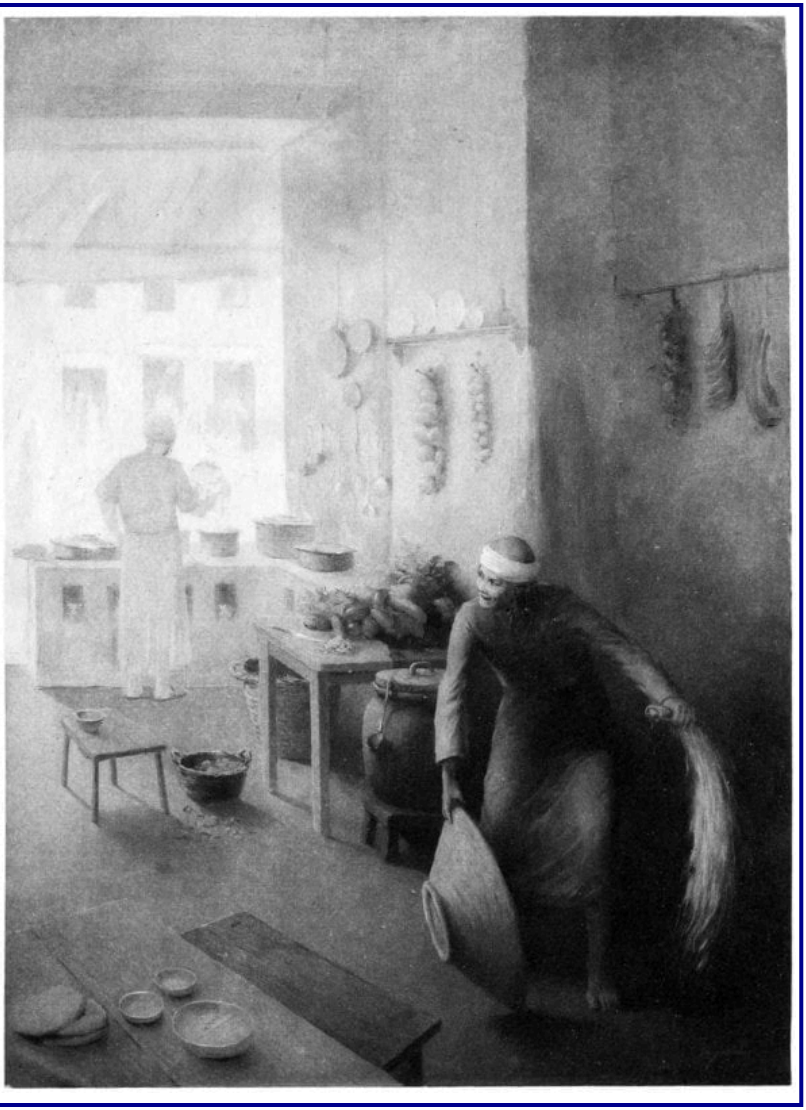
An if my substance fail, no one there is will succour me,
But if my wealth abound, of all I'm held in amity.
How many a friend, for money's sake, hath companied with me!
How many an one, with loss of wealth, hath turned mine enemy!

Then he sprang up [and going] to the place wherein was the other half of his good, [took it] and lived with it well; and he swore that he would never again consort with those whom he knew, but would company only with the stranger nor entertain him but one night and that, whenas it morrowed, he would never know him more. So he fell to sitting every night on the bridge and looking on every one who passed by him; and if he saw him to be a stranger, he made friends with him and carried him to his house, where he caroused with him till the morning. Then he dismissed him and would never more salute him nor ever again drew near unto him neither invited him.

On this wise he continued to do for the space of a whole year, till, one day, as he sat on the bridge, according to his custom, expecting who should come to him, so he might take him and pass the night with him, behold, [up came] the Khalif and Mesrour, the swordsman of his vengeance, disguised [in merchants' habits] as of their wont. So he looked at them and rising up, for that he knew them not, said to them, "What say ye? Will you go with me to my dwelling-place, so ye may eat what is ready and drink what is at hand, to wit, bread baked in the platter and meat cooked and wine clarified?" The Khalif refused this, but he conjured him and said to him, "God on thee, O my lord, go with me, for thou art my guest this night, and disappoint not my expectation concerning thee!" And he ceased not to press him till he consented to him; whereat Aboulhusn rejoiced and going on before him, gave not over talking with him till they came to his [house and he carried the Khalif into the] saloon. Er Reshid entered and made his servant abide at the door; and as soon as he was seated,

Aboulhusn brought him somewhat to eat; so he ate, and Aboulhusn ate with him, so eating might be pleasant to him. Then he removed the tray and they washed their hands and the Khalif sat down again; whereupon Aboulhusn set on the drinking vessels and seating himself by his side, fell to filling and giving him to drink and entertaining him with discourse.

His hospitality pleased the Khalif and the goodliness of his fashion, and he said to him, "O youth, who art thou? Make me acquainted with thyself, so I may requite thee thy kindness." But Aboulhusn smiled and said, "O my lord, far be it that what is past should recur and that I be in company with thee at other than this time!" "Why so?" asked the Khalif. "And why wilt thou not acquaint me with thy case?" And Aboulhusn said, "Know, O my lord, that my story is extraordinary and that there is a cause for this affair." Quoth the Khalif, "And what is the cause?" And he answered, "The cause hath a tail." The Khalif laughed at his words and Aboulhusn said, "I will explain to thee this [saying] by the story of the lackpenny and the cook. Know, O my lord, that



Story of the Lackpenny and the Cook.

ONE of the good-for-noughts found himself one day without aught and the world was straitened upon him and his patience failed; so he lay down to sleep and gave not over sleeping till the sun burnt him and the foam came out upon his mouth, whereupon he arose, and he was penniless and had not so much as one dirhem. Presently, he came to the shop of a cook, who had set up therein his pans [over the fire] and wiped his scales and washed his saucers and swept his shop and sprinkled it; and indeed his oils were clear and his spices fragrant and he himself stood behind his cooking-pots [waiting for custom]. So the lackpenny went up to him and saluting him, said to him, 'Weigh me half a dirhem's worth of meat and a quarter of a dirhem's worth of kouskoussou and the like of bread.' So the cook weighed out to him [that which he sought] and the lackpenny entered the shop, whereupon the cook set the food before him and he ate till he had gobbled up the whole and licked the saucers and abode perplexed, knowing not how he should do with the cook concerning the price of that which he had eaten and turning his eyes about upon everything in the shop.

Presently, he caught sight of an earthen pan turned over upon its mouth; so he raised it from the ground and found under it a horse's tail, freshly cut off, and the blood oozing from it; whereby he knew that the cook adulterated his meat with horses' flesh. When he discovered this default, he rejoiced therein and washing his hands, bowed his head and went out; and when the cook saw that he went and gave him nought, he cried out, saying, 'Stay, O sneak, O slink-thief!' So the lackpenny stopped and said to him, 'Dost thou cry out upon me and becall [me] with these words, O cuckold?' Whereat the cook was angry and coming down from the shop, said, 'What meanest thou by thy speech, O thou that devourest meat and kouskoussou and bread and seasoning and goest forth with "Peace[be on thee!]," as it were the thing had not been, and payest down nought for it?' Quoth the lackpenny, 'Thou liest, O son of a cuckold!' Wherewith the cook cried out and laying hold of the lackpenny's collar, said, 'O Muslims, this fellow is my first customer this day and he hath eaten my food and given me nought.'

So the folk gathered together to them and blamed the lackpenny and said to him, 'Give him the price of that which thou hast eaten.' Quoth he, 'I gave him a dirhem before I entered the shop;' and the cook said, 'Be everything I sell this day forbidden to me, if he gave me so much as the name of a piece of money! By Allah, he gave me nought, but ate my food and went out and [would have] made off, without aught [said I]' 'Nay,' answered the lackpenny, 'I gave thee a dirhem,' and he reviled the cook, who returned his abuse; whereupon he dealt him a cuff and they gripped and grappled and throttled each other. When the folk saw them on this wise, they came up to them and said to them, 'What is this strife between you, and no cause for it?' 'Ay, by Allah,' replied the lackpenny, 'but there is a cause for it, and the cause hath a tail!' Whereupon, 'Yea, by Allah,' cried the cook, 'now thou mindest me of thyself and thy dirhem! Yes, he gave me a dirhem and [but] a quarter of the price is spent. Come back and take the rest of the price of thy dirhem.' For that he understood what was to do, at

the mention of the tail; and I, O my brother," added Aboulhusn, "my story hath a cause, which I will tell thee."

The Khalif laughed at his speech and said, "By Allah, this is none other than a pleasant tale! Tell me thy story and the cause." "With all my heart," answered Aboulhusn. "Know, O my lord, that my name is Aboulhusn el Khelia and that my father died and left me wealth galore, of which I made two parts. One I laid up and with the other I betook myself to [the enjoyment of the pleasures of] friendship [and conviviality] and consorting with comrades and boon-companions and with the sons of the merchants, nor did I leave one but I caroused with him and he with me, and I spent all my money on companionship and good cheer, till there remained with me nought [of the first half of my good]; whereupon I betook myself to the comrades and cup-companions upon whom I had wasted my wealth, so haply they might provide for my case; but, when I resorted to them and went round about to them all, I found no avail in one of them, nor broke any so much as a crust of bread in my face. So I wept for myself and repairing to my mother, complained to her of my case. Quoth she, 'On this wise are friends; if thou have aught, they make much of thee and devour thee, but, if thou have nought, they cast thee off and chase thee away.' Then I brought out the other half of my money and bound myself by an oath that I would never more entertain any, except one night, after which I would never again salute him nor take note of him; hence my saying to thee, 'Far be it that what is past should recur!' For that I will never again foregather with thee, after this night."

When the Khalif heard this, he laughed heartily and said, "By Allah, O my brother, thou art indeed excused in this matter, now that I know the cause and that the cause hath a tail. Nevertheless if it please God, I will not sever myself from thee." "O my guest," replied Aboulhusn, "did I not say to thee, 'Far be it that what is past should recur! For that I will never again foregather with any'?" Then the Khalif rose and Aboulhusn set before him a dish of roast goose and a cake of manchet-bread and sitting down, fell to cutting off morsels and feeding the Khalif therewith. They gave not over eating thus till they were content, when Aboulhusn brought bowl and ewer and potash and they washed their hands.

Then he lighted him three candles and three lamps and spreading the drinking-cloth, brought clarified wine, limpid, old and fragrant, the scent whereof was as that of virgin musk. He filled the first cup and saying, "O my boon-companion, by thy leave, be ceremony laid aside between us! I am thy slave; may I not be afflicted with thy loss!" drank it off and filled a second cup, which he handed to the Khalif, with a reverence. His fashion pleased the Khalif and the goodliness of his speech and he said in himself, "By Allah, I will assuredly requite him for this!" Then Aboulhusn filled the cup again and handed it to the Khalif, reciting the following verses:

Had we thy coming known, we would for sacrifice
Have poured thee out heart's blood or blackness of the eyes;
Ay, and we would have spread our bosoms in thy way,
That so thy feet might fare on eyelids, carpet-wise.

When the Khalif heard his verses, he took the cup from his hand and kissed it and drank it off and returned it to Aboulhusn, who made him an obeisance and filled

and drank. Then he filled again and kissing the cup thrice, recited the following verses:

Thy presence honoureth us and we Confess thy magnanimity;
If thou forsake us, there is none Can stand to us instead of thee.

Then he gave the cup to the Khalif, saying, "Drink [and may] health and soundness [attend it]! It doth away disease and bringeth healing and setteth the runnels of health abroach."

They gave not over drinking and carousing till the middle of the night, when the Khalif said to his host, "O my brother, hast thou in thy heart a wish thou wouldst have accomplished or a regret thou wouldst fain do away?" "By Allah," answered he, "there is no regret in my heart save that I am not gifted with dominion and the power of commandment and prohibition, so I might do what is in my mind!" Quoth the Khalif, "For God's sake, O my brother, tell me what is in thy mind!" And Aboulhusn said, "I would to God I might avenge myself on my neighbours, for that in my neighbourhood is a mosque and therein four sheikhs, who take it ill, whenas there cometh a guest to me, and vex me with talk and molest me in words and threaten me that they will complain of me to the Commander of the Faithful, and indeed they oppress me sore, and I crave of God the Most High one day's dominion, that I may beat each of them with four hundred lashes, as well as the Imam of the mosque, and parade them about the city of Baghdad and let call before them, 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso exceedeth [in talk] and spiteth the folk and troubleth on them their joys.' This is what I wish and no more."

Quoth the Khalif, "God grant thee that thou seekest! Let us drink one last cup and rise before the dawn draw near, and to-morrow night I will be with thee again." "Far be it!" said Aboulhusn. Then the Khalif filled a cup and putting therein a piece of Cretan henbane, gave it to his host and said to him, "My life on thee, O my brother, drink this cup from my hand!" "Ay, by thy life," answered Aboulhusn, "I will drink it from thy hand." So he took it and drank it off; but hardly had he done so, when his head forewent his feet and he fell to the ground like a slain man; whereupon the Khalif went out and said to his servant Mesrour, "Go in to yonder young man, the master of the house, and take him up and bring him to me at the palace; and when thou goest out, shut the door."

So saying, he went away, whilst Mesrour entered and taking up Aboulhusn, shut the door after him, and followed his master, till he reached the palace, what while the night drew to an end and the cocks cried out, and set him down before the Commander of the Faithful, who laughed at him. Then he sent for Jaafer the Barmecide and when he came before him, he said to him, "Note this young man and when thou seest him to-morrow seated in my place of estate and on the throne of my Khalifate and clad in my habit, stand thou in attendance upon him and enjoin the Amirs and grandees and the people of my household and the officers of my realm to do the like and obey him in that which he shall command them; and thou, if he bespeak thee of anything, do it and hearken unto him and gainsay him not in aught in this coming day." Jaafer answered with, "Hearkening and obedience," and withdrew, whilst the Khalif went in to the women of the palace, who came to him, and he said to them, "Whenas yonder sleeper awaketh to-morrow from his sleep, kiss ye the earth

before him and make obeisance to him and come round about him and clothe him in the [royal] habit and do him the service of the Khalifate and deny not aught of his estate, but say to him, 'Thou art the Khalif.'" Then he taught them what they should say to him and how they should do with him and withdrawing to a privy place, let down a curtain before himself and slept.

Meanwhile, Aboulhusn gave not over snoring in his sleep, till the day broke and the rising of the sun drew near, when a waiting-woman came up to him and said to him, "O our lord [it is the hour of] the morning- prayer." When he heard the girl's words, he laughed and opening his eyes, turned them about the place and found himself in an apartment the walls whereof were painted with gold and ultramarine and its ceiling starred with red gold. Around it were sleeping-chambers, with curtains of gold-embroidered silk let down over their doors, and all about vessels of gold and porcelain and crystal and furniture and carpets spread and lamps burning before the prayer-niche and slave-girls and eunuchs and white slaves and black slaves and boys and pages and attendants. When he saw this, he was confounded in his wit and said, "By Allah, either I am dreaming, or this is Paradise and the Abode of Peace!" And he shut his eyes and went to sleep again. Quoth the waiting-woman, "O my lord, this is not of thy wont, O Commander of the Faithful!"

Then the rest of the women of the palace came all to him and lifted him into a sitting posture, when he found himself upon a couch, stuffed all with floss-silk and raised a cubit's height from the ground. So they seated him upon it and propped him up with a pillow, and he looked at the apartment and its greatness and saw those eunuchs and slave-girls in attendance upon him and at his head, whereat he laughed at himself and said, "By Allah, it is not as I were on wake, and [yet] I am not asleep!" Then he arose and sat up, whilst the damsels laughed at him and hid [their laughter] from him; and he was confounded in his wit and bit upon his finger. The bite hurt him and he cried "Oh!" and was vexed; and the Khalif watched him, whence he saw him not, and laughed.

Presently Aboulhusn turned to a damsel and called to her; whereupon she came to him and he said to her, "By the protection of God, O damsel, am I Commander of the Faithful?" "Yes, indeed," answered she; "by the protection of God thou in this time art Commander of the Faithful." Quoth he, "By Allah, thou liest, O thousandfold strumpet!" Then he turned to the chief eunuch and called to him, whereupon he came to him and kissing the earth before him, said, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful." "Who is Commander of the Faithful?" asked Aboulhusn. "Thou," replied the eunuch and Aboulhusn said, "Thou liest, thousandfold catamite that thou art!" Then he turned to another eunuch and said to him, "O my chief, by the protection of God, am I Commander of the Faithful?" "Ay, by Allah, O my lord!" answered he. "Thou in this time art Commander of the Faithful and Vicar of the Lord of the Worlds." Aboulhusn laughed at himself and misdoubted of his reason and was perplexed at what he saw and said, "In one night I am become Khalif! Yesterday I was Aboulhusn the Wag, and to-day I am Commander of the Faithful." Then the chief eunuch came up to him and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, (the name of God encompass thee!) thou art indeed Commander of the Faithful and Vicar of the Lord of the Worlds!" And the

slave-girls and eunuchs came round about him, till he arose and abode wondering at his case.

Presently, one of the slave-girls brought him a pair of sandals wrought with raw silk and green silk and embroidered with red gold, and he took them and put them in his sleeve, whereat the slave cried out and said, "Allah! Allah! O my lord, these are sandals for the treading of thy feet, so thou mayst enter the draught-house." Aboulhusn was confounded and shaking the sandals from his sleeve, put them on his feet, whilst the Khalif [well-nigh] died of laughter at him. The slave forewent him to the house of easance, where he entered and doing his occasion, came out into the chamber, whereupon the slave- girls brought him a basin of gold and an ewer of silver and poured water on his hands and he made the ablution.

Then they spread him a prayer-carpet and he prayed. Now he knew not how to pray and gave not over bowing and prostrating himself, [till he had prayed the prayers] of twenty inclinations, pondering in himself the while and saying, "By Allah, I am none other than the Commander of the Faithful in very sooth! This is assuredly no dream, for all these things happen not in a dream." And he was convinced and determined in himself that he was Commander of the Faithful; so he pronounced the Salutation and made an end of his prayers; whereupon the slaves and slave-girls came round about him with parcels of silk and stuffs and clad him in the habit of the Khalifate and gave him the royal dagger in his hand. Then the chief eunuch went out before him and the little white slaves behind him, and they ceased not [going] till they raised the curtain and brought him into the hall of judgment and the throne-room of the Khalifate. There he saw the curtains and the forty doors and El Ijli and Er Recashi and Ibdan and Jedim and Abou Ishac the boon-companions and beheld swords drawn and lions encompassing [the throne] and gilded glaives and death-dealing bows and Persians and Arabs and Turks and Medes and folk and peoples and Amirs and viziers and captains and grandees and officers of state and men of war, and indeed there appeared the puissance of the house of Abbas and the majesty of the family of the Prophet.

So he sat down upon the throne of the Khalifate and laid the dagger in his lap, whereupon all [present] came up to kiss the earth before him and called down on him length of life and continuance [of glory and prosperity]. Then came forward Jaafer the Barmecide and kissing the earth, said, "May the wide world of God be the treading of thy feet and may Paradise be thy dwelling-place and the fire the habitation of thine enemies! May no neighbour transgress against thee nor the lights of fire die out for thee, O Khalif of [all] cities and ruler of [all] countries!"

Therewithal Aboulhusn cried out at him and said, "O dog of the sons of Bermek, go down forthright, thou and the master of the police of the city, to such a place in such a street and deliver a hundred dinars to the mother of Aboulhusn the Wag and bear her my salutation. [Then, go to such a mosque] and take the four sheikhs and the Imam and beat each of them with four hundred lashes and mount them on beasts, face to tail, and go round with them about all the city and banish them to a place other than the city; and bid the crier make proclamation before them, saying, 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso multiplieth words and molesteth his neighbours and stinteth them of their delights and their eating and drinking!'" Jaafer

received the order [with submission] and answered with ["Hearkening and] obedience;" after which he went down from before Aboulhusn to the city and did that whereunto he had bidden him.

Meanwhile, Aboulhusn abode in the Khalifate, taking and giving, ordering and forbidding and giving effect to his word, till the end of the day, when he gave [those who were present] leave and permission [to withdraw], and the Amirs and officers of state departed to their occasions. Then the eunuchs came to him and calling down on him length of life and continuance [of glory and prosperity], walked in attendance upon him and raised the curtain, and he entered the pavilion of the harem, where he found candles lighted and lamps burning and singing-women smiting [on instruments of music]. When he saw this, he was confounded in his wit and said in himself, "By Allah, I am in truth Commander of the Faithful!" As soon as he appeared, the slave-girls rose to him and carrying him up on to the estrade, brought him a great table, spread with the richest meats. So he ate thereof with all his might, till he had gotten his fill, when he called one of the slave-girls and said to her, "What is thy name?" "My name is Miskeh," replied she, and he said to another, "What is thy name?" Quoth she, "My name is Terkeh." Then said he to a third, "What is thy name?" "My name is Tuhfeh," answered she; and he went on to question the damsels of their names, one after another, [till he had made the round of them all], when he rose from that place and removed to the wine-chamber.

He found it every way complete and saw therein ten great trays, full of all fruits and cakes and all manner sweetmeats. So he sat down and ate thereof after the measure of his sufficiency, and finding there three troops of singing-girls, was amazed and made the girls eat. Then he sat and the singers also seated themselves, whilst the black slaves and the white slaves and the eunuchs and pages and boys stood, and the slave-girls, some of them, sat and some stood. The damsels sang and warbled all manner melodies and the place answered them for the sweetness of the songs, whilst the pipes cried out and the lutes made accord with them, till it seemed to Aboulhusn that he was in Paradise and his heart was cheered and his breast dilated. So he sported and joyance waxed on him and he bestowed dresses of honour on the damsels and gave and bestowed, challenging this one and kissing that and toying with a third, plying one with wine and another with meat, till the night fell down.

All this while the Khalif was diverting himself with watching him and laughing, and at nightfall he bade one of the slave-girls drop a piece of henbane in the cup and give it to Aboulhusn to drink. So she did as he bade her and gave Aboulhusn the cup, whereof no sooner had he drunken than his head forewent his feet [and he fell down, senseless]. Therewith the Khalif came forth from behind the curtain, laughing, and calling to the servant who had brought Aboulhusn to the palace, said to him, "Carry this fellow to his own place." So Mesrour took him up [and carrying him to his own house], set him down in the saloon. Then he went forth from him and shutting the saloon-door upon him, returned to the Khalif, who slept till the morrow.

As for Aboulhusn, he gave not over sleeping till God the Most High brought on the morning, when he awoke, crying out and saying, "Ho, Tuffaheh! Ho, Rahet el Culoub! Ho, Miskeh! Ho, Tuhfeh!" And he gave not over calling upon the slave-girls till his mother heard him calling upon strange damsels and rising, came to him and

said, "The name of God encompass thee! Arise, O my son, O Aboulhusn! Thou dreamest." So he opened his eyes and finding an old woman at his head, raised his eyes and said to her, "Who art thou?" Quoth she, "I am thy mother;" and he answered, "Thou liest! I am the Commander of the Faithful, the Vicar of God." Whereupon his mother cried out and said to him, "God preserve thy reason! Be silent, O my son, and cause not the loss of our lives and the spoiling of thy wealth, [as will assuredly betide,] if any hear this talk and carry it to the Khalif."

So he rose from his sleep and finding himself in his own saloon and his mother by him, misdoubted of his wit and said to her, "By Allah, O my mother, I saw myself in a dream in a palace, with slave-girls and servants about me and in attendance upon me, and I sat upon the throne of the Khalifate and ruled. By Allah, O my mother, this is what I saw, and verily it was not a dream!" Then he bethought himself awhile and said, "Assuredly, I am Aboulhusn el Khelia, and this that I saw was only a dream, and [it was in a dream that] I was made Khalif and commanded and forbade." Then he bethought himself again and said, "Nay, but it was no dream and I am no other than the Khalif, and indeed I gave gifts and bestowed dresses of honour." Quoth his mother to him, "O my son, thou sportest with thy reason: thou wilt go to the hospital and become a gazing-stock. Indeed, that which thou hast seen is only from the Devil and it was a delusion of dreams, for whiles Satan sporteth with men's wits in all manner ways."

Then said she to him, "O my son, was there any one with thee yesternight?" And he bethought himself and said, "Yes; one lay the night with me and I acquainted him with my case and told him my story. Doubtless, he was from the Devil, and I, O my mother, even as thou sayst truly, am Aboulhusn el Khelia." "O my son," rejoined she, "rejoice in tidings of all good, for yesterday's record is that there came the Vivier Jaafer the Barmecide [and his company] and beat the sheikhs of the mosque and the Imam, each four hundred lashes; after which they paraded them about the city, making proclamation before them and saying, 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso lacketh of goodwill to his neighbours and troubleth on them their lives!' and banished them from Baghdad. Moreover, the Khalif sent me a hundred dinars and sent to salute me." Whereupon Aboulhusn cried out and said to her, "O old woman of ill-omen, wilt thou contradict me and tell me that I am not the Commander of the Faithful? It was I who commanded Jaafer the Barmecide to beat the sheikhs and parade them about the city and make proclamation before them and who sent thee the hundred dinars and sent to salute thee, and I, O beldam of ill-luck, am in very deed the Commander of the Faithful, and thou art a liar, who would make me out a dotard."

So saying, he fell upon her and beat her with a staff of almond-wood, till she cried out, "[Help], O Muslims!" and he redoubled the beating upon her, till the folk heard her cries and coming to her, [found] Aboulhusn beating her and saying to her, "O old woman of ill-omen, am I not the Commander of the Faithful? Thou hast enchanted me!" When the folk heard his words, they said, "This man raveth," and doubted not of his madness. So they came in upon him and seizing him, pinioned him and carried him to the hospital. Quoth the superintendant, "What aileth this youth?" And they said, "This is a madman." "By Allah," cried Aboulhusn, "they lie against me! I am no

madman, but the Commander of the Faithful." And the superintendant answered him, saying, "None lieth but thou, O unluckiest of madmen!"

Then he stripped him of his clothes and clapping on his neck a heavy chain, bound him to a high lattice and fell to drubbing him two bouts a day and two anights; and on this wise he abode the space of ten days. Then his mother came to him and said, "O my son, O Aboulhusn, return to thy reason, for this is the Devil's doing." Quoth he, "Thou sayst sooth, O my mother, and bear thou witness of me that I repent [and forswear] that talk and turn from my madness. So do thou deliver me, for I am nigh upon death." So his mother went out to the superintendant and procured his release and he returned to his own house.

Now this was at the beginning of the month, and when it was the end thereof, Aboulhusn longed to drink wine and returning to his former usance, furnished his saloon and made ready food and let bring wine; then, going forth to the bridge, he sat there, expecting one whom he should carouse withal, as of his wont. As he sat thus, behold, up came the Khalif [and Mesrour] to him; but Aboulhusn saluted them not and said to them, "No welcome and no greeting to the perverters! Ye are no other than devils." However, the Khalif accosted him and said to him, "O my brother, did I not say to thee that I would return to thee?" Quoth Aboulhusn, "I have no need of thee; and as the byword says in verse:

'Twere fitter and better my loves that I leave, For, if the eye see not, the heart will not grieve.

And indeed, O my brother, the night thou camest to me and we caroused together, I and thou, it was as if the Devil came to me and troubled me that night." "And who is he, the Devil?" asked the Khalif. "He is none other than thou," answered Aboulhusn; whereat the Khalif smiled and sitting down by him, coaxed him and spoke him fair, saying, "O my brother, when I went out from thee, I forgot [to shut] the door [and left it] open, and belike Satan came in to thee." Quoth Aboulhusn, "Ask me not of that which hath betided me. What possessed thee to leave the door open, so that the Devil came in to me and there befell me with him this and that?" And he related to him all that had befallen him, from first to last, aud there is no advantage in the repetition of it; what while the Khalif laughed and hid his laughter.

Then said he to Aboulhusn, "Praised be God who hath done away from thee that which irked thee and that I see thee in weal!" And Aboulhusn said, "Never again will I take thee to boon-companion or sitting-mate; for the byword saith, 'Whoso stumbleth on a stone and returneth thereto, blame and reproach be upon him.' And thou, O my brother, nevermore will I entertain thee nor use companionship with thee, for that I have not found thy commerce propitious to me." But the Khalif blandished him and conjured him, redoubling words upon him with "Verily, I am thy guest; reject not the guest," till Aboulhusn took him and [carrying him home], brought him into the saloon and set food before him and friendly entreated him in speech. Then he told him all that had befallen him, whilst the Khalif was like to die of hidden laughter; after which Aboulhusn removed the tray of food and bringing the wine-tray, filled a cup and emptied it out three times, then gave it to the Khalif, saying, "O boon-companion

mine, I am thy slave and let not that which I am about to say irk thee, and be thou not vexed, neither do thou vex me." And he recited these verses:

No good's in life (to the counsel list of one who's purpose-whole,)
An if thou be not drunken still and gladden not thy soul.
Ay, ne'er will I leave to drink of wine, what while the night on me
Darkens, till drowsiness bow down my head upon my bowl.
In wine, as the glittering sunbeams bright, my heart's contentment is,
That banishes hence, with various joys, all kinds of care and dole.

When the Khalif heard these his verses, he was moved to exceeding delight and taking the cup, drank it off, and they ceased not to drink and carouse till the wine rose to their heads. Then said Aboulhusn to the Khalif, "O boon-companion mine, of a truth I am perplexed concerning my affair, for meseemed I was Commander of the Faithful and ruled and gave gifts and largesse, and in very deed, O my brother, it was not a dream." "These were the delusions of sleep," answered the Khalif and crumbling a piece of henbane into the cup, said to him, "By my life, do thou drink this cup." And Aboulhusn said, "Surely I will drink it from thy hand." Then he took the cup from the Khalifs hand and drank it off, and no sooner had it settled in his belly than his head forewent his feet [and he fell down senseless].

Now his parts and fashions pleased the Khalif and the excellence of his composition and his frankness, and he said in himself, "I will assuredly make him my cup- companion and sitting-mate." So he rose forthright and saying to Mesrour, "Take him up," [returned to the palace]. Accordingly, Mesrour took up Aboulhusn and carrying him to the palace of the Khalifate, set him down before Er Reshid, who bade the slaves and slave- girls encompass him about, whilst he himself hid in a place where Aboulhusn could not see him.

Then he commanded one of the slave-girls to take the lute and strike it at Aboulhusn's head, whilst the rest smote upon their instruments. [So they played and sang,] till Aboulhusn awoke at the last of the night and heard the noise of lutes and tabrets and the sound of the pipes and the singing of the slave-girls, whereupon he opened his eyes and finding himself in the palace, with the slave-girls and eunuchs about him, exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! Verily, I am fearful of the hospital and of that which I suffered therein aforetime, and I doubt not but the Devil is come to me again, as before. O my God, put thou Satan to shame!" Then he shut his eyes and laid his head in his sleeve and fell to laughing softly and raising his head [bytimes], but [still] found the apartment lighted and the girls singing.

Presently, one of the eunuchs sat down at his head and said to him, "Sit up, O Commander of the Faithful, and look on thy palace and thy slave-girls." Quoth Aboulhusn, "By the protection of God, am I in truth Commander of the Faithful and dost thou not lie? Yesterday, I went not forth neither ruled, but drank and slept, and this eunuch cometh to rouse me up." Then he sat up and bethought himself of that which had betided him with his mother and how he had beaten her and entered the hospital, and he saw the marks of the beating, wherewithal the superintendant of the hospital had beaten him, and was perplexed concerning his affair and pondered in

himself, saying, "By Allah, I know not how my case is nor what is this that betideth me!"

Then he turned to a damsel of the damsels and said to her, "Who am I?" Quoth she, "Thou art the Commander of the Faithful;" and he said, "Thou liest, O calamity! If I be indeed the Commander of the Faithful, bite my finger." So she came to him and bit it with her might, and he said to her, "It sufficeth." Then he said to the chief eunuch, "Who am I?" And he answered, "Thou art the Commander of the Faithful." So he left him and turning to a little white slave, said to him, "Bite my ear;" and he bent down to him and put his ear to his mouth. Now the slave was young and lacked understanding; so he closed his teeth upon Aboulhusn's ear with his might, till he came near to sever it; and he knew not Arabic, so, as often as Aboulhusn said to him, "It sufficeth," he concluded that he said, "Bite harder," and redoubled his bite and clenched his teeth upon the ear, whilst the damsels were diverted from him with hearkening to the singing-girls, and Aboulhusn cried out for succour from the boy and the Khalif [well-nigh] lost his senses for laughter.

Then he dealt the boy a cuff and he let go his ear, whereupon Aboulhusn put off his clothes and abode naked, with his yard and his arse exposed, and danced among the slave-girls. They bound his hands and he wantoned among them, what while they [well-nigh] died of laughing at him and the Khalif swooned away for excess of laughter. Then he came to himself and going forth to Aboulhusn, said to him, "Out on thee, O Aboulhusn! Thou slayest me with laughter." So he turned to him and knowing him, said to him, "By Allah, it is thou slayest me and slayest my mother and slewest the sheikhs and the Imam of the Mosque!"

Then the Khalif took him into his especial favour and married him and bestowed largesse on him and lodged him with himself in the palace and made him of the chief of his boon-companions, and indeed he was preferred with him above them and the Khalif advanced him over them all. Now they were ten in number, to wit, El Ijli and Er Recashi and Ibdan and Hassan el Feresdec and El Lauz and Es Seker and Omar et Tertis and Abou Nuwas and Abou Ishac en Nedim and Aboulhusn el Khelia, and by each of them hangeth a story that is told in other than this book. And indeed Aboulhusn became high in honour with the Khalif and favoured above all, so that he sat with him and the Lady Zubeideh bint el Casim and married the latter's treasuress, whose name was Nuzhet el Fuad.

Aboulhusn abode with his wife in eating and drinking and all delight of life, till all that was with them was spent, when he said to her, "Harkye, O Nuzhet el Fuad!" "At thy service," answered she, and he said, "I have it in mind to play a trick on the Khalif and thou shalt do the like with the Lady Zubeideh, and we will take of them, in a twinkling, two hundred dinars and two pieces of silk." "As thou wilt," answered she; "but what thinkest thou to do?" And he said,"We will feign ourselves dead and this is the trick. I will die before thee and lay myself out, and do thou spread over me a kerchief of silk and loose [the muslin of] my turban over me and tie my toes and lay on my heart a knife, and a little salt. Then let down thy hair and betake thyself to thy mistress Zubeideh, tearing thy dress and buffeting thy face and crying out. She will say to thee, 'What aileth thee?' and do thou answer her, saying, 'May thy head outlive Aboulhusn el Khelia! For he is dead." She will mourn for me and weep and bid her

treasuress give thee a hundred dinars and a piece of silk and will say to thee, 'Go lay him out and carry him forth [to burial].' So do thou take of her the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and come back, and when thou returnest to me, I will rise up and thou shalt lie down in my place, and I will go to the Khalif and say to him, 'May thy head outlive Nuzhet el Fuad!' and tear my dress and pluck at my beard. He will mourn for thee and say to his treasurer, 'Give Aboulhusn a hundred dinars and a piece of silk.' Then he will say to me, 'Go; lay her out and carry her forth;' and I will come back to thee."

Therewith Nuzhet el Fuad rejoiced and said, "Indeed, this is an excellent device." [Then Aboulhusn stretched himself out] forthright and she shut his eyes and tied his feet and covered him with the kerchief and did what [else] her lord had bidden her; after which she rent her dress and uncovering her head, let down her hair and went in to the Lady Zubeideh, crying out and weeping, When the princess saw her in this case, she said to her, "What plight is this [in which I see thee]? What is thy story and what maketh thee weep?" And Nuzhet el Fuad answered, weeping and crying out the while, "O my lady, may thy head live and mayst thou survive Aboulhusn el Khelia! For he is dead." The Lady Zubeideh mourned for him and said, "Alas for Aboulhusn el Khelia!" And she wept for him awhile. Then she bade her treasuress give Nuzhet el Fuad a hundred dinars and a piece of silk and said to her, "O Nuzhet el Fuad, go, lay him out and carry him forth."

So she took the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and returned to her dwelling, rejoicing, and went in to Aboulhusn and told him what had befallen, whereupon he arose and rejoiced and girt his middle and danced and took the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and laid them up. Then he laid out Nuzhet el Fuad and did with her even as she had done with him; after which he rent his clothes and plucked out his beard and disordered his turban [and went forth] and gave not over running till he came in to the Khalif, who was sitting in the hall of audience, and he in this plight, beating upon his breast. Quoth the Khalif to him, "What aileth thee, O Aboulhusn!" And he wept and said, "Would thy boon-companion had never been and would his hour had never come!" "Tell me [thy case,]" said the Khalif; and Aboulhusn said, "O my lord, may thy head outlive Nuzhet el Fuad!" Quoth the Khalif, "There is no god but God!" And he smote hand upon hand. Then he comforted Aboulhusn and said to him, "Grieve not, for we will give thee a concubine other than she." And he bade the treasurer give him a hundred dinars and a piece of silk. So the treasurer gave him what the Khalif bade him, and the latter said to him,"Go, lay her out and carry her forth and make her a handsome funeral." So Aboulhusn took that which he had given him and returning to his house, rejoicing, went in to Nuzhet el Fuad and said to her, "Arise, for the wish is accomplished unto us." So she arose and he laid before her the hundred dinars and the piece of silk, whereat she rejoiced, and they added the gold to the gold and the silk to the silk and sat talking and laughing at one another.

Meanwhile, when Aboulhusn went out from the presence of the Khalif and went to lay out Nuzhet el Fuad, the prince mourned for her and dismissing the divan, arose and betook himself, leaning upon Mesrour, the swordsman of his vengeance, [to the pavilion of the harem, where he went in] to the Lady Zubeideh, that he might condole with her for her slave-girl. He found the princess sitting weeping and awaiting his

coming, so she might condole with him for [his boon-companion] Aboulhusn el Khelia. So he said to her, "May thy head outlive thy slave-girl Nuzhet el Fuad!" And she answered, saying, "O my lord, God preserve my slave-girl! Mayst thou live and long survive thy boon-companion Aboulhusn el Khelia! For he is dead."

The Khalif smiled and said to his eunuch, "O Mesrour, verily women are little of wit. I conjure thee, by Allah, say, was not Aboulhusn with me but now?" ["Yes, O Commander of the Faithful," answered Mesrour] Quoth the Lady Zubeideh, laughing from a heart full of wrath, "Wilt thou not leave thy jesting? Is it not enough that Aboulhusn is dead, but thou must kill my slave-girl also and bereave us of the two and style me little of wit?" "Indeed," answered the Khalif, "it is Nuzhet el Fuad who is dead." And Zubeideh said, "Indeed he hath not been with thee, nor hast thou seen him, and none was with me but now but Nuzhet el Fuad, and she sorrowful, weeping, with her clothes torn. I exhorted her to patience and gave her a hundred dinars and a piece of silk; and indeed I was awaiting thy coming, so I might condole with thee for thy boon- companion Aboulhusn el Khelia, and was about to send for thee." The Khalif laughed and said, "None is dead but Nuzhet el Fuad;" and she, "No, no, my lord; none is dead but Aboulhusn."

With this the Khalif waxed wroth, and the Hashimi vein started out from between his eyes and he cried out to Mesrour and said to him, "Go forth and see which of them is dead." So Mesrour went out, running, and the Khalif said to Zubeideh, "Wilt thou lay me a wager?" "Yes," answered she; "I will wager, and I say that Aboulhusn is dead." "And I," rejoined the Khalif, "wager and say that none is dead save Nuzhet el Fuad; and the stake shall be the Garden of Pleasance against thy palace and the Pavilion of Pictures." So they [agreed upon this and] abode awaiting Mesrour, till such time as he should return with news.

As for Mesrour, he gave not over running till he came to the by-street, [wherein was the house] of Aboulhusn el Khelia. Now the latter was sitting reclining at the lattice, and chancing to look round, saw Mesrour running along the street and said to Nuzhet el Fuad, "Meseemeth the Khalif, when I went forth from him, dismissed the Divan and went in to the Lady Zubeideh, to condole with her [for thee;] whereupon she arose and condoled with him [for me,] saying, 'God greaten thy recompence for [the loss of] Aboulhusn el Khelia!' And he said to her, 'None is dead save Nuzhet el Fuad, may thy head outlive her!' Quoth she, 'It is not she who is dead, but Aboulhusn el Khelia, thy boon-companion.' And he to her, 'None is dead but Nuzhet el Fuad.' And they gainsaid one another, till the Khalif waxed wroth and they laid a wager, and he hath sent Mesrour the sword- bearer to see who is dead. Wherefore it were best that thou lie down, so he may see thee and go and acquaint the Khalif and confirm my saying." So Nuzhet el Fuad stretched herself out and Aboulhusn covered her with her veil and sat at her head, weeping.

Presently, in came Mesrour the eunuch to him and saluted him and seeing Nuzhet el Fuad stretched out, uncovered her face and said, "There is no god but God! Our sister Nuzhet el Fuad is dead. How sudden was the [stroke of] destiny! May God have mercy on thee and acquit thee of responsibility!" Then he returned and related what had passed before the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh, and he laughing. "O accursed one,' said the Khalif, "is this a time for laughter? Tell us which is dead of

them." "By Allah, O my lord," answered Mesrour, "Aboulhusn is well and none is dead but Nuzhet el Fuad." Quoth the Khalif to Zubeideh, "Thou hast lost thy pavilion in thy play," and he laughed at her and said to Mesrour, "O Mesrour, tell her what thou sawest." "Verily, O my lady," said the eunuch, "I ran without ceasing till I came in to Aboulhusn in his house and found Nuzhet el Fuad lying dead and Aboulhusn sitting at her head, weeping. I saluted him and condoled with him and sat down by his side and uncovered the face of Nuzhet el Fuad and saw her dead and her face swollen. So I said to him, 'Carry her out forthright [to burial], so we may pray over her.' He answered, 'It is well;' and I left him to lay her out and came hither, that I might tell you the news."

The Khalif laughed and said, "Tell it again and again to thy lady lack-wit." When the Lady Zubeideh heard Mesrour's words [and those of the Khalif,] she was wroth and said, "None lacketh wit but he who believeth a black slave." And she reviled Mesrour, whilst the Khalif laughed. Mesrour was vexed at this and said to the Khalif, "He spoke sooth who said, 'Women lack wit and religion.'" Then said the Lady Zubeideh to the Khalif, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou sportest and jestest with me, and this slave hoodwinketh me, to please thee; but I will send and see which is dead of them." And he answered, saying, "Send one who shall see which is dead of them." So the Lady Zubeideh cried out to an old woman, a stewardess, and said to her, "Go to the house of Nuzhet el Fuad in haste and see who is dead and loiter not." And she railed at her.

The old woman went out, running, whilst the Khalif and Mesrour laughed, and gave not over running till she came into the street. Aboulhusn saw her and knowing her, said to his wife, "O Nuzhet el Fuad, meseemeth the Lady Zubeideh hath sent to us to see who is dead and hath not given credence to Mesrour's report of thy death; so she hath despatched the old woman, her stewardess, to discover the truth; wherefore it behoveth me to be dead in my turn, for the sake of thy credit with the Lady Zubeideh." Accordingly, he lay down and stretched himself out, and she covered him and bound his eyes and feet and sat at his head, weeping.

Presently, the old woman came in to her and saw her sitting at Aboulhusn's head, weeping and lamenting; and when she saw the old woman, she cried out and said to her, "See what hath betided me! Indeed, Aboulhusn is dead and hath left me alone and forlorn!" Then she cried out and tore her clothes and said to the old woman, "O my mother, how good he was!" Quoth the other, "Indeed thou art excused, for thou wast used to him and he to thee." Then she considered what Mesrour had reported to the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh and said to her, "Indeed, Mesrour goeth about to sow discord between the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh." "And what is the [cause of] discord, O my mother?" asked Nuzhet el Fuad. "O my daughter," answered the old woman, "Mesrour came to the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh and gave them news of thee that thou wast dead and that Aboulhusn was well. "And Nuzhet el Fuad said to her, "O my aunt, I was with my lady but now and she gave me a hundred dinars and a piece of silk; and now see my condition and that which hath befallen me! Indeed, I am bewildered, and how shall I do, and I alone, forlorn? Would God I had died and he had lived!"

Then she wept and the old woman with her and the latter went up to Aboulhusn and uncovering his face, saw his eyes bound and swollen for the binding. So she

covered him again and said, "Indeed, O Nuzhet el Fuad, thou art afflicted in Aboulhusn!" Then she condoled with her and going out from her, ran without ceasing till she came in to the Lady Zubeideh and related to her the story; and the princess said to her, laughing, "Tell it over again to the Khalif, who maketh me out scant of wit and lacking of religion, and to this ill-omened slave, who presumeth to contradict me." Quoth Mesrour, "This old woman lieth; for I saw Aboulhusn well and Nuzhet el Fuad it was who lay dead." "It is thou that liest," rejoined the stewardess, "and wouldst fain sow discord between the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh." And he said, "None lieth but thou, O old woman of ill-omen, and thy lady believeth thee, and she doteth." Whereupon the Lady Zubeideh cried out at him, and indeed she was enraged at him and at his speech and wept.

Then said the Khalif to her, "I lie and my eunuch lieth, and thou liest and thy waiting-woman lieth; so methinks we were best go, all four of us together, that we may see which of us telleth the truth." Quoth Mesrour, "Come, let us go, that I may put this ill-omened old woman to shame and deal her a sound drubbing for her lying." And she answered him, saying, "O dotard, is thy wit like unto my wit? Indeed, thy wit is as the hen's wit." Mesrour was incensed at her words and would have laid violent hands on her, but the Lady Zubeideh warded him off from her and said to him, "Her sooth-fastness will presently be distinguished from thy sooth-fastness and her leasing from thy leasing."

Then they all four arose, laying wagers with one another, and went forth, walking, from the palace-gate [and fared on] till they came in at the gate of the street in which Aboulhusn el Khelia dwelt. He saw them and said to his wife Nuzhet el Fuad, "Verily, all that is sticky is not a pancake and not every time cometh the jar off safe.' Meseemeth the old woman hath gone and told her lady and acquainted her with our case and she hath disputed with Mesrour the eunuch and they have laid wagers with one another about our death and are come to us, all four, the Khalif and the eunuch and the Lady Zubeideh and the old woman." When Nuzhet el Fuad heard this, she started up from her lying posture and said, "How shall we do?" And he said, "We will both feign ourselves dead and stretch ourselves out and hold our breath." So she hearkened unto him and they both lay down on the siesta[-carpet] and bound their feet and shut their eyes and covered themselves with the veil and held their breath.

Presently, up came the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh and Mesrour and the old woman and entering, found Aboulhusn and his wife both stretched out [apparently] dead; which when the Lady Zubeideh saw, she wept and said, "They ceased not to bring [ill] news of my slave- girl, till she died; methinketh Aboulhusn's death was grievous to her and that she died after him.". Quoth the Khalif, "Thou shalt not forestall me with talk and prate. She certainly died before Aboulhusn, for he came to me with his clothes torn and his beard plucked out, beating his breast with two bricks, and I gave him a hundred dinars and a piece of silk and said to him, 'Go, carry her forth [and bury her] and I will give thee a concubine other than she and handsomer, and she shall be in stead of her.' But it would appear that her death was no light matter to him and he died after her; so it is I who have beaten thee and gotten thy stake."

The Lady Zubeideh answered him many words and the talk waxed amain between them. At last the Khalif sat down at the heads of the pair and said, "By the tomb of the

Apostle of God (may He bless and preserve him!) and the sepulchres of my fathers and forefathers, whoso will tell me which of them died before the other, I will willingly give him a thousand dinars!" When Aboulhusn heard the Khalifs words, he sprang up in haste and said, "I died first, O Commander of the Faithful! Hand over the thousand dinars and quit thine oath and the conjuration by which thou sworest." Then Nuzhet el Fuad rose also and stood up before the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh, who both rejoiced in this and in their safety, and the princess chid her slave-girl. Then the Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh gave them joy at their well-being and knew that this [pretended] death was a device to get the money; and the princess said to Nuzhet el Fuad, "Thou shouldst have sought of me that which thou desiredst, without this fashion, and not have consumed my heart for thee." And she said, "Indeed, I was ashamed, O my lady."

As for the Khalif, he swooned away for laughing and said, "O Aboulhusn, thou wilt never cease to be a wag and do rarities and oddities!" Quoth he, "O Commander of the Faithful, I played off this trick, for that the money was exhausted, which thou gavest me, and I was ashamed to ask of thee again. When I was single, I could never keep money; but since thou marriedst me to this damsel here, if I possessed thy wealth, I should make an end of it. So, when all that was in my hand was spent, I wrought this trick, so I might get of thee the hundred dinars and the piece of silk; and all this is an alms from our lord. But now make haste to give me the thousand dinars and quit thee of thine oath."

The Khalif and the Lady Zubeideh laughed and returned to the palace; and he gave Aboulhusn the thousand dinars, saying, "Take them as a thank-offering for thy preservation from death," whilst the princess did the like with Nuzhet el Fuad. Moreover, the Khalif increased Aboulhusn in his stipends and allowances, and he [and his wife] ceased not [to live] in joy and contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, he who layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs.

The Khalif Omar Ben Abdulaziz and the Poets.

IT is said that, when the Khalifate devolved on Omar ben Abdulaziz (of whom God accept), the poets [of the time] resorted to him, as they had been used to resort to the Khalifs before him, and abode at his door days and days, but he gave them not leave to enter, till there came to Omar Adi ben Artah, who stood high in esteem with him. Jerir accosted him and begged him to crave admission for them [to the Khalif]. "It is well," answered Adi and going in to Omar, said to him, "The poets are at thy door and have been there days and days; yet hast thou not given them leave to enter, albeit their sayings are abiding and their arrows go straight to the mark." Quoth Omar, "What have I to do with the poets?" And Adi answered, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) was praised [by a poet] and gave [him largesse,] and therein is an exemplar to every Muslim." Quoth Omar, "And who praised him?" "Abbas ben Mirdas praised him," replied Adi, "and he clad him with a suit and said, 'O Bilal, cut off from me his tongue!'" "Dost thou remember what he said?" asked the Khalif; and Adi said, "Yes." "Then repeat it," rejoined Omar. So Adi recited the following verses:

I saw thee, O thou best of all the human race, display
A book that came to teach the Truth to those in error's way.
Thou madest known to us therein the road of righteousness,
When we had wandered from the Truth, what while in gloom it lay.
A dark affair thou littest up with Islam and with proof
Quenchedst the flaming red-coals of error and dismay.
Mohammed, then, I do confess, God's chosen prophet is,
And every man requited is for that which he doth say.
The road of right thou hast made straight, that erst was crooked grown;
Yea, for its path of old had fall'n to ruin and decay.
Exalted mayst thou be above th' empyrean heaven of joy
And may God's glory greater grow and more exalted aye!

"And indeed," continued Adi, "this ode on the Prophet (may God bless and keep him!) is well known and to comment it would be tedious." Quoth Omar, "Who is at the door?" "Among them is Omar ibn [Abi] Rebya the Cureishite," answered Adi, and the Khalif said, "May God show him no favour neither quicken him! Was it not he who said ... ?" And he recited the following verses:

Would God upon that bitterest day, when my death calls for me,
What's 'twixt thine excrement and blood I still may smell of thee!
Yea, so but Selma in the dust my bedfellow may prove,
Fair fall it thee! In heaven or hell I reck not if it be.

"Except," continued the Khalif, "he were the enemy of God, he had wished for her in this world, so he might after [repent and] return to righteous dealing. By Allah, he shall not come in to me! Who is at the door other than he?" Quoth Adi, "Jemil ben

Mamer el Udhri is at the door;" and Omar said, "It is he who says in one of his odes" ... [And he recited the following:]

Would we may live together and when we come to die,
God grant the death-sleep bring me within her tomb to lie!
For if "Her grave above her is levelled" it be said,
Of life and its continuance no jot indeed reck I.

"Away with him from me! Who is at the door?" "Kutheiyir Azzeh," replied Adi, and Omar said, "It is he who says in one of his odes ... " [And he repeated the following verses:]

Some with religion themselves concern and make it their business all;
Sitting, they weep for the pains of hell and still for mercy bawl!
If they could hearken to Azzeh's speech, as I, I hearken to it,
They straight would humble themselves to her and prone before her fall.

"Leave the mention of him. Who is at the door?" Quoth Adi, "El Akhwes el Ansari." "God the Most High put him away and estrange him from His mercy!" cried Omar. "Is it not he who said, berhyming on a man of Medina his slave-girl, so she might outlive her master ... ?" [And he repeated the following line:]

God [judge] betwixt me and her lord! Away With her he flees me and I follow aye.

"He shall not come in to me. Who is at the door, other than he?" "Heman ben Ghalib el Ferezdec," answered Adi; and Omar said, "It is he who saith, glorying in adultery ..." [And he repeated the following verses:]

The two girls let me down from fourscore fathoms' height,
As swoops a hawk, with wings all open in full flight;
And when my feet trod earth, "Art slain, that we should fear,"
Quoth they, "or live, that we may hope again thy sight?"

"He shall not come in to me. Who is at the door, other than he?" "El Akhtel et Teghlibi," answered Adi; and Omar said, "He is the unbeliever who says in his verse ..." [And he repeated the following:]

Ramazan in my life ne'er I fasted, nor e'er
Have I eaten of flesh, save in public it were.
No exhorter am I to abstain from the fair,
Nor to love Mecca's vale for my profit I care;
Nor, like others a little ere morning appear who bawl,
"Come to safety!" I stand up to prayer.
Nay, at daybreak I drink of the wind-freshened wine
And prostrate me instead in the dawn-whitened air.

"By Allah, he treadeth no carpet of mine! Who is at the door other than he?" "Jerir ibn el Khetefa," answered Adi; and Omar said, "It is he who saith ..." [And he recited as follows:]

But for the spying of the eyes [ill-omened,] we had seen
Wild cattle's eyes and antelopes' tresses of sable sheen.

The huntress of th' eyes by night came to me.
"Turn in peace," [Quoth I to her;]
"This is no time for visiting, I ween."

"If it must be and no help, admit Jerir." So Adi went forth and admitted Jerir, who entered, saying:

He, who Mohammed sent, as prophet to mankind,
Hath to a just high-priest the Khalifate assigned.
His justice and his truth all creatures do embrace;
The erring He corrects and those of wandering mind.
I hope for present good [and bounty at thy hand,]
For souls of men are still to present good inclined.

Quoth Omar, "O Jerir, keep the fear of God before thine eyes and say nought but the truth." And Jerir recited the following verses:

How many, in Yemameh, dishevelled widows plain!
How many a weakling orphan unsuccoured doth remain,
For whom is thy departure even as a father's loss!
To fly or creep, like nestlings, alone, they strive in vain.
Now that the clouds have broken their promise to our hope,
We trust the Khalif's bounty will stand to us for rain.

When the Khalif heard this, he said, "By Allah, O Jerir, Omar possesseth but a hundred dirhems." [And he cried out to his servant, saying,] "Ho, boy! give them to him." Moreover, he gave him the ornaments of his sword; and Jerir went forth to the [other] poets, who said to him, "What is behind thee?" And he answered, "A man who giveth to the poor and denieth the poets, and I am well-pleased with him."

El Hejjaj and the Three Young Men.

THEY tell that El Hejjaj once commanded the Master of Police [of Bassora] to go round about [the city] by night, and whomsoever he found [abroad] after nightfall, that he should strike off his head. So he went round one night of the nights and came upon three youths staggering from side to side, and on them signs of [intoxication with] wine. So the officers laid hold of them and the captain of the watch said to them, "Who are ye that ye transgress the commandment of the [lieutenant of the] Commander of the Faithful and come abroad at this hour?" Quoth one of the youths, "I am the son of him to whom [all] necks abase themselves, alike the nose-pierced of them and the [bone-]breaker; they come to him in their own despite, abject and submissive, and he taketh of their wealth and of their blood."

The master of police held his hand from him, saying, "Belike he is of the kinsmen of the Commander of the Faithful," and said to the second, "Who art thou?" Quoth he, "I am the son of him whose rank time abaseth not, and if it descend one day, it will assuredly return [to its former height]; thou seest the folk [crowd] in troops to the light of his fire, some standing around it and some sitting." So the master of the police refrained from slaying him and said to the third, "Who art thou?" Quoth he, "I am the son of him who plungeth through the ranks with his might and correcteth them with the sword, so that they stand straight; his feet are not loosed from the stirrup, whenas the horsemen on the day of battle are weary." So the master of police held his hand from him also, saying, "Belike, he is the son of a champion of the Arabs."

Then he kept them under guard, and when the morning morrowed, he referred their case to El Hejjaj, who caused bring them before him and enquiring into their affair, found that the first was the son of a barber-surgeon, the second of a [hot] bean-seller and the third of a weaver. So he marvelled at their readiness of speech and said to his session-mates, "Teach your sons deportment; for, by Allah, but for their ready wit, I had smitten off their heads!"

Haroun Er Reshid and the Woman of the Barmecides.

THEY tell that Haroun er Reshid was sitting one day to do away grievances, when there came up to him a woman and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, may God accomplish thine affair and cause thee rejoice in that which He hath given thee and increase thee in elevation! Indeed, thou hast done justice and wrought equitably." Quoth the Khalif to those who were present with him, "Know ye what this woman meaneth by her saying?" And they answered, "Of a surety, she meaneth not otherwise than well, O Commander of the Faithful." "Nay," rejoined Haroun; "she purposeth only in this an imprecation against me. As for her saying, 'God accomplish thine affair!' she hath taken it from the saying of the poet, 'When an affair is accomplished, its abatement beginneth. Beware of cessation, whenas it is said, "It is accomplished."' As for her saying 'God cause thee rejoice in that which He hath given thee,' she took it from the saying of God the Most High, 'Till, whenas they rejoiced in that which they were given, we took them suddenly and lo, they were confounded!' As for her saying, 'God increase thee in elevation!' she took it from the saying of the poet, 'No bird flieth and riseth up on high, but, like as he flieth, he falleth.' And as for her saying, 'Indeed, thou hast done justice and wrought equitably,' it is from the saying of the Most High, '[If ye deviate or lag behind or turn aside, verily, God of that which ye do is aware;' and] 'As for the transgressors,' they are fuel for hell[-fire]."

Then he turned to the woman and said to her, "Is it not thus?" "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful," answered she; and he said, "What prompted thee to this?" Quoth she, "Thou slewest my father and my mother and my kinsfolk and tookest their goods." "Whom meanest thou?" asked the Khalif, and she replied, "I am of the house of Bermek." Then said he to her, "As for the dead, they are of those who are past away, and it booteth not to speak of them; but, as for that which I took of wealth, it shall be restored to thee, yea, and more than it." And he was bountiful to her to the utmost of munificence.

The Ten Viziers; Or the History of King Azadbekht and His Son.

THERE was once, of old days, a king of the kings, whose name was Azadbekht; his [capital] city was called Kuneim Mudoud and his kingdom extended to the confines of Seistan and from the frontiers of Hindustan to the sea He had ten viziers, who ordered his state and his dominion, and he was possessed of judgment and exceeding wisdom. One day he went forth with certain of his guards to the chase and fell in with an eunuch on horseback, holding in his hand the halter of a mule, which he led along. On the mule's back was a litter of gold-inwoven brocade, garded about with an embroidered band set with gold and jewels, and over against the litter was a company of horsemen. When King Azadbekht saw this, he separated himself from his companions and making for the mule and the horsemen, questioned the latter, saying, "To whom belongeth this litter and what is therein?". The eunuch answered, (for he knew not that he was King Azadbekht,) saying, "This litter belongeth to Isfehend, vizier to King Azadbekht, and therein is his daughter, whom he purposeth to marry to Zad Shah the King."

As the eunuch was speaking with the king, behold, the damsel raised a corner of the curtain that shut in the litter, so she might look upon the speaker, and saw the king. When Azadbekht beheld her and noted her fashion and her loveliness (and indeed never set story-teller eyes on her like,) his soul inclined to her and she took hold upon his heart and he was ravished by her sight. So he said to the eunuch, "Turn the mule's head and return, for I am King Azadbekht and I will marry her myself, for that Isfehend her father is my vizier and he will accept of this affair and it will not be grievous to him." "O king," answered the eunuch, "may God prolong thy continuance, have patience till I acquaint my lord her father, and thou shalt take her in the way of approof, for it befitteth thee not neither is it seemly unto thee that thou take her on this wise, seeing that it will be an affront to her father if thou take her without his knowledge." Quoth Azadbekht, "I have not patience [to wait] till thou go to her father and return, and no dishonour will betide him, if I marry her." "O my lord," rejoined the eunuch, "nought that is done in haste is long of durance nor doth the heart rejoice therein; and indeed it behoveth thee not to take her on this foul wise. Whatsoever betideth thee, destroy not thyself with [undue] haste, for I know that her father's breast will be straitened by this affair and this that thou dost will not profit thee." But the king said, "Verily, Isfehend is [my boughten] servant and a slave of my slaves, and I reck not of her father, if he be vexed or pleased." So saying, he drew the reins of the mule and carrying the damsel, whose name was Behrjaur, to his house, married her.

Meanwhile, the eunuch betook himself, he and the horsemen, to her father and said to him, "O my lord, the king is beholden to thee for many years' service and thou hast not failed him a day of the days; and now, behold, he hath taken thy daughter against thy wish and without thy permission." And he related to him what had passed and how the king had taken her by force. When Isfehend heard the eunuch's story, he was exceeding wroth and assembling many troops, said to them, "Whenas the king was occupied with his women [and concerned not himself with the affairs of his kingdom],

we took no reck of him; but now he putteth out his hand to our harem; wherefore methinketh we should do well to look us out a place, wherein we may have sanctuary."

Then he wrote a letter to King Azadbekht, saying to him, "I am a servant of thy servants and a slave of thy slaves and my daughter is a handmaid at thy service, and may God the Most High prolong thy days and appoint thy times [to be] in delight and contentment! Indeed, I still went girded of the waist in thy service and in caring for the preservation of thy dominion and warding off thine enemies from thee; but now I abound yet more than before in zeal and watchfulness, for that I have taken this to charge upon myself, since my daughter is become thy wife." And he despatched a messenger to the king with the letter and a present.

When the messenger came to King Azadbekht and he read the letter and the present was laid before him, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and occupied himself with eating and drinking, hour after hour. But the chief Vizier of his Viziers came to him and said, "0 king, know that Isfehend the Vizier is thine enemy, for that his soul liketh not that which thou hast done with him, and the message that he hath sent thee [is a trick; so] rejoice thou not therein, neither be thou deluded by the sweetness of his words and the softness of his speech." The king hearkened [not] to his Vizier's speech, but made light of the matter and presently, [dismissing it from his thought], busied himself with that which he was about of eating and drinking and merrymaking and delight

Meanwhile, Isfehend the Vizier wrote a letter and despatched it to all the Amirs, acquainting them with that which had betided him with King Azadbekht and how he had taken his daughter by force and adding, "And indeed he will do with you more than he hath done with me." When the letter reached the chiefs [of the people and troops], they all assembled together to Isfehend and said to him, "What is to do with him?" So he discovered to them the affair of his daughter and they all agreed, of one accord, that they should endeavour for the slaughter of the king and taking horse with their troops, set out, intending for him. Azadbekht knew not [of their design] till the noise [of the invasion] beset his capital city, when he said to his wife Behrjaur, "How shall we do?" And she answered, saying, "Thou knowest best and I am at thy commandment." So he let bring two swift horses and bestrode one himself, whilst his wife mounted the other. Then they took what they might of gold and went forth, fleeing, in the night, to the desert of Kerman; what while Isfehend entered the city and made himself king.

Now King Azadbekht's wife was big with child and the pains of labour took her in the mountain; so they alighted at the mountain-foot, by a spring of water, and she gave birth to a boy as he were the moon. Behrjaur his mother pulled off a gown of gold-inwoven brocade and wrapped the child therein, and they passed the night [in that place], what while she gave him suck till the morning. Then said the king to her, "We are hampered by this child and cannot abide here nor can we carry him with us; so methinks we were better leave him here and go, for Allah is able to send him one who shall take him and rear him." So they wept over him exceeding sore and left him beside the spring, wrapped in the gown of brocade: then they laid at his head a thousand dinars in a bag and mounting their horses, departed, fleeing.

Now, by the ordinance of God the Most High, a company of thieves fell in upon a caravan hard by that mountain and made prize of that which was with them of merchandise. Then they betook themselves to the mountain, so they might share their booty, and looking at the foot thereof, espied the gown of brocade. So they descended, to see what it was, and finding the child wrapped therein and the gold laid at his head, marvelled and said, "Extolled be the perfection of God! By what wickedness cometh this child here?" Then they divided the money between them and the captain of the thieves took the boy and made him his son and fed him with sweet milk and dates, till he came to his house, when he appointed him a nurse, who should rear him.

Meanwhile, King Azadbekht and his wife stayed not in their flight till they came to [the court of] the King of Fars, whose name was Kutrou. When they presented themselves to him, he entreated them with honour and entertained them handsomely, and Azadbekht told him his story, first and last. So he gave him a great army and wealth galore and he abode with him some days, till he was rested, when he made ready with his host and setting out for his own dominions, waged war upon Isfehend and falling in upon the capital, defeated the rebel vizier and slew him. Then he entered the city and sat down on the throne of his kingship; and whenas he was rested and the kingdom was grown peaceful for him, he despatched messengers to the mountain aforesaid in quest of the child; but they returned and informed the king that they had not found him.

As time went on, the boy, the son of the king, grew up and fell to stopping the way with the thieves, and they used to carry him with them, whenas they went a-thieving. They sallied forth one day upon a caravan in the land of Seistan, and there were in that caravan strong and valiant men and with them merchandise galore. Now they had heard that in that land were thieves; so they gathered themselves together and made ready their arms and sent out spies, who returned and gave them news of the thieves. Accordingly, they prepared for battle, and when the robbers drew near the caravan, they fell in upon them and they fought a sore battle. At last the folk of the caravan overmastered the thieves, by dint of numbers, and slew some of them, whilst the others fled. Moreover they took the boy, the son of King Azadbekht, and seeing him as he were the moon, possessed of beauty and grace, brightfaced and comely of fashion, questioned him, saying, "Who is thy father, and how camest thou with these thieves?" And he answered, saying, "I am the son of the captain of the thieves." So they took him and carried him to the capital of his father King Azadbekht

When they reached the city, the king heard of their coming and commanded that they should attend him with what befitted [of their merchandise]. So they presented themselves before him, [and the boy with them,] whom when the king saw, he said to them, "To whom belongeth this boy?" And they answered, "O king, we were going in such a road, when there came out upon us a sort of robbers; so we made war upon them and overcame them and took this boy prisoner. Then we questioned him, saying, 'Who is thy father?' and he answered, 'I am the captain's son of the thieves.'" Quoth the king, "I would fain have this boy." And the captain of the caravan said, "God maketh thee gift of him, O king of the age, and we all are thy slaves." Then the king dismissed [the people of] the caravan and let carry the youth into his palace and he became as one of the servants, what while his father the king knew not that he was his

son. As time went on, the king observed in him good breeding and understanding and knowledge galore and he pleased him; so he committed his treasuries to his charge and straitened the viziers' hand therefrom, commanding that nought should be taken forth therefrom except by leave of the youth. On this wise he abode a number of years and the king saw in him nought but fidelity and studiousness in well-doing.

Now the treasuries aforetime had been in the viziers' hand, so they might do with them what they would, and when they came under the youth's hand, that of the viziers was straitened from them, and the youth became dearer to the king than a son and he could not brook to be separated from him. When the viziers saw this, they were jealous of him and envied him and cast about for a device against him whereby they might oust him from the king's favour, but found no opportunity. At last, when came the destined hour, it chanced that the youth one day drank wine and became drunken and wandered from his wits; so he fell to going round about within the palace of the king and fate led him to the lodging of the women, in which there was a little sleeping-chamber, where the king lay with his wife. Thither came the youth and entering the chamber, found there a couch spread, to wit, a sleeping place, and a candle burning. So he cast himself on the couch, marvelling at the paintings that were in the chamber, and slept and slumbered heavily till eventide, when there came a slave-girl, bringing with her all the dessert, eatables and drinkables, that she was wont to make ready for the king and his wife, and seeing the youth lying on his back, (and none knowing of his case and he in his drunkenness unknowing where he was,) thought that he was the king asleep on his bed; so she set the censing-vessel and laid the essences by the couch, then shut the door and went away.

Presently, the king arose from the wine-chamber and taking his wife by the hand, repaired with her to the chamber in which he slept. He opened the door and entering, saw the youth lying on the bed, whereupon he turned to his wife and said to her, "What doth this youth here? This fellow cometh not hither but on thine account." Quoth she, "I have no knowledge of him." With this, the youth awoke and seeing the king, sprang up and prostrated himself before him, and Azadbekht said to him, "O vile of origin, O lack-loyalty, what hath prompted thee to outrage my dwelling?" And he bade imprison him in one place and the woman in another.

The First Day.

Of the Uselessness of Endeavour Against Persistent Ill Fortune.

WHEN the morning morrowed and the king sat on the throne of his kingship, he summoned the chief of his viziers and said to him, "What deemest thou of this that yonder robber-youth hath done? Behold, he hath entered my house and lain down on my bed and I fear lest there be an intrigue between him and the woman. How deemest thou of the affair?" "God prolong the king's continuance!" replied the vizier. "What sawest thou in this youth [to make thee trust in him]? Is he not vile of origin, the son of thieves? Needs must a thief revert to his vile origin, and whoso reareth the young of the serpent shall get of them nought but biting. As for the woman, she is not at fault; for, since [the] time [of her marriage with thee] till now, there hath appeared from her nought but good breeding and modesty; and now, if the king give me leave, I will go to her and question her, so I may discover to thee the affair."

The king gave him leave for this and the vizier betook himself to the queen and said to her, "I am come to thee, on account of a grave reproach, and I would have thee be truthful with me in speech and tell me how came the youth into the sleeping-chamber." Quoth she, "I have no knowledge whatsoever [of it]" and swore to him a solemn oath thereof, whereby he knew that she had no knowledge of the matter and that she was not at fault and said to her, "I will teach thee a device, where- with thou mayst acquit thyself and thy face be whitened before the king." "What is it?" asked she; and he answered, saying, "When the king calleth for thee and questioneth thee of this, say thou to him, 'Yonder youth saw me in the privy-chamber and sent me a message, saying, "I will give thee a hundred jewels, to whose price money may not avail, so thou wilt suffer me to foregather with thee." I laughed at him who bespoke me with these words and rebuffed him; but he sent again to me, saying, "An thou fall not in with my wishes, I will come one of the nights, drunken, and enter and lie down in the sleeping-chamber, and the king will see me and kill me; so wilt thou be put to shame and thy face will be blackened with him and thine honour abased."' Be this thy saying to the king, and I will presently go to him and repeat this to him." Quoth the queen, "And I also will say thus."

So the vizier returned to the king and said to him, "Verily, this youth hath merited grievous punishment, after abundance of bounty [bestowed on him], and it may not be that a bitter kernel should ever become sweet; but, as for the woman, I am certified that there is no fault in her." Then he repeated to the king the story which he had taught the queen, which when Azadbekht heard, he rent his clothes and bade fetch the youth. So they brought him and stationed him before the king, who let bring the headsman, and the folk all fixed their eyes upon the youth, so they might see what the king should do with him.

Then said Azadbekht to him (and indeed his words were [prompted] by anger and those of the youth by presence of mind and good breeding), "I bought thee with my money and looked for fidelity from thee, wherefore I chose thee over all my grandees and servants and made thee keeper of my treasuries. Why, then, hast thou outraged my honour and entered my house and played the traitor with me and tookest no thought

unto that which I have done thee of benefits?" "O king," answered the youth, "I did this not of my choice and freewill and I had no [evil] intent in being there; but, of the littleness of my luck, I was driven thither, for that fate was contrary and fair fortune lacking. Indeed, I had striven with all endeavour that nought of foul should proceed from me and kept watch over myself, lest default appear in me; but none may avail to make head against ill fortune, nor doth endeavour profit in case of lack of luck, as appeareth by the example of the merchant who was stricken with ill luck and his endeavour profited him not and he succumbed to the badness of his fortune." "What is the story of the merchant," asked the king, "and how was his luck changed upon him by the sorriness of his fortune?" "May God prolong the king's continuance!" answered the youth.

Story of the Unlucky Merchant.

"THERE was once a man, a merchant, who was fortunate in trade, and at one time his [every] dirhem profited [him] fifty. Presently, his luck turned against him and he knew it not; so he said in himself, 'I have wealth galore, yet do I weary myself and go round about from country to country; I were better abide in my own country and rest myself in my house from this travail and affliction and sell and buy at home.' Then he made two parts of his money, with one whereof he bought wheat in summer, saying, 'When the winter cometh, I will sell it at a great profit.' But, when the winter came, wheat became at half the price for which he had bought it, whereat he was sore concerned and left it till the next year. However, next year, the price fell yet lower and one of his friends said to him, 'Thou hast no luck in this wheat; so do thou sell it at whatsoever price.' Quoth the merchant, 'This long while have I profited and it is allowable that I lose this time. God is all- knowing! If it abide [with me] half a score years, I will not sell it save at a profit.'

Then, in his anger, he walled up the door of the granary with clay, and by the ordinance of God the Most High, there came a great rain and descended from the roofs of the house wherein was the wheat [so that the latter rotted]; and needs must the merchant give the porters five hundred dirhems from his purse, so they should carry it forth and cast it without the city, for that the smell of it was noisome. So his friend said to him, 'How often did I tell thee thou hadst no luck in wheat? But thou wouldst not give ear to my speech, and now it behoveth thee to go to the astrologer and question him of thy star.' Accordingly the merchant betook himself to the astrologer and questioned him of his star, and the astrologer said to him, 'Thy star is unpropitious. Put not thy hand to any business, for thou wilt not prosper therein.' However, he paid no heed to the astrologer's words and said in himself, 'If I do my occasion, I am not afraid of aught.' Then he took the other part of his money, after he had spent therefrom three years, and built [therewith] a ship, which he loaded with all that seemed good to him and all that was with him and embarked on the sea, so he might travel.

The ship tarried with him some days, till he should be certified what he would do, and he said, 'I will enquire of the merchants what this merchandise profiteth and in what country it lacketh and how much is the gain thereon.' [So he questioned them and] they directed him to a far country, where his dirhem should profit a hundredfold. Accordingly, he set sail and steered for the land in question; but, as he went, there blew on him a tempestuous wind and the ship foundered. The merchant saved himself on a plank and the wind cast him up, naked as he was, on the sea-shore, hard by a town there. So he praised God and gave Him thanks for his preservation; then, seeing a great village hard by, he betook himself thither and saw, seated therein, a very old man, whom he acquainted with his case and that which had betided him. The old man grieved sore for him, when he heard his story, and set food before him. So he ate and the old man said to him, 'Abide here with me, so I may make thee my steward and factor over a farm I have here, and thou shall have of me five dirhems a day.' 'God make fair thy reward,' answered the merchant, 'and requite thee with benefits!'

So he abode in this employ, till he had sowed and reaped and threshed and winnowed, and all was sheer in his hand and the owner appointed neither inspector nor overseer, but relied altogether upon him. Then he bethought himself and said, '*I misdoubt me the owner of this grain will not give me my due; so I were better take of it, after the measure of my hire; and if he give me my due, I will restore him that which I have taken.' So he took of the grain, after the measure of that which fell to him, and hid it in a privy place. Then he carried the rest to the old man and meted it out to him, and he said to him, 'Come, take [of the grain, after the measure of] thy hire, for which I agreed with thee, and sell it and buy with the price clothes and what not else; and though thou abide with me half a score years, yet shall thou still have this wage and I will acquit it to thee thus.' Quoth the merchant in himself, 'Indeed, I have done a foul thing in that I look it without his leave.'

Then he went to fetch that which he had hidden of the grain, but found it not and returned, perplexed and sorrowful, to the old man, who said to him, 'What aileth thee to be sorrowful?' And he answered, 'Methought thou wouldst not pay me my due; so I took of the grain, after the measure of my hire; and now thou hast paid me my due and I went to bring back to thee that which I had hidden from thee, but found it gone, for those who had happened upon it had stolen it.' The old man was wroth, when he heard this, and said to the merchant, 'There is no device [can cope] with ill luck! I had given thee this, but, of the sorriness of thy luck and thy fortune, thou hast done this deed, O oppressor of thine own self! Thou deemedst I would not acquit thee thy wage; but, by Allah, nevermore will I give thee aught.' And he drove him away from him.

So the merchant went forth, afflicted, sorrowful, weeping, [and wandered on along the sea-shore], till he came to a sort of divers diving in the sea for pearls. They saw him weeping and mourning and said to him, 'What is thy case and what maketh thee weep?' So he acquainted them with his history, from first to last, whereby they knew him and said to him, 'Art thou [such an one] son of such an one?' 'Yes,' answered he; whereupon they condoled with him and wept sore for him and said to him, 'Abide here till we dive for thy luck this next time and whatsoever betideth us shall be between us and thee.' Accordingly, they dived and brought up ten oysters, in each two great pearls; whereat they marvelled and said to him, 'By Allah, thy luck hath returned and thy good star is in the ascendant!' Then they gave him ten pearls and said to him, 'Sell two of them and make them thy capital [whereon to trade]; and hide the rest against the time of thy straitness.' So he took them, joyful and contented, and addressed himself to sew eight of them in his gown, keeping the two others in his mouth; but a thief saw him and went and advertised his mates of him; whereupon they gathered together upon him and took his gown and departed from him. When they were gone away, he arose, saying, 'These two pearls [in my mouth] will suffice me,' and made for the [nearest] city, where he brought out the pearls [and repairing to the jewel- market, gave them to the broker], that he might sell them.

Now, as destiny would have it, a certain jeweller of the town had been robbed of ten pearls, like unto those which were with the merchant; so, when he saw the two pearls in the broker's hand, he said to him, 'To whom do these pearls belong?' and the broker answered, 'To yonder man.' [The jeweller looked at the merchant and] seeing

him in sorry case and clad in tattered clothes, misdoubted of him and said to him (purposing to surprise him into confession), 'Where are the other eight pearls?' The merchant thought he asked him of those which were in the gown and answered, 'The thieves stole them from me.' When the jeweller heard his reply, he doubted not but that it was he who had taken his good; so he laid hold of him and haling him before the chief of the police, said to him, 'This is the man who stole my pearls: I have found two of them upon him and he confesseth to the other eight.'

Now the magistrate knew of the theft of the pearls; so he bade clap the merchant in prison. Accordingly they imprisoned him and flogged him, and he abode in the prison a whole year, till, by the ordinance of God the Most High, the Master of Police arrested one of the divers aforesaid and imprisoned him in the prison where the merchant lay. He saw the latter and knowing him, questioned him of his case; whereupon he told them his story and that which had befallen him, and the diver marvelled at the sorriness of his luck. So, when he came forth of the prison, he acquainted the Sultan with the merchant's case and told him that it was he who had given him the pearls. The Sultan bade bring him forth of the prison and questioned him of his story, whereupon he told him all that had befallen him and the Sultan pitied him and assigned him a lodging in his own palace, together with an allowance for his living.

Now the lodging in question adjoined the king's house, and whilst the merchant was rejoicing in this and saying, 'Verily, my luck hath returned and I shall live in this king's shadow the rest of my life,' he espied an opening walled up with stones and clay. So he pulled out the stones and clearing away the earth from the opening, found that it was a window giving upon the lodging of the king's women. When he saw this, he was affrighted and rising in haste, fetched clay and stopped it up again. But one of the eunuchs saw him and misdoubting of him, repaired to the Sultan and told him of this. So he came and seeing the stones pulled out, was wroth with the merchant and said to him, 'Is this my recompense from thee, that thou seekest to violate my harem?' And he bade pluck out his eyes. So they did as he commanded and the merchant took his eyes in his hand and said, 'How long [wilt thou afflict me], O star of ill-omen? First my wealth and now my life!' And he bewailed himself, saying, 'Endeavour profiteth me nought against evil fortune. The Compassionate aided me not and endeavour was useless.'

On like wise, O king," continued the youth, "whilst fortune was favourable to me, all that I did came to good; but now that it is grown contrary to me, everything turneth against me."

When the youth had made an end of his story, the king's anger subsided a little and he said, "Restore him to the prison, for the day draweth to an end, and tomorrow we will took into his affair."

Of Looking to the Issues of Affairs.

WHEN it was the second day, the second of the king's viziers, whose name was Beheroun, came in to him and said, "God advance the king! This that yonder youth hath done is a grave matter and a foul deed and a heinous against the household of the king." So Azadbekht bade fetch the youth, because of the saying of the vizier; and when he came into his presence, he said to him, "Out on thee, O youth! Needs must I slay thee by the worst of deaths, for indeed thou hast committed a grave crime, and I will make thee a warning to the folk." "O king," answered the youth, "hasten not, for the looking to the issues of affairs is a pillar of the realm and [a cause of] continuance and sure stablishment for the kingship. Whoso looketh not to the issues of affairs, there befalleth him that which befell the merchant, and whoso looketh to the issues of affairs, there betideth him of joyance that which betided the merchant's son." "And what is the story of the merchant and his son?" asked the king. "O king," answered the youth,

Story of the Merchant and His Sons.

"THERE was once a man, a merchant, who had a wife and abundant wealth. He set out one day on a journey with merchandise, leaving his wife big with child, and said to her, 'If it be the will of God the Most High, I will return before the birth of the child.' Then he took leave of her and setting out, journeyed from country to country till he came to the court of one of the kings and foregathered with him. Now this king was in need of one who should order his affairs and those of his kingdom and seeing the merchant well-bred and intelligent, he charged him abide with him and entreated him with honour and munificence. After awhile, he sought of the king leave to go to his own house, but the latter would not consent to this; whereupon he said to him, 'O king, suffer me go and see my children and come again.' So he gave him leave for this and took surety of him for his return. Moreover, he gave him a purse, wherein were a thousand gold dinars, and the merchant embarked in a ship and set sail, intending for his own country.

Meanwhile, news came to his wife that her husband had taken service with King Such-an-one; so she arose and taking her two sons, (for she had given birth to twin boys in his absence,) set out for those parts. As fate would have it, they happened upon an island and her husband came thither that very night in the ship. [When the woman heard of the coming of the ship], she said to her children, 'This ship cometh from the country where your father is; so go ye to the sea-shore, that ye may enquire of him.' So they repaired to the sea-shore and [going up into the ship], fell to playing about it and occupied themselves with their play till the evening.

Now the merchant their father lay asleep in the ship, and the crying of the boys troubled him; so he rose to call out to them [and silence them] and let the purse [with the thousand dinars therein] fall among the bales of merchandise. He sought for it and finding it not, buffeted his head and seized upon the boys, saying, 'None took the purse but you. Ye were playing about the bales, so ye might steal somewhat, and there was none here but you.' Then he took a staff and laying hold of the children, fell to beating them and flogging them, whilst they wept, and the sailors came round about them and said, 'The boys of this island are all thieves and robbers.' Then, of the greatness of the merchant's wrath, he swore that, if they brought not out the purse, he would drown them in the sea; so when [by reason of their denial] his oath became binding upon him, he took the two boys and lashing them [each] to a bundle of reeds, cast them into the sea.

Presently, the mother of the two boys, finding that they tarried from her, went searching for them, till she came to the ship and fell to saying, 'Who hath seen two boys of mine? Their fashion is thus and thus and their age thus and thus.' When they heard her words, they said, 'This is the description of the two boys who were drowned in the sea but now.' Their mother heard and fell to calling on them and saying, 'Alas, my anguish for your loss, O my sons! Where was the eye of your father this day, that it might have seen you?' Then one of the crew questioned her, saying, 'Whose wife art thou?' And she answered, 'I am the wife of such an one the merchant. I was on my way to him, and there hath befallen me this calamity.' When the merchant heard her

speech, he knew her and rising to his feet, rent his clothes and buffeted his head and said to his wife, 'By Allah, I have destroyed my children with mine own hand! This is the end of whoso looketh not to the issues of affairs.' Then he fell a-wailing and weeping over them, he and his wife, and he said, 'By Allah, I shall have no ease of my life, till I light upon news of them!' And he betook himself to going round about the sea, in quest of them, but found them not.

Meanwhile, the wind carried the two children [out to sea and thence driving them] towards the land, cast them up on the sea-shore. As for one of them, a company of the guards of the king of those parts found him and carried him to their master, who marvelled at him with an exceeding wonderment and adopted him to his son, giving out to the folk that he was his [very] son, whom he had hidden, of his love for him. So the folk rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy, for the king's sake, and the latter appointed him his heir-apparent and the inheritor of his kingdom. On this wise, a number of years passed, till the king died and they crowned the youth king in his room. So he sat down on the throne of his kingship and his estate flourished and his affairs prospered.

Meanwhile, his father and mother had gone round about all the islands of the sea in quest of him and his brother, hoping that the sea might have cast them up, but found no trace of them; so they despaired of finding them and took up their abode in one of the islands. One day, the merchant, being in the market, saw a broker, and in his hand a boy he was calling for sale, and said in himself, 'I will buy yonder boy, so I may console myself with him for my sons.' So he bought him and carried him to his house; and when his wife saw him, she cried out and said, 'By Allah, this is my son!' So his father and mother rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and questioned him of his brother; but he answered, 'The sea parted us and I knew not what became of him.' Therewith his father and mother consoled themselves with him and on this wise a number of years passed.

Now the merchant and his wife had taken up their abode in a city in the land whereof their [other] son was king, and when the boy [whom they had found] grew up, his father assigned unto him merchandise, so he might travel therewith. So he set out and entered the city wherein his brother was king. News reached the latter that there was a merchant come thither with merchandise befitting kings. So he sent for him and the young merchant obeyed the summons and going in to him, sat down before him. Neither of them knew the other; but blood stirred between them and the king said to the young merchant, 'I desire of thee that thou abide with me and I will exalt thy station and give thee all that thou desirest and cravest.' So he abode with him awhile, quitting him not; and when he saw that he would not suffer him to depart from him, he sent to his father and mother and bade them remove thither to him. So they addressed them to remove to that island, and their son increased still in honour with the king, albeit he knew not that he was his brother.

It chanced one night that the king sallied forth without the city and drank and the wine got the mastery of him and he became drunken. So, of the youth's fearfulness for him, he said, 'I will keep watch myself over the king this night, seeing that he deserveth this from me, for that which he hath wrought with me of kindnesses.' So he arose forthright and drawing his sword, stationed himself at the door of the king's

pavilion. Now one of the royal servants saw him standing there, with the drawn sword in his hand, and he was of those who envied him his favour with the king; so he said to him, 'Why dost thou on this wise at this season and in the like of this place?' Quoth the youth, 'I am keeping watch over the king myself, in requital of his bounties to me.'

The servant said no more to him, but, when it was morning, he acquainted a number of the king's servants with this and they said, 'This is an opportunity for us. Come let us assemble together and acquaint the king with this, so the young merchant may lose favour with him and he rid us of him and we be at rest from him.' So they assembled together and going in to the king, said to him, 'We have a warning we would give thee.' Quoth he, 'And what is your warning?' And they said, 'Yonder youth, the merchant, whom thou hast taken into favour and whose rank thou hast exalted above the chiefs of the people of thy household, we saw yesterday draw his sword and offer to fall upon thee, so he might slay thee.' When the king heard this, his colour changed and he said to them, 'Have ye proof of this?' Quoth they, 'What proof wouldst thou have? If thou desire this, feign thyself drunken again this night and lie down, as if asleep, and watch him, and thou wilt see with thine eyes all that we have named to thee.'

Then they went to the youth and said to him, 'Know that the king thanketh thee for thy dealing yesternight and exceedeth in [praise of] thy good deed;' and they prompted him to do the like again. So, when the next night came, the king abode on wake; watching the youth; and as for the latter, he went to the door of the pavilion and drawing his sword, stood in the doorway. When the king saw him do thus, he was sore disquieted and bade seize him and said to him, 'Is this my requital from thee? I showed thee favour more than any else and thou wouldst do with me this vile deed.' Then arose two of the king's servants and said to him, 'O our lord, if thou command it, we will strike off his head.' But the king said, 'Haste in slaying is a vile thing, for it is a grave matter; the quick we can slay, but the slain we cannot quicken, and needs must we look to the issue of affairs. The slaying of this [youth] will not escape us.' Therewith he bade imprison him, whilst he himself returned [to the city] and despatching his occasions, went forth to the chase.

Then he returned to the city and forgot the youth; so the servants went in to him and said to him, 'O king, if thou keep silence concerning yonder youth, who would have slain thee, all thy servants will presume upon thee, and indeed the folk talk of this matter.' With this the king waxed wroth and saying, 'Fetch him hither,' commanded the headsman to strike off his head. So they [brought the youth and] bound his eyes; and the headsman stood at his head and said to the king, 'By thy leave, O my lord, I will strike off his head.' But the king said, 'Stay, till I look into his affair. Needs must I put him to death and the slaying of him will not escape [me].' So he restored him to the prison and there he abode till it should be the king's will to put him to death.

Presently, his father and his mother heard of the matter; whereupon the former arose and going up to the place, wrote a letter and [presented it to the king, who] read it, and behold, therein was written, saying, 'Have pity on me, so may God have pity on thee, and hasten not in the slaughter [of my son]; for indeed I acted hastily in a certain affair and drowned his brother in the sea, and to this day I drink the cup of his

anguish. If thou must needs kill him, kill me in his stead.' Therewith the old merchant prostrated himself before the king and wept; and the latter said to him, 'Tell me thy story.' 'O my lord,' answered the merchant, 'this youth had a brother and I [in my haste] cast them both into the sea.' And he related to him his story from first to last, whereupon the king cried out with an exceeding great cry and casting himself down from the throne, embraced his father and brother and said to the former, 'By Allah, thou art my very father and this is my brother and thy wife is our mother.' And they abode weeping, all three.

Then the king acquainted the people [of his court] with the matter and said to them,' O folk, how deem ye of my looking to the issues of affairs?' And they all marvelled at his wisdom and foresight. Then he turned to his father and said to him, 'Hadst thou looked to the issue of thine affair and dealt deliberately in that which thou didst, there had not betided thee this repentance and grief all this time.' Then he let bring his mother and they rejoiced in each other and lived all their days in joy and gladness. What then," continued the young treasurer, "is more grievous than the lack of looking to the issues of affairs? Wherefore hasten thou not in the slaying of me, lest repentance betide thee and sore concern."

When the king heard this, he said, "Restore him to the prison till the morrow, so we may look into his affair; for that deliberation in affairs is advisable and the slaughter of this [youth] shall not escape [us]."

The Third Day.

Of the Advantages of Patience.

WHEN it was the third day, the third vizier came in to the king and said to him, "O king, delay not the affair of this youth, for that his deed hath caused us fall into the mouths of the folk, and it behoveth that thou slay him presently, so the talk may be estopped from us and it be not said, 'The king saw on his bed a man with his wife and spared him.'"* The king was chagrined by this speech and bade bring the youth. So they brought him in shackles, and indeed the king's anger was roused against him by the speech of the vizier and he was troubled; so he said to him, "O base of origin, thou hast dishonoured us and marred our repute, and needs must I do away thy life from the world." Quoth the youth, "O king, make use of patience in all thine affairs, so wilt thou attain thy desire, for that God the Most High hath appointed the issue of patience [to be] in abounding good, and indeed by patience Abou Sabir ascended from the pit and sat down upon the throne." "Who was Abou Sabir," asked the king, "and what is his story?" And the youth answered, saying, "O king,

Story of Abou Sabir.

THERE was once a man, a headman [of a village], by name Abou Sabir, and he had much cattle and a fair wife, who had borne him two sons. They abode in a certain village and there used to come thither a lion and devour Abou Sabir's cattle, so that the most part thereof was wasted and his wife said to him one day, 'This lion hath wasted the most part of our cattle. Arise, mount thy horse and take thy men and do thine endeavour to kill him, so we may be at rest from him.' But Abou Sabir said, 'Have patience, O woman, for the issue of patience is praised. This lion it is that transgresseth against us, and the transgressor, needs must Allah destroy him. Indeed, it is our patience that shall slay him, and he that doth evil, needs must it revert upon him.' A little after, the king went forth one day to hunt and falling in with the lion, he and his troops, gave chase to him and ceased not [to follow] after him till they slew him. This came to Abou Sabir's knowledge and he said to his wife, 'Said I not to thee, O woman, that whoso doth evil, it shall revert upon him? Belike, if I had sought to slay the lion myself, I had not availed against him, and this is the issue of patience.'

It befell, after this, that a man was slain in Abou Sabir's village; wherefore the Sultan caused plunder the village, and they plundered the headman's goods with the rest So his wife said to him, 'All the Sultan's officers know thee; so do thou prefer thy plaint to the king, that he may cause thy beasts to be restored to thee.' But he said to her, 'O woman, said I not to thee that he who doth evil shall suffer it? Indeed, the king hath done evil, and he shall suffer [the consequences of] his deed, for whoso taketh the goods of the folk, needs must his goods be taken.' A man of his neighbours heard his speech, and he was an envier of his; so he went to the Sultan and acquainted him therewith, whereupon he sent and plundered all [the rest of] his goods and drove him forth from the village, and his wife [and children] with him. So they went wandering in the desert and his wife said to him, 'All that hath befallen us cometh of thy slothfulness in affairs and thy default.' But he said to her, 'Have patience, for the issue of patience is good.'

Then they went on a little, and thieves met them and despoiling them of that which remained with them, stripped them of their raiment and took the children from them; whereupon the woman wept and said to her husband, 'O man, put away from thee this folly and arise, let us follow the thieves, so haply they may have compassion on us and restore the children to us.' 'O woman,' answered he, 'have patience, for he who doth evil shall be requited with evil and his wickedness shall revert upon him. Were I to follow them, most like one of them would take his sword and smite off my head and slay me; but have patience, for the issue of patience is praised.' Then they fared on till they drew near a village in the land of Kirman, and by it a river of water. So he said to his wife, 'Abide thou here, whilst I enter the village and look us out a place wherein we may take up our lodging.' And he left her by the water and entered the village.

Presently, up came a horseman in quest of water, so he might water his horse. He saw the woman and she was pleasing in his sight; so he said to her, 'Arise, mount with me and I will take thee to wife and entreat thee kindly.' Quoth she, 'Spare me, so may

God spare thee! Indeed, I have a husband.' But he drew his sword and said to her, 'An thou obey me not, I will smite thee and kill thee.' When she saw his malice, she wrote on the ground in the sand with her finger, saying, 'O Abou Sabir, thou hast not ceased to be patient, till thy wealth is gone from thee and thy children and [now] thy wife, who was more precious in thy sight than everything and than all thy wealth, and indeed thou abidest in thy sorrow all thy life long, so thou mayst see what thy patience will profit thee.' Then the horseman took her, and setting her behind him, went his way.

As for Abou Sabir, when he returned, he saw not his wife and read what was written on the ground, wherefore he wept and sat [awhile] sorrowing. Then said he to himself, 'O Abou Sabir, it behoveth thee to be patient, for belike there shall betide [thee] an affair yet sorer than this and more grievous;' and he went forth wandering at a venture, like to the love-distraught, the madman, till he came to a sort of labourers working upon the palace of the king, by way of forced labour. When [the overseers] saw him, they laid hold of him and said to him, 'Work thou with these folk at the palace of the king; else will we imprison thee for life.' So he fell to working with them as a labourer and every day they gave him a cake of bread. He wrought with them a month's space, till it chanced that one of the labourers mounted a ladder and falling, broke his leg; whereupon he cried out and wept. Quoth Abou Sabir to him, 'Have patience and weep not; for thou shall find ease in thy patience.' But the man said to him, 'How long shall I have patience?' And he answered, saying, 'Patience bringeth a man forth of the bottom of the pit and seateth him on the throne of the kingdom.'

Now the king was seated at the lattice, hearkening to their talk, and Abou Sabir's words angered him; so he bade bring him before him and they brought him forthright. Now there was in the king's palace an underground dungeon and therein a vast deep pit, into which the king caused cast Abou Sabir, saying to him, 'O lackwit, now shall we see how thou wilt come forth of the pit to the throne of the kingdom.' Then he used to come and stand at the mouth of the pit and say, 'O lackwit, O Abou Sabir, I see thee not come forth of the pit and sit down on the king's throne!' And he assigned him each day two cakes of bread, whilst Abou Sabir held his peace and spoke not, but bore with patience that which betided him.

Now the king had a brother, whom he had imprisoned in that pit of old time, and he had died [there]; but the folk of the realm thought that he was alive, and when his [supposed] imprisonment grew long, the king's officers used to talk of this and of the tyranny of the king, and the report spread abroad that the king was a tyrant, wherefore they fell upon him one day and slew him. Then they sought the well and brought out Abou Sabir therefrom, deeming him the king's brother, for that he was the nearest of folk to him [in favour] and the likest, and he had been long in the prison. So they doubted not but that he was the prince in question and said to him, 'Reign thou in thy brother's room, for we have slain him and thou art king in his stead.' But Abou Sabir was silent and spoke not a word; and he knew that this was the issue of his patience. Then he arose and sitting down on the king's throne, donned the royal raiment and discovered justice and equity and the affairs [of the realm] prospered [in his hand]; wherefore the folk obeyed him and the people inclined to him and many were his troops.

Now the king, who had plundered Abou Sabir['s goods] and driven him forth of his village, had an enemy; and the latter took horse against him and overcame him and captured his [capital] city; wherefore he addressed himself to flight and came to Abou Sabir's city, craving protection of him and seeking that he should succour him. He knew not that the king of the city was the headman whom he had despoiled; so he presented himself before him and made complaint to him; but Abou Sabir knew him and said to him, 'This is somewhat of the issue of patience. God the Most High hath given me power over thee.' Then he bade his guards plunder the [unjust] king and his attendants; so they plundered them and stripping them of their clothes, put them forth of his country. When Abou Sabir's troops saw this, they marvelled and said, 'What is this deed that the king doth? There cometh a king to him, craving protection, and he despoileth him! This is not of the fashion of kings.' But they dared not [be]speak [him] of this.

After this, news came to the king of robbers in his land; so he set out in quest of them and ceased not to follow after them, till he seized on them all, and behold, they were the [very] thieves who had despoiled him [and his wife] by the way and taken his children. So he bade bring them before him, and when they came into his presence, he questioned them, saying, 'Where are the two boys ye took on such a day?' Quoth they, 'They are with us and we will present them to our lord the king for slaves to serve him and give him wealth galore that we have gotten together and divest ourselves of all that we possess and repent from sin and fight in thy service.' Abou Sabir, however, paid no heed to their speech, but took all their good and bade put them all to death. Moreover, he took the two boys and rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy, whereat the troops murmured among themselves, saying, 'Verily, this is a greater tyrant than his brother! There come to him a sort of robbers and seek to repent and proffer two boys [by way of peace-offering], and he taketh the two boys and all their good and slayeth them!'

After this came the horseman, who had taken Abou Sabir's wife, and complained of her to the king that she would not give him possession of herself, avouching that she was his wife. The king bade bring her before him, that he might hear her speech and pronounce judgment upon her. So the horseman came with her before him, and when the king saw her, he knew her and taking her from her ravisher, bade put the latter to death. Then he became aware of the troops, that they murmured against him and spoke of him as a tyrant; so he turned to his officers and viziers and said to them, 'As for me, by God the Great, I am not the king's brother! Nay, I am but one whom the king imprisoned upon a word he heard from me and used every day to taunt me therewith. Ye think that I am the king's brother; but I am Abou Sabir and God hath given me the kingship in virtue of my patience. As for the king who sought protection of me and I despoiled him, it was he who first wronged me, for that he despoiled me aforetime and drove me forth of my native land and banished me, without due [cause]; wherefore I requited him with that which he had done to me, in the way of lawful vengeance. As for the thieves who proffered repentance, there was no repentance for them with me, for that they began upon me with foul [dealing] and waylaid me by the road and despoiled me and took my good and my sons. Now these two boys, that I took of them and whom ye deemed slaves, are my very sons; so I avenged myself on the thieves of that which they did with me aforetime and requited them with equity. As for

the horseman whom I slew, the woman I took from him was my wife and he took her by force, but God the Most High hath restored her [to me]; so this was my right, and my deed that I have done was just, albeit ye, [judging] by the outward of the matter, deemed that I had done this by way of tyranny.' When the folk heard this, they marvelled and fell prostrate before him; and they redoubled in esteem for him and exceeding affection and excused themselves to him, marvelling at that which God had done with him and how He had given him the kingship by reason of his longsuffering and his patience and how he had raised himself by his patience from the bottom of the pit to the throne of the kingdom, what while God cast down the [late] king from the throne into the pit. Then Abou Sabir foregathered with his wife and said to her, 'How deemest thou of the fruit of patience and its sweetness and the fruit of haste and its bitterness? Verily, all that a man doth of good and evil, he shall assuredly abide.' On like wise, O king," continued the young treasurer, "it behoveth thee to practise patience, whenas it is possible to thee, for that patience is of the fashion of the noble, and it is the chiefest of their reliance, especially for kings."

When the king heard this from the youth, his anger subsided; so he bade restore him to the prison, and the folk dispersed that day.

The Fourth Day.

Of the Ill Effects of Precipitation.

WHEN it was the fourth day, the fourth vizier, whose name was Zoushad, made his appearance and prostrating himself to the king, said to him, "O king, suffer not the talk of yonder youth to delude thee, for that he is not a truth-teller. So long as he abideth on life, the folk will not give over talking nor will thy heart cease to be occupied with him." "By Allah," cried the king, "thou sayst sooth and I will cause fetch him this day and slay him before me." Then he commanded to bring the youth; so they brought him in shackles and he said to him, "Out on thee! Thinkest thou to appease my heart with thy prate, whereby the days are spent in talk? I mean to slay thee this day and be quit of thee." "O king," answered the youth, "it is in thy power to slay me whensoever thou wilt, but haste is of the fashion of the base and patience of that of the noble. If thou put me to death, thou wilt repent, and if thou desire to bring me back to life, thou wilt not be able thereunto. Indeed, whoso acteth hastily in an affair, there befalleth him what befell Bihzad, son of the king." Quoth the king, "And what is his story?" "O king," replied the young treasurer,

Story of Prince Bihzad.

"THERE was once, of old time, a king and he had a son [named Bihzad], there was not in his day a goodlier than he and he loved to consort with the folk and to sit with the merchants and converse with them. One day, as he sat in an assembly, amongst a number of folk, he heard them talking of his own goodliness and grace and saying, 'There is not in his time a goodlier than he.' But one of the company said, 'Indeed, the daughter of King Such-an-one is handsomer than he.' When Bihzad heard this saying, his reason fled and his heart fluttered and he called the last speaker and said to him, 'Repeat to me that which thou saidst and tell me the truth concerning her whom thou avouchest to be handsomer than I and whose daughter she is.' Quoth the man, 'She is the daughter of King Such-an-one;' whereupon Bihzad's heart clave to her and his colour changed.

The news reached his father, who said to him, 'O my son, this damsel to whom thy heart cleaveth is at thy commandment and we have power over her; so wait till I demand her [in marriage] for thee.' But the prince said, 'I will not wait.' So his father hastened in the matter and sent to demand her of her father, who required of him a hundred thousand dinars to his daughter's dowry. Quoth Bihzad's father, 'So be it,' and paid down what was in his treasuries, and there remained to his charge but a little of the dower. So he said to his son, 'Have patience, O my son, till we gather together the rest of the money and send to fetch her to thee, for that she is become thine.' Therewith the prince waxed exceeding wroth and said, 'I will not have patience;' so he took his sword and his spear and mounting his horse, went forth and fell to stopping the way, [so haply that he might win what lacked of the dowry].

It chanced one day that he fell in upon a company of folk and they overcame him by dint of numbers and taking him prisoner, pinioned him and carried him to the lord of that country. The latter saw his fashion and grace and misdoubting of him, said, 'This is no robber's favour. Tell me truly, O youth, who thou art.' Bihzad thought shame to acquaint him with his condition and chose rather death for himself; so he answered, 'I am nought but a thief and a bandit.' Quoth the king, 'It behoveth us not to act hastily in the matter of this youth, but that we look into his affair, for that haste still engendereth repentance.' So he imprisoned him in his palace and assigned him one who should serve him.

Meanwhile, the news spread abroad that Bihzad, son of the king, was lost, whereupon his father sent letters in quest of him [to all the kings and amongst others to him with whom he was imprisoned]. When the letter reached the latter, he praised God the Most High for that he had not anydele hastened in Bihzad's affair and letting bring him before himself, said to him, 'Art thou minded to destroy thyself?' Quoth Bihzad, '[I did this] for fear of reproach;' and the king said, 'An thou fear reproach, thou shouldst not practise haste [in that thou dost]; knowest thou not that the fruit of haste is repentance? If we had hasted, we also, like unto thee, we had repented.'

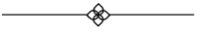
Then he conferred on him a dress of honour and engaged to him for the completion of the dowry and sent to his father, giving him the glad news and

comforting his heart with [the tidings of] his son's safety; after which he said to Bihzad, Arise, O my son, and go to thy father.' 'O king,' rejoined the prince, 'complete thy kindness to me by [hastening] my going-in to my wife; for, if I go back to my father, till he send a messenger and he return, promising me, the time will be long.' The king laughed and marvelled at him and said to him, 'I fear for thee from this haste, lest thou come to shame and attain not thy desire.' Then he gave him wealth galore and wrote him letters, commending him to the father of the princess, and despatched him to them. When he drew near their country, the king came forth to meet him with the people of his realm and assigned him a handsome lodging and bade hasten the going-in of his daughter to him, in compliance with the other king's letter. Moreover, he advised the prince's father [of his son's coming] and they busied themselves with the affair of the damsel.

When it was the day of the going-in, Bihzad, of his haste and lack of patience, betook himself to the wall, which was between himself and the princess's lodging and in which there was a hole pierced, and looked, so he might see his bride, of his haste. But the bride's mother saw him and this was grievous to her; so she took from one of the servants two red-hot iron spits and thrust them into the hole through which the prince was looking. The spits ran into his eyes and put them out and he fell down aswoon and joyance was changed and became mourning and sore concern. See, then, O king," continued the youth, "the issue of the prince's haste and lack of deliberation, for indeed his haste bequeathed him long repentance and his joy was changed to mourning; and on like wise was it with the woman who hastened to put out his eyes and deliberated not. All this was the doing of haste; wherefore it behoveth the king not to be hasty in putting me to death, for that I am under the grasp of his hand, and what time soever thou desirest my slaughter, it shall not escape [thee]."

When the king heard this, his anger subsided and he said, "Carry him back to prison till to-morrow, to we may look into his affair."

The Fifth Day



Of The Issues of Good and Evil Actions.

WHEN it was the fifth day, the fifth Vizier, whose name was Jehrbaur, came in to the king and prostrating himself before him, said, "O king, it behoveth thee, if thou see or hear that one look on thy house, that thou put out his eyes. How then should it be with him whom thou sawest midmost thy house and on thy very bed, and he suspected with thy harem, and not of thy lineage nor of thy kindred? Wherefore do thou away this reproach by putting him to death. Indeed, we do but urge thee unto this for the assurance of thine empire and of our zeal for thy loyal counselling and of our love to thee. How can it be lawful that this youth should live for a single hour?"

Therewith the king was filled with wrath and said, "Bring him forthright," So they brought the youth before him, shackled, and the king said to him, "Out on thee! Thou hast sinned a great sin and the time of thy life hath been long; but needs must we put thee to death, for that there is for us no ease in thy life after this," "O king," answered he, "know that I, by Allah, am guiltless, and by reason of this I hope for life, for that he who is guiltless of offence goeth not in fear of punishment neither maketh great his mourning and his concern; but whoso hath sinned, needs must his sin be expiated upon him, though his life be prolonged, and it shall overtake him, even as it overtook Dadbin the king and his vizier." "How was that?" asked Azadbekht, and the youth said,

Story of King Dadbin and His Viziers.

"THERE was once a king in the land of Teberistan, by name Dadbin, and he had two viziers, called one Zourkhan and the other Kardan. The Vizier Zourkhan had a daughter, there was not in her time a handsomer than she nor yet a chaster nor a more pious, for she was a faster, a prayer and a worshipper of God the Most High, and her name was Arwa. Now Dadbin heard tell of her charms; so his heart clave to her and he called the vizier [her father] and said to him, 'I desire of thee that thou marry me to thy daughter.' Quoth Zourkhan, 'Allow me to consult her, and if she consent, I will marry thee with her.' And the king said, 'Hasten unto this.'

So the vizier went in to his daughter and said to her, 'O my daughter, the king seeketh thee of me and desireth to marry thee.' 'O my father,' answered she 'I desire not a husband and if thou wilt marry me, marry me not but with one who shall be below me in rank and I nobler than he, so he may not turn to other than myself nor lift his eyes upon me, and marry me not to one who is nobler than I, lest I be with him as a slave-girl and a serving-woman.' So the vizier returned to the king and acquainted him with that which his daughter had said, whereat he redoubled in desire and love-liking for her and said to her father, 'An thou marry me not to her of good grace, I will take her by force in thy despite.' The vizier again betook himself to his daughter and repeated to her the king's words, but she replied, 'I desire not a husband.' So he returned to the king and told him what she said, and he was wroth and threatened the vizier, whereupon the latter took his daughter and fled with her.

When this came to the king's knowledge, he despatched troops in pursuit of Zourkhan, to stop the road upon him, whilst he himself went out and overtaking the vizier, smote him on the head with his mace and slew him. Then he took his daughter by force and returning to his dwelling-place, went in to her and married her. Arwa resigned herself with patience to that which betided her and committed her affair to God the Most High; and indeed she was used to serve Him day and night with a goodly service in the house of King Dabdin her husband.

It befell one day that the king had occasion to make a journey; so he called his Vizier Kardan and said to him, 'I have a trust to commit to thy care, and it is yonder damsel, my wife, the daughter of the Vizier [Zourkhan], and I desire that thou keep her and guard her thyself, for that there is not in the world aught dearer to me than she.' Quoth Kardan in himself, 'Of a truth, the king honoureth me with an exceeding honour [in entrusting me] with this damsel.' And he answered 'With all my heart.'

When the king had departed on his journey, the vizier said in himself, 'Needs must I look upon this damsel whom the king loveth with all this love.' So he hid himself in a place, that he might look upon her, and saw her overpassing description; wherefore he was confounded at her and his wit was dazed and love got the mastery of him, so that he said to her, saying, 'Have pity on me, for indeed I perish for the love of thee.' She sent back to him, saying, 'O vizier, thou art in the place of trust and confidence, so do not thou betray thy trust, but make thine inward like unto thine outward and occupy thyself with thy wife and that which is lawful to thee. As for this,

it is lust and [women are all of] one taste. And if thou wilt not be forbidden from this talk, I will make thee a byword and a reproach among the folk.' When the vizier heard her answer, he knew that she was chaste of soul and body; wherefore he repented with the utmost of repentance and feared for himself from the king and said, 'Needs must I contrive a device wherewithal I may destroy her; else shall I be disgraced with the king.'

When the king returned from his journey, he questioned his vizier of the affairs of his kingdom and the latter answered, 'All is well, O king, save a vile matter, which I have discovered here and wherewith I am ashamed to confront the king; but, if I hold my peace thereof, I fear lest other than I discover it and I [be deemed to] have played traitor to the king in the matter of my [duty of] loyal warning and my trust.' Quoth Dabdin, 'Speak, for thou art none other than a truth-teller, a trusty one, a loyal counsellor in that which thou sayest, undistrusted in aught.' And the vizier said, 'O king, this woman to whose love thy heart cleaveth and of whose piety thou talkest and her fasting and praying, I will make plain to thee that this is craft and guile.' At this, the king was troubled and said, 'What is to do?' 'Know,' answered the vizier, 'that some days after thy departure, one came to me and said to me, "Come, O vizier, and look." So I went to the door of the [queen's] sleeping-chamber and beheld her sitting with Aboulkhair, her father's servant, whom she favoureth, and she did with him what she did, and this is the manner of that which I saw and heard.'

When Dabdin heard this, he burnt with rage and said to one of his eunuchs, 'Go and slay her in her chamber.' But the eunuch said to him, 'O king, may God prolong thy continuance! Indeed, the killing of her may not be at this time; but do thou bid one of thine eunuchs take her up on a camel and carry her to one of the trackless deserts and cast her down there; so, if she be at fault, God shall cause her to perish, and if she be innocent, He will deliver her, and the king shall be free from sin against her, for that this damsel is dear to thee and thou slewest her father by reason of thy love for her.' Quoth the king, 'By Allah, thou sayst sooth!' Then he bade one of his eunuchs carry her on a camel to one of the far-off deserts and there leave her and go away, and he forbade [him] to prolong her torment. So he took her up and betaking himself with her to the desert, left her there without victual or water and returned, whereupon she made for one of the [sand-]hills and ranging stones before her [in the form of a prayer-niche], stood praying.

Now it chanced that a camel-driver, belonging to Kisra the king, lost certain camels and the king threatened him, if he found them not, that he would slay him. So he set out and plunged into the deserts till he came to the place where the damsel was and seeing her standing praying, waited till she had made an end of her prayer, when he went up to her and saluted her, saying, 'Who art thou?' Quoth she, 'I am a handmaid of God.' 'What dost thou in this desolate place?' asked he, and she said, 'I serve God the Most High.' When he saw her beauty and grace, he said to her, 'Harkye! Do thou take me to husband and I will be tenderly solicitous over thee and use thee with exceeding compassion and I will further thee in obedience to God the Most High.' But she answered, saying, 'I have no need of marriage and I desire to abide here [alone] with my Lord and His service; but, if thou wouldst deal compassionately with me and further me in the obedience of God the Most High, carry me to a place where there is water and thou wilt have done me a kindness.'

So he carried her to a place wherein was running water and setting her down on the ground, left her and went away, marvelling at her. After he left her, he found his camels, by her blessing, and when he returned, King Kisra asked him, 'Hast thou found the camels?' ['Yes,' answered he] and acquainted him with the affair of the damsel and set out to him her beauty and grace; whereupon the king's heart clave to her and he mounted with a few men and betook himself to that place, where he found the damsel and was amazed at her, for that he saw her overpassing the description wherewith the camel-driver had described her to him. So he accosted her and said to her, 'I am King Kisra, greatest of the kings. Wilt thou not have me to husband?' Quoth she, 'What wilt thou do with me, O king, and I a woman abandoned in the desert?' And he answered, saying, 'Needs must this be, and if thou wilt not consent to me, I will take up my sojourn here and devote myself to God's service and thine and worship Him with thee.'

Then he bade set up for her a tent and another for himself, facing hers, so he might worship God with her, and fell to sending her food; and she said in herself, 'This is a king and it is not lawful for me that I suffer him forsake his subjects and his kingdom for my sake. So she said to the serving-woman, who used to bring her the food, 'Speak to the king, so he may return to his women, for he hath no need of me and I desire to abide in this place, so I may worship God the Most High therein.' The slave-girl returned to the king and told him this, whereupon he sent back to her, saying, 'I have no need of the kingship and I also desire to abide here and worship God with thee in this desert.' When she found this earnestness in him, she consented to his wishes and said, 'O king, I will consent unto thee in that which thou desirest and will be to thee a wife, but on condition that thou bring me Dadbin the king and his Vizier Kardan and his chamberlain and that they be present in thine assembly, so I may speak a word with them in thy presence, to the intent that thou mayest redouble in affection for me.' Quoth Kisra, 'And what is thine occasion unto this?' So she related to him her story from first to last, how she was the wife of Dadbin the king and how the latter's vizier had miscalled her honour.

When King Kisra heard this, he redoubled in loveliking for her and affection and said to her, 'Do what thou wilt.' So he let bring a litter and carrying her therein to his dwelling-place, married her and entreated her with the utmost honour. Then he sent a great army to King Dadbin and fetching him and his vizier and the chamberlain, caused bring them before him, unknowing what he purposed with them. Moreover, he caused set up for Arwa a pavilion in the courtyard of his palace and she entered therein and let down the curtain before herself. When the servants had set their seats and they had seated themselves, Arwa raised a corner of the curtain and said, 'O Kardan, rise to thy feet, for it befitteth not that thou sit in the like of this assembly, before this mighty King Kisra.' When the vizier heard these words, his heart quaked and his joints were loosened and of his fear, he rose to his feet. Then said she to him, 'By the virtue of Him who hath made thee stand in this place of standing [up to judgment], and thou abject and humiliated, I conjure thee speak the truth and say what prompted thee to lie against me and cause me go forth from my house and from the hand of my husband and made thee practise thus against a man, a true believer, and slay him. This is no place wherein leasing availeth nor may prevarication be therein.'

When the vizier was ware that she was Arwa and heard her speech, he knew that it behoved him not to lie and that nought would avail him but truth-speaking; so he bowed [his head] to the ground and wept and said, 'Whoso doth evil, needs must he abide it, though his day be prolonged. By Allah, I am he who hath sinned and transgressed, and nought prompted me unto this but fear and overmastering desire and the affliction written upon my forehead; and indeed this woman is pure and chaste and free from all fault.' When King Dadbin heard this, he buffeted his face and said to his vizier, 'God slay thee! It is thou that hast parted me and my wife and wronged me!' But Kisra the king said to him, 'God shall surely slay thee, for that thou hastenedst and lookedst not into thine affair and knewest not the guilty from the guiltless. Hadst thou wrought deliberately, the false had been made manifest to thee from the true; so where was thy judgment and thy sight?"

Then said he to Arwa, "What wilt thou that I do with them?" And she answered, saying, "Accomplish on them the ordinance of God the Most High; the slayer shall be slain and the transgressor transgressed against, even as he transgressed against us; yea, and the well-doer, good shall be done unto him, even as he did unto us." So she gave [her officers] commandment concerning Dadbin and they smote him on the head with a mace and slew him, and she said, "This is for the slaughter of my father." Then she bade set the vizier on a beast [and carry him] to the desert whither he had caused carry her [and leave him there without victual or water]; and she said to him, "An thou be guilty, thou shalt abide [the punishment of] thy guilt and perish of hunger and thirst in the desert; but, if there be no guilt in thee, thou shalt be delivered, even as I was delivered."

As for the eunuch, the chamberlain, who had counselled King Dadbin [not to slay her, but] to [cause] carry her to the desert [and there abandon her], she bestowed on him a sumptuous dress of honour and said to him, "The like of thee it behoveth kings to hold in favour and set in high place, for that thou spokest loyally and well, and a man is still requited according to his deed." And Kisra the king invested him with the governance of one of the provinces of his empire. Know, therefore, O king," continued the youth, "that whoso doth good is requited therewith and he who is guiltless of sin and reproach feareth not the issue of his affair. And I, O king, am free from guilt, wherefore I trust in God that He will show forth the truth and vouchsafe me the victory over enemies and enviers."

When the king heard this, his wrath subsided and he said, "Carry him back to the prison till the morrow, so we may look into his affair."

The Sixth Day

Of Trust in God.

WHEN it was the sixth day, the viziers' wrath redoubled, for that they had not compassed their desire of the youth and they feared for themselves from the king; so three of them went in to him and prostrating themselves before him, said to him, "O king, indeed we are loyal counsellors to thy dignity and tenderly solicitous for thee. Verily, thou persistest long in sparing this youth alive and we know not what is thine advantage therein. Every day findeth him yet on life and the talk redoubleth suspicions on thee; so do thou put him to death, that the talk may be made an end of." When the king heard this speech, he said, "By Allah, indeed, ye say sooth and speak rightly!" Then he let bring the young treasurer and said to him, "How long shall I look into thine affair and find no helper for thee and see them all athirst for thy blood?"

"O king," answered the youth, "I hope for succour only from God, not from created beings: if He aid me, none can avail to harm me, and if He be with me and on my side, because of the truth, who is it I shall fear, because of falsehood? Indeed, I have made my intent with God a pure and sincere intent and have severed my expectation from the help of the creature; and whoso seeketh help [of God] findeth of his desire that which Bekhtzeman found." Quoth the king, "Who was Bekhtzeman and what is his story?" "O king," replied the youth,

Story of King Bekhtzeman.

“THERE was once a king of the kings, whose name was Bekhtzeman, and he was a great eater and drinker and carouser. Now enemies of his made their appearance in certain parts of his realm and threatened him; and one of his friends said to him, ‘O king, the enemy maketh for thee: be on thy guard against him.’ Quoth Bekhtzeman, ‘I reck not of him, for that I have arms and wealth and men and am not afraid of aught.’ Then said his friends to him, ‘Seek aid of God, O king, for He will help thee more than thy wealth and thine arms and thy men.’ But he paid no heed to the speech of his loyal counsellors, and presently the enemy came upon him and waged war upon him and got the victory over him and his trust in other than God the Most High profited him nought. So he fled from before him and seeking one of the kings, said to him, ‘I come to thee and lay hold upon thy skirts and take refuge with thee, so thou mayst help me against mine enemy.’

The king gave him money and men and troops galore and Bekhtzeman said in himself, ‘Now am I fortified with this army and needs must I conquer my enemy therewith and overcome him;’ but he said not, ‘With the aid of God the Most High.’ So his enemy met him and overcame him again and he was defeated and put to the rout and fled at a venture. His troops were dispersed from him and his money lost and the enemy followed after him. So he sought the sea and passing over to the other side, saw a great city and therein a mighty citadel. He asked the name of the city and to whom it belonged and they said to him, ‘It belongeth to Khedidan the king.’ So he fared on till he came to the king’s palace aud concealing his condition, passed himself off for a horseman and sought service with King Khedidan, who attached him to his household and entreated him with honour; but his heart still clave to his country and his home.

Presently, it chanced that an enemy attacked King Khedidan; so he sent out his troops to him and made Bekhtzeman head of the army. Then they went forth to the field and Khedidan also came forth and ranged his troops and took the spear and sallied out in person and fought a sore battle and overcame his enemy, who fled, he and his troops, ignominiously. When the king and his army returned in triumph, Bekhtzeman said to him, ‘Harkye, O king! Meseemeth this is a strange thing of thee that thou art compassed about with this vast army, yet dost thou apply thyself in person to battle and adventurest thyself.’ Quoth the king, ‘Dost thou call thyself a cavalier and a man of learning and deemest that victory is in abundance of troops?’ ‘Ay,’ answered Bekhtzeman; ‘that is indeed my belief.’ And Khedidan said, ‘By Allah, then, thou errest in this thy belief! Woe and again woe to him whose trust is in other than God! Indeed, this army is appointed only for adornment and majesty, and victory is from God alone. I too, O Bekhtzeman, believed aforetime that victory was in the multitude of men, and an enemy came out against me with eight hundred men, whilst I had eight hundred thousand. I trusted in the number of my troops, whilst mine enemy trusted in God; so he defeated me and routed me and I was put to a shameful flight and hid myself in one of the mountains, where I met with a recluse, [who had] withdrawn [himself from the world]. So I joined myself to him and complained to him

of my case and acquainted him with all that had befallen me. Quoth he, "Knowest thou why this befell thee and thou wast defeated?" "I know not," answered I, and he said, "Because thou puttest thy trust in the multitude of thy troops and reliedst not upon God the Most High. Hadst thou put thy trust in God and believed in Him that it is He [alone] who advantageth and endamageth thee, thine enemy had not availed to cope with thee. Return unto God." So I returned to myself and repented at the hands of the solitary, who said to me, "Turn back with what remaineth to thee of troops and confront thine enemies, for, if their intents be changed from God, thou wilt overcome them, wert thou alone." When I heard these words, I put my trust in God the Most High, and gathering together those who remained with me, fell upon mine enemies at unawares in the night. They deemed us many and fled on the shamefullest wise, whereupon I entered my city and repossessed myself of my place by the might of God the Most High, and now I fight not but [trusting] in His aid.'

When Bekhtzeman heard this, he awoke from his heedlessness and said, 'Extolled be the perfection of God the Great! O king, this is my case and my story, nothing added and nought diminished, for I am King Bekhtzeman and all this happened to me; wherefore I will seek the gate of God['s mercy] and repent unto Him.' So he went forth to one of the mountains and there worshipped God awhile, till one night, as he slept, one appeared to him in a dream and said to him, 'O Bekhtzeman, God accepteth thy repentance and openeth on thee [the gate of succour] and will further thee against thine enemy.' When he was certified of this in the dream, he arose and turned back, intending for his own city; and when he drew near thereunto, he saw a company of the king's retainers, who said to him, 'Whence art thou? We see that thou art a stranger and fear for thee from this king, for that every stranger who enters this city, he destroys him, of his fear of King Bekhtzeman.' Quoth Bekhtzeman, 'None shall hurt him nor advantage him save God the Most High.' And they answered, saying, 'Indeed, he hath a vast army and his heart is fortified in the multitude of his troops.'

When King Bekhtzeman heard this, his heart was comforted and he said in himself, 'I put my trust in God. If He will, I shall overcome mine enemy by the might of God the Most High.' So he said to the folk, ' Know ye not who I am?' and they answered, ' No, by Allah.' Quoth he, 'I am King Bekhtzeman.' When they heard this and knew that it was indeed he, they dismounted from their horses and kissed his stirrup, to do him honour, and said to him, 'O king, why hast thou thus adventured thyself?' Quoth he, 'Indeed, my life is a light matter to me and I put my trust in God the Most High, looking to Him for protection.' And they answered him, saying, 'May this suffice thee! We will do with thee that which is in our power and whereof thou art worthy: comfort thy heart, for we will succour thee with our goods and our lives, and we are his chief officers and the most in favour with him of all folk. So we will take thee with us and cause the folk follow after thee, for that the inclination of the people, all of them, is to thee.' Quoth he, 'Do that unto which God the Most High enableth you.'

So they carried him into the city and hid him with them. Moreover, they agreed with a company of the king's chief officers, who had aforetime been those of Bekhtzeman, and acquainted them with this; whereat they rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Then they assembled together to Bekhtzeman and made a covenant and handfast

[of fealty] with him and fell upon the enemy at unawares and slew him and seated King Bekhtzeman again on the throne of his kingship. And his affairs prospered and God amended his estate and restored His bounty to him, and he ruled his subjects justly and abode in the obedience of the Most High. On this wise, O king," continued the young treasurer, "he with whom God is and whose intent is pure, meeteth nought but good. As for me, I have no helper other than God, and I am content to submit myself to His ordinance, for that He knoweth the purity of my intent."

With this the king's wrath subsided and he said, "Restore him to the prison till the morrow, so we may look into his affair."

The Seventh Day.

Of Clemency.

WHEN it was the seventh day, the seventh vizier, whose name was Bihkemal, came in to the king and prostrating himself to him, said, "O king, what doth thy long-suffering with this youth advantage thee? Indeed the folk talk of thee and of him. Why, then, dost thou postpone the putting him to death?" The vizier's words aroused the king's anger and he bade bring the youth. So they brought him before him, shackled, and Azadbekht said to him, "Out on thee! By Allah, after this day there abideth no deliverance for thee from my hand, for that thou hast outraged mine honour, and there can be no forgiveness for thee."

"O king," answered the youth, "there is no great forgiveness save in case of a great crime, for according as the offence is great, in so much is forgiveness magnified and it is no dishonour to the like of thee if he spare the like of me. Verily, Allah knoweth that there is no fault in me, and indeed He commandeth unto clemency, and no clemency is greater than that which spareth from slaughter, for that thy forgiveness of him whom thou purposest to put to death is as the quickening of a dead man; and whoso doth evil shall find it before him, even as it was with King Bihkerd." "And what is the story of King Bihkerd?" asked the king. "O king," answered the youth,

Story of King Bihkerd.

THERE was once a king named Bihkerd aed he had wealth galore and many troops; but his deeds were evil and he would punish for a slight offence and never forgave. He went forth one day to hunt and one of his servants shot an arrow, which lit on the king's ear and cut it off. Quoth Bihkerd, 'Who shot that arrow?' So the guards brought him in haste the offender, whose name was Yetrou, and he of his fear fell down on the ground in a swoon. Then said the king, 'Put him to death;' but Yetrou said, 'O King, this that hath befallen was not of my choice nor of my knowledge; so do thou pardon me, in the hour of thy power over me, for that clemency is of the goodliest of things and belike it shall be [in this world] a provision and a good work [for which thou shall be requited] one of these days, and a treasure [laid up to thine account] with God in the world to come. Pardon me, therefore, and fend off evil from me, so shall God fend off from thee evil the like thereof.' When the king heard this, it pleased him and he pardoned the servant, albeit he had never before pardoned any.

Now this servant was of the sons of the kings and had fled from his father, on account of an offence he had committed. Then he went and took service with King Bihkerd and there happened to him what happened. After awhile, it chanced that a man recognized him and went and told his father, who sent him a letter, comforting his heart and mind and [beseeching him] to return to him. So he returned to his father, who came forth to meet him and rejoiced in him, and the prince's affairs were set right with him.

It befell, one day of the days, that King Bihkerd embarked in a ship and put out to sea, so he might fish; but the wind blew on them and the ship foundered. The king won ashore on a plank, unknown of any, and came forth, naked, on one of the coasts; and it chanced that he landed in the country whereof the father of the youth aforesaid, [his sometime servant], was king. So he came in the night to the gate of the latter's city and [finding it shut], took up his lodging [for the night] in a burying-place there.

When the morning morrowed and the folk came forth of the city, they found a murdered man cast down in a corner of the burial-ground and seeing Bihkerd there, doubted not but it was he who had slain him; so they laid hands on him and carried him up to the king and said to him, 'This fellow hath slain a man.' The king bade imprison him; [so they clapped him in prison] and he fell a-saying in himself, what while he was in the prison, 'All that hath befallen me is of the abundance of my sins and my tyranny, for, indeed, I have slain much people unrighteously and this is the requital of my deeds and that which I have wrought aforetime of oppression.' As he was thus pondering in himself, there came a bird and lighted down on the coign of the prison, whereupon, of his much eagerness in the chase, he took a stone and cast it at the bird.

Now the king's son was playing in the exercise-ground with the ball and the mall, and the stone lit on his ear and cut it off, whereupon the prince fell down in a swoon. So they enquired who had thrown the stone and [finding that it was Bihkerd,] took

him and carried him before the prince, who bade put him to death. Accordingly, they cast the turban from his head and were about to bind his eyes, when the prince looked at him and seeing him cropped of an ear, said to him, 'Except thou wert a lewd fellow, thine ear had not been cut off.' 'Not so, by Allah!' answered Bihkerd. 'Nay, but the story [of the loss] of my ear is thus and thus, and I pardoned him who smote me with an arrow and cut off my ear.' When the prince heard this, he looked in his face and knowing him, cried out and said, 'Art thou not Bihkerd the king?' 'Yes,' answered he, and the prince said to him 'What bringeth thee here?' So he told him all that had betided him and the folk marvelled and extolled the perfection of God the Most High.

Then the prince rose to him and embraced him and kissed him and entreated him with honour. Moreover, he seated him in a chair and bestowed on him a dress of honour; and he turned to his father and said to him, 'This is the king who pardoned me and this is his ear that I cut off with an arrow; and indeed he deserveth pardon from me, for that he pardoned me.' Then said he to Bihkerd, 'Verily, the issue of clemency hath been a provision for thee [in thine hour of need].' And they entreated him with the utmost kindness and sent him back to his own country in all honour and worship Know, then, O King," continued the youth, "that there is no goodlier thing than clemency and that all thou dost thereof, thou shalt find before thee, a treasure laid up for thee."

When the king heard this, his wrath subsided and he said, "Carry him back to the prison till the morrow, so we may look into his affair."

The Eighth Day.

Of Envy and Malice.

WHEN it was the eighth day, the viziers all assembled and took counsel together and said, "How shall we do with this youth, who baffleth us with his much talk? Indeed, we fear lest he be saved and we fall [into perdition]. Wherefore, let us all go in to the king and unite our efforts to overcome him, ere he appear without guilt and come forth and get the better of us." So they all went in to the king and prostrating themselves before him, said to him, "O king, have a care lest this youth beguile thee with his sorcery and bewitch thee with his craft. If thou heardest what we hear, thou wouldst not suffer him live, no, not one day. So pay thou no heed to his speech, for we are thy viziers, [who endeavour for] thy continuance, and if thou hearken not to our word, to whose word wilt thou hearken? See, we are ten viziers who testify against this youth that he is guilty and entered not the king's sleeping-chamber but with evil intent, so he might put the king to shame and outrage his honour; and if the king slay him not, let him banish him his realm, so the tongue of the folk may desist from him."

When the king heard his viziers' words, he was exceeding wroth and bade bring the youth, and when he came in to the king, the viziers all cried out with one voice, saying, "O scant o' grace, thinkest thou to save thyself from slaughter by craft and guile, that thou beguilest the king with thy talk and hopest pardon for the like of this great crime which thou hast committed?" Then the king bade fetch the headsman, so he might smite off his head; whereupon each of the viziers fell a-saying, "I will slay him;" and they sprang upon him. Quote the youth, "O king, consider and ponder these men's eagerness. Is this of envy or no? They would fain make severance between thee and me, so there may fall to them what they shall plunder, as aforetime." And the king said to him, "Consider their testimony against thee." "O king," answered the young man, "how shall they testify of that which they saw not? This is but envy and rancour; and thou, if thou slay me, thou wilt regret me, and I fear lest there betide thee of repentance that which betided Ilan Shah, by reason of the malice of his viziers." "And what is his story?" asked Azadbekht. "O king," replied the youth,

Story of Ilan Shah and Abou Temam.

"THERE was once a merchant named Abou Temam, and he was a man of understanding and good breeding, quick-witted and truthful in all his affairs, and he had wealth galore. Now there was in his land an unjust king and a jealous, and Abou Temam feared for his wealth from this king and said, 'I will remove hence to another place where I shall not be in fear.' So he made for the city of Ilan Shah and built himself a palace therein and transporting his wealth thither, took up his abode there. Presently, the news of him reached King Ilan Shah; so he sent to bid him to his presence and said to him, 'We know of thy coming to us and thine entry under our allegiance, and indeed we have heard of thine excellence and wit and generosity; so welcome to thee and fair welcome! The land is thy land and at thy commandment, and whatsoever occasion thou hast unto us, it is [already] accomplished unto thee; and it behoveth that thou be near our person and of our assembly.' Abou Temam prostrated himself to the king and said to him, 'O king, I will serve thee with my wealth and my life, but do thou excuse me from nearness unto thee, for that, [if I took service about thy person], I should not be safe from enemies and enviers.' Then he addressed himself to serve the king with presents and largesses, and the king saw him to be intelligent, well-bred and of good counsel; so he committed to him the ordinance of his affairs and in his hand was the power to bind and loose.

Now Ilan Shah had three viziers, in whose hands the affairs [of the kingdom] were [aforetime] and they had been used to leave not the king night nor day; but they became shut out from him by reason of Abou Temam and the king was occupied with him to their exclusion. So they took counsel together upon the matter and said, 'What counsel ye we should do, seeing that the king is occupied from us with yonder man, and indeed he honoureth him more than us? But now come, let us cast about for a device, whereby we may remove him from the king.' So each of them spoke forth that which was in his mind, and one of them said, 'The king of the Turks hath a daughter, whose like there is not in the world, and whatsoever messenger goeth to demand her in marriage, her father slayeth him. Now our king hath no knowledge of this; so, come, let us foregather with him and bring up the talk of her. When his heart is taken with her, we will counsel him to despatch Abou Temam to seek her hand in marriage; whereupon her father will slay him and we shall be quit of him, for we have had enough of his affair."

Accordingly, they all went in to the king one day (and Abou Temam was present among them,) and mentioned the affair of the damsel, the king's daughter of the Turks, and enlarged upon her charms, till the king's heart was taken with her and he said to them, 'We will send one to demand her in marriage for us; but who shall be our messenger?' Quoth the viziers, 'There is none for this business but Abou Temam, by reason of his wit and good breeding;' and the king said, 'Indeed, even as ye say, none is fitting for this affair but he.' Then he turned to Abou Temam and said to him, 'Wilt thou not go with my message and seek me [in marriage] the king's daughter of the Turks?' and he answered, 'Hearkening and obedience, O king.'

So they made ready his affair and the king conferred on him a dress of honour, and he took with him a present and a letter under the king's hand and setting out, fared on till he came to the [capital] city of Turkestan. When the king of the Turks knew of his coming, he despatched his officers to receive him and entreated him with honour and lodged him as befitted his rank. Then he entertained him three days, after which he summoned him to his presence and Abou Temam went in to him and prostrating himself before him, as beseemeth unto kings, laid the present before him and gave him the letter.

The king read the letter and said to Abou Temam, "We will do what behoveth in the matter; but, O Abou Temam, needs must thou see my daughter and she thee, and needs must thou hear her speech and she thine.' So saying, he sent him to the lodging of the princess, who had had notice of this; so that they had adorned her sitting-chamber with the costliest that might be of utensils of gold and silver and the like, and she seated herself on a throne of gold, clad in the most sumptuous of royal robes and ornaments. When Abou Temam entered, he bethought himself and said, 'The wise say, he who restraineth his sight shall suffer no evil and he who guardeth his tongue shall hear nought of foul, and he who keepeth watch over his hand, it shall be prolonged and not curtailed.' So he entered and seating himself on the ground, [cast down his eyes and] covered his hands and feet with his dress. Quoth the king's daughter to him, 'Lift thy head, O Abou Temam, and look on me and speak with me.' But he spoke not neither raised his head, and she continued, 'They sent thee but that thou mightest look on me and speak with me, and behold, thou speakest not at all. Take of these pearls that be around thee and of these jewels and gold and silver. But he put not forth his hand unto aught, and when she saw that he paid no heed to anything, she was angry and said, 'They have sent me a messenger, blind, dumb and deaf.'

Then she sent to acquaint her father with this; whereupon the king called Abou Temam to him and said to him, 'Thou camest not but to see my daughter. Why, then, hast thou not looked upon her?' Quoth Abou Temam, 'I saw everything.' And the king said, 'Why didst thou not take somewhat of that which thou sawest of jewels and the like? For they were set for thee.' But he answered, 'It behoveth me not to put out my hand to aught that is not mine.' When the king heard his speech, he gave him a sumptuous dress of honour and loved him exceedingly and said to him, 'Come, look at this pit.' So Abou Temam went up [to the mouth of the pit] and looked, and behold, it was full of heads of men; and the king said to him, 'These are the heads of ambassadors, whom I slew, for that I saw them without loyalty to their masters, and I was used, whenas I saw an ambassador without breeding, to say, "He who sent him is less of breeding than he, for that the messenger is the tongue of him who sendeth him and his breeding is of his master's breeding; and whoso is on this wise, it befitteth not that he be akin to me." So, because of this, I used to put the messengers to death; but, as for thee, thou hast overcome us and won my daughter, of the excellence of thy breeding; so be of good heart, for she is thy master's.' Then he sent him back to king Ilan Shah with presents and rarities and a letter, saying, 'This that I have done is in honour of thee and of thine ambassador.'

When Abou Temam returned with [news of] the accomplishment of his errand and brought the presents and the letter, King Ilan Shah rejoiced in this and redoubled

in showing him honour and made much of him. Some days thereafterward, the king of Turkestan sent his daughter and she went in to King Ilan Shah, who rejoiced in her with an exceeding joy and Abou Temam's worth was exalted in his sight. When the viziers saw this, they redoubled in envy and despite and said, 'An we contrive us not a device to rid us of this man, we shall perish of rage.' So they bethought them [and agreed upon] a device they should practise.

Then they betook themselves to two boys affected to the [special] service of the king, who slept not but on their knee, and they lay at his head, for that they were his pages of the chamber, and gave them each a thousand dinars of gold, saying, 'We desire of you that ye do somewhat for us and take this gold as a provision against your occasion.' Quoth the boys, 'What is it ye would have us do?' And the viziers answered, 'This Abou Temam hath marred our affairs for us, and if his case abide on this wise, he will estrange us all from the king's favour; and what we desire of you is that, when ye are alone with the king and he leaneth back, as he were asleep, one of you say to his fellow, "Verily, the king hath taken Abou Temam into his especial favour and hath advanced him to high rank with him, yet is he a transgressor against the king's honour and an accursed one." Then let the other of you ask, "And what is his transgression?" And the first make answer, "He outrageth the king's honour and saith, 'The King of Turkestan was used, whenas one went to him to seek his daughter in marriage, to slay him; but me he spared, for that she took a liking to me, and by reason of this he sent her hither, because she loved me.'" Then let his fellow say, "Knowest thou this for truth?" And the other reply, "By Allah, this is well known unto all the folk, but, of their fear of the king, they dare not bespeak him thereof; and as often as the king is absent a-hunting or on a journey, Abou Temam comes to her and is private with her."' And the boys answered, 'We will say this.'

Accordingly, one night, when they were alone with the king and he leant back, as he were asleep, they said these words and the king heard it all and was like to die of rage and said in himself, 'These are young boys, not come to years of discretion, and have no intrigue with any; and except they had heard these words from some one, they had not spoken with each other thereof.' When it was morning, wrath overmastered him, so that he stayed not neither deliberated, but summoned Abou Temam and taking him apart, said to him, 'Whoso guardeth not his lord's honour, what behoveth unto him?' Quoth Abou Temam, 'It behoveth that his lord guard not his honour.' 'And whoso entereth the king's house and playeth the traitor with him,' continued the king, 'what behoveth unto him?' And Abou Temam answered, 'He shall not be left on life.' Whereupon the king spat in his face and said to him, 'Both these things hast thou done.' Then he drew his dagger on him in haste and smiting him in the belly, slit it and he died forthright; whereupon the king dragged him to a well that was in his palace and cast him therein.

After he had slain him, he fell into repentance and mourning and chagrin waxed upon him, and none, who questioned him, would he acquaint with the cause thereof, nor, of his love for his wife, did he tell her of this, and whenas she asked him of [the cause of] his grief, he answered her not. When the viziers knew of Abou Temam's death, they rejoiced with an exceeding joy and knew that the king's grief arose from regret for him. As for Ilan Shah, he used, after this, to betake himself by night to the

sleeping-chamber of the two boys and spy upon them, so he might hear what they said concerning his wife. As he stood one night privily at the door of their chamber, he saw them spread out the gold before them and play with it and heard one of them say, 'Out on us! What doth this gold profit us? For that we cannot buy aught therewith neither spend it upon ourselves. Nay, but we have sinned against Abou Temam and done him to death unjustly.' And the other answered, 'Had we known that the king would presently kill him, we had not done what we did.'

When the king heard this, he could not contain himself, but rushed in upon them and said to them, 'Out on you! What did ye? Tell me.' And they said, 'Pardon, O king.' Quoth he, 'An ye would have pardon from God and me, it behoveth you to tell me the truth, for nothing shall save you from me but truth-speaking.' So they prostrated themselves before him and said, 'By Allah, O king, the viziers gave us this gold and taught us to lie against Abou Teman, so thou mightest put him to death, and what we said was their words.' When the king heard this, he plucked at his beard, till he was like to tear it up by the roots and bit upon his fingers, till he well-nigh sundered them in twain, for repentance and sorrow that he had wrought hastily and had not delayed with Abou Temam, so he might look into his affair.

Then he sent for the viziers and said to them, 'O wicked viziers, ye thought that God was heedless of your deed, but your wickedness shall revert upon you. Know ye not that whoso diggeth a pit for his brother shall fall into it? Take from me the punishment of this world and to-morrow ye shall get the punishment of the world to come and requital from God.' Then he bade put them to death; so [the headsman] smote off their heads before the king, and he went in to his wife and acquainted her with that wherein he had transgressed against Abou Temam; whereupon she grieved for him with an exceeding grief and the king and the people of his household left not weeping and repenting all their lives. Moreover, they brought Abou Temam forth of the well and the king built him a dome in his palace and buried him therein.

See, then, O august king," continued the youth, "what envy doth and injustice and how God caused the viziers' malice revert upon their own necks; and I trust in God that He will succour me against all who envy me my favour with the king and show forth the truth unto him. Indeed, I fear not for my life from death; only I fear lest the king repent of my slaughter, for that I am guiltless of offence, and if I knew that I were guilty of aught, my tongue would be mute."

When the king heard this, he bowed [his head] in perplexity and confusion and said, "Carry him back to the prison till the morrow, so we may look into his affair."

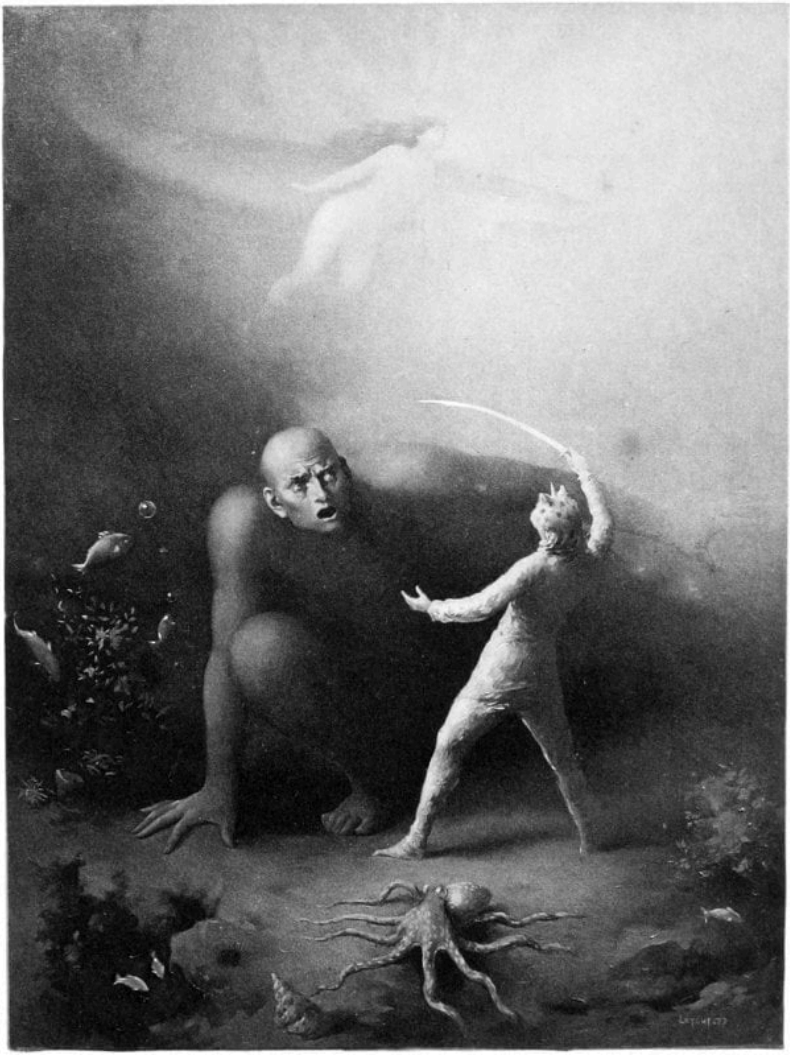
The Ninth Day

Of Destiny or That Which is Written on the Forehead.

WHEN it was the ninth day, the viziers [foregathered and] said, one to another, "Verily, this youth baffleth us, for as often as the king is minded to put him to death, he beguileth him and ensorcelleth him with a story; so what deem ye we should do, that we may slay him and be at rest from him?" Then they took counsel together and were of accord that they should go to the king's wife [and prompt her to urge the king to slaughter the youth. So they betook themselves to her] and said to her, "Thou art heedless of this affair wherein thou art and this heedlessness will not profit thee; whilst the king is occupied with eating and drinking and diversion and forgetteth that the folk beat upon tabrets and sing of thee and say, 'The king's wife loveth the youth;' and what while he abideth on life, the talk will increase and not diminish." Quoth she, "By Allah, it was ye set me on against him, and what shall I do [now]?" And they answered, "Do thou go in to the king and weep and say to him, 'Verily, the women come to me and tell me that I am become a byword in the city, and what is thine advantage in the sparing of this youth? If thou wilt not slay him, slay me, so this talk may be estopped from us.'"

So she arose and tearing her clothes, went in to the king, in the presence of the viziers, and cast herself upon him, saying, "O king, falleth my shame not upon thee and fearest thou not reproach? Indeed, this is not of the behoof of kings that their jealousy over their women should be thus [laggard]. Thou art heedless and all the folk of the realm prate of thee, men and women. So either slay him, that the talk may be cut off, or slay me, if thy soul will not consent to his slaughter." Thereupon the king's wrath waxed hot and he said to her, "I have no pleasure in his continuance [on life] and needs must I slay him this day. So return to thy house and comfort thy heart."

Then he bade fetch the youth; so they brought him before him and the viziers said, "O base of origin, out on thee! Thy term is at hand and the earth hungereth for thy body, so it may devour it." But he answered them, saying, "Death is not in your word nor in your envy; nay, it is an ordinance written upon the forehead; wherefore, if aught be written upon my forehead, needs must it come to pass, and neither endeavour nor thought-taking nor precaution will deliver me therefrom; [but it will surely happen] even as happened to King Ibrahim and his son." Quoth the king, "Who was King Ibrahim and who was his son?" And the youth said, "O king,



Story of King Ibrahim and His Son.

THERE was once a king of the kings, by name Ibrahim, to whom the kings abased themselves and did obedience; but he had no son and was straitened of breast because of this, fearing lest the kingship go forth of his hand. He ceased not vehemently to desire a son and to buy slave-girls and lie with them, till one of them conceived, whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and gave gifts and largesse galore. When the girl's months were accomplished and the season of her delivery drew near, the king summoned the astrologers and they watched for the hour of her child-bearing and raised astrolabes [towards the sun] and took strait note of the time. The damsel gave birth to a male child, whereat the king rejoiced with an exceeding joy, and the people heartened each other with the glad news of this.

Then the astrologers made their calculations and looked into his nativity and his ascendant, whereupon their colour changed and they were confounded. Quoth the king to them, 'Acquaint me with his horoscope and ye shall have assurance and fear ye not of aught' 'O king,' answered they, 'this child's nativity denotes that, in the seventh year of his age, there is to be feared for him from a lion, which will attack him; and if he be saved from the lion, there will betide an affair yet sorer and more grievous.' 'What is that?' asked the king; and they said, 'We will not speak, except the king command us thereto and give us assurance from [that which we] fear.' Quoth the king, 'God assure you!' And they said, 'If he be saved from the lion, the king's destruction will be at his hand.' When the king heard this, his colour changed and his breast was straitened; but he said in himself, 'I will be watchful and do my endeavour and suffer not the lion to eat him. It cannot be that he will kill me, and indeed the astrologers lied.'

Then he caused rear him among the nurses and matrons; but withal he ceased not to ponder the saying of the astrologers and indeed his life was troubled. So he betook himself to the top of a high mountain and dug there a deep pit and made in it many dwelling-places and closets and filled it with all that was needful of victual and raiment and what not else and made in it conduits of water from the mountain and lodged the boy therein, with a nurse who should rear him. Moreover, at the first of each month he used to go to the mountain and stand at the mouth of the pit and let down a rope he had with him and draw up the boy to him and strain him to his bosom and kiss him and play with him awhile, after which he would let him down again into the pit to his place and return; and he used to count the days till the seven years should pass by.

When came the time [of the accomplishment] of the foreordered fate and the fortune graven on the forehead and there abode for the boy but ten days till the seven years should be complete, there came to the mountain hunters hunting wild beasts and seeing a lion, gave chase to him. He fled from them and seeking refuge in the mountain, fell into the pit in its midst. The nurse saw him forthright and fled from him into one of the closets; whereupon the lion made for the boy and seizing upon him, tore his shoulder, after which he sought the closet wherein was the nurse and falling upon her, devoured her, whilst the boy abode cast down in a swoon. Meanwhile, when the hunters saw that the lion had fallen into the pit, they came to the mouth

thereof and heard the shrieking of the boy and the woman; and after awhile the cries ceased, whereby they knew that the lion had made an end of them.

Presently, as they stood by the mouth of the pit, the lion came scrambling up the sides and would have issued forth; but, as often as he showed his head, they pelted him with stones, till they beat him down and he fell; whereupon one of the hunters descended into the pit and despatched him and saw the boy wounded; after which he went to the cabinet, where he found the woman dead, and indeed the lion had eaten his fill of her. Then he noted that which was therein of clothes and what not else, and advising his fellows thereof, fell to passing the stuff up to them. Moreover, he took up the boy and bringing him forth of the pit, carried him to their dwelling-place, where they dressed his wounds and he grew up with them, but acquainted them not with his affair; and indeed, when they questioned him, he knew not what he should say, for that he was little, when they let him down into the pit. The hunters marvelled at his speech and loved him with an exceeding love and one of them took him to son and abode rearing him with him [and instructing him] in hunting and riding on horseback, till he attained the age of twelve and became a champion, going forth with the folk to the chase and to the stopping of the way.

It chanced one day that they sallied forth to stop the way and fell in upon a caravan in the night; but the people of the caravan were on their guard; so they joined battle with the robbers and overcame them and slew them and the boy fell wounded and abode cast down in that place till the morrow, when he opened his eyes and finding his comrades slain, lifted himself up and rose to walk in the way. Presently, there met him a man, a treasure-seeker, and said to him, 'Whither goest thou, O youth?' So he told him what had betided him and the other said, 'Be of good heart, for that [the season of] thy fair fortune is come and God bringeth thee joy and solace. I am one who am in quest of a hidden treasure, wherein is vast wealth. So come with me, that thou mayst help me, and I will give thee wealth, wherewith thou shalt provide thyself thy life long.' Then he carried the youth to his dwelling and dressed his wound, and he abode with him some days, till he was rested; when he took him and two beasts and all that he needed, and they fared on till they came to a precipitous mountain.

Here the treasure-seeker brought out a book and reading therein, dug in the crest of the mountain five cubits deep, whereupon there appeared to him a stone. He pulled it up and behold, it was a trap-door covering the mouth of a pit. So he waited till the [foul] air was come forth from the midst of the pit, when he bound a rope about the boy's middle and let him down to the bottom, and with him a lighted flambeau. The boy looked and beheld, at the upper end of the pit, wealth galore; so the treasure-seeker let down a rope and a basket and the boy fell to filling and the man to drawing up, till the latter had gotten his sufficiency, when he loaded his beasts and did his occasion, whilst the boy looked for him to let down to him the rope and draw him up; but he rolled a great stone to the mouth of the pit and went away.

When the boy saw what the treasure-seeker had done with him he committed his affair to God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) and abode perplexed concerning his case and said, 'How bitter is this death!' For that indeed the world was darkened on him and the pit was blinded to him. So he fell a-weeping and saying, 'I was delivered from the lion and the thieves and now is my death [appointed to be] in

this pit, where I shall die lingeringly.' And he abode confounded and looked for nothing but death. As he pondered [his affair], behold, he heard a sound of water running with a mighty noise; so he arose and walked in the pit, following after the sound, till he came to a corner and heard the mighty running of water. So he laid his ear to the sound of the current and hearing it a great strength, said in himself, 'This is the running of a mighty water and needs must I die in this place, be it to-day or to-morrow; so I will cast myself into the water and not die a lingering death in this pit.'

Then he braced up his courage and gathering his skirts about him, threw himself into the water, and it bore him along with an exceeding might and carrying him under the earth, stayed not till it brought him out into a deep valley, wherethrough ran a great river, that welled up from under the earth. When he found himself on the surface of the earth, he abode perplexed and dazed all that day; after which he came to himself and rising, fared on along the valley, till he came to an inhabited land and a great village in the dominions of the king his father. So he entered the village and foregathered with its inhabitants, who questioned him of his case; whereupon he related to them his history and they marvelled at him, how God had delivered him from all this. Then he took up his abode with them and they loved him exceedingly.

To return to the king his father. When he went to the pit, as of his wont, and called the nurse, she returned him no answer, whereat his breast was straitened and he let down a man who [found the nurse dead and the boy gone and] acquainted the king therewith; which when he heard, he buffeted his head and wept passing sore and descended into the midst of the pit, so he might see how the case stood. There he found the nurse slain and the lion dead, but saw not the boy; so he [returned and] acquainted the astrologers with the verification of their words, and they said, 'O king, the lion hath eaten him; destiny hath been accomplished upon him and thou art delivered from his hand; for, had he been saved from the lion, by Allah, we had feared for thee from him, for that the king's destruction should have been at his hand.' So the king left [sorrowing for] this and the days passed by and the affair was forgotten.

Meanwhile, the boy [grew up and] abode with the people of the village, and when God willed the accomplishment of His ordinance, the which endeavour availeth not to avert, he went forth with a company of the villagers, to stop the way. The folk complained of them to the king, who sallied out with a company of his men and surrounded the highwaymen and the boy with them, whereupon the latter drew forth an arrow and launched it at them, and it smote the king in his vitals and wounded him. So they carried him to his house, after they had laid hands upon the youth and his companions and brought them before the king, saying, 'What biddest thou that we do with them?' Quoth he, 'I am presently in concern for myself; so bring me the astrologers.' Accordingly, they brought them before him and He said to them, 'Ye told me that my death should be by slaying at the hand of my son: how, then, befalleth it that I have gotten my death-wound on this wise of yonder thieves?' The astrologers marvelled and said to him, 'O king, it is not impossible to the lore of the stars, together with the fore-ordinance of God, that he who hath smitten thee should be thy son.'

When Ibrahim heard this, he let fetch the thieves and said to them, 'Tell me truly, which of you shot the arrow that wounded me.' Quoth they, 'It was this youth that is

with us.' Whereupon the king fell to looking upon him and said to him, 'O youth, acquaint me with thy case and tell me who was thy father and thou shalt have assurance from God.' 'O my lord,' answered the youth, 'I know no father; as for me, my father lodged me in a pit [when I was little], with a nurse to rear me, and one day, there fell in upon us a lion, which tore my shoulder, then left me and occupied himself with the nurse and rent her in pieces; and God vouchsafed me one who brought me forth of the pit.' Then he related to him all that had befallen him, first and last; which when Ibrahim heard, he cried out and said, 'By Allah, this is my very son!' And he said to him, 'Uncover thy shoulder.' So he uncovered it and behold, it was scarred.

Then the king assembled his nobles and commons and the astrologers and said to them, 'Know that what God hath graven upon the forehead, be it fair fortune or calamity, none may avail to efface, and all that is decreed unto a man he must needs abide. Indeed, this my caretaking and my endeavour profited me nought, for that which God decreed unto my son, he hath abidden and that which He decreed unto me hath betided me. Nevertheless, I praise God and thank Him for that this was at my son's hand and not at the hand of another, and praised be He for that the kingship is come to my son!' And he strained the youth to his breast and embraced him and kissed him, saying, 'O my son, this matter was on such a wise, and of my care and watchfulness over thee from destiny, I lodged thee in that pit; but caretaking availed not.' Then he took the crown of the kingship and set it on his son's head and caused the folk and the people swear fealty to him and commended the subjects to his care and enjoined him to justice and equity. And he took leave of him that night and died and his son reigned in his stead.

On like wise, O king," continued the young treasurer, "is it with thee. If God have written aught on my forehead, needs must it befall me and my speech to the king shall not profit me, no, nor my adducing to him of [illustrative] instances, against the fore-ordinance of God. So with these viziers, for all their eagerness and endeavour for my destruction, this shall not profit them; for, if God [be minded to] save me, He will give me the victory over them."

When the king heard these words, he abode in perplexity and said, "Restore him to the prison till the morrow, so we may look into his affair, for the day draweth to an end and I mean to put him to death on exemplary wise, and [to-morrow] we will do with him that which he meriteth."

The Tenth Day.

Of The Appointed Term, Which, if It Be Advanced, May Not be Deferred and if it be Deferred, May Not be Advanced.

WHEN it was the tenth day, (now this day was called El Mihrjan and it was the day of the coming in of the folk, gentle and simple, to the king, so they might give him joy and salute him and go forth), the counsel of the viziers fell of accord that they should speak with a company of the notables of the city [and urge them to demand of the king that he should presently put the youth to death]. So they said to them, "When ye go in to-day to the king and salute him, do ye say to him, 'O king, (to God be the praise!) thou art praiseworthy of policy and governance, just to all thy subjects; but this youth, to whom thou hast been bountiful, yet hath he reverted to his base origin and wrought this foul deed, what is thy purpose in his continuance [on life]? Indeed, thou hast prisoned him in thy house, and every day thou hearest his speech and thou knowest not what the folk say.'" And they answered with "Hearkening and obedience."

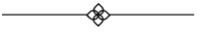
So, when they entered with the folk and had prostrated themselves before the king and given him joy and he had raised their rank, [they sat down]. Now it was the custom of the folk to salute and go forth, so, when they sat down, the king knew that they had a word that they would fain say. So he turned to them and said, "Ask your need." And the viziers also were present. Accordingly, they bespoke him with all that these latter had taught them and the viziers also spoke with them; and Azadbekht said to them, "O folk, I know that this your speech, there is no doubt of it, proceedeth from love and loyal counsel to me, and ye know that, were I minded to slay half these folk, I could avail to put them to death and this would not be difficult to me; so how shall I not slay this youth and he in my power and under the grip of my hand? Indeed, his crime is manifest and he hath incurred pain of death and I have only deferred his slaughter by reason of the greatness of the offence; for, if I do this with him and my proof against him be strengthened, my heart is healed and the heart of the folk; and if I slay him not to-day, his slaughter shall not escape me to-morrow."

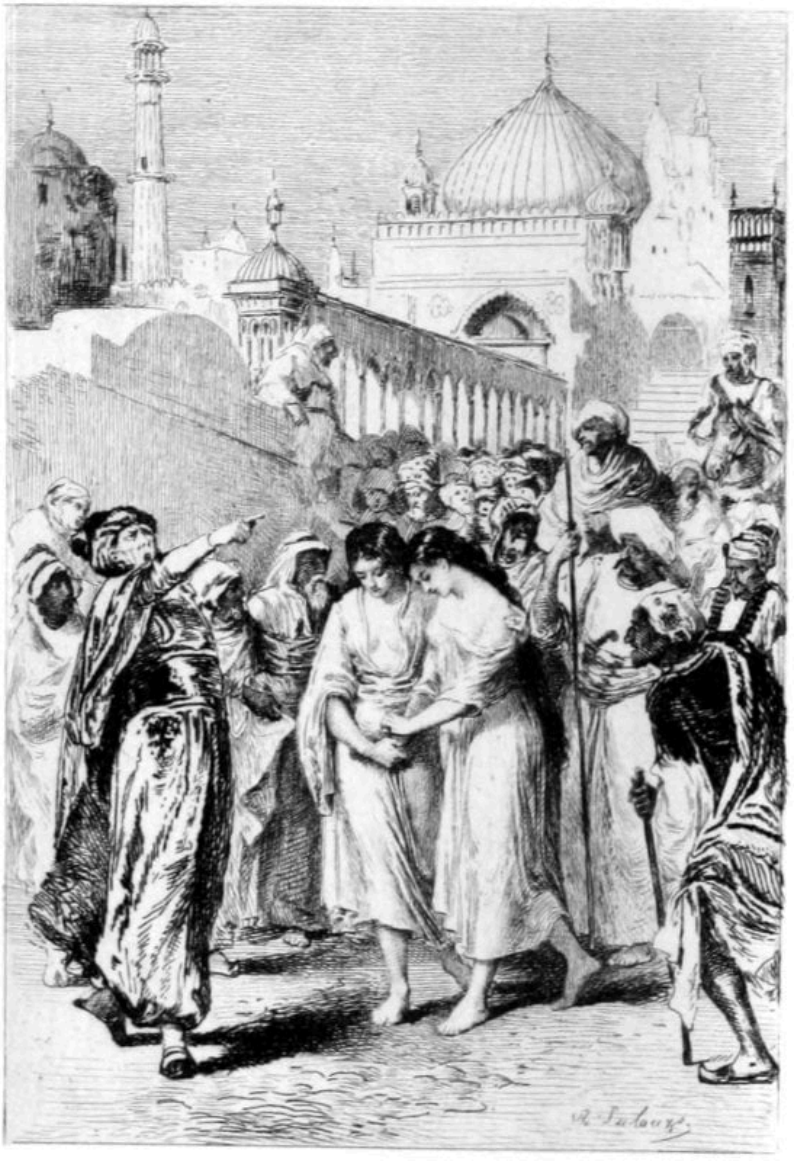
Then he bade fetch the youth and when he was present before him, he prostrated himself to him and prayed for him; whereupon quoth the king to him, "Out on thee! How long shall the folk upbraid me on thine account and blame me for delaying thy slaughter? Even the people of my city blame me because of thee, so that I am grown a talking-stock among them, and indeed they come in to me and upbraid me [and urge me] to put thee to death. How long shall I delay this? Indeed, this very day I mean to shed thy blood and rid the folk of thy prate."

"O king," answered the youth, "if there have betided thee talk because of me, by Allah, by Allah the Great, those who have brought on thee this talk from the folk are these wicked viziers, who devise with the folk and tell them foul things and evil concerning the king's house; but I trust in God that He will cause their malice to revert upon their heads. As for the king's menace of me with slaughter, I am in the grasp of his hand; so let not the king occupy his mind with my slaughter, for that I am like unto the sparrow in the hand of the fowler; if he will, he slaughtereth him, and if he

will, he looseth him. As for the delaying of my slaughter, it [proceedeth] not [from] the king, but from Him in whose hand is my life; for, by Allah, O king, if God willed my slaughter, thou couldst not avail to postpone it, no, not for a single hour. Indeed, man availeth not to fend off evil from himself, even as it was with the son of King Suleiman Shah, whose anxiety and carefulness for the accomplishment of his desire of the newborn child [availed him nothing], for his last hour was deferred how many a time! and God saved him until he had accomplished his [foreordained] period and had fulfilled [the destined term of] his life."

"Out on thee!" exclaimed the king. "How great is thy craft and thy talk! Tell me, what was their story." And the youth said, "O king,





Story of King Suleiman Shah and His Sons.

THERE was once a king named Suleiman Shah, who was goodly of polity and judgment, and he had a brother who died and left a daughter. So Suleiman Shah reared her on the goodliest wise and the girl grew up, endowed with reason and perfection, nor was there in her time a fairer than she. Now the king had two sons, one of whom he had appointed in himself that he would marry her withal, and the other purposed in himself that he would take her. The elder son's name was Belehwan and that of the younger Melik Shah, and the girl was called Shah Khatoun.

One day, King Suleiman Shah went in to his brother's daughter and kissing her head, said to her, 'Thou art my daughter and dearer to me than a child, for the love of thy father deceased; wherefore I am minded to marry thee to one of my sons and appoint him my heir apparent, so he may be king after me. Look, then, which thou wilt have of my sons, for that thou hast been reared with them and knowest them.' The damsel arose and kissing his hand, said to him, 'O my lord, I am thine handmaid and thou art the ruler over me; so whatsoever pleaseth thee, do, for that thy wish is higher and more honourable and nobler [than mine] and if thou wouldst have me serve thee, [as a handmaid], the rest of my life, it were liefer to me than any [husband].'

The king approved her speech and bestowed on her a dress of honour and gave her magnificent gifts; after which, for that his choice had fallen upon his younger son, Melik Shah, he married her with him and made him his heir apparent and caused the folk swear fealty to him. When this came to the knowledge of his brother Belehwan and he was ware that his younger brother had been preferred over him, his breast was straitened and the affair was grievous to him and envy entered into him and rancour; but he concealed this in his heart, whilst fire raged therein because of the damsel and the kingship.

Meanwhile Shah Khatoun went in to the king's son and conceived by him and bore a son, as he were the resplendent moon. When Belehwan saw this that had betided his brother, jealousy and envy overcame him; so he went in one night to his father's house and coming to his brother's lodging, saw the nurse sleeping at the chamber-door, with the cradle before her and therein his brother's child asleep. Belehwan stood by him and fell to looking upon his face, the radiance whereof was as that of the moon, and Satan insinuated himself into his heart, so that he bethought himself and said, 'Why is not this child mine? Indeed, I am worthier of him than my brother, [yea], and of the damsel and the kingship.' Then envy got the better of him and anger spurred him, so that he took out a knife and setting it to the child's gullet, cut his throat and would have severed his windpipe.

So he left him for dead and entering his brother's chamber, saw him asleep, with the damsel by his side, and thought to slay her, but said in himself, 'I will leave the damsel for myself.' Then he went up to his brother and cutting his throat, severed his head from his body, after which he left him and went away. Therewithal the world was straitened upon him and his life was a light matter to him and he sought his father Suleiman Shah's lodging, that he might slay him, but could not win to him. So he went

forth from the palace and hid himself in the city till the morrow, when he repaired to one of his father's strengths and fortified himself therein.

Meanwhile, the nurse awoke, that she might give the child suck, and seeing the bed running with blood, cried out; whereupon the sleepers and the king awoke and making for the place, found the child with his throat cut and the cradle running over with blood and his father slain and dead in his sleeping chamber. So they examined the child and found life in him and his windpipe whole and sewed up the place of the wound. Then the king sought his son Belehwan, but found him not and saw that he had fled; whereby he knew that it was he who had done this deed, and this was grievous to the king and to the people of his realm and to the lady Shah Katoun. So the king laid out his son Melik Shah and buried him and made him a mighty funeral and they mourned passing sore; after which he addressed himself to the rearing of the infant

As for Belehwan, when he fled and fortified himself, his power waxed amain and there remained for him but to make war upon his father, who had cast his affection upon the child and used to rear him on his knees and supplicate God the Most High that he might live, so he might commit the commandment to him. When he came to five years of age, the king mounted him on horseback and the people of the city rejoiced in him and invoked on him length of life, so he might take his father's leavings and [heal] the heart of his grandfather.

Meanwhile, Belehwan the froward addressed himself to pay court to Caesar, King of the Greeks, and seek help of him in making war upon his father, and he inclined unto him and gave him a numerous army. His father the king heard of this and sent to Caesar, saying, 'O king of illustrious might, succour not an evil-doer. This is my son and he hath done thus and thus and cut his brother's throat and that of his brother's son in the cradle.' But he told not the King of the Greeks that the child [had recovered and] was alive. When Caesar heard [the truth] of the matter, it was grievous to him and he sent back to Suleiman Shah, saying, 'If it be thy will, O king, I will cut off his head and send it to thee.' But he made answer, saying, 'I reck not of him: the reward of his deed and his crimes shall surely overtake him, if not to-day, then to-morrow.' And from that day he continued to correspond with Caesar and to exchange letters and presents with him.

Now the king of the Greeks heard tell of the damsel and of the beauty and grace wherewith she was gifted, wherefore his heart clave to her and he sent to seek her in marriage of Suleiman Shah, who could not refuse him. So he arose and going in to Shah Khatoun, said to her, 'O my daughter, the king of the Greeks hath sent to me to seek thee in marriage. What sayst thou?' She wept and answered, saying, 'O king, how canst thou find it in thy heart to bespeak me thus? Abideth there husband for me, after the son of my uncle?' 'O my daughter,' rejoined the king, 'it is indeed as thou sayest; but let us look to the issues of affairs. Needs must I take account of death, for that I am an old man and fear not but for thee and for thy little son; and indeed I have written to the king of the Greeks and others of the kings and said, "His uncle slew him," and said not that he [hath recovered and] is living, but concealed his affair. Now hath the king of the Greeks sent to demand thee in marriage, and this is no thing to be refused and fain would we have our back strengthened with him." And she was silent and spoke not.

So King Suleiman Shah made answer unto Caesar with 'Hearkening and obedience.' Then he arose and despatched her to him, and Cassar went in to her and found her overpassing the description wherewithal they had described her to him; wherefore he loved her with an exceeding love and preferred her over all his women and his love for Suleiman Shah was magnified; but Shah Khatoun's heart still clave to her son and she could say nought. As for Suleiman Shah's rebellious son, Belehwan, when he saw that Shah Khatoun had married the king of the Greeks, this was grievous to him and he despaired of her. Meanwhile, his father Suleiman Shah kept strait watch over the child and cherished him and named him Melik Shah, after the name of his father. When he reached the age of ten, he made the folk swear fealty to him and appointed him his heir apparent, and after some days, [the hour of] the old king's admission [to the mercy of God] drew near and he died.

Now a party of the troops had banded themselves together for Belehwan; so they sent to him and bringing him privily, went in to the little Melik Shah and seized him and seated his uncle Belehwan on the throne of the kingship. Then they proclaimed him king and did homage to him all, saying, 'Verily, we desire thee and deliver to thee the throne of the kingship; but we wish of thee that thou slay not thy brother's son, for that on our consciences are the oaths we swore to his father and grandfather and the covenants we made with them.' So Belehwan granted them this and imprisoned the boy in an underground dungeon and straitened him. Presently, the heavy news reached his mother and this was grievous to her; but she could not speak and committed her affair to God the Most High, daring not name this to King Caesar her husband, lest she should make her uncle King Suleiman Shah a liar.

So Belehwan the froward abode king in his father's room and his affairs prospered, what while the young Melik Shah lay in the underground dungeon four full-told years, till his charms faded and his favour changed. When God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) willed to relieve him and bring him forth of the prison, Belehwan sat one day with his chief officers and the grandees of his state and discoursed with them of the story of King Suleiman Shah and what was in his heart. Now there were present certain viziers, men of worth, and they said to him, 'O king, verily God hath been bountiful unto thee and hath brought thee to thy wish, so that thou art become king in thy father's stead and hast gotten thee that which thou soughtest. But, as for this boy, there is no guilt in him, for that, from the day of his coming into the world, he hath seen neither ease nor joyance, and indeed his favour is faded and his charms changed [with long prison]. What is his offence that he should merit this punishment? Indeed, it is others than he who were to blame, and God hath given thee the victory over them, and there is no fault in this poor wight.' Quoth Belehwan, 'Indeed, it is as ye say; but I am fearful of his craft and am not assured from his mischief; belike the most part of the folk will incline unto him.' 'O king,' answered they, 'what is this boy and what power hath he? If thou fear him, send him to one of the frontiers.' And Belehwan said, 'Ye say sooth: we will send him to be captain over such an one of the marches.'

Now over against the place in question was a host of enemies, hard of heart, and in this he purposed the youth's slaughter. So he bade bring him forth of the underground dungeon and caused him draw near to him and saw his case. Then he

bestowed on him a dress of honour and the folk rejoiced in this. Moreover, he tied him an ensign and giving him a numerous army, despatched him to the region aforesaid, whither all who went were still slain or made prisoners. So Melik Shah betook himself thither with his army and when it was one of the days, behold, the enemy fell in upon them in the night; whereupon some of his men fled and the rest the enemy took; and they took Melik Shah also and cast him into an underground dungeon, with a company of his men. There he abode a whole year in evil plight, whilst his fellows mourned over his beauty and grace.

Now it was the enemy's wont, at every year's end, to bring forth their prisoners and cast them down from the top of the citadel to the bottom. So they brought them forth, at the end of the year, and cast them down, and Melik Shah with them. However, he fell upon the [other] men and the earth touched him not, for his term was [God-]guarded. Now those that were cast down there were slain and their bodies ceased not to lie there till the wild beasts ate them and the winds dispersed them. Melik Shah abode cast down in his place, aswoon, all that day and night, and when he recovered and found himself whole, he thanked God the Most High for his safety [and rising, fared on at a venture]. He gave not over walking, unknowing whither he went and feeding upon the leaves of the trees; and by day he hid himself whereas he might and fared on all his night at hazard; and thus he did some days, till he came to an inhabited land and seeing folk there, accosted them and acquainted them with his case, giving them to know that he had been imprisoned in the fortress and that they had cast him down, but God the Most High had delivered him and brought him off alive.

The folk took compassion on him and gave him to eat and drink and he abode with them awhile. Then he questioned them of the way that led to the kingdom of his uncle Belehwan, but told them not that he was his uncle. So they taught him the way and he ceased not to go barefoot, till he drew near his uncle's capital, and he naked and hungry, and indeed his body was wasted and his colour changed. He sat down at the gate of the city, and presently up came a company of King Belehwan's chief officers, who were out a-hunting and wished to water their horses. So they lighted down to rest and the youth accosted them, saying, 'I will ask you of somewhat, wherewith do ye acquaint me.' Quoth they, 'Ask what thou wilt.' And he said, 'Is King Belehwan well?' They laughed at him and answered, 'What a fool art thou, O youth! Thou art a stranger and a beggar, and what concern hast thou with the king's health?' Quoth he, 'Indeed, he is my uncle;' whereat they marvelled and said, 'It was one question and now it is become two.' Then said they to him, 'O youth, it is as thou wert mad. Whence pretendest thou to kinship with the king? Indeed, we know not that he hath aught of kinsfolk, except a brother's son, who was prisoned with him, and he despatched him to wage war upon the infidels, so that they slew him.' 'I am he,' answered Melik Shah, 'and they slew me not, but there betided me this and that.'

They knew him forthright and rising to him, kissed his hands and rejoiced in him and said to him, 'O our lord, in good sooth, thou art a king and the son of a king, and we desire thee nought but good and beseech [God to grant] thee continuance. Consider how God hath rescued thee from this thy wicked uncle, who sent thee to a place whence none came ever off alive, purposing not in this but thy destruction; and indeed thou fellest into [peril of] death and God delivered thee therefrom. So how wilt

thou return and cast thyself again into thine enemy's hand? By Allah, save thyself and return not to him again. Belike thou shall abide upon the face of the earth till it please God the Most High [to vouchsafe thee relief]; but, if thou fall again into his hand, he will not suffer thee live a single hour.'

The prince thanked them and said to them, 'God requite you with all good, for indeed ye give me loyal counsel; but whither would ye have me go?' Quoth they, 'Get thee to the land of the Greeks, the abiding-place of thy mother.' And he said, 'My grandfather Suleiman Shah, when the King of the Greeks wrote to him, demanding my mother in marriage, concealed my affair and hid my secret; [and she hath done the like,] and I cannot make her a liar.' 'Thou sayst sooth,' rejoined they; 'but we desire thine advantage, and even if thou tookest service with the folk, it were a means of thy continuance [on life].' Then each of them brought out to him money and gave to him and clad him and fed him and fared on with him a parasang's distance till they brought him far from the city, and giving him to know that he was safe, departed from him, whilst he fared on till he came forth of the dominions of his uncle and entered those [of the king] of the Greeks. Then he entered a village and taking up his abode therein, betook himself to serving one there in ploughing and sowing and the like.

As for his mother, Shah Khatoun, great was her longing for her son and she [still] thought of him and news of him was cut off from her, wherefore her life was troubled and she forswore sleep and could not make mention of him before King Caesar her husband. Now she had an eunuch who had come with her from the court of her uncle King Suleiman Shah, and he was intelligent, quickwitted, a man of good counsel. So she took him apart one day and said to him, 'Thou hast been my servant from my childhood to this day; canst thou not therefore avail to get me news of my son, for that I cannot speak of his matter?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'this is an affair that thou hast concealed from the first, and were thy son here, it would not be possible for thee to harbour him, lest thine honour fall into suspicion with the king; for they would never credit thee, since the news hath been spread abroad that thy son was slain by his uncle.' Quoth she, 'The case is even as thou sayst and thou speakest truly; but, provided I know that my son is alive, let him be in these parts pasturing sheep and let me not see him nor he me.' And he said to her, 'How shall we contrive in this affair?' 'Here are my treasures and my wealth,' answered she. 'Take all thou wilt and bring me my son or else news of him.'

Then they agreed upon a device between them, to wit, that they should feign an occasion in their own country, under pretext that she had there wealth buried from the time of her husband Melik Shah and that none knew of it but this eunuch who was with her, wherefore it behoved that he should go and fetch it. So she acquainted the king her husband with this and sought of him leave for the eunuch to go: and the king granted him permission for the journey and charged him cast about for a device, lest any get wind of him. Accordingly, the eunuch disguised himself as a merchant and repairing to Belehwan's city, began to enquire concerning the youth's case; whereupon they told him that he had been prisoned in an underground dungeon and that his uncle had released him and dispatched him to such a place, where they had slain him. When the eunuch heard this, it was grievous to him and his breast was straitened and he knew not what he should do.

It chanced one day that one of the horsemen, who had fallen in with the young Melik Shah by the water and clad him and given him spending-money, saw the eunuch in the city, disguised as a merchant, and recognizing him, questioned him of his case and of [the reason of] his coming. Quoth he, 'I come to sell merchandise.' And the horseman said, 'I will tell thee somewhat, if thou canst keep it secret.' 'It is well,' answered the eunuch; 'what is it?' And the other said, 'We met the king's son Melik Shah, I and certain of the Arabs who were with me, and saw him by such a water and gave him spending-money and sent him towards the land of the Greeks, near his mother, for that we feared for him, lest his uncle Belehwan should kill him.' Then he told him all that had passed between them, whereupon the eunuch's countenance changed and he said to the cavalier, 'Assurance!' 'Thou shalt have assurance,' answered the other, 'though thou come in quest of him.' And the eunuch rejoined, saying, 'Truly, that is my errand, for there abideth no repose for his mother, lying down or rising up, and she hath sent me to seek news of him.' Quoth the cavalier, 'Go in safety, for he is in a [certain] part of the land of the Greeks, even as I said to thee.'

The eunuch thanked him and blessed him and mounting, returned upon his way, following the trace, whilst the cavalier rode with him to a certain road, when he said to him, 'This is where we left him.' Then he took leave of him and returned to his own city, whilst the eunuch fared on along the road, enquiring of the youth in every village he entered by the description which the cavalier had given him, and he ceased not to do thus till he came to the village where the young Melik Shah was. So he entered and lighting down therein, made enquiry after the prince, but none gave him news of him; whereat he abode perplexed concerning his affair and addressed himself to depart. Accordingly he mounted his horse [and set out homeward]; but, as he passed through the village, he saw a cow bound with a rope and a youth asleep by her side, with the end of the halter in his hand; so he looked at him and passed on and took no heed of him in his heart; but presently he stopped and said in himself; 'If he of whom I am in quest be come to the like [of the condition] of yonder sleeping youth, by whom I passed but now, how shall I know him? Alas, the length of my travail and weariness! How shall I go about in quest of a wight whom I know not and whom, if I saw him face to face, I should not know?'

Then he turned back, pondering upon that sleeping youth, and coming to him, as he slept, lighted down from his horse and sat down by him. He fixed his eyes upon his face and considered him awhile and said in himself, 'For aught I know, this youth may be Melik Shah.' And he fell a-hemming and saying, 'Harkye, O youth!' Whereupon the sleeper awoke and sat up; and the eunuch said to him, 'Who is thy father in this village and where is thy dwelling?' The youth sighed and answered, 'I am a stranger;' and the eunuch said, 'From what land art thou and who is thy father?' Quoth the other, 'I am from such a land,' and the eunuch ceased not to question him and he to answer him, till he was certified of him and knew him. So he rose and embraced him and kissed him and wept over his case. Moreover, he told him that he was going about in quest of him and informed him that he was come privily from the king his mother's husband and that his mother would be content [to know] that he was alive and well, though she saw him not.

Then he re-entered the village and buying the prince a horse, mounted him thereon and they ceased not going, till they came to the frontier of their own country, where there fell robbers upon them by the way and took all that was with them and pinioned them; after which they cast them into a pit hard by the road and went away and left them to die there, and indeed they had cast many folk into that pit and they had died.

The eunuch fell a-weeping in the pit and the youth said to him, 'What is this weeping and what shall it profit here?' Quoth the eunuch, 'I weep not for fear of death, but of pity for thee and the sorriness of thy case and because of thy mother's heart and for that which thou hast suffered of horrors and that thy death should be this abject death, after the endurance of all manner stresses.' But the youth said, 'That which hath betided me was forewrit to me and that which is written none hath power to efface; and if my term be advanced, none may avail to defer it.' Then they passed that night and the following day and the next night and the next day [in the pit], till they were weak with hunger and came near upon death and could but groan feebly.

Now it befell, by the ordinance of God the Most High and His providence, that Caesar, king of the Greeks, the husband of Melik Shah's mother Shah Khatoun, [went forth to the chase that day]. He started a head of game, he and his company, and chased it, till they came up with it by that pit, whereupon one of them lighted down from his horse, to slaughter it, hard by the mouth of the pit. He heard a sound of low moaning from the bottom of the pit} so he arose and mounting his horse, waited till the troops were assembled. Then he acquainted the king with this and he bade one of his servants [descend into the pit]. So the man descended and brought out the youth [and the eunuch], aswoon.

They cut their bonds and poured wine into their gullets, till they came to themselves, when the king looked at the eunuch and recognizing him, said, 'Harkye, such an one!' 'Yes, O my lord the king,' replied the man and prostrated himself to him; whereat the king marvelled with an exceeding wonder and said to him, 'How earnest thou to this place and what hath befallen thee?" Quoth the eunuch, 'I went and took out the treasure and brought it hither; but the [evil] eye was behind me and I unknowing. So the thieves took us alone here and seized the money and cast us into this pit, so we might die of hunger, even as they had done with other than we; but God the Most High sent thee, in pity to us.'

The king marvelled, he and his company, and praised God the Most High for that he had come thither; after which he turned to the eunuch and said to him, 'What is this youth thou hast with thee?' 'O king,' answered he, 'this is the son of a nurse who belonged to us and we left him little. I saw him to-day and his mother said to me, 'Take him with thee.' So I brought him with me, that he might be a servant to the king, for that he is an adroit and quickwitted youth.' Then the king fared on, he and his company, and the eunuch and the youth with them, what while he questioned the former of Belehwan and his dealing with his subjects, and he answered, saying, 'As thy head liveth, O king, the folk with him are in sore straits and not one of them desireth to look on him, gentle or simple.'

[When the king returned to his palace,] he went in to his wife Shah Khatoun and said to her, 'I give thee the glad news of thine eunuch's return.' And he told her what had betided and of the youth whom he had brought with him. When she heard this, her wits fled and she would have cried out, but her reason restrained her, and the king said to her, 'What is this? Art thou overcome with grief for [the loss of] the treasure or [for that which hath befallen] the eunuch?' 'Nay, as thy head liveth, O king!' answered she. 'But women are fainthearted.' Then came the servant and going in to her, told her all that had befallen him and acquainted her with her son's case also and with that which he had suffered of stresses and how his uncle had exposed him to slaughter and he had been taken prisoner and they had cast him into the pit and hurled him from the top of the citadel and how God had delivered him from these perils, all of them; and he went on to tell her [all that had betided him], whilst she wept.

Then said she to him, 'When the king saw him and questioned thee of him, what saidst thou to him?' And he answered, 'I said to him, "This is the son of a nurse who belonged to us. We left him little and he grew up; so I brought him, that he might be servant to the king,"' Quoth she, 'Thou didst well.' And she charged him to be instant in the service of the prince. As for the king, he redoubled in kindness to the eunuch and appointed the youth a liberal allowance and he abode going in to the king's house and coming out therefrom and standing in his service, and every day he grew in favour with him; whilst, as for Shah Khatoun, she used to stand a-watch for him at the windows and balconies and gaze upon him, and she on coals of fire on his account, yet could she not speak.

On this wise she abode a great while and indeed yearning for him came nigh to slay her; so she stood and watched for him one day at the door of her chamber and straining him to her bosom, kissed him on the cheek and breast. At this moment, out came the master of the king's household and seeing her embracing the youth, abode amazed. Then he asked to whom that chamber belonged and was answered, 'To Shah Khatoun, wife of the king,' whereupon he turned back, trembling as [one smitten by] a thunderbolt. The king saw him quaking and said to him, 'Out on thee! what is the matter?' 'O king,' answered he, 'what matter is graver than that which I see?' 'What seest thou?' asked the king and the officer said, 'I see that yonder youth, who came with the eunuch, he brought not with him but on account of Shah Khatoun; for that I passed but now by her chamber door, and she was standing, watching; [and when the youth came up,] she rose to him and clipped him and kissed him on his cheek.'

When the king heard this, he bowed [his head] in amazement and perplexity and sinking into a seat, clutched at his beard and shook it, till he came nigh to pluck it out. Then he arose forthright and laid hands on the youth and clapped him in prison. Moreover, he took the eunuch also and cast them both into an underground dungeon in his house, after which he went in to Shah Khatoun and said to her, 'Thou hast done well, by Allah, O daughter of nobles, O thou whom kings sought in marriage, for the excellence of thy repute and the goodliness of the reports of thee! How fair is thy semblance! May God curse her whose inward is the contrary of her outward, after the likeness of thy base favour, whose outward is comely and its inward foul, fair face and foul deeds! Verily, I mean to make of thee and of yonder good-for-nought an example among the folk, for that thou sentest not thine eunuch but of intent on his account, so

that he took him and brought him into my house and thou hast trampled my head with him; and this is none other than exceeding hardihood; but thou shall see what I will do with you.'

So saying, he spat in her face and went out from her; whilst Shah Khatoun made him no answer, knowing that, if she spoke at that time, he would not credit her speech. Then she humbled herself in supplication to God the Most High and said, 'O God the Great, Thou knowest the hidden things and the outward parts and the inward' If an advanced term be [appointed] to me, let it not be deferred, and if a deferred one, let it not be advanced!' On this wise she passed some days, whilst the king fell into perplexity and forswore meat and drink and sleep and abode knowing not what he should do and saying [in himself], 'If I kill the eunuch and the youth, my soul will not be solaced, for they are not to blame, seeing that she sent to fetch him, and my heart will not suffer me to slay them all three. But I will not be hasty in putting them to death, for that I fear repentance.' Then he left them, so he might look into the affair.

Now he had a nurse, a foster-mother, on whose knees he had been reared, and she was a woman of understanding and misdoubted of him, but dared not accost him [with questions]. So she went in to Shah Khatoun and finding her in yet sorrier plight than he, asked her what was to do; but she refused to answer. However, the nurse gave not over coaxing and questioning her, till she exacted of her an oath of secrecy. So the old woman swore to her that she would keep secret all that she should say to her, whereupon the queen related to her her history from first to last and told her that the youth was her son. With this the old woman prostrated herself before her and said to her, 'This is an easy matter.' But the queen answered, saying, 'By Allah, O my mother, I choose my destruction and that of my son rather than defend myself by avouching a thing whereof they will not credit me; for they will say, "She avoucheth this, but that she may fend off reproach from herself" And nought will avail me but patience.' The old woman was moved by her speech and her intelligence and said to her, 'Indeed, O my daughter, it is as thou sayst, and I hope in God that He will show forth the truth. Have patience and I will presently go in to the king and hear what he saith and contrive somewhat in this matter, if it be the will of God the Most High.'

Then she arose and going in to the king, found him with his head between his knees, and he lamenting. So she sat down by him awhile and bespoke him with soft words and said to him, 'Indeed, O my son, thou consumest mine entrails, for that these [many] days thou hast not mounted to horse, and thou lamentest and I know not what aileth thee.' 'O my mother,' answered he, '[this my chagrin] is due to yonder accursed woman, of whom I still deemed well and who hath done thus and thus.' Then he related to her the whole story from first to last, and she said to him, 'This thy concern is on account of a worthless woman.' Quoth he, 'I was but considering by what death I should slay them, so the folk may [be admonished by their fate and] repent.' And she said, 'O my son, beware of haste, for it engendereth repentance and the slaying of them will not escape [thee]. When thou art assured of this affair, do what thou wilt.' 'O my mother,' rejoined he; 'there needeth no assurance concerning him for whom she despatched her eunuch and he fetched him.'

But she said, 'There is a thing wherewith we will make her confess, and all that is in her heart shall be discovered to thee.' 'What is that?' asked the king, and she

answered, 'I will bring thee a hoopoe's heart, which, when she sleepeth, do thou lay upon her heart and question her of all thou wilt, and she will discover this unto thee and show forth the truth to thee." The king rejoiced in this and said to his nurse, 'Hasten and let none know of thee.' So she arose and going in to the queen, said to her, 'I have done thine occasion and it is on this wise. This night the king will come in to thee and do thou feign thyself asleep; and if he ask thee of aught, do thou answer him, as if in thy sleep.' The queen thanked her and the old woman went away and fetching the hoopoe's heart, gave it to the king.

Hardly was the night come, when he went in to his wife and found her lying back, [apparently] asleep; so he sat down by her side and laying the hoopoe's heart on her breast, waited awhile, so he might be certified that she slept. Then said he to her, 'Shah Khatoun, Shah Khatoun, is this my recompense from thee?' Quoth she, 'What offence have I committed?' And he, 'What offence can be greater than this? Thou sentest after yonder youth and broughtest him hither, on account of the desire of thy heart, so thou mightest do with him that for which thou lustedst.' 'I know not desire,' answered she. 'Verily, among thy servants are those who are comelier and handsomer than he; yet have I never desired one of them.' 'Why, then,' asked he, 'didst thou lay hold of him and kiss him!' And she said, 'This is my son and a piece of my heart; and of my longing and love for him, I could not contain myself, but sprang upon him and kissed him.' When the king heard this, he was perplexed and amazed and said to her, 'Hast thou a proof that this youth is thy son? Indeed, I have a letter from thine uncle King Suleiman Shah, [wherein he giveth me to know] that his unck Belehwan cut his throat.' 'Yes,' answered she, 'he did indeed cut his throat, but severed not the windpipe; so my uncle sewed up the wound and reared him, [and he lived,] for that his hour was not come.'

When the king heard this, he said, 'This proof sufficeth me,' and rising forthright in the night, let bring the youth and the eunuch. Then he examined the former's throat with a candle and saw [the scar where] it [had been] cut from ear to ear, and indeed the place had healed up and it was like unto a stretched-out thread. Therewithal the king fell down prostrate to God, [in thanksgiving to Him] for that He had delivered the prince from all these perils and from the stresses that he had undergone, and rejoiced with an exceeding joy for that he had wrought deliberately and had not made haste to slay him, in which case sore repentance had betided him. As for the youth," continued the young treasurer, "he was not saved but because his term was deferred, and on like wise, O king, is it with me; I too have a deferred term, which I shall attain, and a period which I shall accomplish, and I trust in God the Most High that He will give me the victory over these wicked viziers."

When the youth had made an end of his speech, the king said, "Carry him back to the prison;" and when they had done this, he turned to the viziers and said to them, "Yonder youth looseth his tongue upon you, but I know your affectionate solicitude for the welfare of my empire and your loyal counsel to me; so be of good heart, for all that ye counsel me I will do." When they heard tnese words, they rejoiced and each of them said his say Then said the king, "I have not deferred his slaughter but to the intent that the talk might be prolonged and that words might abound, and I desire [now] that ye sit up for him a gibbet without the town and make proclamation among the folk that

they assemble and take him and carry him in procession to the gibbet, with the crier crying before him and saying, 'This is the recompense of him whom the king delighted to favour and who hath betrayed him!'" The viziers rejoiced, when they heard this, and slept not that night, of their joy; and they made proclamation in the city and set up the gibbet.

The Eleventh Day.

Of the Speedy Relief of God.

WHEN it was the eleventh day, the viziers betook them early in the morning to the king's gate and said to him, "O king, the folk are assembled from the king's gate to the gibbet, so they may see [the execution of] the king's commandment on the youth." So the king bade fetch the prisoner and they brought him; whereupon the viziers turned to him and said to him, "O vile of origin, doth any hope of life remain with thee and lookest thou still for deliverance after this day?" "O wicked viziers," answered he, "shall a man of understanding renounce hope in God the Most High? Indeed, howsoever a man be oppressed, there cometh to him deliverance from the midst of stress and life from the midst of death, [as is shown by the case of] the prisoner and how God delivered him." "What is his story?" asked the king; and the youth answered, saying, "O king, they tell that

Story of the Prisoner and How God Gave Him Relief.

THERE was once a king of the kings, who had a high palace, overlooking a prison of his, and he used to hear in the night one saying, 'O Ever-present Deliverer, O Thou whose relief is nigh, relieve Thou me!' One day the king waxed wroth and said, "Yonder fool looketh for relief from [the consequences of] his crime. 'Then said he to his officers, 'Who is in yonder prison?' And they answered, 'Folk upon whom blood hath been found.' So the king bade bring the man in question before him and said to him, 'O fool, little of wit, how shall thou be delivered from this prison, seeing that thine offence is great?' Then he committed him to a company of his guards and said to them, 'Take this fellow and crucify him without the city.'

Now it was the night-season. So the soldiers carried him without the city, thinking to crucify him, when, behold, there came out upon them thieves and fell in on them with swords and [other] weapons. Thereupon the guards left him whom they purposed to put to death [and took to flight], whilst the man who was going to slaughter fled forth at a venture and plunging into the desert, knew not whither he went before he found himself in a thicket and there came out upon him a lion of frightful aspect, which snatched him up and set him under him. Then he went up to a tree and tearing it up by the roots, covered the man therewith and made off into the thicket, in quest of the lioness.

As for the man, he committed his affair to God the Most High, relying upon Him for deliverance, and said in himself, 'What is this affair?' Then he did away the leaves from himself and rising, saw great plenty of men's bones there, of those whom the lion had devoured. He looked again and saw a heap of gold lying alongside a girdle; whereat he marvelled and gathering up the gold in his skirts, went forth of the thicket and fled in affright at hazard, turning neither to the right nor to the left, in his fear of the lion; till he came to a village and cast himself down, as he were dead. He lay there till the day appeared and he was rested from his fatigue, when he arose and burying the gold, entered the village. Thus God gave him relief and he came by the gold."

Then said the king, "How long wilt thou beguile us with thy prate, O youth? But now the hour of thy slaughter is come." And he bade crucify him upon the gibbet. [So they carried him to the place of execution] and were about to hoist him up [upon the cross,] when, behold, the captain of the thieves, who had found him and reared him, came up at that moment and asked what was that assembly and [the cause of] the crowds gathered there. They told him that a servant of the king had committed a great crime and that he was about to put him to death. So the captain of the thieves pressed forward and looking upon the prisoner, knew him, whereupon he went up to him and embraced him and clipped him and fell to kissing him upon his mouth. Then said he, "This is a boy whom I found under such a mountain, wrapped in a gown of brocade, and I reared him and he fell to stopping the way with us. One day, we set upon a caravan, but they put us to flight and wounded some of us and took the boy and went their way. From that day to this I have gone round about the lands in quest of him, but have not lighted on news of him [till now;] and this is he."

When the king heard this, he was certified that the youth was his very son; so he cried out at the top of his voice and casting himself upon him, embraced him and wept and said, "Had I put thee to death, as was my intent, I should have died of regret for thee." Then he cut his bonds and taking his crown from his head, set it on that of his son, whereupon the people raised cries of joy, whilst the trumpets sounded and the drums beat and there befell a great rejoicing. They decorated the city and it was a glorious day; the very birds stayed their flight in the air, for the greatness of the clamour and the noise of the crying. The army and the folk carried the prince [to the palace] in magnificent procession, and the news came to his mother Behrjaur, who came forth and threw herself upon him. Moreover, the king bade open the prison and bring forth all who were therein, and they held high festival seven days and seven nights and rejoiced with a mighty rejoicing; whilst terror and silence and confusion and affright fell upon the viziers and they gave themselves up for lost.

After this the king sat, with his son by his side and the viziers sitting before him, and summoned his chief officers and the folk of the city. Then the prince turned to the viziers and said to them, "See, O wicked viziers, that which God hath done and the speedy [coming of] relief." But they answered not a word and the king said, "It sufficeth me that there is nothing alive but rejoiceth with me this day, even to the birds in the sky, but ye, your breasts are straitened. Indeed, this is the greatest of ill-will in you to me, and had I hearkened to you, my regret had been prolonged and I had died miserably of grief." "O my father," quoth the prince, "but for the fairness of thy thought and thy judgment and thy longanimity and deliberation in affairs, there had not bedded thee this great joyance. Hadst thou slain me in haste, repentance would have been sore on thee and long grief, and on this wise doth he who ensueth haste repent."

Then the king sent for the captain of the thieves and bestowed on him a dress of honour, commanding that all who loved the king should put off [their raiment and cast it] upon him. So there fell dresses of honour [and other presents] on him, till he was wearied with their much plenty, and Azadbekht invested him with the mastership of the police of his city. Then he bade set up other nine gibbets beside the first and said to his son, "Thou art guiltless, and yet these wicked viziers endeavoured for thy slaughter." "O my father," answered the prince, "I had no fault [in their eyes] but that I was a loyal counsellor to thee and still kept watch over thy good and withheld their hands from thy treasuries; wherefore they were jealous and envied me and plotted against me and sought to slay me," Quoth the king, "The time [of retribution] is at hand, O my son; but what deemest thou we should do with them in requital of that which they did with thee? For that they have endeavoured for thy slaughter and exposed thee to public ignominy and soiled my honour among the kings."

Then he turned to the viziers and said to them, "Out on ye! What liars ye are! What excuse is left you?" "O king," answered they, "there abideth no excuse for us and our sin hath fallen upon us and broken us in pieces. Indeed we purposed evil to this youth and it hath reverted upon us, and we plotted mischief against him and it hath overtaken us; yea, we digged a pit for him and have fallen ourselves therein." So the king bade hoist up the viziers upon the gibbets and crucify them there, for that God is just and ordaineth that which is right. Then Azadbekht and his wife and son abode in

joyance and contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and they died all; and extolled be the perfection of the [Ever-]Living One, who dieth not, to whom be glory and whose mercy be upon us for ever and ever! Amen.

Jaafer Ben Yehya and Abdulmeilik Ben Salih the Abbaside.

IT is told of Jaafer ben Yehya the Barmecide that he sat down one day to drink and being minded to be private (with his friends), sent for his boon-companions, in whom he delighted, and charged the chamberlain that he should suffer none of the creatures of God the Most High to enter, save a man of his boon-companions, by name Abdulmelik ben Salih, who was behindhand with them. Then they donned coloured clothes, for that it was their wont, whenas they sat in the wine-chamber, to don raiment of red and yellow and green silk, and sat down to drink, and the cups went round and the lutes pulsed.

Now there was a man of the kinsfolk of the Khalif [Haroun er Reshid], by name Abdulmelik ben Salih ben Ali ben Abdallah ben el Abbas, who was great of gravity and piety and decorousness, and Er Reshid was used instantly to require of him that he should keep him company in his carousals and drink with him and had proffered him, to this end, riches galore, but he still refused. It chanced that this Abdulmelik es Salih came to the door of Jaafer ben Yehya, that he might bespeak him of certain occasions of his, and the chamberlain, doubting not but he was the Abdulmelik ben Salih aforesaid, whom Jaafer had charged him admit and that he should suffer none but him to enter, allowed him to go in to his master.

When Jaafer saw him, his reason was like to depart for shame and he knew that the chamberlain had been deceived by the likeness of the name; and Abdulmelik also perceived how the case stood and confusion was manifest to him in Jaafer's face. So he put on a cheerful favour and said, "No harm be upon you! Bring us of these dyed clothes." So they brought him a dyed gown and he put it on and sat discoursing cheerily with Jaafer and jesting with him. Then said he, "Give us to drink of your wine." So they poured him out a pint and he said, "Be ye indulgent with us, for we have no wont of this." Then he chatted and jested with them till Jaafer's breast dilated and his constraint ceased from him and his shamefastness, and he rejoiced in this with an exceeding joy and said to Abdulmelik, "What is thine errand?" Quoth the other, "I come (may God amend thee!) on three occasions, whereof I would have thee bespeak the Khalif; to wit, firstly, I have on me a debt to the amount of a thousand thousand dirhems, which I would have discharged; secondly, I desire for my son the office of governor of a province, whereby his rank may be raised; and thirdly, I would fain have thee marry him to a daughter of the Khalif, for that she is his cousin and he is a match for her." And Jaafer said, "God accomplished! unto thee these three occasions. As for the money, it shall presently be carried to thy house; as for the government, I make thy son viceroy of Egypt; and as for the marriage, I give him to wife such an one, the daughter of our Lord the Commander of the Faithful, at a dowry of such and such a sum. So depart in the assurance of God the Most High."

So Abdulmelik went away to his house, whither he found that the money had foregone him, and on the morrow Jaafer presented himself before the Khalif and acquainted him with what had passed and that he had appointed Abdulmelik's son governor of Egypt and had promised him his daughter in marriage. Er Reshid approved of this and confirmed the appointment and the marriage. [Then he sent for

the young man] and he went not forth of the palace of the Khalif till he wrote him the patent [of investiture with the government] of Egypt; and he let bring the Cadis and the witnesses and drew up the contract of marriage.

Er Reshid and the Barmecides.

IT is said that the most extraordinary of that which happened to Er Reshid was as follows: His brother El Hadi, when he succeeded to the Khalifate, enquired of a seal-ring of great price, that had belonged to his father El Mehdi, and it came to his knowledge that Er Reshid had taken it. So he required it of the latter, who refused to give it up, and El Hadi insisted upon him, but he still denied the seal-ring of the Khalifate. Now this was on the bridge [over the Tigris], and he threw the ring into the river. When El Hadi died and Er Reshid succeeded to the Khalifate, he came in person to that bridge, with a seal-ring of lead, which he threw into the river at the same place, and bade the divers seek it. So they did [his bidding] and brought up the first ring, and this was reckoned [an omen] of Er Reshid's good fortune and [a presage of] the continuance of his reign.

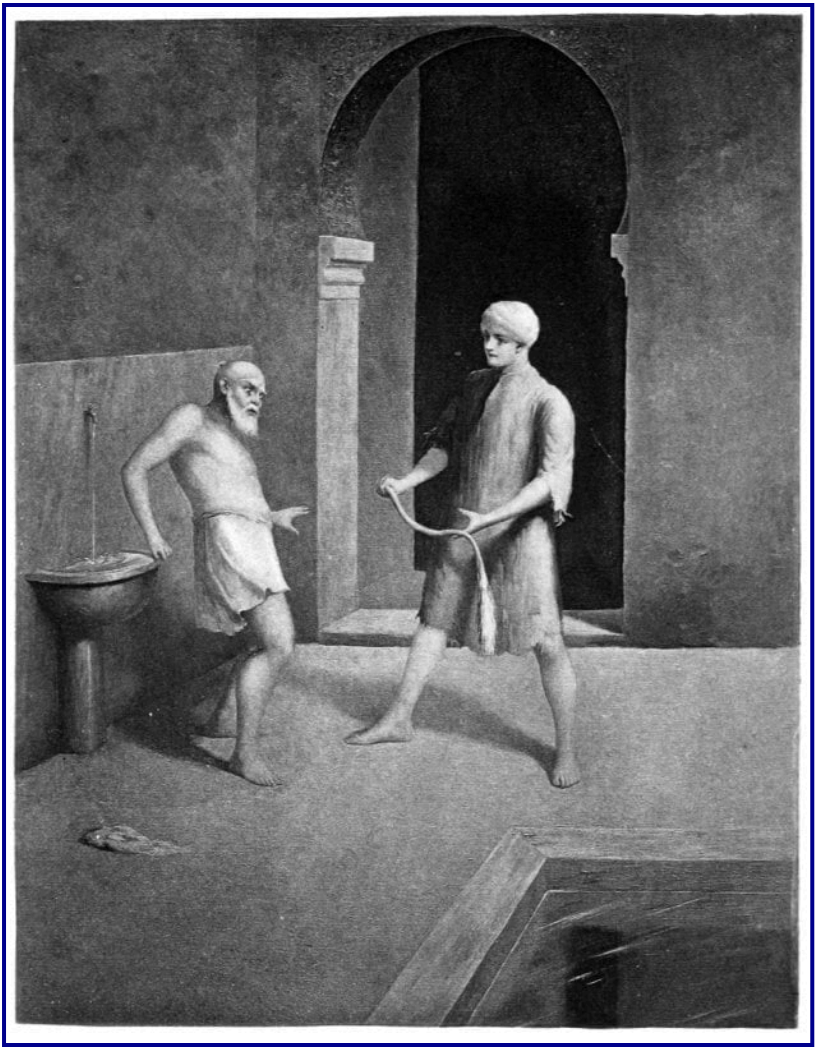
When Er Reshid came to the throne, he invested Jaafer ben Yehya ben Khalid el Bermeki with the vizierate. Now Jaafer was eminently distinguished for generosity and munificence, and the stories of him to this effect are renowned and are written in the books. None of the viziers attained to the rank and favour which he enjoyed with Er Reshid, who was wont to call him brother and used to carry him with him into his house. The period of his vizierate was nineteen years, and Yehya one day said to his son Jaafer, "O my son, what time thy reed trembleth, water it with kindness." Opinions differ concerning the reason of Jaafer's slaughter, but the better is as follows. Er Reshid could not brook to be parted from Jaafer nor from his [own] sister Abbaseh, daughter of El Mehdi, a single hour, and she was the loveliest woman of her time; so he said to Jaafer, "I will marry thee to her, that it may be lawful to thee to look upon her, but thou shalt not touch her." [Accordingly, they were married] and they used both to be present in Er Reshid's sitting chamber. Now the Khalif would rise bytimes [and go forth] from the chamber, and they being both young and filled with wine, Jaafer would rise to her and swive her. She conceived by him and bore a handsome boy and fearing Er Reshid, despatched the newborn child by one of her confidants to Mecca the Holy, may God the Most High advance it in honour and increase it in venerance and nobility and magnification! The affair abode concealed till there befell despite between Abbaseh and one of her slave-girls, whereupon the latter discovered the affair of the child to Er Reshid and acquainted him with its abiding-place. So, when the Khalif made the pilgrimage, he despatched one who brought him the boy and found the affair true, wherefore he caused befall the Barmecides that which befell.

Ibn Es Semmak and Er Reshid.

IT is related that Ibn es Semmak went in one day to Er Reshid and the Khalif, being athirst, called for drink. So his cup was brought him, and when he took it, Ibn es Semmak said to him, "Softly, O Commander of the Faithful! If thou wert denied this draught, with what wouldst thou buy it?" "With the half of my kingdom," answered the Khalif; and Ibn es Semmak said, "Drink and God prosper it to thee!" Then, when he had drunken, he said to him, "If thou wert denied the going forth of the draught from thy body, with what wouldst thou buy its issue?" "With the whole of my kingdom," answered Er Reshid: and Ibn es Semmak said, "O Commander of the Faithful, verily, a kingdom that weigheth not in the balance against a draught [of water] or a voiding of urine is not worth the striving for." And Haroun wept.

El Mamoun and Zubeideh

IT is said that El Mamoun came one day upon Zubeideh, mother of El Amin, and saw her moving her lips and muttering somewhat he understood not; so he said to her, "O mother mine, dost thou imprecate [curses] upon me, for that I slew thy son and despoiled him of his kingdom?" "Not so, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful!" answered she, and he said, "What then saidst thou?" Quoth she, "Let the Commander of the Faithful excuse me." But he was instant with her, saying, "Needs must thou tell it." And she replied, "I said, 'God confound importunity!'" "How so?" asked the Khalif, and she said, "I played one day at chess with the Commander of the Faithful [Haroun er Reshid] and he imposed on me the condition of commandment and acceptance. He beat me and bade me put off my clothes and go round about the palace, naked; so I did this, and I incensed against him. Then we fell again to playing and I beat him; so I bade him go to the kitchen and swive the foulest and sorriest wench of the wenches thereof. [I went to the kitchen] and found not a slave-girl fouler and filthier than thy mother; so I bade him swive her. He did as I bade him and she became with child by him of thee, and thus was I [by my unlucky insistance] the cause of the slaying of my son and the despoiling him of his kingdom." When El Mamoun heard this, he turned away, saying, "God curse the importunate!" to wit, himself, who had importuned her till she acquainted him with that matter.



En Numan And the Arab of the Benou Tai.

IT is said that En Numan had two boon-companions, one of whom was called Ibn Saad and the other Amrou ben el Melik, and he became one night drunken and bade bury them alive; so they buried them. When he arose on the morrow, he enquired for them and was acquainted with their case, whereupon he built over them a monument and appointed to himself a day of ill-luck and a day of good-luck. If any met him on his day of ill-omen, he slew him and with his blood he washed the monument aforesaid, the which is a place well known in Cufa; and if any met him on his day of grace, he enriched him.

Now there accosted him once, on his day of ill-omen, an Arab of the Benou Tai, and En Numan would have put him to death; but the Arab said, "God quicken the king! I have two little girls and have made none guardian over them; so, if the king see fit to grant me leave to go to them, I will give him the covenant of God that I will return to him, whenas I have appointed them a guardian." En Numan had compassion on him and said to him, "If a man will be surety for thee of those who are with us, [I will let thee go], and if thou return not, I will put him to death." Now there was with En Numan his vizier Sherik ben Amrou; so the Tai looked at him and said,

Sherik ben Amrou, what device avails the hand of death to stay?
O brother of the brotherless, brother of all th' afflicted, say.
Brother of En Numan, with thee lies an old man's anguish to allay,
A graybeard slain, may God make fair his deeds upon the Reckoning-Day!
Quoth Sherik, "On me be his warranty, may God assain the king!"
So the Tai departed, after a term had been assigned him for his coming.

When the appointed day arrived, En Numan sent for Sherik and said to him, "Verily the first part of this day is past." And Sherik answered, "The king hath no recourse against me till it be eventide." When it evened, there appeared one afar off and En Numan fell to looking upon him and on Sherik, and the latter said to him, "Thou hast no right over me till yonder fellow come, for belike he is my man." As he spoke, up came the Tai in haste and En Numan said "By Allah, never saw I [any] more generous than you two! I know not whether of you is the more generous, this one who became warrant for thee in [danger of] death or thou who returnest unto slaughter." Then said he to Sherik, "What prompted thee to become warrant for him, knowing that it was death?" And he said, "[I did this] lest it be said, 'Generosity hath departed from viziers.'" Then said En Numan to the Tai, "And thou, what prompted thee to return, knowing that therein was death and thine own destruction?" Quoth the Arab, "[I did this] lest it be said, 'Fidelity hath departed from the folk.'" And En Numan said, "By Allah, I will be the third of you, lest it be said, 'Clemency hath departed from kings.'" So he pardoned him and bade abolish the day of ill-omen; whereupon the Arab recited the following verses:

Full many a man incited me to infidelity,
But I refused, for all the talk wherewith they set on me.

I am a man in whom good faith's a natural attribute;
The deeds of every upright man should with his speech agree.

Quoth En Numan, "What prompted thee to keep faith, the case being as thou sayest?" "O king," answered the Arab, "it was my religion." And En Numan said, "What is thy religion?" "The Christian," replied the other. Quoth the king, "Expound it unto me." [So the Tai expounded it to him] and En Numan became a Christian.

Firouz and His Wife

A CERTAIN king sat one day on the roof of his palace, diverting himself with looking about him, and presently, chancing to look aside, he espied, on [the roof of] a house over against his palace, a woman, never saw his eyes her like. So he turned to those who were present and said to them, "To whom belongeth yonder house?" "To thy servant Firouz," answered they, "and that is his wife." So he went down, (and indeed love had made him drunken and he was passionately enamoured of her), and calling Firouz, said to him, "Take this letter and go with it to such a city and bring me the answer." Firouz took the letter and going to his house, laid it under his head and passed that night. When the morning morrowed, he took leave of his wife and set out for the city in question, unknowing what the king purposed against him.

As for the king, he arose in haste and disguising himself, repaired to the house of Firouz and knocked at the door. Quoth Firouz's wife, "Who is at the door?" And he answered, saying, "I am the king, thy husband's master." So she opened the door and he entered and sat down, saying, "We are come to visit thee." Quoth she, "I seek refuge [with God] from this visitation, for indeed I deem not well thereof." And the king said, "O desire of hearts, I am thy husband's master and methinks thou knowest me not." "Nay," answered she, "I know thee, O my lord and master, and I know thy purpose and that which thou seekest and that thou art my husband's lord. I understand what thou wishest, and indeed the poet hath forestalled thee in his saying of the following verses, in reference to thy case:

Your water I'll leave without drinking, for there
Too many already have drunken whilere.
When the flies light on food, from the platter my hand
I raise, though my spirit should long for the fare;
And whenas the dogs at a fountain have lapped,
The lions to drink of the water forbear."

Then said she, "O king, comest thou to a [watering-]place whereat thy dog hath drunken and wilt thou drink thereof?" The king was abashed at her and at her words and went out from her, but forgot his sandal in the house.

As for Firouz, when he went forth from his house, he sought the letter, but found it not; so he returned home. Now his return fell in with the king's going forth and he found the latter's sandal in his house, whereat his wit was dazed and he knew that the king had not sent him away but for a purpose of his own. However, he held his peace and spoke not a word, but, taking the letter, went on his errand and accomplished it and returned to the king, who gave him a hundred dinars. So Firouz betook himself to the market and bought what beseemeth women of goodly gifts and returning to his wife, saluted her and gave her all that he had brought and said to her, "Arise [go] to thy father's house." "Wherefore?" asked she, and he said, "Verily, the king hath been bountiful to me and I would have thee show forth this, so thy father may rejoice in that which he seeth upon thee." "With all my heart," answered she and arising forthright, betook herself to the house of her father, who rejoiced in her coming and in

that which he saw upon her; and she abode with him a month's space, and her husband made no mention of her.

Then came her brother to him and said, "O Firouz, an thou wilt not acquaint me with the reason of thine anger against thy wife, come and plead with us before the king." Quoth he, "If ye will have me plead with you, I will do so." So they went to the king and found the cadi sitting with him; whereupon quoth the damsel's brother, "God assist our lord the cadi! I let this man on hire a high-walled garden, with a well in good case and trees laden with fruit; but he beat down its walls and ruined its well and ate its fruits, and now he desireth to return it to me." The cadi turned to Firouz and said to him, "What sayst thou, O youth?" And he answered, "Indeed, I delivered him the garden in the goodliest of case." So the cadi said to the brother, "Hath he delivered thee the garden, as he saith?" And the other replied, "No; but I desire to question him of the reason of his returning it." Quoth the cadi, "What sayst thou, O youth?" And Firouz answered, "I returned it in my own despite, for that I entered it one day and saw the track of the lion; wherefore I feared lest, if I entered it again, the lion should devour me. So that which I did, I did of reverence to him and for fear of him."

Now the king was leaning back upon the cushion, when he heard the man's words, he knew the purport thereof; so he sat up and said, "Return to thy garden in all assurance and ease of heart; for, by Allah, never saw I the like of thy garden nor stouter of ward than its walls over its trees!" So Firouz returned to his wife, and the cadi knew not the truth of the affair, no, nor any of those who were in that assembly, save the king and the husband and the damsel's brother.

King Shah Bekht and His Vizier Er Rehwan.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a king of the kings of the time, by name Shah Bekht, who had troops and servants and guards galore and a vizier called Er Rehwan, who was wise, understanding, a man of good counsel and a cheerful acceptor of the commandments of God the Most High, to whom belong might and majesty. The king committed to him the affairs of his kingdom and his subjects and said according to his word, and on this wise he abode a long space of time.

Now this vizier had many enemies, who envied him his high place and still sought to do him hurt, but found no way thereunto, and God, in His fore-knowledge and His fore-ordinance from time immemorial, decreed that the king dreamt that the Vizier Er Rehwan gave him a fruit from off a tree and he ate it and died. So he awoke, affrighted and troubled, and when the vizier had presented himself before him [and withdrawn] and the king was alone with those in whom he trusted, he related to them his dream and they counselled him to send for the astrologers and interpreters [of dreams] and commended to him a sage, for whose skill and wisdom they vouched. So the king sent for him and entreated him with honour and made him draw near to himself. Now there had been private with the sage in question a company of the vizier's enemies, who besought him to slander the vizier to the king and counsel him to put him to death, in consideration of that which they promised him of wealth galore; and he agreed with them of this and told the king that the vizier would slay him in the course of the [ensuing] month and bade him hasten to put him to death, else would he surely slay him.

Presently, the vizier entered and the king signed to him to cause avoid the place. So he signed to those who were present to withdraw, and they departed; whereupon quoth the king to him, "How deemest thou, O excellent vizier, O loyal counsellor in all manner of governance, of a vision I have seen in my sleep?" "What is it, O king?" asked the vizier, and Shah Bekht related to him his dream, adding, "And indeed the sage interpreted it to me and said to me, 'An thou put not the vizier to death within a month, he will slay thee.' Now I am exceeding both to put the like of thee to death, yet do I fear to leave thee on life. What then dost thou counsel me that I should do in this matter?" The vizier bowed his head awhile, then raised it and said, "God prosper the king! Verily, it skills not to continue him on life of whom the king is afraid, and my counsel is that thou make haste to put me to death."

When the king heard his speech, he turned to him and said, "It is grievous to me, O vizier of good counsel." And he told him that the [other] sages testified [to the correctness of their fellow's interpretation of the dream]; whereupon Er Rehwan sighed and knew that the king went in fear of him; but he showed him fortitude and said to him, "God assain the king! My counsel is that the king accomplish his commandment and execute his ordinance, for that needs must death be and it is liefer to me that I die, oppressed, than that I die, an oppressor. But, if the king see fit to defer the putting of me to death till the morrow and will pass this night with me and take leave of me, when the morrow cometh, the king shall do what he will."

Then he wept till he wet his gray hairs and the king was moved to compassion for him and granted him that which he sought and vouchsafed him that night's respite.

The First Night of the Month

When it was eventide, the king caused avoid his sitting chamber and summoned the vizier, who presented himself and making his obeisance to the king, kissed the earth before him and bespoke him as follows:

Story of the Man of Khorassan, His Son and His Governor.

"THERE was once a man of Khorassan and he had a son, whose improvement he ardently desired; but the young man sought to be alone and to remove himself from his father's eye, so he might give himself up to pleasance and delight. So he sought of his father [leave to make] the pilgrimage to the Holy House of God and to visit the tomb of the Prophet (whom God bless and keep!). Now between them and Mecca was a journey of five hundred parasangs; but his father could not gainsay him, for that the law of God made this incumbent on him and because of that which he hoped for him of improvement [therefrom]. So he joined unto him a governor, in whom he trusted, and gave him much money and took leave of him. The son set out on the holy pilgrimage with the governor and abode on that wise, spending freely and using not thrift.

Now there was in his neighbourhood a poor man, who had a slave-girl of surpassing beauty and loveliness, and the youth became enamoured of her and suffered grief and concern for the love of her and her loveliness, so that he was like to perish for passion; and she also loved him with a love yet greater than his love for her. So she called an old woman who used to visit her and acquainted her with her case, saying, 'An I foregather not with him, I shall die.' The old woman promised her that she would do her endeavour to bring her to her desire; so she veiled herself and repairing to the young man, saluted him and acquainted him with the girl's case, saying, 'Her master is a covetous man; so do thou invite him [to thy lodging] and tempt him with money, and he will sell thee the damsel.'

Accordingly, he made a banquet, and stationing himself in the man's way, invited him and carried him to his house, where they sat down and ate and drank and abode in discourse. Presently, the young man said to the other, 'I hear that thou hast with thee a slave-girl, whom thou desirest to sell.' And he answered, saying, 'By Allah, O my lord, I have no mind to sell her!' Quoth the youth, 'I hear that she cost thee a thousand dinars, and I will give thee six hundred, to boot.' And the other said, 'I sell her to thee [at that price].' So they fetched notaries, who drew up the contract of sale, and the young man counted out to the girl's master half the purchase money, saying, 'Let her be with thee till I complete to thee the rest of the price and take my slave-girl.' The other consented to this and took of him a bond for the rest of the money, and the girl abode with her master, on deposit.

As for the youth, he gave his governor a thousand dirhems and despatched him to his father, to fetch money from him, so he might pay the rest of the girl's price, saying to him, 'Be not [long] absent.' But the governor said in himself, 'How shall I go to his father and say to him, "Thy son hath wasted thy money and wantoned it away"? With what eye shall I look on him, and indeed, I am he in whom he confided and to whom he hath entrusted his son? Indeed, this were ill seen. Nay, I will fare on to the pilgrimage [with the caravan of pilgrims], in despite of this fool of a youth; and when he is weary [of waiting], he will demand back the money [he hath already paid] and return to his father, and I shall be quit of travail and reproach.' So he went on with the caravan to the pilgrimage and took up his abode there.

Meanwhile, the youth abode expecting his governor's return, but he returned not; wherefore concern and chagrin waxed upon him, because of his mistress, and his longing for her redoubled and he was like to slay himself. She became aware of this and sent him a messenger, bidding him to her. So he went to her and she questioned him of the case; whereupon he told her what was to do of the matter of his governor, and she said to him, 'With me is longing the like of that which is with thee, and I misdoubt me thy messenger hath perished or thy father hath slain him; but I will give thee all my trinkets and my clothes, and do thou sell them and pay the rest of my price, and we will go, I and thou, to thy father.'

So she gave him all that she possessed and he sold it and paid the rest of her price; after which there remained to him a hundred dirhems. These he spent and lay that night with the damsel in all delight of life, and his soul was like to fly for joy; but when he arose in the morning, he sat weeping and the damsel said to him, 'What aileth thee to weep?' And he said, 'I know not if my father be dead, and he hath none other heir but myself; and how shall I win to him, seeing I have not a dirhem?' Quoth she, 'I have a bracelet; do thou sell it and buy small pearls with the price. Then bray them and fashion them into great pearls, and thereon thou shalt gain much money, wherewith we may make our way to thy country.' So he took the bracelet and repairing to a goldsmith, said to him, 'Break up this bracelet and sell it.' But he said, 'The king seeketh a good bracelet; I will go to him and bring thee the price thereof.' So he carried the bracelet to the Sultan and it pleased him greatly, by reason of the goodliness of its workmanship. Then he called an old woman, who was in his palace, and said to her, 'Needs must I have the mistress of this bracelet, though but for a single night, or I shall die.' And the old woman answered, 'I will bring her to thee.'

So she donned a devotee's habit and betaking herself to the goldsmith, said to him, 'To whom belongeth the bracelet that is in the king's hand?' Quoth he, 'It belongeth to a man, a stranger, who hath bought him a slave-girl from this city and lodgeth with her in such a place.' So the old woman repaired to the young man's house and knocked at the door. The damsel opened to her and seeing her clad in devotee's apparel, saluted her and said to her, ' Belike thou hast an occasion with us?' 'Yes,' answered the old woman; 'I desire privacy and ablution.' Quoth the girl, 'Enter.' So she entered and did her occasion and made the ablution and prayed. Then she brought out a rosary and began to tell her beads thereon, and the damsel said to her, 'Whence comest thou, O pilgrim?' Quoth she '[I come] from [visiting] the Idol of the Absent in such a church. There standeth up no woman [to prayer] before him, who hath an absent friend and discovereth to him her need, but he acquainteth her with her case and giveth her tidings of her absent one.' 'O pilgrim,' said the damsel, 'we have an absent one, and my lord's heart cleaveth to him and I desire to go to the idol and question him of him.' Quoth the old woman, '[Wait] till to-morrow and ask leave of thy husband, and I will come to thee and go with thee in weal.'

Then she went away, and when the girl's master came, she sought his leave to go with the old woman and he granted her leave. So the beldam took her and carried her to the king's door. The damsel entered with her, unknowing whither she went, and beheld a goodly house and chambers adorned [with gold and colours] that were no idol's chambers. Then came the king and seeing her beauty and grace, went up to her,

to kiss her; whereupon she fell down in a fit and strove with her hands and feet. When he saw this, he was solicitous for her and held aloof from her and left her; but the thing was grievous to her and she refused meat and drink, and as often as the king drew near her, she fled from him in affright, wherefore he swore by Allah that he would not approach her, save with her consent, and fell to guerdoning her with trinkets and raiment, but she only redoubled in aversion to him.

Meanwhile, the youth her master abode expecting her; but she returned not and his heart forbode him of the draught [of separation]; so he went forth at hazard, distraught and knowing not what he should do, and fell to strewing dust upon his head and crying out, 'The old woman hath taken her and gone away!' The boys followed him with stones and pelted him, saying, 'A madman! A madman!' Presently, the king's chamberlain, who was a man of age and worth, met him, and when he saw his youth, he forbade the boys and drove there away from him, after which he accosted him and questioned him of his case. So he told him how it was with him and the chamberlain said to him, 'Fear not: all shall yet be well with thee. I will deliver thy slave-girl for thee: so calm thy trouble.' And he went on to speak him fair and comfort him, till he put faith in his speech.

Then he carried him to his house and stripping him of his clothes, clad him in rags; after which he called an old woman, who was his stewardess, and said to her. 'Take this youth and clap on his neck this iron chain and go round about with him in all the thoroughfares of the city; and when thou hast made an end of this, go up with him to the palace of the king.' And he said to the youth, 'In whatsoever place thou seest the damsel, speak not a syllable, but acquaint me with her place and thou shall owe her deliverance to none but me.' The youth thanked him and went with the old woman on such wise as the chamberlain bade him. She fared on with him till they entered the city [and made the round thereof]; after which she went up to the palace of the king and fell to saying, 'O people of affluence, look on a youth whom the devils take twice in the day and pray for preservation from [a like] affliction!' And she ceased not to go round about with him till she came to the eastern wing of the palace, whereupon the slave-girls came out to look upon him and when they saw him they were amazed at his beauty and grace and wept for him.

Then they told the damsel, who came forth and looked upon him and knew him not. But he knew her; so he bowed his head and wept. She was moved to compassion for him and gave him somewhat and returned to her place, whilst the youth returned with the stewardess to the chamberlain and told him that she was in the king's house, whereat he was chagrined and said, 'By Allah, I will assuredly contrive a device for her and deliver her!' Whereupon the youth kissed his hands and feet. Then he turned to the old woman and bade her change her apparel and her favour. Now this old woman was goodly of speech and nimble of wit; so he gave her costly and delicious perfumes and said to her, 'Get thee to the king's slave girls and sell them these [perfumes] and make thy way to the damsel and question her if she desire her master or not.' So the old woman went out and making her way to the palace, went in to the damsel and drew near her and recited the following verses:

God keep the days of love-delight! How dearly sweet they were!
How joyous and how solaceful was life in them whilere!
Would he were not who sundered us upon the parting day!
How many a body hath he slain, how many a bone laid bare?
Sans fault of mine, my blood and tears he shed and beggared me
Of him I love, yet for himself gained nought thereby whate'er.

When the damsel heard these verses, she wept till her clothes were drenched and drew near the old woman, who said to her, 'Knowest thou such an one?' And wept and said, 'He is my lord. Whence knowest thou him?' 'O my lady,' answered the old woman, 'sawst thou not the madman who came hither yesterday with the old woman? He was thy lord. But this is no time for talk. When it is night, get thee to the top of the palace [and wait] on the roof till thy lord come to thee and contrive for thy deliverance.' Then she gave her what she would of perfumes and returning to the chamberlain, acquainted him with that which had passed, and he told the youth.

When it was eventide, the chamberlain let bring two horses and great store of water and victual and a saddle-camel and a man to show them the way. These he hid without the town, whilst he and the young man took with them a long rope, made fast to a staple, and repaired to the palace. When they came thither, they looked and beheld the damsel standing on the roof. So they threw her the rope and the staple; whereupon she [made the latter fast to the parapet and] wrapping her sleeves about her hands, slid down [the rope] and landed with them. They carried her without the town, where they mounted, she and her lord, and fared on, whilst the guide forewent them, directing them in the way, and they gave not over going night and day till they entered his father's house. The young man saluted his father, who rejoiced in him, and he related to him all that had befallen him, whereupon he rejoiced in his safety.

As for the governor, he wasted all that was with him and returned to the city, where he saw the youth and excused himself to him. Then he questioned him of what had befallen him and he told him, whereat he marvelled and returned to companionship with him; but the youth ceased to have regard for him and gave him not stipends, as of his [former] wont, neither discovered to him aught of his secrets. When the governor saw that there was no profit for him with the young Khorassani, he returned to the king, the ravisher of the damsel, and told him what the chamberlain had done and counselled him to slay the latter and incited him to recover the damsel, [promising] to give his friend to drink of poison and return. So the king sent for the chamberlain and upbraided him; whereupon he fell upon him and slew him and the king's servants fell upon the chamberlain and slew him.

Meanwhile, the governor returned to the youth, who questioned him of his absence, and he told him that he had been in the city of the king who had taken the damsel. When the youth heard this, he misdoubted of the governor and never again trusted him in aught, but was still on his guard against him. Then the governor made great store of sweetmeats and put in them deadly poison and presented them to the youth. When the latter saw the sweetmeats, he said in himself, 'This is an extraordinary thing of the governor! Needs must there be mischief in this sweetmeat, and I will make proof of it upon himself.' So he made ready victual and set on the sweetmeat amongst

it and bade the governor to his house and set food before him. He ate and amongst the rest, they brought him the poisoned sweetmeat; so he ate thereof and died forthright; whereby the youth knew that this was a plot against himself and said, 'He who seeketh his fortune of his own [unaided] might attaineth it not.' Nor (continued the vizier) is this, O king of the age, more extraordinary than the story of the druggist and his wife and the singer."

When King Shah Bekht heard his vizier's story, he gave him leave to withdraw to his own house and he abode there the rest of the night and the next day till the evening.

The Second Night of the Month

When the evening evened, the king sat in his privy sitting-chamber and his mind was occupied with the story of the singer and the druggist. So he called the vizier and bade him tell the story. "It is well," answered he, "They tell, O my lord, that

Story of the Singer and the Druggist.

THERE was once in the city of Hemadan a young man of comely aspect and excellently skilled in singing to the lute, and he was well seen of the people of the city. He went forth one day of his city, with intent to travel, and gave not over journeying till his travel brought him to a goodly city. Now he had with him a lute and what pertained thereto, so he entered and went round about the city till he fell in with a druggist, who, when he espied him, called to him. So he went up to him and he bade him sit down. Accordingly, he sat down by him and the druggist questioned him of his case. The singer told him what was in his mind and the other took him up into his shop and brought him food and fed him. Then said he to him, 'Arise and take up thy lute and beg about the streets, and whenas thou smellest the odour of wine, break in upon the drinkers and say to them, "I am a singer." They will laugh and say, "Come, [sing] to us." And when thou singest, the folk will know thee and bespeak one another of thee; so shall thou become known in the city and thine affairs will prosper.'

So he went round about, as the druggist bade him, till the sun grew hot, but found none drinking. Then he entered a by-street, that he might rest himself, and seeing there a handsome and lofty house, stood in its shade and fell to observing the goodliness of its ordinance. As he was thus engaged, behold, a window opened and there appeared thereat a face, as it were the moon. Quoth she, 'What aileth thee to stand there? Dost thou want aught?' And he answered, 'I am a stranger,' and acquainted her with his case; whereupon quoth she, 'What sayst thou to meat and drink and the enjoyment of a fair-face[d one] and getting thee what thou mayst spend?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'this is my desire and that in quest whereof I am going about.'

So she opened the door to him and brought him in. Then she seated him at the upper end of the room and set food before him. So he ate and drank and lay with her and swived her. Then she sat down in his lap and they toyed and laughed and kissed till the day was half spent, when her husband came home and she could find nothing for it but to hide the singer in a rug, in which she rolled him up. The husband entered and seeing the place disordered and smelling the odour of wine, questioned her of this. Quoth she, 'I had with me a friend of mine and I conjured her [to drink with me]; so we drank a jar [of wine], she and I, and she went away but now, before thy coming in.' Her husband, (who was none other than the singer's friend the druggist, that had invited him and fed him), deemed her words true and went away to his shop, whereupon the singer came forth and he and the lady returned to their sport and abode on this wise till eventide, when she gave him money and said to him, 'Come hither to-morrow in the forenoon.' 'It is well,' answered he and departed; and at nightfall he went to the bath.

On the morrow, he betook himself to the shop of his friend the druggist, who welcomed him and questioned him of his case and how he had fared that day. Quoth the singer, 'May God requite thee with good, O my brother! For that thou hast directed me unto easance!' And he related to him his adventure with the woman, till he came to the mention of her husband, when he said, 'And at midday came the cuckold her husband and knocked at the door. So she wrapped me in the mat, and when he had

gone about his business, I came forth and we returned to what we were about.' This was grievous to the druggist and he repented of having taught him [how he should do] and misdoubted of his wife. So he said to the singer, 'And what said she to thee at thy going away?' And the other answered, 'She bade me come back to her on the morrow. So, behold, I am going to her and I came not hither but that I might acquaint thee with this, lest thy heart be occupied with me.' Then he took leave of him and went his way. As soon as the druggist was assured that he had reached the house, he cast the net over his shop and made for his house, misdoubting of his wife, and knocked at the door.

Now the singer had entered and the druggist's wife said to him, 'Arise, enter this chest.' So he entered it and she shut the lid on him and opened to her husband, who came in, in a state of bewilderment, and searched the house, but found none and overlooked the chest. So he said in himself, 'The house [of which the singer spoke] is one which resembleth my house and the woman is one who resembles my wife,' and returned to his shop; whereupon the singer came forth of the chest and falling upon the druggist's wife, did his occasion and paid her her due and weighed down the scale for her. Then they ate and drank and kissed and clipped, and on this wise they abode till the evening, when she gave him money, for that she found his weaving good, and made him promise to come to her on the morrow.

So he left her and slept his night and on the morrow he repaired to the shop of his friend the druggist and saluted him. The other welcomed him and questioned him of his case; whereupon he told him how he had fared, till he came to the mention of the woman's husband, when he said, 'Then came the cuckold her husband and she clapped me into the chest and shut the lid on me, whilst her addlepated pimp of a husband went round about the house, top and bottom; and when he had gone his way, we returned to what we were about.' With this, the druggist was certified that the house was his house and the wife his wife, and he said, 'And what wilt thou do to-day?' Quoth the singer, 'I shall return to her and weave for her and full her yarn, and I came but to thank thee for thy dealing with me.'

Then he went away, whilst the fire was loosed in the heart of the druggist and he shut his shop and betaking himself to his house, knocked at the door. Quoth the singer, 'Let me get into the chest, for he saw me not yesterday.' 'Nay,' answered she, 'wrap thyself up in the rug.' So he wrapped himself up in the rug and stood in a corner of the room, whilst the druggist entered and went straight to the chest, but found it empty. Then he went round about the house and searched it from top to bottom, but found nothing and no one and abode between belief and disbelief, and said in himself, 'Belike, I suspect my wife of that which is not in her.' So he was certified of her innocence and returned to his shop, whereupon out came the singer and they abode on their former case, as of wont, till eventide, when she gave him one of her husband's shirts and he took it and going away, passed the night in his lodging.

On the morrow, he repaired to the druggist, who saluted him and came to meet him and rejoiced in him and smiled in his face, deeming his wife innocent. Then he questioned him of his yesterday's case and he told him how he had fared, saying, 'O my brother, when the cuckold knocked at the door, I would have entered the chest; but his wife forbade me and rolled me up in the rug. The man entered and thought of nothing but the chest; so he broke it open and abode as he were a madman, going up and

coming down. Then he went his way and I came out and we abode on our wonted case till eventide, when she gave me this shirt of her husband's; and behold, I am going to her.'

When the druggist heard the singer's words, he was certified of the case and knew that the calamity, all of it, was in his own house and that the wife was his wife; and he saw the shirt, whereupon he redoubled in certainty and said to the singer, 'Art thou now going to her?' 'Yes, O my brother,' answered he and taking leave of him, went away; whereupon the druggist started up, as he were a madman, and ungarnished his shop. Whilst he was thus engaged, the singer won to the house, and presently up came the druggist and knocked at the door. The singer would have wrapped himself up in the rug, but she forbade him and said to him, 'Get thee down to the bottom of the house and enter the oven and shut the lid upon thyself.' So he did as she bade him and she went down to her husband and opened the door to him, whereupon he entered and went round about the house, but found no one and overlooked the oven. So he stood meditating and swore that he would not go forth of the house till the morrow.

As for the singer, when his [stay in the oven] grew long upon him, he came forth therefrom, thinking that her husband had gone away. Then he went up to the roof and looking down, beheld his friend the druggist; whereat he was sore concerned and said in himself, 'Alas, the disgrace of it! This is my friend the druggist, who dealt kindly with me and wrought me fair and I have requited him with foul' And he feared to return to the druggist; so he went down and opened the first door and would have gone out; but, when he came to the outer door, he found it locked and saw not the key. So he stole up again to the roof and cast himself down into the [next] house. The people of the house heard him and hastened to him, deeming him a thief. Now the house in question belonged to a Persian; so they laid hands on him and the master of the house began to beat him, saying to him, 'Thou art a thief.' 'Nay,' answered he, 'I am no thief, but a singing-man, a stranger. I heard your voices and came to sing to you.'

When the folk heard his words, they talked of letting him go; but the Persian said, 'O folk, let not his speech beguile you. This fellow is none other than a thief who knoweth how to sing, and when he happeneth on the like of us, he is a singer.' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'this man is a stranger, and needs must we release him.' Quoth he, 'By Allah, my heart revolteth from this fellow! Let me make an end of him with beating.' But they said, 'Thou mayst nowise do that' So they delivered the singer from the Persian, the master of the house, and seated him amongst them, whereupon he fell to singing to them and they rejoiced in him.

Now the Persian had a mameluke, as he were the full moon, and he arose [and went out], and the singer followed him and wept before him, professing love to him and kissing his hands and feet. The mameluke took compassion on him and said to him, 'When the night cometh and my master entereth [the harem] and the folk go away, I will grant thee thy desire; and I lie in such a place.' Then the singer returned and sat with the boon-companions, and the Persian rose and went out, he and the mameluke beside him. [Then they returned and sat down.] Now the singer knew the place that the mameluke occupied at the first of the night; but it befell that he rose from his place and the candle went out. The Persian, who was drunken, fell over on his

face, and the singer, supposing him to be the mameluke, said, 'By Allah, it is good!' and threw himself upon him and clipped him, whereupon the Persian started up, crying out, and laying hands on the singer, pinioned him and beat him grievously, after which he bound him to a tree that was in the house.

Now there was in the house a fair singing-girl and when she saw the singer pinioned and bound to the tree, she waited till the Persian lay down on his couch, when she arose and going to the singer, fell to condoling with him over what had betided him and ogling him and handling his yard and rubbing it, till it rose on end. Then said she to him, 'Do thou swive me and I will loose thy bonds, lest he return and beat thee again; for he purposeth thee evil.' Quoth he, 'Loose me and I will do.' But she said, 'I fear that, [if I loose thee], thou wilt not do. But I will do, and thou standing; and when I have done, I will loose thee.' So saying, she pulled up her clothes and sitting down on the singer's yard, fell to going and coming.

Now there was in the house a ram, with which the Persian used to butt, and when he saw what the woman did, he thought she would butt with him; so he broke his halter and running at her, butted her and broke her head. She fell on her back and cried out; whereupon the Persian started up from sleep in haste and seeing the singing-girl [cast down on her back] and the singer with his yard on end, said to the latter, 'O accursed one, doth not what thou hast already done suffice thee?' Then he beat him soundly and opening the door, put him out in the middle of the night.

He lay the rest of the night in one of the ruins, and when he arose in the morning, he said, 'None is to blame. I sought my own good, and he is no fool who seeketh good for himself; and the druggist's wife also sought good for herself; but destiny overcometh precaution and there remaineth no abiding for me in this town.' So he went forth from the city. Nor (added the vizier) is this story, extraordinary though it be, more extraordinary than that of the king and his son and that which bedded them of wonders and rarities."

When the king heard this story, he deemed it pleasant and said, "This story is near unto that which I know and meseemeth I should do well to have patience and hasten not to slay my vizier, so I may get of him the story of the king and his son." Then he gave the vizier leave to go away to his own house; so he thanked him and abode in his house all that day.

The Third Night of the Month

When it was the time of the evening meal, the king repaired to the sitting-chamber and summoning the vizier, sought of him the story he had promised him; and the vizier said, "They avouch, O king, that

Story of the King Who Knew the Quintessence of Things.

THERE came to a king of the kings, in his old age, a son, who grew up comely, quick-witted and intelligent, and when he came to years of discretion and became a young man, his father said to him, 'Take this kingdom and govern it in my stead, for I desire to flee [from the world] to God the Most High and don the gown of wool and give myself up to devotion.' Quoth the prince, 'And I also desire to take refuge with God the Most High.' And the king said, 'Arise, let us flee forth and make for the mountains and worship in them, for shamefastness before God the Most High.'

So they gat them raiment of wool and clothing themselves therewith, went forth and wandered in the deserts and wastes; but, when some days had passed over them, they became weak for hunger and repented them of that which they had done, whenas repentance profited them not, and the prince complained to his father of weariness and hunger. 'Dear my son,' answered the king, 'I did with thee that which behoved me, but thou wouldst not hearken to me, and now there is no means of returning to thy former estate, for that another hath taken the kingdom and become its defender; but I will counsel thee of somewhat, wherein do thou pleasure me.' Quoth the prince, 'What is it?' And his father said, 'Take me and go with me to the market and sell me and take my price and do with it what thou wilt, and I shall become the property of one who will provide for my support,' 'Who will buy thee of me,' asked the prince, 'seeing thou art a very old man? Nay, do thou rather sell me, for the demand for me will be greater.' But the king said, 'An thou wert king, thou wouldst require me of service.'

So the youth obeyed his father's commandment and taking him, carried him to the slave-dealer and said to the latter, 'Sell me this old man.' Quoth the dealer, 'Who will buy this fellow, and he a man of fourscore?' Then said he to the king, 'In what crafts dost thou excel?' Quoth he, 'I know the quintessence of jewels and I know the quintessence of horses and that of men; brief, I know the quintessence of all things.' So the dealer took him and went about, offering him for sale to the folk; but none would buy. Presently, up came the overseer of the [Sultan's] kitchen and said, 'What is this man?' And the dealer answered, 'This is a slave for sale.' The cook marvelled at this and bought the king for ten thousand dirhems, after questioning him of what he could do. Then he paid down the money and carried him to his house, but dared not employ him in aught of service; so he appointed him an allowance, such as should suffice for his livelihood, and repented him of having bought him, saying, 'What shall I do with the like of this fellow?'

Presently, the king [of the city] was minded to go forth to his garden, a-pleasuring, and bade the cook forego him thither and appoint in his stead one who should dress meat for the king, so that, when he returned, he might find it ready. So the cook fell a-considering of whom he should appoint and was bewildered concerning his affair. As he was on this wise, the old man came to him and seeing him perplexed how he should do, said to him, 'Tell me what is in thy mind; belike, I may avail to relieve thee.' So he acquainted him with the king's wishes and he said, 'Have no care for this, but leave me one of the serving-men and go thou in peace and surety, for I will suffice thee of this.'

So the cook departed with the king, after he had brought the old man what he needed and left him a man of the guards.

When he was gone, the old man bade the trooper wash the kitchen-vessels and made ready passing goodly food. When the king returned, he set the meat before him, and he tasted food whose like he had never known; whereat he marvelled and asked who had dressed it. So they acquainted him with the old man's case and he summoned him to his presence and awarded him a handsome recompense. Moreover, he commanded that they should cook together, he and the cook, and the old man obeyed his commandment.

Awhile after this, there came two merchants to the king with two pearls of price and each of them avouched that his pearl was worth a thousand dinars, but there was none who availed to value them. Then said the cook, 'God prosper the king! Verily, the old man whom I bought avouched that he knew the quintessence of jewels and that he was skilled in cookery. We have made proof of him in cookery and have found him the skilfullest of men; and now, if we send after him and prove him on jewels, [the truth or falsehood of] his pretension will be made manifest to us.'

So the king bade fetch the old man and he came and stood before the Sultan, who showed him the two pearls. Quoth he, 'As for this one, it is worth a thousand dinars.' And the king said, 'So saith its owner.' 'But for this other,' continued the old man, 'it is worth but five hundred.' The folk laughed and marvelled at his saying, and the merchant, [the owner of the second pearl], said to him, 'How can this, which is greater of bulk and purer of water and more perfect of rondure, be less of worth than that?' And the old man answered, 'I have said what is with me.' Then said the king to him, 'Indeed, the outward appearance thereof is like unto that of the other pearl; why then is it worth but the half of its price?' 'Yes,' answered the old man, '[its outward resembleth the other]; but its inward is corrupt.' 'Hath a pearl then an outward and an inward?' asked the merchant, and the old man said, 'Yes. In its inward is a boring worm; but the other pearl is sound and secure against breakage.' Quoth the merchant, 'Give us a token of this and prove to us the truth of thy saying.' And the old man answered, 'We will break the pearl. If I prove a, liar, here is my head, and if I speak truth, thou wilt have lost thy pearl.' And the merchant said, 'I agree to that.' So they broke the pearl and it was even as the old man had said, to wit, in its midst was a boring worm.

The king marvelled at what he saw and questioned him of [how he came by] the knowledge of this. 'O king,' answered the old man, 'this [kind of] jewel is engendered in the belly of a creature called the oyster and its origin is a drop of rain and it is firm to the touch [and groweth not warm, when held in the hand]; so, when [I took the second pearl and felt that] it was warm to the touch, I knew that it harboured some living thing, for that live things thrive not but in heat.' So the king said to the cook, 'Increase his allowance.' And he appointed to him [fresh] allowances.

Awhile after this, two merchants presented themselves to the king with two horses, and one said, 'I ask a thousand dinars for my horse,' and the other, 'I seek five thousand for mine.' Quoth the cook, 'We have experienced the old man's just judgment; what deemeth the king of fetching him?' So the king bade fetch him, and

when he saw the two horses, he said, 'This one is worth a thousand and the other two thousand dinars.' Quoth the folk, 'This [horse that thou judgeth the lesser worth] is an evident thoroughbred and he is younger and swifter and more compact of limb than the other, ay, and finer of head and clearer of skin and colour. What token, then, hast thou of the truth of thy saying?' And the old man said, 'This ye say is all true, but his sire is old and this other is the son of a young horse. Now, when the son of an old horse standeth still [to rest,] his breath returneth not to him and his rider falleth into the hand of him who followeth after him; but the son of a young horse, if thou put him to speed and make him run, [then check him] and alight from off him, thou wilt find him untired, by reason of his robustness.'

Quoth the merchant, 'Indeed, it is as the old man avoucheth and he is an excellent judge.' And the king said, 'Increase his allowance.' But the old man stood still and did not go away. So the king said to him, 'Why dost thou not go about thy business?' And he answered, 'My business is with the king.' 'Name what thou wouldst have,' said the king, and the other replied, 'I would have thee question me of the quintessences of men, even as thou hast questioned me of the quintessences of horses.' Quoth the king, 'We have no occasion to question thee of [this].' But the old man replied, 'I have occasion to acquaint thee.' 'Say what thou pleasest,' rejoined the king, and the old man said, 'Verily, the king is the son of a baker.' Quoth the king 'How knowest thou that?' And the other replied, 'Know, O king, that I have examined into degrees and dignities and have learnt this.'

Thereupon the king went in to his mother and questioned her of his father, and she told him that me king her husband was weak; 'wherefore,' quoth she, 'I feared for the kingdom, lest it pass away, after his death; so I took to my bed a young man, a baker, and conceived by him [and bore a son]; and the kingship came into the hand of my son, to wit, thyself.' So the king returned to the old man and said to him, 'I am indeed the son of a baker; so do thou expound to me the means whereby thou knewest me for this.' Quoth the other, 'I knew that, hadst thou been a king's son, thou wouldst have given largesse of things of price, such as rubies [and the like]; and wert thou the son of a Cadi, thou hadst given largesse of a dirhem or two dirhems, and wert thou the son of a merchant, thou hadst given wealth galore. But I saw that thou guerdonest me not but with cakes of bread [and other victual], wherefore I knew that thou wast the son of a baker.' Quoth the king, 'Thou hast hit the mark.' And he gave him wealth galore and advanced him to high estate."

This story pleased King Shah Bekht and he marvelled thereat; but the vizier said to him, "This story is not more extraordinary than that of the rich man who married his fair daughter to the poor old man." The king's mind was occupied with the [promised] story and he bade the vizier withdraw to his lodging. So he [returned to his house and] abode there the rest of the night and the whole of the following day.

The Fourth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king withdrew to his privy sitting-chamber and bade fetch the vizier. When he presented himself before him, he said to him, "Tell me the story of the wealthy man who married his daughter to the poor old man." "It is well," answered the vizier. "Know, O puissant king, that

Story of the Rich Man Who Gave His Fair Daughter in Marriage to the Poor Old Man.

A CERTAIN wealthy merchant had a fair daughter, who was as the full moon, and when she attained the age of fifteen, her father betook himself to an old man and spreading him a carpet in his sitting-chamber, gave him to eat and caroused with him. Then said he to him, 'I desire to marry thee to my daughter.' The other excused himself, because of his poverty, and said to him, 'I am not worthy of her nor am I a match for thee.' The merchant was instant with him, but he repeated his answer to him, saying, 'I will not consent to this till thou acquaint me with the reason of thy desire for me. If I find it reasonable, I will fall in with thy wish; and if not, I will not do this ever.'

'Know, then,' said the merchant, 'that I am a man from the land of China and was in my youth well-favoured and well-to-do. Now I made no account of womankind, one and all, but followed after boys, and one night I saw, in a dream, as it were a balance set up, and it was said by it, "This is the portion of such an one." Presently, I heard my own name; so I looked and beheld a woman of the utmost loathliness; whereupon I awoke in affright and said, "I will never marry, lest haply this loathly woman fall to my lot." Then I set out for this city with merchandise and the voyage was pleasant to me and the sojourn here, so that I took up my abode here awhile and got me friends and factors, till I had sold all my merchandise and taken its price and there was left me nothing to occupy me till the folk should depart and depart with them.

One day, I changed my clothes and putting money in my sleeve, sallied forth to explore the holes and corners of this city, and as I was going about, I saw a handsome house. Its goodliness pleased me; so I stood looking on it, and behold, a lovely woman [at the lattice]. When she saw me, she made haste and descended, whilst I abode confounded. Then I betook myself to a tailor there and questioned him of the house and to whom it belonged. Quoth he, "It belongeth to such an one the notary, may God curse him!" "Is he her father?" asked I; [and he replied, "Yes."] So I repaired in haste to a man, with whom I had been used to deposit my goods for sale, and told him that I desired to gain access to such an one the notary. Accordingly he assembled his friends and we betook ourselves to the notary's house. When we came in to him, we saluted him and sat with him, and I said to him, "I come to thee as a suitor, desiring the hand of thy daughter in marriage." Quoth he, "I have no daughter befitting this man." And I rejoined, "God aid thee! My desire is for thee and not for her." But he still refused and his friends said to him, "This is an honourable man and thine equal in estate, and it is not lawful to thee that thou hinder the girl of her fortune." Quoth he to them, "Verily, my daughter whom ye seek is passing foul-favoured and in her are all blameworthy qualities." And I said, "I accept her, though she be as thou sayest." Then said the folk, "Extolled be the perfection of God! A truce to talk! [The thing is settled;] so say the word, how much wilt thou have [to her dowry]?" Quoth he, "I must have four thousand dinars." And I said, "Hearkening and obedience."

So the affair was concluded and we drew up the contract of marriage and I made the bride-feast; but on the wedding-night I beheld a thing than which never made God the Most High aught more loathly. Methought her people had contrived this by way of sport; so I laughed and looked for my mistress, whom I had seen [at the lattice], to make her appearance; but saw her not. When the affair was prolonged and I found none but her, I was like to go mad for vexation and fell to beseeching my Lord and humbling myself in supplication to Him that He would deliver me from her. When I arose in the morning, there came the chamber-woman and said to me, "Hast thou occasion for the bath?" "No," answered I; and she said, "Art thou for breakfast?" But I replied, "No;" and on this wise I abode three days, tasting neither meat nor drink.

When the damsel saw me in this plight, she said to me, "O man, tell me thy story, for, by Allah, an I may avail to thy deliverance, I will assuredly further thee thereto." I gave ear to her speech and put faith in her loyalty and told her the story of the damsel whom I had seen [at the lattice] and how I had fallen in love with her; whereupon quoth she, "If the girl belong to me, that which I possess is thine, and if she belong to my father, I will demand her of him and deliver her to thee." Then she fell to calling slave-girl after slave-girl and showing them to me, till I saw the damsel whom I loved and said, "This is she." Quoth my wife, "Let not thy heart be troubled, for this is my slave-girl. My father gave her to me and I give her to thee. So comfort thyself and be of good heart and cheerful eye."

Then, when it was night, she brought her to me, after she had adorned her and perfumed her, and said to her, "Gainsay not this thy lord in aught that he shall seek of thee." When she came to bed with me, I said in myself, "Verily, this damsel is more generous than I!" Then I sent away the slave-girl and drew not nigh unto her, but arose forthright and betaking myself to my wife, lay with her and did away her maidenhead. She straightway conceived by me and accomplishing the time of her pregnancy, gave birth to this dear little daughter; in whom I rejoiced, for that she was lovely to the utterest, and she hath inherited her mother's wit and her father's comeliness.

Indeed, many of the notables of the people have sought her of me in marriage, but I would not marry her to any, for that, one night, I saw, in a dream, the balance aforesaid set up and men and women being weighed, one against the other, therein, and meseemed I saw thee [and her] and it was said to me, "This is such a man, the allotted portion of such a woman." Wherefore I knew that God the Most High had allotted unto her none other than thyself, and I choose rather to marry thee to her in my lifetime than that thou shouldst marry her after my death.'

When the poor man heard the merchant's story, he became desirous of marrying his daughter. So he took her to wife and was vouchsafed of her exceeding love. Nor," added the vizier, "is this story more extraordinary than that of the rich man and his wasteful heir."

When the king heard his vizier's story, he was assured that he would not slay him and said, "I will have patience with him, so I may get of him the story of the rich man and his wasteful heir." And he bade him depart to his own house.

The Fifth Night of the Month

When the evening evened, the king sat in his privy closet and summoning the vizier, required of him the promised story. So Er Rehwan said, "Know, O king, that

Story of the Rich Man and His Wasteful Son.

THERE was once a sage of the sages, who had three sons and sons' sons, and when they waxed many and their posterity multiplied, there befell dissension between them. So he assembled them and said to them, 'Be ye one hand against other than you and despise not [one another,] lest the folk despise you, and know that the like of you is as the rope which the man cut, when it was single; then he doubled [it] and availed not to cut it; on this wise is division and union. And beware lest ye seek help of others against yourselves or ye will fall into perdition, for by whosesoever means ye attain your desire, his word will have precedence of your word. Now I have wealth which I will bury in a certain place, so it may be a store for you, against the time of your need.'

Then they left him and dispersed and one of the sons fell to spying upon his father, so that he saw him hide the treasure without the city. When he had made an end of burying it, he returned to his house; and when the morning morrowed, his son repaired to the place where he had seen his father bury the treasure and dug and took it and went his way. When the [hour of the] old man's admission [to the mercy of God] drew nigh, he called his sons to him and acquainted them with the place where he had hidden his riches. As soon as he was dead, they went and dug up the treasure and found wealth galore, for that the money, which the first son had taken by stealth, was on the surface and he knew not that under it was other money. So they took it and divided it and the first son took his share with the rest and laid it to that which he had taken aforetime, behind [the backs of] his father and his brethren. Then he took to wife the daughter of his father's brother and was vouchsafed by her a male child, who was the goodliest of the folk of his time.

When the boy grew up, his father feared for him from poverty and change of case, so he said to him, 'Dear my son, know that in my youth I wronged my brothers in the matter of our father's good, and I see thee in weal; but, if thou [come to] need, ask not of one of them nor of any other, for I have laid up for thee in yonder chamber a treasure; but do not thou open it until thou come to lack thy day's food.' Then he died, and his wealth, which was a great matter, fell to his son. The young man had not patience to wait till he had made an end of that which was with him, but rose and opened the chamber, and behold, it was [empty and its walls were] whitened, and in its midst was a rope hanging down and half a score bricks, one upon another, and a scroll, wherein was written, 'Needs must death betide; so hang thyself and beg not of any, but kick away the bricks, so there may be no escape for thee, and thou shall be at rest from the exultation of enemies and enviers and the bitterness of poverty.'

When the youth saw this, he marvelled at that which his father had done and said, 'This is a sorry treasure.' Then he went forth and fell to eating and drinking with the folk, till nothing was left him and he abode two days without tasting food, at the end of which time he took a handkerchief and selling it for two dirhems, bought bread and milk with the price and left it on the shelf [and went out. Whilst he was gone,] a dog came and took the bread and spoiled the milk, and when the man returned and saw this, he buffeted his face and went forth, distraught, at a venture. Presently, he met

a friend of his, to whom he discovered his case, and the other said to him, 'Art thou not ashamed to talk thus? How hast thou wasted all this wealth and now comest telling lies and saying, "The dog hath mounted on the shelf," and talking nonsense?' And he reviled him.

So the youth returned to his house, and indeed the world was grown black in his eyes and he said, 'My father said sooth.' Then he opened the chamber door and piling up the bricks under his feet, put the rope about his neck and kicked away the bricks and swung himself off; whereupon the rope gave way with him [and he fell] to the ground and the ceiling clove in sunder and there poured down on him wealth galore, So he knew that his father meant to discipline him by means of this and invoked God's mercy on him. Then he got him again that which he had sold of lands and houses and what not else and became once more in good case. Moreover, his friends returned to him and he entertained them some days.

Then said he to them one day, 'There was with us bread and the locusts ate it; so we put in its place a stone, a cubit long and the like broad, and the locusts came and gnawed away the stone, because of the smell of the bread.' Quoth one of his friends (and it was he who had given him the lie concerning the dog and the bread and milk), 'Marvel not at this, for mice do more than that.' And he said, 'Go to your houses. In the days of my poverty, I was a liar [when I told you] of the dog's climbing upon the shelf and eating the bread and spoiling the milk; and to-day, for that I am rich again, I say sooth [when I tell you] that locusts devoured a stone a cubit long and a cubit broad.' They were confounded at his speech and departed from him; and the youth's good flourished and his case was amended. Nor," added the vizier,"is this stranger or more extraordinary than the story of the king's son who fell in love with the picture."

Quoth the king, "Belike, if I hear this story, I shall gain wisdom from it; so I will not hasten in the slaying of this vizier, nor will I put him to death before the thirty days have expired." Then he gave him leave to withdraw, and he went away to his own house.

The Sixth Night of the Month

When the day departed and the evening came, the king sat in his privy chamber and summoned the vizier, who presented himself to him and he questioned him of the story. So the vizier said, "Know, O august king, that

The King's Son Who Fell in Love With the Picture.

THERE was once, in a province of Persia, a king of the kings, who was mighty of estate, endowed with majesty and venerance and having troops and guards at his command; but he was childless. Towards the end of his life, his Lord vouchsafed him a male child, and the boy grew up and was comely and learned all manner of knowledge. He made him a private place, to wit, a lofty palace, builded with coloured marbles and [adorned with] jewels and paintings. When the prince entered the palace, he saw in its ceiling the picture [of a woman], than whom he had never beheld a fairer of aspect, and she was compassed about with slave-girls; whereupon he fell down in a swoon and became distraught for love of her. Then he sat under the picture, till, one day, his father came in to him and finding him wasted of body and changed of colour, by reason of his [continual] looking on that picture, thought that he was ill and sent for the sages and physicians, that they might medicine him. Moreover, he said to one of his boon- companions, 'If thou canst learn what aileth my son, thou shalt have of me largesse.' So the courtier went in to the prince and spoke him fair and cajoled him, till he confessed to him that his malady was caused by the picture. Then he returned to the king and told him what ailed his son, whereupon he transported the prince to another palace and made his former lodging the guest-house; and whosoever of the Arabs was entertained therein, he questioned of the picture, but none could give him tidings thereof.

One day, there came a traveller and seeing the picture, said, 'There is no god but God! My brother wrought this picture.' So the king sent for him and questioned him of the affair of the picture and where was he who had wrought it. 'O my lord,' answered the traveller, 'we are two brothers and one of us went to the land of Hind and fell in love with the king's daughter of the country, and it is she who is the original of the portrait. In every city he entereth, he painteth her portrait, and I follow him, and long is my journey.' When the king's son heard this, he said,'Needs must I travel to this damsel.' So he took all manner rarities and store of riches and journeyed days and nights till he entered the land of Hind, nor did he win thereto save after sore travail. Then he enquired of the King of Hind and he also heard of him.

When the prince came before him, he sought of him his daughter in marriage, and the king said, 'Indeed, thou art her equal, but none dare name a man to her, because of her aversion to men.' So the prince pitched his tents under the windows of the princess's palace, till one day he got hold of one of her favourite slave-girls and gave her wealth galore. Quoth she to him, 'Hast thou a wish?' Yes,' answered he and acquainted her with his case; and she said, 'Indeed thou puttest thyself in peril.' Then he abode, flattering himself with false hopes, till all that he had with him was gone and the servants fled from him; whereupon quoth he to one in whom he trusted, 'I am minded to go to my country and fetch what may suffice me and return hither.' And the other answered, 'It is for thee to decide.' So they set out to return, but the way was long to them and all that the prince had with him was spent and his company died and there abode but one with him, on whom he loaded what remained of the victual and they left the rest and fared on. Then there came out a lion and ate the servant, and

the prince abode alone. He went on, till his beast stood still, whereupon he left her and fared on afoot till his feet swelled.

Presently he came to the land of the Turks, and he naked and hungry and having with him nought but somewhat of jewels, bound about his fore-arm. So he went to the bazaar of the goldsmiths and calling one of the brokers, gave him the jewels. The broker looked and seeing two great rubies, said to him, 'Follow me.' So he followed him, till he brought him to a goldsmith, to whom he gave the jewels, saying, 'Buy these.' Quoth he, 'Whence hadst thou these?' And the broker replied, 'This youth is the owner of them.' Then said the goldsmith to the prince, 'Whence hadst thou these rubies?' And he told him all that had befallen him and that he was a king's son. The goldsmith marvelled at his story and bought of him the rubies for a thousand dinars.

Then said the prince to him, 'Make ready to go with me to my country.' So he made ready and went with the prince till he drew near the frontiers of his father's kingdom, where the people received him with the utmost honour and sent to acquaint his father with his son's coming. The king came out to meet him and they entreated the goldsmith with honour. The prince abode awhile with his father, then set out, [he and the goldsmith] to return to the country of the fair one, the daughter of the King of Hind; but there met him robbers by the way and he fought the sorest of battles and was slain. The goldsmith buried him and marked his grave and returned, sorrowing and distraught to his own country, without telling any of the prince's death.

To return to the king's daughter of whom the prince went in quest and on whose account he was slain. She had been used to look out from the top of her palace and gaze on the youth and on his beauty and grace; so she said to her slave-girl one day, 'Harkye! What is come of the troops that were encamped beside my palace?' Quoth the maid, 'They were the troops of the youth, the king's son of the Persians, who came to demand thee in marriage, and wearied himself on thine account, but thou hadst no compassion on him.' 'Out on thee!' cried the princess. 'Why didst thou not tell me?' And the damsel answered, 'I feared thy wrath.' Then she sought an audience of the king her father and said to him, 'By Allah, I will go in quest of him, even as he came in quest of me; else should I not do him justice.'

So she made ready and setting out, traversed the deserts and spent treasures till she came to Sejestan, where she called a goldsmith to make her somewhat of trinkets. [Now the goldsmith in question was none other than the prince's friend]; so, when he saw her, he knew her (for that the prince had talked with him of her and had depictured her to him) and questioned her of her case. She acquainted him with her errand, whereupon he buffeted his face and rent his clothes and strewed dust on his head and fell a-weeping. Quoth she, 'Why dost thou thus?' And he acquainted her with the prince's case and how he was his comrade and told her that he was dead; whereat she grieved for him and faring on to his father and mother, [acquainted them with the case].

So the prince's father and his uncle and his mother and the grandees of the realm repaired to his tomb and the princess made lamentation over him, crying aloud. She abode by the tomb a whole month; then she let fetch painters and caused them limn her portraiture and that of the king's son. Moreover, she set down in writing their story

and that which had befallen them of perils and afflictions and set it [together with the pictures], at the head of the tomb; and after a little, they departed from the place. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary, O king of the age, than the story of the fuller and his wife and the trooper and what passed between them."

With this the king bade the vizier go away to his lodging, and when he arose in the morning, he abode his day in his house.

The Seventh Night of the Month.

AT eventide the king sat [in his privy sitting-chamber] and sending for the vizier, said to him, "Tell me the story of the fuller and his wife." "With all my heart," answered the vizier. So he came forward and said, "Know, O king of the age, that

Story of the Fuller and His Wife.

THERE was once in a certain city a woman fair of favour, who had to lover a trooper. Her husband was a fuller, and when he went out to his business, the trooper used to come to her and abide with her till the time of the fuller's return, when he would go away. On this wise they abode awhile, till one day the trooper said to his mistress, 'I mean to take me a house near unto thine and dig an underground passage from my house to thy house, and do thou say to thy husband, "My sister hath been absent with her husband and now they have returned from their travels; and I have made her take up her sojourn in my neighbourhood, so I may foregather with her at all times. So go thou to her husband the trooper and offer him thy wares [for sale], and thou wilt see my sister with him and wilt see that she is I and I am she, without doubt. So, Allah, Allah, go to my sister's husband and give ear to that which he shall say to thee."'

Accordingly, the trooper bought him a house near at hand and made therein an underground passage communicating with his mistress's house. When he had accomplished his affair, the wife bespoke her husband as her lover had lessoned her and he went out to go to the trooper's house, but turned back by the way, whereupon quoth she to him, 'By Allah, go forthright, for that my sister asketh of thee.' So the dolt of a fuller went out and made for the trooper's house, whilst his wife forewent him thither by the secret passage, and going up, sat down beside her lover. Presently, the fuller entered and saluted the trooper and his [supposed] wife and was confounded at the coincidence of the case. Then doubt betided him and he returned in haste to his dwelling; but she forewent him by the underground passage to her chamber and donning her wonted clothes, sat [waiting] for him and said to him, 'Did I not bid thee go to my sister and salute her husband and make friends with them?' Quoth he, 'I did this, but I misdoubted of my affair, when I saw his wife.' And she said, 'Did I not tell thee that she resembleth me and I her, and there is nought to distinguish between us but our clothes? Go back to her.'

So, of the heaviness of his wit, he believed her and turning back, went in to the trooper; but she had foregone him, and when he saw her beside her lover, he fell to looking on her and pondering. Then he saluted her and she returned him the salutation; and when she spoke, he was bewildered. So the trooper said to him, 'What ails thee to be thus?' And he answered, 'This woman is my wife and the voice is her voice.' Then he rose in haste and returning to his own house, saw his wife, who had foregone him by the secret passage. So he went back to the trooper's house and saw her sitting as before; whereupon he was abashed before her and sitting down in the trooper's sitting-chamber, ate and drank with him and became drunken and abode without sense all that day till nightfall, when the trooper arose and shaving off some of the fuller's hair (which was long and flowing) after the fashion of the Turks, clipped the rest short and clapped a tarboush on his head.

Then he thrust his feet into boots and girt him with a sword and a girdle and bound about his middle a quiver and a bow and arrows. Moreover, he put money in his pocket and thrust into his sleeve letters-patent addressed to the governor of

Ispahan, bidding him assign to Rustem Khemartekeni a monthly allowance of a hundred dirhems and ten pounds of bread and five pounds of meat and enrol him among the Turks under his commandment. Then he took him up and carrying him forth, left him in one of the mosques.

The fuller gave not over sleeping till sunrise, when he awoke and finding himself in this plight, misdoubted of his affair and imagined that he was a Turk and abode putting one foot forward and drawing the other back. Then said he in himself, 'I will go to my dwelling, and if my wife know me, then am I Ahmed the fuller; but, if she know me not, I am a Turk.' So he betook himself to his house; but when the artful baggage his wife saw him, she cried out in his face, saying, 'Whither away, O trooper? Wilt thou break into the house of Ahmed the fuller, and he a man of repute, having a brother-in-law a Turk, a man of high standing with the Sultan? An thou depart not, I will acquaint my husband and he will requite thee thy deed.'

When he heard her words, the dregs of the drunkenness wrought in him and he imagined that he was indeed a Turk. So he went out from her and putting his hand to his sleeve, found therein a scroll and gave it to one who read it to him. When he heard that which was written in the scroll, his mind was confirmed in the false supposition; but he said in himself, 'Maybe my wife seeketh to put a cheat on me; so I will go to my fellows the fullers; and if they know me not, then am I for sure Khemartekeni the Turk.' So he betook himself to the fullers and when they espied him afar off, they thought that he was one of the Turks, who used to wash their clothes with them without payment and give them nothing.

Now they had complained of them aforetime to the Sultan, and he said, 'If any of the Turks come to you, pelt them with stones.' So, when they saw the fuller, they fell upon him with sticks and stones and pelted him; whereupon quoth he [in himself], 'Verily, I am a Turk and knew it not.' Then he took of the money in his pocket and bought him victual [for the journey] and hired a hackney and set out for Ispahan, leaving his wife to the trooper. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary than the story of the merchant and the old woman and the king."

The vizier's story pleased King Shah Bekht and his heart clave to the story of the merchant and the old woman; so he bade Er Rehwan withdraw to his lodging, and he went away to his house and abode there the next day.

The Eight Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king sat in his privy chamber and bade fetch the vizier, who presented himself before him, and the king required of him the promised story. So the vizier answered, "With all my heart. Know, O king, that

Story of the Old Woman, the Merchant and the King.

THERE was once in a city of Khorassan a family of affluence and distinction, and the townsfolk used to envy them for that which God had vouchsafed them. As time went on, their fortune ceased from them and they passed away, till there remained of them but one old woman. When she grew feeble and decrepit, the townsfolk succoured her not with aught, but put her forth of the city, saying, 'This old woman shall not harbour with us, for that we do her kindness and she requiteth us with evil.' So she took shelter in a ruined place and strangers used to bestow alms upon her, and on this wise she abode a while of time.

Now the uncle's son of the king of the city had aforetime disputed [the kingship] with him, and the people misliked the king; but God the Most High decreed that he should get the better of his cousin. However, jealousy of him abode in his heart and he acquainted the vizier, who hid it not and sent [him] money. Moreover, he fell to summoning [all strangers who came to the town], man after man, and questioning them of their faith and their worldly estate, and whoso answered him not [to his liking], he took his good. Now a certain wealthy man of the Muslims was on a journey and it befell that he arrived at that city by night, unknowing what was to do, and coming to the ruin aforesaid, gave the old woman money and said to her, 'No harm upon thee.' Whereupon she lifted up her voice and prayed [for him], He set down his merchandise by her [and abode with her] the rest of the night and the next day.

Now thieves had followed him, so they might rob him of his good, but availed not unto aught; wherefore he went up to the old woman and kissed her head and exceeded in munificence to her. Then she [warned him of that which awaited strangers entering the town and] said to him, 'I like not this for thee and I fear mischief for thee from these questions that the vizier hath appointed for the confrontation of the ignorant.' And she expounded to him the case according to its fashion. Then said she to him, 'But have no concern: only carry me with thee to thy lodging, and if he question thee of aught, whilst I am with thee, I will expound the answers to thee.' Se he carried her with him to the city and established her in his lodging and entreated her kindly.

Presently, the vizier heard of the merchant's coming; so he sent to him and let bring him to his house and talked with him awhile of his travels and of that which he had abidden therein, and the merchant answered him thereof. Then said the vizier, 'I will put certain questions to thee, which if thou answer me, it will be well [for thee].' And the merchant rose and made him no answer. Quoth the vizier, 'What is the weight of the elephant?' The merchant was perplexed and returned him no answer and gave himself up for lost. Then said he, 'Grant me three days' time.' So the vizier granted him the delay he sought and he returned to his lodging and related what had passed to the old woman, who said, 'When the morrow cometh, go to the vizier and say to him, "Make a ship and launch it on the sea and put in it an elephant, and when it sinketh in the water, [under the beast's weight], mark the place to which the water riseth. Then take out the elephant and cast in stones in its place, till the ship sink to the mark

aforesaid; whereupon do thou take out the stones and weigh them and thou wilt know the weight of the elephant"'

So, when he arose in the morning, he repaired to the vizier and repeated to him that which the old woman had taught him; whereat the vizier marvelled and said to him, 'What sayst thou of a man, who seeth in his house four holes, and in each a viper offering to come out and kill him, and in his house are four staves and each hole may not be stopped but with the ends of two staves? How shall he stop all the holes and deliver himself from the vipers?' When the merchant heard this, there betided him [of concern] what made him forget the first and he said to the vizier, 'Grant me time, so I may consider the answer.' 'Go out,' replied the vizier, 'and bring me the answer, or I will seize thy good.'

The merchant went out and returned to the old woman, who, seeing him changed of colour, said to him, 'What did he ask thee, [may God confound] his hoariness?' So he acquainted her with the case and she said to him, 'Fear not; I will bring thee forth of this [strait].' Quoth he, 'God requite thee with good!' And she said, 'To-morrow go to him with a stout heart and say, "The answer to that whereof thou askest me is that thou put the heads of two staves into one of the holes; then take the other two staves and lay them across the middle of the first two and stop with their heads the second hole and with their butts the fourth hole. Then take the butts of the first two staves and stop with them the third hole."'

So he repaired to the vizier and repeated to him the answer; and he marvelled at its justness and said to him, 'Go; by Allah, I will ask thee no more questions, for thou with thy skill marrest my foundation.' Then he entreated him friendly and the merchant acquainted him with the affair of the old woman; whereupon quoth the vizier, 'Needs must the man of understanding company with those of understanding.' Thus did this weak woman restore to that man his life and good on the easiest wise. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary than the story of the credulous husband."

When the king heard this story, he said, "How like is this to our own case!" Then he bade the vizier retire to his lodging; so he withdrew to his house and on the morrow he abode at home [till the king should summon him to his presence.]

The Ninth Night of the Month.

WHEN the night came, the king sat in his privy chamber and sending after the vizier, sought of him the promised story; and he said, “Know, O august king, that

Story of the Credulous Husband

THERE was once of old time a foolish, ignorant man, who had wealth galore, and his wife was a fair woman, who loved a handsome youth. The latter used to watch for her husband's absence and come to her, and on this wise he abode a long while. One day, as the woman was private with her lover, he said to her, 'O my lady and my beloved, if thou desire me and love me, give me possession of thyself and accomplish my need in thy husband's presence; else will I never again come to thee nor draw near thee, what while I abide on life.' Now she loved him with an exceeding love and could not brook his separation an hour nor could endure to vex him; so, when she heard his words, she said to him, ['So be it,] in God's name, O my beloved and solace of mine eyes, may he not live who would vex thee!' Quoth he, 'To-day?' And she said, 'Yes, by thy life,' and appointed him of this.

When her husband came home, she said to him, 'I desire to go a-pleasuring.' And he said, ' With all my heart.' So he went, till he came to a goodly place, abounding in vines and water, whither he carried her and pitched her a tent beside a great tree; and she betook herself to a place beside the tent and made her there an underground hiding-place, [in which she hid her lover]. Then said she to her husband, 'I desire to mount this tree.' And he said, 'Do so.' So she climbed up and when she came to the top of the tree, she cried out and buffeted her face, saying, 'Lewd fellow that thou art, are these thy usages? Thou sworest [fidelity to me] and liedst.' And she repeated her speech twice and thrice.

Then she came down from the tree and rent her clothes and said, 'O villain, if these be thy dealings with me before my eyes, how dost thou when thou art absent from me?' Quoth he, 'What aileth thee?' and she said, 'I saw thee swive the woman before my very eyes.' 'Not so, by Allah!' cried he. 'But hold thy peace till I go up and see.' So he climbed the tree and no sooner did he begin to do so than up came the lover [from his hiding-place] and taking the woman by the legs, [fell to swiving her]. When the husband came to the top of the tree, he looked and beheld a man swiving his wife. So he said, 'O strumpet, what doings are these?' And he made haste to come down from the tree to the ground; [but meanwhile the lover had returned to his hiding-place] and his wife said to him, 'What sawest thou?' 'I saw a man swive thee,' answered he; and she said, 'Thou liest; thou sawest nought and sayst this but of conjecture.'

On this wise they did three times, and every time [he climbed the tree] the lover came up out of the underground place and bestrode her, whilst her husband looked on and she still said, 'O liar, seest thou aught?' 'Yes,' would he answer and came down in haste, but saw no one and she said to him, 'By my life, look and say nought but the truth!' Then said he to her, 'Arise, let us depart this place, for it is full of Jinn and Marids.' [So they returned to their house] and passed the night [there] and the man arose in the morning, assured that this was all but imagination and illusion. And so the lover accomplished his desire. Nor, O king of the age," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary than the story of the king and the tither."

When the king heard this from the vizier, he bade him go away [and he withdrew to his house].

The Tenth Night of the Month.

WHEN it was eventide, the king summoned the vizier and sought of him the story of the King and the Tither, and he said, "Know, O king, that

Story of the Unjust King and the Tither.

THERE was once a king of the kings of the earth, who dwelt in a populous city, abounding in good; but he oppressed its people and used them foully, so that he ruined the city; and he was named none other than tyrant and misdoer. Now he was wont, whenas he heard of a masterful man in another land, to send after him and tempt him with money to take service with him; and there was a certain tither, who exceeded all his brethren in oppression of the people and foulness of dealing. So the king sent after him and when he stood before him, he found him a mighty man and said to him, 'Thou hast been praised to me, but meseemeth thou overpassest the description. Set out to me somewhat of thy sayings and doings, so I may be dispensed therewith from [enquiring into] all thy circumstance.' 'With all my heart,' answered the other. 'Know, O king, that I oppress the folk and people the land, whilst other than I wasteth it and peopleth it not.'

Now the king was leaning back; so he sat up and said, 'Tell me of this.' 'It is well,' answered the tither. 'I go to the man whom I purpose to tithe and circumvent him and feign to be occupied with certain business, so that I seclude myself therewith from the folk; and meanwhile the man is squeezed after the foulest fashion, till nothing is left him. Then I appear and they come in to me and questions befall concerning him and I say, "Indeed, I was ordered worse than this, for some one (may God curse him!) hath slandered him to the king." Then I take half of his good and return him the rest publicly before the folk and send him away to his house, in all honour and worship, and he causeth the money returned to be carried before him, whilst he and all who are with him call down blessings on me. So is it published in the city that I have returned him his money and he himself saith the like, so he may have a claim on me for the favour due to whoso praiseth me. Then I feign to forget him till some time hath passed over him, when I send for him and recall to him somewhat of that which hath befallen aforetime and demand [of him] somewhat privily. So he doth this and hasteneth to his dwelling and sendeth what I bid him, with a glad heart. Then I send to another man, between whom and the other is enmity, and lay hands upon him and feign to the first man that it is he who hath traduced him to the king and taken the half of his good; and the people praise me.'

The king marvelled at this and at his dealing and contrivance and invested him with [the control of] all his affairs and of his kingdom and the land abode [under his governance] and he said to him, 'Take and people.' One day, the tither went out and saw an old man, a woodcutter, and with him wood; so he said to him, 'Pay a dirhem tithe for thy load.' Quoth the old man, 'Behold, thou killest me and killest my family.' 'What [meanest thou]?' said the tither. 'Who killeth the folk?' And the other answered, 'If thou suffer me enter the city, I shall sell the wood there for three dirhems, whereof I will give thee one and buy with the other two what will support my family; but, if thou press me for the tithe without the city, the load will sell but for one dirhem and thou wilt take it and I shall abide without food, I and my family. Indeed, thou and I in this circumstance are like unto David and Solomon, on whom be peace!' ['How so?' asked the tither, and the woodcutter said], 'Know that

Story of David and Solomon.

CERTAIN husbandmen once made complaint to David (on whom be peace!) against certain owners of sheep, whose flocks had fallen upon their crops by night and devoured them, and he bade value the crops [and that the shepherds should make good the amount]. But Solomon (on whom be peace!) rose and said, "Nay, but let the sheep be delivered to the husbandmen, so they may take their milk and wool, till they have repaid themselves the value of their crops; then let the sheep return to their owners." So David withdrew his own ordinance and caused execute that of Solomon; yet was David no oppressor; but Solomon's judgment was more pertinent and he showed himself therein better versed in jurisprudence.'

When the tither heard the old man's speech, he relented towards him and said to him, 'O old man, I make thee a present of that which is due from thee, and do thou cleave to me and leave me not, so haply I may get of thee profit that shall do away from me my errors and guide me into the way of righteousness.' So the old man followed him, and there met him another with a load of wood. Quoth the tither to him, 'Pay what is due from thee.' And he answered, 'Have patience with me till to-morrow, for I owe the hire of a house, and I will sell another load of wood and pay thee two days' tithe.' But he refused him this and the old man said to him, 'If thou constrain him unto this, thou wilt enforce him quit thy country, for that he is a stranger here and hath no domicile; and if he remove on account of one dirhem, thou wilt lose [of him] three hundred and threescore dirhems a year. Thus wilt thou lose the much in keeping the little.' Quoth the tither, 'I give him a dirhem every month to the hire of his lodging.'

Then he went on and presently there met him a third woodcutter and he said to him, 'Pay what is due from thee.' And he answered, 'I will pay thee a dirhem when I enter the city; or take of me four danics [now].' Quoth the tither, 'I will not do it,' but the old man said to him, 'Take of him the four danics presently, for it is easy to take and hard to restore.' 'By Allah,' quoth the tither, 'it is good!' and he arose and went on, crying out, at the top of his voice and saying, 'I have no power to-day [to do evil].' Then he put off his clothes and went forth wandering at a venture, repenting unto his Lord. Nor," added the vizier, "is this story more extraordinary than that of the thief who believed the woman and sought refuge with God against falling in with her like, by reason of her cunning contrivance for herself."

When the king heard this, he said in himself, "Since the tither repented, in consequence of the admonitions [of the woodcutter], it behoves that I spare this vizier, so I may hear the story of the thief and the woman." And he bade Er Rehwan withdraw to his lodging.

The Eleventh Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening came and the king sat in his privy chamber, he summoned the vizier and required of him the story of the thief and the woman. Quoth the vizier, "Know, O king, that

Story of the Thief and the Woman.

A CERTAIN thief was a [cunning] workman and used not to steal aught, till he had spent all that was with him; moreover, he stole not from his neighbours, neither companied with any of the thieves, lest some one should come to know him and his case get wind. On this wise he abode a great while, in flourishing case, and his secret was concealed, till God the Most High decreed that he broke in upon a poor man, deeming that he was rich. When he entered the house, he found nought, whereat he was wroth, and necessity prompted him to wake the man, who was asleep with his wife. So he aroused him and said to him, 'Show me thy treasure.'

Now he had no treasure; but the thief believed him not and insisted upon him with threats and blows. When he saw that he got no profit of him, he said to him, 'Swear by the oath of divorce from thy wife [that thou hast nothing].' So he swore and his wife said to him, 'Out on thee! Wilt thou divorce me? Is not the treasure buried in yonder chamber?' Then she turned to the thief and conjured him to multiply blows upon her husband, till he should deliver to him the treasure, concerning which he had sworn falsely. So he drubbed him grievously, till he carried him to a certain chamber, wherein she signed to him that the treasure was and that he should take it up.

So the thief entered, he and the husband; and when they were both in the chamber, she locked on them the door, which was a stout one, and said to the thief, 'Out on thee, O fool! Thou hast fallen [into the trap] and now I have but to cry out and the officers of the police will come and take thee and thou wilt lose thy life, O Satan!' Quoth he, 'Let me go forth;' and she said, 'Thou art a man and I am a woman; and in thy hand is a knife and I am afraid of thee.' Quoth he, 'Take the knife from me.' So she took the knife from him and said to her husband, 'Art thou a woman and he a man? Mar his nape with beating, even as he did with thee; and if he put out his hand to thee, I will cry out and the police will come and take him and cut him in sunder.' So the husband said to him, 'O thousand-horned, O dog, O traitor, I owe thee a deposit, for which thou dunnest me.' And he fell to beating him grievously with a stick of live-oak, whilst he called out to the woman for help and besought her of deliverance; but she said, 'Abide in thy place till the morning, and thou shalt see wonders.' And her husband beat him within the chamber, till he [well- nigh] made an end of him and he swooned away.

Then he left beating him and when the thief came to himself, the woman said to her husband, 'O man, this house is on hire and we owe its owners much money, and we have nought; so how wilt thou do?' And she went on to bespeak him thus. Quoth the thief, 'And what is the amount of the rent?' 'It will be fourscore dirhems,' answered the husband; and the thief said, 'I will pay this for thee and do thou let me go my way.' Then said the wife, 'O man, how much do we owe the baker and the greengrocer?' Quoth the thief, 'What is the sum of this?' And the husband said, 'Sixscore dirhems.' 'That makes two hundred dirhems,' rejoined the other; 'let me go my way and I will pay them.' But the wife said, 'O my dear one, and the girl groweth up and needs must we marry her and equip her and [do] what else is needful' So the thief said to the husband, 'How much dost thou want?' And he answered, 'A hundred dirhems, in the

way of moderation.' Quoth the thief, 'That makes three hundred dirhems.' And the woman said, 'O my dear one, when the girl is married, thou wilt need money for winter expenses, charcoal and firewood and other necessaries.' 'What wouldst thou have?' asked the thief; and she said, 'A hundred dirhems.' 'Be it four hundred dirhems,' rejoined he; and she said, 'O my dear one and solace of mine eyes, needs must my husband have capital in hand, wherewith he may buy merchandise and open him a shop.' 'How much will that be?' asked he, and she said, 'A hundred dirhems.' Quoth the thief, '[That makes five hundred dirhems; I will pay it;] but may I be divorced from my wife if all my possessions amount to more than this, and that the savings of twenty years! Let me go my way, so I may deliver them to thee.' 'O fool,' answered she, 'how shall I let thee go thy way? Give me a right token.' [So he gave her a token for his wife] and she cried out to her young daughter and said to her, 'Keep this door.'

Then she charged her husband keep watch over the thief, till she should return, and repairing to his wife, acquainted her with his case and told her that her husband the thief had been taken and had compounded for his release, at the price of seven hundred dirhems, and named to her the token. So she gave her the money and she took it and returned to her house. By this time, the dawn had broken; so she let the thief go his way, and when he went out, she said to him, 'O my dear one, when shall I see thee come and take the treasure?' 'O indebted one,' answered he, 'when thou needest other seven hundred dirhems, wherewithal to amend thy case and that of thy children and to discharge thy debts.' And he went out, hardly believing in his deliverance from her. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary than the story of the three men and our Lord Jesus."

And the king bade him depart to his own house.

The Twelfth Night of the Month.

WHEN it was eventide, the king summoned the vizier and bade him tell the [promised] story, "Hearkening and obedience," answered he. "Know, O king, that

Story of the Three Men and Our Lord Jesus.

THREE men once went out in quest of riches and came upon a block of gold, weighing a hundred pounds. When they saw it, they took it up on their shoulders and fared on with it, till they drew near a certain city, when one of them said, 'Let us sit in the mosque, whilst one of us goes and buys us what we may eat." So they sat down in the mosque and one of them arose and entered the city. When he came therein, his soul prompted him to play his fellows false and get the gold for himself alone. So he bought food and poisoned it; but, when he returned to his comrades, they fell upon him and slew him, so they might enjoy the gold without him. Then they ate of the [poisoned] food and died, and the gold abode cast down over against them.

Presently, Jesus, son of Mary (on whom be peace!) passed by and seeing this, besought God the Most High for tidings of their case; so He told him what had betided them, whereat great was his wonderment and he related to his disciples what he had seen. Quoth one of them, 'O Spirit of God, nought resembleth this but my own story.' 'How so?' asked Jesus, and the other said,

The Disciple's Story.

'I WAS aforetime in such a city and hid a thousand dirhems in a monastery there. After awhile, I went thither and taking the money, bound it about my middle. [Then I set out to return] and when I came to the desert, the carrying of the money was burdensome to me. Presently, I espied a horseman pricking after me; so I [waited till he came up and] said to him, "O horseman, carry this money [for me] and earn reward and recompense [from God]." "Nay," answered he; "I will not do it, for I should weary myself and weary my horse." Then he went on, but, before he had gone far, he said in himself, "If I take up the money and spur my horse and forego him, how shall he overtake me?" And I also said in myself, "Verily, I erred [in asking him to carry the money]; for, had he taken it and made off, I could have done nought." Then he turned back to me and said to me, "Hand over the money, that I may carry it for thee." But I answered him, saying, "That which hath occurred to thy mind hath occurred to mine also; so go in peace."'

Quoth Jesus (on whom be peace!), 'Had these dealt prudently, they had taken thought for themselves; but they neglected the issues of events; for that whoso acteth prudently is safe and conquereth, and whoso neglecteth precaution perisheth and repenteth.' Nor," added the vizier," is this more extraordinary nor goodlier than the story of the king, whose kingdom was restored to him and his wealth, after he had become poor, possessing not a single dirhem."

When the king heard this, he said in himself "How like is this to my own story in the matter of the vizier and his slaughter! Had I not used precaution, I had put him to death." And he bade Er Rehwan depart to his own house.

The Thirteenth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king sent for the vizier to his privy sitting chamber and bade him [tell] the [promised] story. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. They avouch, O king, that

Story of the Dethroned King Whose Kingdom and Good Were Restored to Him.

THERE was once, in a city of Hind, a just and beneficent king, and he had a vizier, a man of understanding, just in his judgment, praiseworthy in his policy, in whose hand was the governance of all the affairs of the realm; for he was firmly stablished in the king's favour and high in esteem with the folk of his time, and the king set great store by him and committed himself to him in all his affairs, by reason of his contrivance for his subjects, and he had helpers who were content with him.

Now the king had a brother, who envied him and would fain have been in his place; and when he was weary of looking for his death and the term of his life seemed distant unto him, he took counsel with certain of his partisans and they said, 'The vizier is the king's counsellor and but for him, there would be left the king no kingdom.' So the king's brother cast about for the ruin of the vizier, but could find no means of accomplishing his design; and when the affair grew long upon him, he said to his wife, 'What deemest thou will advantage us in this?' Quoth she, 'What is it?' And he replied, 'I mean in the matter of yonder vizier, who inciteth my brother to devoutness with all his might and biddeth him thereto, and indeed the king is infatuated with his counsel and committeth to him the governance of all things and matters.' Quoth she, 'Thou sayst truly; but how shall we do with him?' And he answered, 'I have a device, so thou wilt help me in that which I shall say to thee.' Quoth she, 'Thou shall have my help in whatsoever thou desirest.' And he said, 'I mean to dig him a pit in the vestibule and dissemble it artfully.'

So he did this, and when it was night, he covered the pit with a light covering, so that, whenas the vizier stepped upon it, it would give way with him. Then he sent to him and summoned him to the presence in the king's name, and the messenger bade him enter by the privy door. So he entered in thereat, alone, and when he stepped upon the covering of the pit, it gave way with him and he fell to the bottom; whereupon the king's brother fell to pelting him with stones. When the vizier saw what had betided him, he gave himself up for lost; so he stirred not and lay still. The prince, seeing him make no motion, [deemed him dead]; so he took him forth and wrapping him up in his clothes, cast him into the billows of the sea in the middle of the night. When the vizier felt the water, he awoke from the swoon and swam awhile, till a ship passed by him, whereupon he cried out to the sailors and they took him up.

When the morning morrowed, the people went seeking for him, but found him not; and when the king knew this, he was perplexed concerning his affair and abode unknowing what he should do. Then he sought for a vizier to fill his room, and the king's brother said, 'I have a vizier, a sufficient man.' 'Bring him to me,' said the king. So he brought him a man, whom he set at the head of affairs; but he seized upon the kingdom and clapped the king in irons and made his brother king in his stead. The new king gave himself up to all manner of wickedness, whereat the folk murmured and his vizier said to him, 'I fear lest the Indians take the old king and restore him to the

kingship and we both perish; wherefore, if we take him and cast him into the sea, we shall be at rest from him; and we will publish among the folk that he is dead.' And they agreed upon this. So they took him up and carrying him out to sea, cast him in.

When he felt the water, he struck out, and gave not over swimming till he landed upon an island, where he abode five days, finding nothing which he might eat or drink; but, on the sixth day, when he despaired of himself, he caught sight of a passing ship; so he made signals to the crew and they came and took him up and fared on with him to an inhabited country, where they set him ashore, naked as he was. There he saw a man tilling; so he sought guidance of him and the husbandman said, 'Art thou a stranger?' 'Yes,' answered the king and sat with him and they talked. The husbandman found him quickwitted and intelligent and said to him, 'If thou sawest a comrade of mine, thou wouldst see him the like of what I see thee, for his case is even as thy case, and he is presently my friend.'

Quoth the king, 'Verily, thou makest me long to see him. Canst thou not bring us together?' 'With all my heart,' answered the husbandman, and the king sat with him till he had made an end of his tillage, when he carried him to his dwelling-place and brought him in company with the other stranger, aud behold, it was his vizier. When they saw each other, they wept and embraced, and the husbandman wept for their weeping; but the king concealed their affair and said to him, 'This is a man from my country and he is as my brother.' So they abode with the husbandman and helped him for a wage, wherewith they supported themselves a long while. Meanwhile, they sought news of their country and learned that which its people suffered of straitness and oppression.

One day, there came a ship and in it a merchant from their own country, who knew them and rejoiced in them with an exceeding joy and clad them in goodly apparel. Moreover, he acquainted them with the manner of the treachery that had been practised upon them and counselled them to return to their own land, they and he with whom they had made friends, assuring them that God the Most High would restore them to their former estate. So the king returned and the folk joined themselves to him and he fell upon his brother and his vizier and took them and clapped them in prison.

Then he sat down again upon the throne of his kingship, whilst the vizier stood before him, and they returned to their former estate, but they had nought of the [goods of the world]. So the king said to his vizier, 'How shall we avail to abide in this city, and we in this state of poverty?' And he answered, 'Be at thine ease and have no concern.' Then he singled out one of the soldiers and said to him, 'Send us thy service for the year.' Now there were in the city fifty thousand subjects and in the hamlets and villages a like number; and the vizier sent to each of these, saying, 'Let each of you get an egg and lay it under a hen.' So they did this and it was neither burden nor grievance to them.

When twenty days had passed by, each [egg] was hatched, and the vizier bade them pair the chickens, male and female, and rear them well. So they did this and it was found a charge unto no one. Then they waited for them awhile and after this the vizier enquired of the chickens and was told that they were become fowls. Moreover,

they brought him all their eggs and he bade set them; and after twenty days there were hatched from each [pair] of them thirty or five-and-twenty or fifteen [chickens] at the least. The vizier let note against each man the number of chickens that pertained to him, and after two months, he took the old hens and the cockerels, and there came to him from each man nigh half a score, and he left the [young] hens with them. On like wise he sent to the country folk and let the cocks abide with them. So he got him young ones [galore] and appropriated to himself the sale of the fowls, and on this wise he got him, in the course of a year, that which the regal estate required of the king and his affairs were set right for him by the vizier's contrivance. And he peopled the country and dealt justly by his subjects and returned to them all that he took from them and lived a happy and prosperous life. Thus good judgment and prudence are better than wealth, for that understanding profiteth at all times and seasons. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary than the story of the man whose caution slew him."

When the king heard his vizier's words, he marvelled with the utmost wonderment and bade him retire to his lodging. [So Er Rehwan withdrew to his house and abode there till eventide of the next day, when he again presented himself before the king.]

The Fourteenth Night of the Month.

WHEN the vizier returned to the king, the latter sought of him the story of the man whose caution slew him and be said, “Know, O august king, that

Story of the Man Whose Caution Was the Cause of His Death.

THERE was once a man who was exceeding cautious over himself, and he set out one day on a journey to a land abounding in wild beasts. The caravan wherein he was came by night to the gate of a city; but the warders refused to open to them; so they passed the night without the city, and there were lions there. The man aforesaid, of the excess of his caution, could not fix upon a place wherein he should pass the night, for fear of the wild beasts and reptiles; so he went about seeking an empty place wherein he might lie.

Now there was a ruined building hard by and he climbed up on to a high wall and gave not over clambering hither and thither, of the excess of his carefulness, till his feet betrayed him and he slipped [and fell] to the bottom and died, whilst his companions arose in the morning in health [and weal]. Now, if he had overmastered his corrupt judgment and submitted himself to fate and fortune fore-ordained, it had been safer and better [for him]; but he made light of the folk and belittled their wit and was not content to take example by them; for his soul whispered him that he was a man of understanding and he imagined that, if he abode with them, he would perish; so his folly cast him into perdition. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary than the story of the man who was lavish of his house and his victual to one whom he knew not"

When the king heard this, he said, "I will not isolate myself from the folk and slay my vizier." And he bade him depart to his dwelling.

The Fifteenth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king let fetch the vizier and required of him the [promised] story. So he said, “Know, O king, that

Story of the Man Who Was Lavish of His House and His Victual to One Whom He Knew Not.

THERE was once an Arab of [high] rank and [goodly] presence, a man of exalted generosity and magnanimity, and he had brethren, with whom he consorted and caroused, and they were wont to assemble by turns in each other's houses. When it came to his turn, he made ready in his house all manner goodly and pleasant meats and dainty drinks and exceeding lovely flowers and excellent fruits, and made provision of all kinds of instruments of music and store of rare apothegms and marvellous stories and goodly instances and histories and witty anedotes and verses and what not else, for there was none among those with whom he was used to company but enjoyed this on every goodly wise, and in the entertainment he had provided was all whereof each had need. Then he sallied forth and went round about the city, in quest of his friends, so he might assemble them; but found none of them in his house.

Now in that town was a man of good breeding and large generosity, a merchant of condition, young of years and bright of face, who had come to that town from his own country with great store of merchandise and wealth galore. He took up his abode therein and the place was pleasant to him and he was lavish in expenditure, so that he came to the end of all his good and there remained with him nothing save that which was upon him of raiment. So he left the lodging wherein he had abidden in the days of his affluence, after he had wasted that which was therein of furniture, and fell to harbouring in the houses of the townsfolk from night to night.

One day, as he went wandering about the streets, he espied a woman of the utmost beauty and grace, and what he saw of her charms amazed him and there betided him what made him forget his present plight. She accosted him and jested with him and he besought her of foregathering and companionship. She consented to this and said to him, 'Let us go to thy lodging.' With this he repented and was perplexed concerning his affair and grieved for that which must escape him of her company by reason of the straitness of his hand, for that he had no jot of spending money. But he was ashamed to say, 'No,' after he had made suit to her; so he went on before her, bethinking him how he should rid himself of her and casting about for an excuse which he might put off on her, and gave not over going from street to street, till he entered one that had no issue and saw, at the farther end, a door, whereon was a padlock.

So he said to her, 'Do thou excuse me, for my servant hath locked the door, and who shall open to us?' Quoth she, 'O my lord, the padlock is worth [but] half a score dirhems.' So saying, she tucked up [her sleeves] from fore-arms as they were crystal and taking a stone, smote upon the padlock and broke it. Then she opened the door and said to him, 'Enter, O my lord.' So he entered, committing his affair to God, (to whom belong might and majesty,) and she entered after him and locked the door from within. They found themselves in a pleasant house, comprising all weal and gladness; and the young man went on, till he came to the sitting-chamber, and behold, it was furnished with the finest of furniture [and arrayed on the goodliest wise for the reception of guests,] as hath before been set out, [for that it was the house of the man aforesaid].

He [seated himself on the divan and] leant upon a cushion, whilst she put out her hand to her veil and did it off. Then she put off her heavy outer clothes and discovered her charms, whereupon he embraced her and kissed her and swived her; after which they washed and returned to their place and he said to her, 'Know that I have little knowledge [of what goes on] in my house, for that I trust to my servant; so arise thou and see what the boy hath made ready in the kitchen.' Accordingly, she arose and going down into the kitchen, saw cooking pots over the fire, wherein were all manner of dainty meats, and manchet-bread and fresh almond-and-honey cakes. So she set bread on a dish and ladled out [what she would] from the pots and brought it to him.

They ate and drank and sported and made merry awhile of the day; and as they were thus engaged, up came the master of the house, with his friends, whom he had brought with him, that they might carouse together, as of wont. He saw the door opened and knocked lightly, saying to his friends, 'Have patience with me, for some of my family are come to visit me; wherefore excuse belongeth [first] to God the Most High, and then to you.' So they took leave of him and went their ways, whilst he gave another light knock at the door. When the young man heard this, he changed colour and the woman said to him, 'Methinks thy servant hath returned.' 'Yes,' answered he; and she arose and opening the door to the master of the house, said to him, 'Where hast thou been? Indeed, thy master is wroth with thee.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I have but been about his occasions.'

Then he girt his middle with a handkerchief and entering, saluted the young merchant, who said to him, 'Where hast thou been?' Quoth he, 'I have done thine errands;' and the youth said, 'Go and eat and come hither and drink.' So he went away, as he bade him, and ate. Then he washed and returning to the saloon, sat down on the carpet and fell to talking with them; whereupon the young merchant's heart was comforted and his breast dilated and he addressed himself to joyance. They abode in the most delightsome life and the most abounding pleasance till a third part of the night was past, when the master of the house arose and spreading them a bed, invited them to lie down. So they lay down and the youth abode on wake, pondering their affair, till daybreak, when the woman awoke and said to her companion, 'I wish to go.' So he bade her farewell and she departed; whereupon the master of the house followed her with a purse of money and gave it to her, saying, 'Blame not my master,' and made his excuse to her for the young merchant.

Then he returned to the youth and said to him, 'Arise and come to the bath.' And he fell to shampooing his hands and feet, whilst the youth called down blessings on him and said, 'O my lord, who art thou? Methinks there is not in the world the like of thee, no, nor a pleasanter than thy composition.' Then each of them acquainted the other with his case and condition and they went to the bath; after which the master of the house conjured the young merchant to return with him and summoned his friends. So they ate and drank and he related to them the story, wherefore they praised the master of the house and glorified him; and their friendship was complete, what while the young merchant abode in the town, till God vouchsafed him a commodity of travel, whereupon they took leave of him and he departed; and this is the end of his story. Nor," added the vizier, "O king of the age, is this more marvellous than the story of the rich man who lost his wealth and his wit."

When the king heard the vizier's story, it pleased him and he bade him go to his house.

The Sixteenth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king sat in his sitting- chamber and sending for his vizier, bade him relate the story of the wealthy man who lost his wealth and his wit. So he said, "Know, O king, that

Story of the Idiot and the Sharper.

THERE was once a man of fortune, who lost his wealth, and chagrin and melancholy got the mastery of him, so that he became an idiot and lost his wit. There abode with him of his wealth about a score of dinars and he used to beg alms of the folk, and that which they gave him he would gather together and lay to the dinars that were left him. Now there was in that town a vagabond, who made his living by sharping, and he knew that the idiot had somewhat of money; so he fell to spying upon him and gave not over watching him till he saw him put in an earthen pot that which he had with him of money and enter a deserted ruin, where he sat down, [as if] to make water, and dug a hole, in which he laid the pot and covering it up, strewed earth upon the place. Then he went away and the sharper came and taking what was in the pot, covered it up again, as it was.

Presently, the idiot returned, with somewhat to add to his hoard, but found it not; so he bethought him who had followed him and remembered that he had found the sharper aforesaid assiduous in sitting with him and questioning him. So he went in quest of him, assured that he had taken the pot, and gave not over looking for him till he espied him sitting; whereupon he ran to him and the sharper saw him. [Then the idiot stood within earshot] and muttered to himself and said, 'In the pot are threescore dinars and I have with me other score in such a place and to-day I will unite the whole in the pot.' When the sharper heard him say this to himself, muttering and mumbling after his fashion, he repented him of having taken the dinars and said, 'He will presently return to the pot and find it empty; wherefore that for which I am on the look-out will escape me; and meseemeth I were best restore the dinars [to their place], so he may see them and leave all that is with him in the pot, and I can take the whole.'

Now he feared [to return to the pot then and there], lest the idiot should follow him to the place and find nothing and so his plan be marred. So he said to him, 'O Ajlan, I would have thee come to my lodging and eat bread with me." So the idiot went with him to his lodging and he seated him there and going to the market, sold somewhat of his clothes and pawned somewhat from his house and bought dainty food. Then he betook himself to the ruin and replacing the money in the pot, buried it again; after which he returned to his lodging and gave the idiot to eat and drink, and they went out together. The sharper went away and hid himself, lest the idiot should see him, whilst the latter repaired to his hiding- place and took the pot

Presently, the sharper came to the ruin, rejoicing in that which he deemed he should get, and dug in the place, but found nothing and knew that the idiot had tricked him. So he buffeted his face, for chagrin, and fell to following the other whithersoever he went, so he might get what was with him, but availed not unto this, for that the idiot knew what was in his mind and was certified that he spied upon him, [with intent to rob him]; so he kept watch over himself. Now, if the sharper had considered [the consequences of] haste and that which is begotten of loss therefrom, he had not done thus. Nor," continued the vizier, "is this story, O king of the age, rarer or more extraordinary or more diverting than the story of Khelbes and his wife and the learned man and that which befell between them."

When the king heard this story, he renounced his purpose of putting the vizier to death and his soul prompted him to continue him on life. So he bade him go away to his house.

The Seventeenth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king summoned the vizier, and when he presented himself, he required of him the [promised] story. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, O august king, that

Story of Khelbes and His Wife and the Learned Man.

THERE was once a man hight Khelbes, who was a lewd fellow, a calamity, notorious for this fashion, and he had a fair wife, renowned for beauty and loveliness. A man of his townsfolk fell in love with her and she also loved him. Now Khelbes was a crafty fellow and full of tricks, and there was in his neighbourhood a learned man, to whom the folk used to resort every day and he told them stories and admonished them [with moral instances]; and Khelbes was wont to be present in his assembly, for the sake of making a show before the folk.

Now this learned man had a wife renowned for beauty and loveliness and quickness of wit and understanding and the lover cast about for a device whereby he might win to Khelbes's wife; so he came to him and told him, as a secret, what he had seen of the learned man's wife and confided to him that he was enamoured of her and besought him of help in this. Khelbes told him that she was distinguished to the utterest for chastity and continence and that she exposed herself not to suspicion; but the other said, 'I cannot renounce her, [firstly,] because the woman inclineth to me and coveteth my wealth, and secondly, because of the greatness of my love for her; and nothing is wanting but thy help.' Quoth Khelbes, 'I will do thy will;' and the other said, 'Thou shalt have of me two dirhems a day, on condition that thou sit with the learned man and that, when he riseth from the assembly, thou speak a word notifying the breaking up of the session.' So they agreed upon this and Khelbes entered and sat in the assembly, whilst the lover was assured in his heart that the secret was safe with him, wherefore he rejoiced and was content to pay the two dirhems.

Then Khelbes used to attend the learned man's assembly, whilst the other would go in to his wife and abide with her, on such wise as he thought good, till the learned man arose from his session; and when Khelbes saw that he purposed rising, he would speak a word for the lover to hear, whereupon he went forth from Khelbes's wife, and the latter knew not that calamity was in his own house. At last the learned man, seeing Khelbes do on this wise every day, began to misdoubt of him, more by token of that which he knew of his character, and suspicion grew upon him; so, one day, he advanced the time of his rising before the wonted hour and hastening up to Khelbes, laid hold of him and said to him, 'By Allah, an thou speak a single syllable, I will do thee a mischief!' Then he went in to his wife, with Khelbes in his grasp, and behold, she was sitting, as of her wont, nor was there about her aught of suspicious or unseemly.

The learned man bethought him awhile of this, then made for Khelbes's house, which adjoined his own, still holding the latter; and when they entered, they found the young man lying on the bed with Khelbes's wife; whereupon quoth he to him, 'O accursed one, the calamity is with thee and in thine own house!' So Khelbes put away his wife and went forth, fleeing, and returned not to his own land. This, then," continued the vizier, "is the consequence of lewdness, for whoso purposeth in himself craft and perfidy, they get possession of him, and had Khelbes conceived of himself that which he conceived of the folk of dishonour and calamity, there had betided him nothing of this. Nor is this story, rare and extraordinary though it be, more

extraordinary or rarer than that of the pious woman whose husband's brother accused her of lewdness."

When the king heard this, wonderment gat hold of him and his admiration for the vizier redoubled; so he bade him go to his house and return to him [on the morrow], according to his wont. Accordingly, the vizier withdrew to his lodging, where he passed the night and the ensuing day.

VOLUME XI.
Tales from the Arabic II

Story of the Pious Woman Accused of Lewdness.

THERE was once a man of Nishapour, who had a wife of the utmost loveliness and piety, and he was minded to set out on the pilgrimage. So he commended his wife to the care of his brother and besought him to aid her in her affairs and further her to her desires till he should return, so they both abode alive and well. Then he took ship and departed and his absence was prolonged. Meanwhile, the brother went in to his brother's wife, at all times and seasons, and questioned her of her circumstances and went about her occasions; and when his visits to her were prolonged and he heard her speech and looked upon her face, the love of her gat hold upon his heart and he became distraught with passion for her and his soul prompted him [to evil]. So he besought her to lie with him, but she refused and chid him for his foul deed, and he found him no way unto presumption; wherefore he importuned her with soft speech and gentleness.

Now she was righteous in all her dealings and swerved not from one word; so, when he saw that she consented not unto him, he misdoubted that she would tell his brother, when he returned from his journey, and said to her, 'An thou consent not to this whereof I require thee, I will cause thee fall into suspicion and thou wilt perish.' Quoth she, 'Be God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) [judge] betwixt me and thee, and know that, shouldst thou tear me limb from limb, I would not consent to that whereto thou biddest me.' His folly persuaded him that she would tell her husband; so, of his exceeding despite, he betook himself to a company of people in the mosque and told them that he had witnessed a man commit adultery with his brother's wife. They believed his saying and took act of his accusation and assembled to stone her. Then they dug her a pit without the city and seating her therein, stoned her, till they deemed her dead, when they left her.

Presently a villager passed by [the pit and finding] her [alive,] carried her to his house and tended her, [till she recovered]. Now, he had a son, and when the young man saw her, he loved her and besought her of herself; but she refused and consented not to him, whereupon he redoubled in love and longing and despite prompted him to suborn a youth of the people of his village and agree with him that he should come by night and take somewhat from his father's house and that, when he was discovered, he should say that she was of accord with him in this and avouch that she was his mistress and had been stoned on his account in the city. So he did this and coming by night to the villager's house, stole therefrom goods and clothes; whereupon the old man awoke and seizing the thief, bound him fast and beat him, to make him confess. So he confessed against the woman that she had prompted him to this and that he was her lover from the city. The news was bruited abroad and the people of the city assembled to put her to death; but the old man, with whom she was, forbade them and said, 'I brought this woman hither, coveting the recompense [of God,] and I know not [the truth of] that which is said of her and will not suffer any to hurt her.' Then he gave her a thousand dirhems, by way of alms, and put her forth of the village. As for the thief, he was imprisoned for some days; after which the folk interceded for him with the old man, saying, 'This is a youth and indeed he erred;' and he released him.

Meanwhile, the woman went out at hazard and donning devotee's apparel, fared on without ceasing, till she came to a city and found the king's deputies dunning the towns-folk for the tribute, out of season. Presently, she saw a man, whom they were pressing for the tribute; so she enquired of his case and being acquainted therewith, paid down the thousand dirhems for him and delivered him from beating; whereupon he thanked her and those who were present. When he was set free, he accosted her and besought her to go with him to his dwelling. So she accompanied him thither and supped with him and passed the night. When the night darkened on him, his soul prompted him to evil, for that which he saw of her beauty and loveliness, and he lusted after her and required her [of love]; but she repelled him and bade him fear God the Most High and reminded him of that which she had done with him of kindness and how she had delivered him from beating and humiliation.

However, he would not be denied, and when he saw her [constant] refusal of herself to him, he feared lest she should tell the folk of him. So, when he arose in the morning, he took a scroll and wrote in it what he would of forgery and falsehood and going up to the Sultan's palace, said, '[I have] an advisement [for the king].' So he bade admit him and he delivered him the writ that he had forged, saying, 'I found this letter with the woman, the devotee, the ascetic, and indeed she is a spy, a secret informer against the king to his enemy; and I deem the king's due more incumbent on me than any other and his advisement the first [duty], for that he uniteth in himself all the people, and but for the king's presence, the subjects would perish; wherefore I have brought [thee] warning.' The king put faith in his words and sent with him those who should lay hands upon the woman and put her to death; but they found her not.

As for the woman, whenas the man went out from her, she resolved to depart; so she went forth, saying in herself, 'There is no journeying for me in woman's attire.' Then she donned men's apparel, such as is worn of the pious, and set out and wandered over the earth; nor did she leave going till she entered a certain city. Now the king of that city had an only daughter in whom he gloried and whom he loved, and she saw the devotee and deeming her a pilgrim youth, said to her father, 'I would fain have this youth take up his abode with me, so I may learn of him wisdom and renunciation and religion.' Her father rejoiced in this and commanded the [supposed] pilgrim to take up his sojourn with his daughter in his palace. Now they were in one place and the king's daughter was strenuous to the utterest in continence and chastity and nobility of mind and magnanimity and devotion to the worship of God; but the ignorant slandered her and the folk of the realm said, 'The king's daughter loveth the pilgrim youth and he loveth her.'

Now the king was a very old man and destiny decreed the ending of his term of life; so he died and when he was buried, the folk assembled and many were the sayings of the people and of the king's kinsfolk and officers, and they took counsel together to slay the princess and the young pilgrim, saying, 'This fellow dishonoureth us with yonder strumpet and none accepteth dishonour but the base.' So they fell upon them and slew the princess, without questioning her of aught; whereupon the pious woman (whom they deemed a boy) said to them, 'Out on ye, O misbelievers I Ye have slain the pious lady.' Quoth they, 'Lewd fellow that thou art, dost thou bespeak us thus? Thou lovedst her and she loved thee, and we will slay thee without mercy.' 'God forbid!'

answered she, 'Indeed, the affair is the contrary of this.' 'What proof hast thou of that?' asked they, and she said, 'Bring me women.' So they brought her women, and when they looked on her, they found her a woman.

When the townsfolk saw this, they repented of that which they had done and the affair was grievous to them; so they sought pardon [of God] and said to her, ' By the virtue of Him whom thou servest, do thou seek pardon for us [of God!]' Quoth she, 'As for me, I may no longer abide with you and I am about to depart from you.' Then they humbled themselves in supplication to her and wept and said to her, 'We conjure thee, by the virtue of God the Most High, that thou take upon thyself the governance of the kingdom and of the subjects.' But she refused; whereupon they came up to her and wept and gave not over supplicating her, till she consented and abode in the kingship. Her first commandment was that they should bury the princess and build over her a dome and she abode in that palace, worshipping God the Most High and ruling the people with justice, and God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) vouchsafed her, by reason of the excellence of her piety and her patience and continence, the acceptance of her prayers, so that she sought not aught of Him to whom belong might and majesty, but He granted her prayer; and her report was noised abroad in all countries.

So the folk resorted to her from all parts and she used to pray God (to whom belong might and majesty) for the oppressed and God granted him relief, and against his oppressor, and He broke him in sunder. Moreover, she prayed for the sick and they were made whole; and on this wise she abode a great space of time. As for her husband, when he returned from the pilgrimage, his brother and the neighbours acquainted him with his wife's affair, whereat he was sore concerned and misdoubted of their story, for that which he knew of her chastity and prayerfulness; and he wept for her loss.

Meanwhile, she prayed to God the Most High that He would establish her innocence in the eyes of her husband and the folk. So He sent down upon her husband's brother a sore disease and none knew a remedy for him; wherefore he said to his brother, ' In such a city is a pious woman, a recluse, and her prayers are answered; so do thou carry me to her, that she may pray for me and God (to whom belong might and majesty) may make me whole of this sickness.' Accordingly, he took him up and fared on with him, till they came to the village where dwelt the old man, who had rescued the woman from the pit and carried her to his dwelling and tended her there, [till she recovered].

Here they halted and took up their lodging with the old man, who questioned the husband of his case and that of his brother and the reason of their journey, and he said, 'I purpose to go with my brother, this sick man, to the holy woman, her whose prayers are answered, so she may pray for him and God may make him whole by the blessing of her prayers.' Quoth the villager, 'By Allah, my son is in a parlous plight for sickness and we have heard that the holy woman prayeth for the sick and they are made whole. Indeed, the folk counsel me to carry him to her, and behold, I will go in company with you. And they said, 'It is well.' So they passed the night in that intent and on the morrow they set out for the dwelling of the holy woman, this one carrying his son and that his brother.

Now the man who had stolen the clothes and forged a lie against the pious woman, pretending that he was her lover, sickened of a sore sickness, and his people took him up and set out with him to visit the holy woman, and Destiny brought them all together by the way. So they fared on, till they came to the city wherein the man dwelt for whom she had paid a thousand dirhems, to deliver him from torment, and found him about to travel to her, by reason of a sickness that had betided him. So they all fared on together, unknowing that the holy woman was she whom they had so foully wronged, and ceased not going till they came to her city and foregathered at the gates of her palace, to wit, that wherein was the tomb of the king's daughter.

Now the folk used to go in to her and salute her and crave her prayers; and it was her wont to pray for none till he had confessed to her his sins, when she would seek pardon for him and pray for him that he might be healed, and he was straightway made whole of sickness, by permission of God the Most High. [So, when the four sick men were brought in to her,] she knew them forthright, though they knew her not, and said to them, ' Let each of you confess his sins, so I may crave pardon for him and pray for him.' And the brother said, 'As for me, I required my brother's wife of herself and she refused; whereupon despite and folly prompted me and I lied against her and accused her to the townsfolk of adultery; so they stoned her and slew her unjustly and unrighteously; and this is the issue of unright and falsehood and of the slaying of the [innocent] soul, whose slaughter God hath forbidden.'

Then said the young man, the villager's son, 'And I, O holy woman, my father brought us a woman who had been stoned, and my people tended her till she recovered. Now she was surpassing of beauty; so I required her of herself; but she refused and clave fast to God (to whom belong might and majesty), wherefore folly prompted me, so that I agreed with one of the youths that he should steal clothes and coin from my father's house. Then I laid hands on him [and carried him] to my father and made him confess. So he avouched that the woman was his mistress from the city and had been stoned on his account and that she was of accord with him concerning the theft and had opened the doors to him, and this was a lie against her, for that she had not yielded to me in that which I sought of her. So there befell me what ye see of punishment." And the young man, the thief, said, 'I am he with whom thou agreedst concerning the theft and to whom thou openedst the door, and I am he who avouched against her falsely and calumniously and God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) knoweth that I never did evil with her, no, nor knew her in any wise before then.'

Then said he whom she had delivered from torture and for whom she had paid a thousand dirhems and who had required her of herself in his house, for that her beauty pleased him, and [when she refused to yield to him] had forged a letter against her and treacherously denounced her to the Sultan and requited her bounty with ingratitude, 'I am he who wronged her and lied against her, and this is the issue of the oppressor's affair.'

When she heard their words, in the presence of the folk, she said, 'Praise be to God, the King who availeth unto all things, and blessing upon His prophets and apostles!' Then quoth she [to the assembly], ' Bear witness, O ye who are present, to these men's speech, and know that I am that woman whom they confess that they

wronged.' And she turned to her husband's brother and said to him, 'I am thy brother's wife and God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He I) delivered me from that whereinto thou castedst me of false accusation and suspect and from the frowardness whereof thou hast spoken, and [now] hath He shown forth my innocence, of His bounty and generosity. Go, for thou art absolved of the wrong thou didst me.' Then she prayed for him and he was made whole of his sickness.

Then said she to the villager's son, 'Know that I am the woman whom thy father delivered from harm and stress and whom there betided from thee of false accusation and frowardness that which thou hast named.' And she craved pardon for him and he was made whole of his sickness. [Then said she to the thief, 'I am she against whom thou liedst, avouching that I was thy mistress, who had been stoned on thine account, and that I was of accord with thee concerning the robbing of the villager's house and had opened the doors to thee.' And she prayed for him and he was made whole of his sickness.] Then said she to [the townsman], him of the tribute, 'I am she who gave thee the [thousand] dirhems and thou didst with me what thou didst.' And she craved pardon for him and prayed for him and he was made whole; whereupon the folk marvelled at her oppressors, who had been afflicted alike, so God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) might show forth her innocence before witnesses.

Then she turned to the old man who had delivered her from the pit and prayed for him and gave him presents galore and among them a myriad of money; and they all departed from her, except her husband. When she was alone with him, she made him draw near unto her and rejoiced in his coming and gave him the choice of abiding with her. Moreover, she assembled the people of the city and set out to them his virtue and worth and counselled them to invest him with the charge of their governance and besought them to make him king over them. They fell in with her of this and he became king and took up his abode amongst them, whilst she gave herself up to her religious exercises and abode with her husband on such wise as she was with him aforetime. Nor," added the vizier, "is this story, O king of the time, more extraordinary or more delightful than that of the journeyman and the girl whose belly he slit and fled."

When King Shah Bekht heard this, he said, "Most like all they say of the vizier is leasing and his innocence will appear, even as that of the pious woman appeared." Then he comforted the vizier's heart and bade him go to his house.

The Nineteenth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king bade fetch the vizier and required of him the story of the journeyman and the girl. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, O august king, that

Story of the Journeyman and the Girl.

THERE was once, of old time, in one of the tribes of the Arabs, a woman great with child by her husband, and they had a hired servant, a man of excellent understanding. When the woman came to [the time of her] delivery, she gave birth to a maid-child in the night and they sought fire of the neighbours. So the journeyman went in quest of fire.

Now there was in the camp a wise woman, and she questioned him of the new-born child, if it was male or female. Quoth he, 'It is a girl;' and she said, 'She shall do whoredom with a hundred men and a journeyman shall marry her and a spider shall slay her.' When the journeyman heard this, he returned upon his steps and going in to the woman, took the child from her by wile and slit its paunch. Then he fled forth into the desert at a venture and abode in strangerhood what [while] God willed.

He gained him wealth and returning to his native land, after twenty years' absence, alighted in the neighbourhood of an old woman, whom he bespoke fair and entreated with liberality, requiring of her a wench whom he might lie withal. Quoth she, 'I know none but a certain fair woman, who is renowned for this fashion.' Then she described her charms to him and made him lust after her, and he said, 'Hasten to her forthright and lavish unto her that which she asketh, [in exchange for her favours].' So the old woman betook herself to the damsel and discovered to her the man's wishes and bade her to him; but she answered, saying, 'It is true that I was on this [fashion of] whoredom [aforetime]; but now I have repented to God the Most High and hanker no more after this; nay, I desire lawful marriage; so, if he be content with that which is lawful, I am at his service.'

The old woman returned to the man and told him what the damsel said; and he lusted after her, by reason of her beauty and her repentance; so he took her to wife, and when he went in to her, he loved her and she also loved him. On this wise they abode a great while, till one day he questioned her of the cause of a mark he espied on her body, and she said, 'I know nought thereof save that my mother told me a marvellous thing concerning it.' 'What was that?' asked he, and she answered, 'She avouched that she gave birth to me one night of the nights of the winter and despatched a hired man, who was with us, in quest of fire for her. He was absent a little while and presently returning, took me and slit my belly and fled. When my mother saw this, affliction overcame her and compassion possessed her; so she sewed up my belly and tended me till, by the ordinance of God (to whom belong might and majesty), the wound healed up."

When her husband heard this, he said to her, 'What is thy name and what are the names of thy father and mother?' She told him their names and her own, whereby he knew that it was she whose belly he had slit and said to her, 'And where are thy father and mother?' 'They are both dead,' answered she, and he said, 'I am that journeyman who slit thy belly.' Quoth she, 'Why didst thou that?' And he replied, 'Because of a saying I heard from the wise woman.' 'What was it?' asked his wife, and he said, 'She avouched that thou wouldst play the harlot with a hundied men and that I should after

take thee to wife.' Quoth she, 'Ay, I have whored it with a hundred men, no more and no less, and behold, thou hast married me.' 'Moreover,' continued her husband, 'the wise woman foresaid, also, that thou shouldst die, at the last of thy life, of the bite of a spider. Indeed, her saying hath been verified of the harlotry and the marriage, and I fear lest her word come true no less in the matter of thy death.'

Then they betook themselves to a place without the city, where he builded him a mansion of solid stone and white plaster and stopped its inner [walls] and stuccoed them; yea, he left not therein cranny nor crevice and set in it two serving-women to sweep and wipe, for fear of spiders. Here he abode with his wife a great while, till one day he espied a spider on the ceiling and beat it down. When his wife saw it, she said, 'This is that which the wise woman avouched would kill me; so, by thy life [I conjure thee], suffer me to slay it with mine own hand.' Her husband forbade her from this, but she conjured him to let her kill the spider; then, of her fear and her eagerness, she took a piece of wood and smote it. The wood broke in sunder, of the force of the blow, and a splinter from it entered her hand and wrought upon it, so that it swelled. Then her arm swelled also and the swelling spread to her side and thence grew till it reached her heart and she died. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary or more wonderful than the story of the weaver who became a physician by his wife's commandment."

When the king heard this, his admiration redoubled and he said, "Of a truth, destiny is forewritten to all creatures, and I will not accept aught that is said against my vizier the loyal counsellor." And he bade him go to his house.

The Twentieth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king let call his vizier and he presented himself before him, whereupon he required of him the hearing of the [promised] story. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, O king. that

Story of the Weaver Who Became a Physician By His Wife's Commandment.

THERE was once, in the land of Fars, a man who took to wife a woman higher than himself in rank and nobler of lineage, but she had no guardian to preserve her from want. It misliked her to marry one who was beneath her; nevertheless, she married him, because of need, and took of him a bond in writing to the effect that he would still be under her commandment and forbiddance and would nowise gainsay her in word or deed. Now the man was a weaver and he bound himself in writing to pay his wife ten thousand dirhems, [in case he should make default in the condition aforesaid].

On this wise they abode a long while till one day the wife went out in quest of water, whereof she had need, and espied a physician who had spread a carpet in the Thereon he had set out great store of drugs and implements of medicine and he was speaking and muttering [charms], whilst the folk flocked to him and compassed him about on every side. The weaver's wife marvelled at the largeness of the physician's fortune and said in herself, 'Were my husband thus, he would have an easy life of it and that wherein we are of straitness and misery would be enlarged unto him.'

Then she returned home, troubled and careful; and when her husband saw her on this wise, he questioned her of her case and she said to him, 'Verily, my breast is straitened by reason of thee and of the simpleness of thine intent. Straitness liketh me not and thou in thy [present] craft gaiuest nought; so either do thou seek out a craft other than this or pay me my due and let me go my way.' Her husband chid her for this and admonished her; but she would not be turned from her intent and said to him, 'Go forth and watch yonder physician how he doth and leam from him what he saith.' Quoth he, 'Let not thy heart be troubled: I will go every day to the physician's assembly.'

So he fell to resorting daily to the physician and committing to memory his sayings and that which he spoke of jargon, till he had gotten a great matter by heart, and all this he studied throughly and digested it. Then he returned to his wife and said to her, 'I have committed the physician's sayings to memory and have learned his fashion of muttering and prescribing and applying remedies and have gotten by heart the names of the remedies and of all the diseases, and there abideth nought [unaccomplished] of thy commandment. What wilt thou have me do now?' Quoth she, 'Leave weaving and open thyself a physician's shop.' But he answered, 'The people of my city know me and this affair will not profit me, save in a land of strangerhood; so come, let us go out from this city and get us to a strange land and [there] live.' And she said, 'Do as thou wilt.'

So he arose and taking his weaving gear, sold it and bought with the price drugs and simples and wrought himself a carpet, with which they set out and journeyed to a certain village, where they took up their abode. Then the man donned a physician's habit and fell to going round about the hamlets and villages and country parts; and he began to earn his living and make gain. Their affairs prospered and their case was

bettered; wherefore they praised God for their present ease and the village became to them a home.

[On this wise he abode a pretty while] and the days ceased not and the nights to transport him from country to country, till he came to the land of the Greeks and lighted down in a city of the cities thereof, wherein was Galen the Sage; but the weaver knew him not, nor was he ware who he was. So he went forth, according to his wont, in quest of a place where the folk might assemble together, and hired Galen's courtyard. There he spread his carpet and setting out thereon his drugs and instruments of medicine, praised himself and his skill and vaunted himself of understanding such as none but he might claim.

Galen heard that which he avouched of his understanding and it was certified unto him and established in his mind that the man was a skilled physician of the physicians of the Persians and [he said in himself], 'Except he had confidence in his knowledge and were minded to confront me and contend with me, he had not sought the door of my house neither spoken that which he hath spoken.' And concern gat hold upon Galen and doubt. Then he looked out upon the weaver and addressed himself to see what he should do, whilst the folk began to flock to him and set out to him their ailments, and he would answer them thereof [and prescribe for them], hitting the mark one while and missing it another, so that there appeared unto Galen of his fashion nothing whereby his mind might be assured that he had formed a just opinion of his skill.

Presently, up came a woman with a phial of urine, and when the [mock] physician saw the phial afar off, he said to her, 'This is the urine of a man, a stranger.' 'Yes,' answered she; and he continued, 'Is he not a Jew and is not his ailment indigestion?' 'Yes,' replied the woman, and the folk marvelled at this; wherefore the man was magnified in Galen's eyes, for that he heard speech such as was not of the usage of physicians, seeing that they know not urine but by shaking it and looking into it anear neither know they a man's water from a woman's water, nor a stranger's [from a countryman's], nor a Jew's from a Sherifs. Then said the woman, 'What is the remedy?' Quoth the weaver, 'Pay down the fee.' So she paid him a dirhem and he gave her medicines contrary to that ailment and such as would aggravate the patient's malady.

When Galen saw what appeared to him of the [mock] physician's incapacity, he turned to his disciples and pupils and bade them fetch the other, with all his gear and drugs. So they brought him into his presence on the speediest wise, and when Galen saw him before him, he said to him, 'Knowest thou me?' ' No,' answered the other, 'nor did I ever set eyes on thee before this day.' Quoth the sage, 'Dost thou know Galen?' And the weaver said, 'No.' Then said Galen, 'What prompted thee to that which thou dost?' So he related to him his story and gave him to know of the dowry and the obligation by which he was bound with regard to his wife, whereat Galen marvelled and certified himself of the matter of the dower.

Then he bade lodge him near himself and was bountiful to him and took him apart and said to him, 'Expound to me the story of the phial and whence then knewest that the water therein was that of a man, and he a stranger and a Jew, and that his ailment was indigestion?' ' It is well,' answered the weaver. ' Thou must know that we

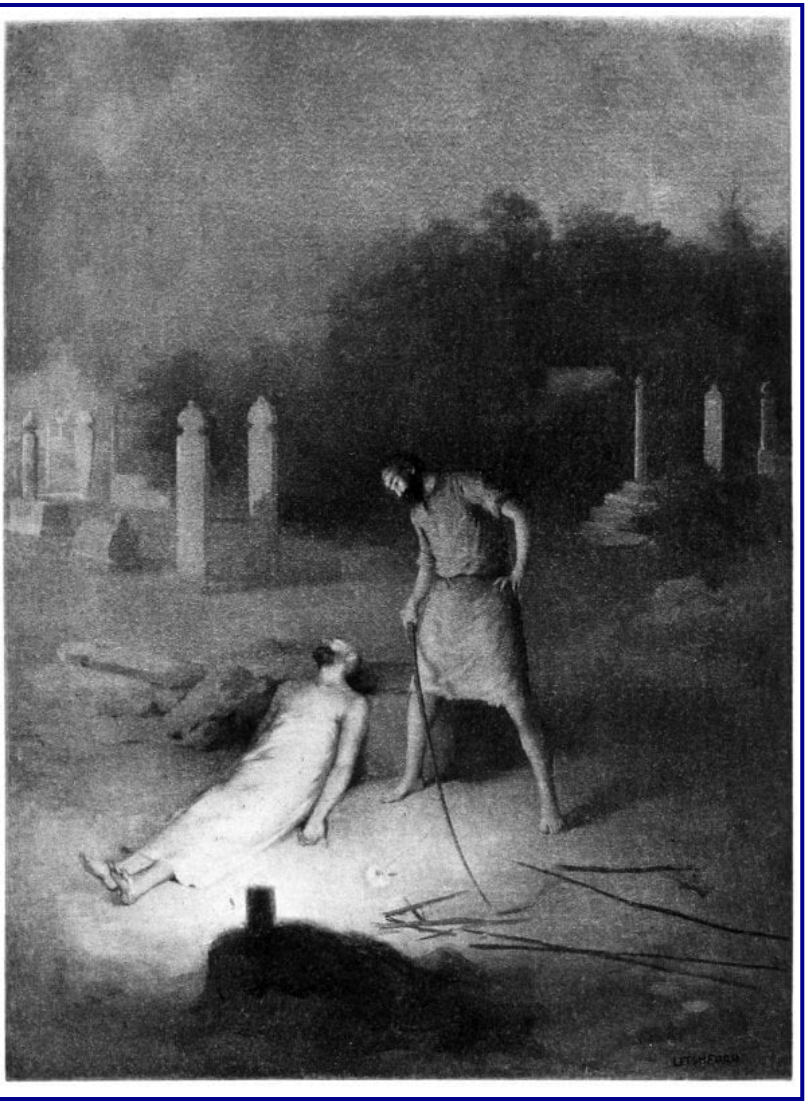
people of Persia are skilled in physiognomy and I saw the woman to be rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed and tall. Now these attributes belong to women who are enamoured of a man and are distraught for love of him; moreover, I saw her consumed [with anxiety]; wherefore I knew that the patient was her husband. As for his strangerhood, I observed that the woman's attire differed from that of the people of the city, wherefore I knew that she was a stranger; and in the mouth of the phial I espied a yellow rag, whereby I knew that the patient was a Jew and she a Jewess. Moreover, she came to me on the first day [of the week]; and it is the Jews' custom to take pottages and meats that have been dressed overnight and eat them on the Sabbath day, hot and cold, and they exceed in eating; wherefore indigestion betideth them. On this wise I was directed and guessed that which thou hast heard.'

When Galen heard this, he ordered the weaver the amount of his wife's dowry and bade him pay it to her and divorce her. Moreover, he forbade him from returning to the practice of physic and warned him never again to take to wife a woman of better condition than himself; and he gave him his spending-money and bade him return to his [former] craft. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more extraordinary or rarer than the story of the two sharpers who cozened each his fellow."

When King Shah Bekht heard this, he said in himself, "How like is this story to my present case with this vizier, who hath not his like!" Then he bade him depart to his own house and come again at eventide.

The Twenty-First Night of the Month.

WHEN came the night, the vizier presented himself before the king, who bade him relate the [promised] story. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, Out



Story of the Two Sharpers Who Cheated Each His Fellow.

THERE was once, in the city of Baghdad, a man, [by name El Merouzi,] who was a sharper and plagued the folk with his knavish tricks, and he was renowned in all quarters [for roguery]. [He went out one day], carrying a load of sheep's dung, and took an oath that he would not return to his lodging till he had sold it at the price of raisins. Now there was in another city a second sharper, [by name Er Razi,] one of its people, who [went out the same day], bearing a load of goat's dung, which he had sworn that he would not sell but at the price of dried figs.

So each of them fared on with that which was with him and gave not over going till they met in one of the inns and each complained to the other of that which he had abidden of travel [in quest of custom] and of the lack of demand for his wares. Now each of them had it in mind to cheat his fellow; so El Merouzi said to Er Razi, 'Wilt thou sell me that?' 'Yes,' answered he, and the other continued, 'And wilt thou buy that which is with me?' Er Razi assented; so they agreed upon this and each of them sold his fellow that which was with him [in exchange for the other's ware]; after which they bade each other farewell and parted. As soon as they were out of each other's sight, they examined their loads, to see what was therein, and one of them found that he had a load of sheep's dung and the other that he had a load of goat's dung; whereupon each of them turned back in quest of his fellow. They met in the inn aforesaid and laughed at each other and cancelling their bargain, agreed to enter into partnership and that all that they had of money and other good should be in common between them, share and share alike.

Then said Er Razi to El Merouzi, 'Come with me to my city, for that it is nearer [than thine].' So he went with him, and when he came to his lodging, he said to his wife and household and neighbours, 'This is my brother, who hath been absent in the land of Khorassan and is come back.' And he abode with him in all honour and worship three days' space. On the fourth day, Er Razi said to him, 'Know, O my brother, that I purpose to do somewhat' 'What is it?' asked El Merouzi. Quoth the other, 'I mean to feign myself dead and do thou go to the market and hire two porters and a bier. [Then come back and take me up and go round about the streets and markets with me and collect alms on my account.]

Accordingly El Merouzi repaired to the market and fetching that which he sought, returned to Er Razi's house, where he found the latter cast down in the vestibule, with his beard tied and his eyes shut; and indeed, his colour was paled and his belly blown out and his limbs relaxed. So he deemed him in truth dead and shook him; but he spoke not; and he took a knife and pricked him in the legs, but he stirred not. Then said Er Razi, 'What is this, O fool?' And El Merouzi answered, 'Methought thou wast dead in very sooth.' Quoth Er Razi, 'Get thee to seriousness and leave jesting.' So he took him up and went with him to the market and collected [alms] for him that day till eventide, when he carried him back to his lodging and waited till the morrow.

Next morning, he again took up the bier and went round with it as before, in quest of alms. Presently, the master of police, who was of those who had given alms on account of the supposed dead man on the previous day, met him; so he was angered and fell on the porters and beat them and took the [supposed] dead body, saying, 'I will bury him and earn the reward [of God].' So his men took him up and carrying him to the prefecture, fetched grave-diggers, who dug him a grave. Then they bought him a shroud and perfumes and fetched an old man of the quarter, to wash him. So he recited over him [the appointed prayers and portions of the Koran] and laying him on the bench, washed him and shrouded him. After he had shrouded him, he voided; so he renewed the washing and went away to make his ablutions, whilst all the folk departed, likewise, to make the [obligatory] ablution, previously to the funeral.

When the dead man found himself alone, he sprang up, as he were a Satan, and donning the washer's clothes, took the bowls and water-can and wrapped them up in the napkins. Then be took his shroud under his arm and went out. The doorkeepers thought that he was the washer and said to him, 'Hast thou made an end of the washing, so we may tell the Amir?' 'Yes,' answered the sharper and made off to his lodging, where he found El Merouzi soliciting his wife and saying to her, 'Nay, by thy life, thou wilt never again look upon his face; for that by this time he is buried. I myself escaped not from them but after travail and trouble, and if he speak, they will put him to death.' Quoth she, 'And what wilt thou have of me?' 'Accomplish my desire of thee,' answered he, 'and heal my disorder, for I am better than thy husband.' And he fell a-toying with her.

When Er Razi heard this, he said, 'Yonder wittol lusteth after my wife; but I will do him a mischief.' Then he rushed in upon them, and when El Merouzi saw him, he marvelled at him and said to him, 'How didst thou make thine escape?' So he told him the trick he had played and they abode talking of that which they had collected from the folk [by way of alms], and indeed they had gotten great store of money. Then said El Merouzi, 'Verily, mine absence hath been prolonged and fain would I return to my own country.' Quoth Er Rasi,' As thou wilt;' and the other said, 'Let us divide the money we have gotten and do thou go with me to my country, so I may show thee my tricks and my fashions.' 'Come to-morrow,' replied Er Razi, 'and we will divide the money.'

So El Merouzi went away and the other turned to his wife and said to her, 'We have gotten us great plenty of money, and yonder dog would fain take the half of it; but this shall never be, for that my mind hath been changed against him, since I heard him solicit thee; wherefore I purpose to play him a trick and enjoy all the money; and do not thou cross me.' ' It is well,' answered she, and he said to her, '[To-morrow] at day-peep I will feign myself dead and do thou cry out and tear thy hair, whereupon the folk will flock to me. Then lay me out and bury me, and when the folk are gone away [from the burial-place], do thou dig down to me and take me; and have no fear for me, for I can abide two days in the tomb [without hurt].' And she answered, 'Do what thou wilt.'

So, when it was the foredawn hour, she tied his beard and spreading a veil over him, cried out, whereupon the people of the quarter flocked to her, men and women. Presently, up came El Merouzi, for the division of the money, and hearing the crying

[of the mourners], said, 'What is to do?" Quoth they, 'Thy brother is dead;' and he said in himself, 'The accursed fellow putteth a cheat on me, so he may get all the money for himself, but I will do with him what shall soon bring him to life again.' Then he rent the bosom of his gown and uncovered his head, weeping and saying, 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my chief! Alas, my lord!' And he went in to the men, who rose and condoled with him. Then he accosted Er Razi's wife and said to her, 'How came his death about?' 'I know not,' answered she, 'except that, when I arose in the morning, I found him dead.' Moreover, he questioned her of the money and good that was with her, but she said, 'I have no knowledge of this and no tidings.'

So he sat down at the sharper's head, and said to him, 'Know, O Razi, that I will not leave thee till after ten days and their nights, wherein I will wake and sleep by thy grave. So arise and be not a fool.' But he answered him not and El Merouzi [drew his knife and] fell to sticking it into the other's hands and feet, thinking to make him move; but [he stirred not and] he presently grew weary of this and concluded that the sharper was dead in good earnest. [However, he still misdoubted of the case] and said in himself, 'This fellow is dissembling, so he may enjoy all the money.' Therewith he addressed himself to prepare him [for burial] and bought him perfumes and what [not else] was needed. Then they brought him to the washing-place and El Merouzi came to him and heating water till it boiled and bubbled and a third of it was wasted, fell to pouring it on his skin, so that it turned red and blue and blistered; but he abode still on one case [and stirred not].

So they wrapped him in the shroud and set him on the bier. Then they took up his bier and bearing him to the burial-place, laid him in the grave and threw the earth over him; after which the folk dispersed, but El Merouzi and the widow abode by the tomb, weeping, and gave not over sitting till sundown, when the woman said to him, 'Come, let us go to the house, for this weeping will not profit us, nor will it restore the dead.' 'By Allah,' answered the sharper, 'I will not budge hence till I have slept and waked by this tomb ten days, with their nights!' When she heard this his speech, she feared lest he should keep his word and his oath, and so her husband perish; but she said in herself, 'This fellow dissembleth: if I go away and return to my house, he will abide by him a little while and go away.' And El Merouzi said to her, 'Arise, thou, and go away.'

So she arose and returned to her house, whilst El Merouzi abode in his place till the night was half spent, when he said to himself, 'How long [is this to last]? Yet how can I let this knavish dog die and lose the money? Methinks I were better open the tomb on him and bring him forth and take my due of him by dint of grievous beating and torment.' Accordingly, he dug him up and pulled him forth of the tomb; after which he betook himself to an orchard hard by the burial-ground and cut thence staves and palm sticks. Then he tied the dead man's legs and came down on him with the staff and beat him grievously; but he stirred not. When the time grew long on him, his shoulders became weary and he feared lest some one of the watch should pass on his round and surprise him. So he took up Er Razi and carrying him forth of the cemetery, stayed not till he came to the Magians' burying-place and casting him down in a sepulchre there, rained heavy blows upon him till his shoulders failed him, but the other stirred not Then he sat down by his side and rested; after which he rose and

renewed the beating upon him, [but to no better effect; and thus he did] till the end of the night

Now, as destiny would have it, a band of thieves, whose use it was, whenas they had stolen aught, to resort to that place and divide [their booty], came thither [that night], as of their wont; and they were ten in number and had with them wealth galore, which they were carrying. When they drew near the sepulchre, they heard a noise of blows within it and the captain said, 'This is a Magian whom the angels are tormenting.' So they entered [the burial-ground] and when they came over against El Merouzi, he feared lest they should be the officers of the watch come upon him, wherefore he [arose and] fled and stood among the tombs. The thieves came up to the place and finding Er Razi bound by the feet and by him near seventy sticks, marvelled at this with an exceeding wonderment and said, 'God confound thee! This was sure an infidel, a man of many crimes; for, behold, the earth hath rejected him from her womb, and by my life, he is yet fresh! This is his first night [in the tomb] and the angels were tormenting him but now; so whosoever of you hath a sin upon his conscience, let him beat him, as a propitiatory offering to God the Most High.' And the thieves said, 'We all have sins upon our consciences.'

So each of them went up to the [supposed] dead man and dealt him nigh upon a hundred blows, exclaiming the while, one, 'This is for my father!' and another, 'This is for my grandfather!' whilst a third said, 'This is for my brother!' and a fourth, 'This is for my mother!' And they gave not over taking turns at him and beating him, till they were weary, what while El Merouzi stood laughing and saying in himself, 'It is not I alone who have entered into sin against him. There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!'

Then the thieves addressed themselves to sharing their booty and presently fell out concerning a sword that was among the spoil, who should take it. Quoth the captain, 'Methinks we were better prove it; so, if it be good, we shall know its worth, and if it be ill, we shall know that.' And they said, 'Try it on this dead man, for he is fresh.' So the captain took the sword and drawing it, poised it and brandished it; but, when Er Razi saw this, he made sure of death and said in himself, 'I have borne the washing and the boiling water and the pricking with the knife and the grave and its straitness and all this [beating], trusting in God that I might be delivered from death, and [hitherto] I have been delivered; but, as for the sword, I may not brook that, for but one stroke of it, and I am a dead man.'

So saying, he sprang to his feet and catching up the thigh-bone of one of the dead, cried out at the top of his voice, saying, 'O ye dead, take them!' And he smote one of them, whilst his comrade [El Merouzi] smote another and they cried out at them and buffeted them on the napes of their necks; whereupon the thieves left that which was with them of plunder and fled; and indeed their wits forsook them [for terror] and they stayed not in their flight till they came forth of the Magians' burial-ground and left it a parasang's length behind them, when they halted, trembling and affrighted for the soreness of that which had betided them of fear and amazement at the dead.

As for Er Razi and El Merouzi, they made peace with each other and sat down to share the booty. Quoth El Merouzi, 'I will not give thee a dirhem of this money, till

thou pay me my due of the money that is in thy house.' And Er Razi said 'I will not do it, nor will I subtract this from aught of my due.' So they fell out upon this and disputed with one another and each went saying to his fellow, 'I will not give thee a dirhem!' And words ran high between them and contention was prolonged.

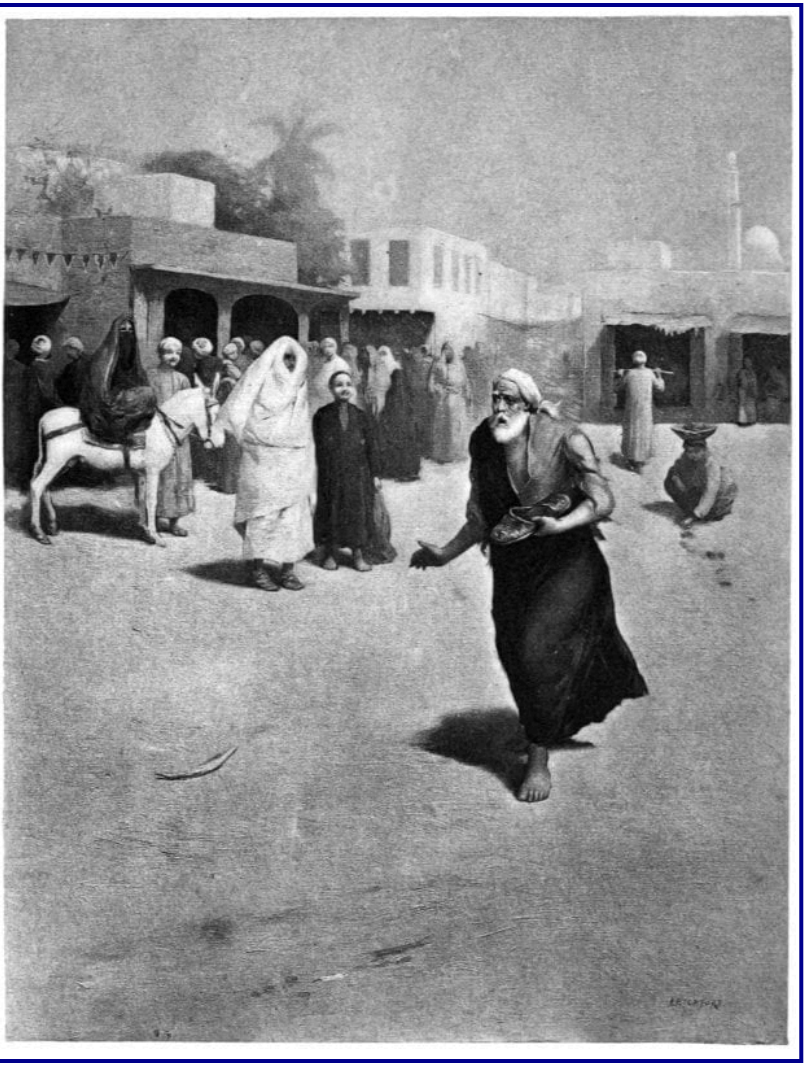
Meanwhile, when the thieves halted, one of them said to the others, 'Let us return and see;' and the captain said, 'This thing is impossible of the dead: never heard we that they came to life on this wise. So let us return and take our good, for that the dead have no occasion for good.' And they were divided in opinion as to returning: but [presently they came to a decision and] said, 'Indeed, our arms are gone and we cannot avail against them and will not draw near the place where they are: only let one of us [go thither and] look at it, and if he hear no sound of them, let him advertise us what we shall do.' So they agreed that they should send a man of them and assigned him [for this service] two parts [of the booty].

Accordingly, he returned to the burial-ground and gave not over going till he stood at the door of the sepulchre, when he heard El Merouzi say to his fellow, 'I will not give thee a single dirhem of the money!' The other said the like and they were occupied with contention and mutual revilement and talk. So the thief returned in haste to his fellows, who said, 'What is behind thee?' Quoth he, 'Get you gone and flee for your lives and save yourselves, O fools; for that much people of the dead are come to life and between them are words and contention.' So the thieves fled, whilst the two sharpers retained to Er Razi's house and made peace with one another and laid the thieves' purchase to the money they had gotten aforetime and lived a while of time. Nor, O king of the age," added the vizier, "is this rarer or more marvellous than the story of the four sharpers with the money-changer and the ass."

When the king heard this story, he smiled and it pleased him and he bade the vizier go away to his own house.

The Twenty-Second Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king summoned the vizier and required of him the hearing of the [promised] story. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, O king, that



Story of the Sharpers With the Money-changer and the Ass.

FOUR sharpers once plotted against a money-changer, a man of abounding wealth, and agreed upon a device for the taking of somewhat of his money. So one of them took an ass and laying on it a bag, wherein was money, lighted down at the money-changer's shop and sought of him change for the money. The money- changer brought out to him the change and bartered it with him, whilst the sharper was easy with him in the matter of the exchange, so he might give him confidence in himself. [As they were thus engaged,] up came the [other three] sharpers and surrounded the ass; and one of them said, '[It is] he,' and another said, 'Wait till I look at him.' Then he fell to looking on the ass and stroking him from his mane to his crupper; whilst the third went up to him and handled him and felt him from head to tail, saying, ' Yes, [it is] in him.' Quoth another, ['Nay,] it is not in him.' And they gave not over doing the like of this.

Then they accosted the owner of the ass and chaffered with him and he said, 'I will not sell him but for ten thousand dirhems.' They offered him a thousand dirhems; but he refused and swore that he would not sell the ass but for that which he had said. They ceased not to add to their bidding, till the price reached five thousand dirhems, whilst their fellow still said, 'I will not sell him but for ten thousand dirhems.' The money-changer counselled him to sell, but he would not do this and said to him, 'Harkye, gaffer! Thou hast no knowledge of this ass's case. Concern thyself with silver and gold and what pertaineth thereto of change and exchange; for indeed the virtue of this ass passeth thy comprehension. To every craft its craftsman and to every means of livelihood its folk.'

When the affair was prolonged upon the three sharpers, they went away and sat down a little apart; then they came up to the money-changer privily and said to him, 'If thou canst buy him for us, do so, and we will give thee a score of dirhems.' Quoth he, 'Go away and sit down afar from him.' So they did his bidding and the money-changer went up to the owner of the ass and gave not over tempting him with money and cajoling him and saying, 'Leave yonder fellows and sell me the ass, and I will reckon him a gift from thee,' till he consented to sell him the ass for five thousand and five hundred dirhems. Accordingly the money-changer counted down to him five thousand and five hundred dirhems of his own money, and the owner of the ass took the price and delivered the ass to him, saying, 'Whatsoever betideth, though he abide a deposit about thy neck, sell him not to yonder rogues for less than ten thousand dirhems, for that they would fain buy him because of a hidden treasure whereof they know, and nought can guide them thereto but this ass. So close thy hand on him and gainsay me not, or thou wilt repent.'

So saying, he left him and went away, whereupon up came the three other sharpers, the comrades of him of the ass, and said to the money-changer, 'God requite thee for us with good, for that thou hast bought him! How can we requite thee!' Quoth he, 'I will not sell him but for ten thousand dirhems.' When they heard this, they returned to the ass and fell again to examining him and handling him. Then said they to the money-changer, 'We were mistaken in him. This is not the ass we sought and he

is not worth more than half a score paras to us.' Then they left him and offered to go away, whereat the money-changer was sore chagrined and cried out at their speech, saying, 'O folk, ye besought me to buy him for you and now I have bought him, ye say, "We were deceived [in him], and he is not worth more than ten paras to us."' Quoth they, 'We supposed that in him was that which we desired; but, behold, in him is the contrary of that which we want; and indeed he hath a default, for that he is short of back.' And they scoffed at him and went away from him and dispersed.

The money-changer thought they did but finesse with him, that they might get the ass at their own price; but, when they went away from him and he had long in vain awaited their return, he cried out, saying, 'Woe!' and 'Ruin!' and 'Alack, my sorry chance!' and shrieked aloud and tore his clothes. So the people of the market assembled to him and questioned him of his case; whereupon he acquainted them with his plight and told them what the sharpers had said and how they had beguiled him and how it was they who had cajoled him into buying an ass worth half a hundred dirhems for five thousand and five hundred. His friends blamed him and a company of the folk laughed at him and marvelled at his folly and his credulity in accepting the sharpers' talk, without suspicion, and meddling with that which he understood not and thrusting himself into that whereof he was not assured.

On this wise, O King Shah Bekht," continued the vizier, "is the issue of eagerness for [the goods of] the world and covetise of that which our knowledge embraceth not; indeed, [whoso doth thus] shall perish and repent Nor, O king of the age, (added he) is this story more extraordinary than that of the sharper and the merchants."

When the king heard this story, he said in himself, "Verily, had I given ear to the sayings of my courtiers and inclined to the idle prate [of those who counselled me] in the matter of [the slaying of] my vizier, I had repented to the utterest of repentance, but praised be God, who hath disposed me to mansuetude and long-suffering and hath endowed me with patience!" Then he turned to the vizier and bade him return to his dwelling and [dismissed] those who were present, as of wont.

The Twenty-Third Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king sent after the vizier and when he presented himself before him, he required of him the hearing of the [promised] story. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, O illustrious lord, that

Story of the Sharper and the Merchants.

THERE was once aforetime a certain sharper, who [was so eloquent that he] would turn the ear inside out, and he was a man of understanding and quick wit and skill and perfection. It was his wont to enter a town and [give himself out as a merchant and] make a show of trafficking and insinuate himself into the intimacy of people of worth and consort with the merchants, for he was [apparently] distinguished for virtue and piety. Then he would put a cheat on them and take [of them] what he might spend and go away to another city; and he ceased not to do thus a great while.

It befell one day that he entered a certain city and sold somewhat that was with him of merchandise and got him friends of the merchants of the place and fell to sitting with them and entertaining them and inviting them to his lodging and his assembly, whilst they also invited him to their houses. On this wise he abode a long while, till he was minded to leave the city; and this was bruited abroad among his friends, who were concerned for parting from him. Then he betook himself to him of them, who was the richest of them in substance and the most apparent of them in generosity, and sat with him and borrowed his goods; and when he was about to take leave, he desired him to give him the deposit that he had left with him. 'And what is the deposit?' asked the merchant. Quoth the sharper, 'It is such a purse, with the thousand dinars therein.' And the merchant said, 'When didst thou give it me?' 'Extolled be the perfection of God!' replied the sharper. 'Was it not on such a day, by such a token, and thus and thus?' 'I know not of this,' rejoined the merchant, and words were bandied about between them, whilst the folk [who were present also] disputed together concerning their affair and their speech, till their voices rose high and the neighbours had knowledge of that which passed between them.

Then said the sharper, 'O folk, this is my friend and I deposited with him a deposit, but he denieth it; so in whom shall the folk put trust after this?' And they said, 'This is a man of worth and we have found in him nought but trustiness and loyality and good breeding, and he is endowed with understanding and generosity. Indeed, he avoucheth no falsehood, for that we have consorted with him and mixed with him and he with us and we know the sincerity of his religion.' Then quoth one of them to the merchant, 'Harkye, such an one! Bethink thee and consult thy memory. It may not be but that thou hast forgotten.' But he said, 'O folk, I know nothing of that which he saith, for indeed he deposited nought with me.' And the affair was prolonged between them. Then said the sharper to the merchant, 'I am about to make a journey and have, praised be God the Most High, wealth galore, and this money shall not escape me; but do thou swear to me.' And the folk said, 'Indeed, this man doth justice upon himself.' Whereupon the merchant fell into that which he misliked and came near upon [suffering] loss and ill repute.

Now he had a friend, who pretended to quickwittedness and understanding; so he came up to him privily and said to him, 'Let me do, so I may put the change on this trickster, for I know him to be a liar and thou art near upon having to pay the money; but I will turn suspicion from thee and say to him, "The deposit is with me and thou

erredst in imagining that it was with other than myself," and so divert him from thee.' 'Do so,' replied the merchant, 'and rid the folk of their [false] debts.'

So the friend turned to the sharper and said to him, 'O my lord, O such an one, thou goest under a delusion. The purse is with me, for it was with me that thou depositedst it, and this elder is innocent of it.' But the sharper answered him with impatience and impetuosity, saying, 'Extolled be the perfection of God! As for the purse that is with thee, O noble and trusty man, I know that it is in the warrant of God and my heart is at ease concerning it, for that it is with thee as it were with me; but I began by demanding that which I deposited with this man, of my knowledge that he coveteth the folk's good.' At this the friend was confounded and put to silence and returned not an answer; [and the] only [result of his interference was that] each of them paid a thousand dinars.

So the sharper took the two thousand dinars and made off; and when he was gone, the merchant said to his friend, the [self-styled] man of wit and intelligence, 'Harkye, such an one! Thou and I are like unto the hawk and the locust.' 'What was their case?' asked the other; and the merchant said,

Story of the Hawk and the Locust.

'THERE was once, of old time, a hawk who made himself a nest hard by that of a locust, and the latter gloried in his neighbourhood and betaking herself to him, saluted him and said, "O my lord and chief of the birds, indeed the nearness unto thee delighteth me and thou honourest me with thy neighbourhood and my soul is fortified with thee." The hawk thanked her for this and there ensued friendship between them. One day, the locust said to the hawk, "O chief of the birds, how cometh it that I see thee alone, solitary, having with thee no friend of thy kind of the birds, to whom thou mayst incline in time of easance and of whom thou mayst seek succour in time of stress? Indeed, it is said, 'Man goeth about seeking the ease of his body and the preservation of his strength, and in this there is nought more necessary to him than a friend who shall be the completion of his gladness and the mainstay of his life and on whom shall be his dependence in his stress and in his ease.' Now I, albeit I ardently desire thy weal in that which beseemeth thy condition, yet am I weak [and unable] unto that which the soul craveth; but, if thou wilt give me leave, I will seek out for thee one of the birds who shall be conformable unto thee in thy body and thy strength." And the hawk said, "I commit this to thee and rely upon thee therein."

Therewithal, O my brother, the locust fell to going round about among the company of the birds, but saw nought resembling the hawk in bulk and body save the kite and deemed well of her. So she brought the hawk and the kite together and counselled the former to make friends with the latter. Now it chanced that the hawk fell sick and the kite abode with him a long while [and tended him] till he recovered and became whole and strong; wherefore he thanked her [and she departed from him]. But after awhile the hawk's sickness returned to him and he needed the kite's succour. So the locust went out from him and was absent from him a day, after which she returned to him with a[nother] locust, saying, "I have brought thee this one." When the hawk saw her, he said, "God requite thee with good! Indeed, thou hast done well in the quest and hast been subtle in the choice."

All this, O my brother,' continued the merchant, 'befell because the locust had no knowledge of the secret essence that lieth hid in apparent bodies. As for thee, O my brother, (may God requite thee with good!) thou wast subtle in device and usedst precaution; but precaution sufficeth not against fate, and fortune fore-ordained baffleth contrivance. How excellent is the saying of the poet! And he recited the following verses:

It chances whiles that the blind man escapes a pit,
Whilst he who is clear of sight falls into it.
The ignorant man may speak with impunity
A word that is death to the wise and the ripe of wit.
The true believer is pinched for his daily bread,
Whilst infidel rogues enjoy all benefit.

Where is a man's resource and what can he do?
It is the Almighty's will; we most submit.

Nor," added the vizier, "is this, O king of the age, more extraordinary or stranger than the story of the king and his chamberlain's wife; nay, the latter is rarer than this and more delightsome."

When the king heard this story, he was fortified in his resolve to spare the vizier and to leave haste in an affair whereof he was not assured; so he comforted him and bade him withdraw to his lodging.

The Twenty-Fourth Night of the Month.

WHEN it was night, the king summoned the vizier and sought of him the hearing of the [promised] story. “Hearkening and obedience,” replied Er Rehwan, “Know, O august king, that

Story of the King and His Chamberlain's Wife.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a king of the kings of the Persians, who was passionately addicted to the love of women. His courtiers bespoke him of the wife of a chamberlain of his chamberlains, for that she was endowed with beauty and loveliness and perfection, and this prompted him to go in to her. When she saw him, she knew him and said to him, 'What prompteth the king unto this that he doth?' And he answered, saying, 'Verily, I yearn after thee with an exceeding yearning and needs must I enjoy thy favours.' And he gave her of wealth that after the like whereof women hanker; but she said, 'I cannot do that whereof the king speaketh, for fear of my husband.' And she refused herself to him with the most rigorous of refusals and would not do his desire. So the king went out, full of wrath, and forgot his girdle in the place.

Presently, her husband entered and saw the girdle and knew it. Now he was ware of the king's love for women; so he said to his wife, ' What is this that I see with thee?' Quoth she, 'I will tell thee the truth,' and recounted to him the story; but he believed her not and doubt entered into his heart. As for the king, he passed that night in chagrin and concern, and when it morrowed, he summoned the chamberlain and investing him with the governance of one of his provinces, bade him betake himself thither, purposing, after he should have departed and come to his destination, to foregather with his wife. The chamberlain perceived [his intent] and knew his design; so he answered, saying, 'Hearkening and obedience. I will go and set my affairs in order and give such charges as may be necessary for the welfare of my estate; then will I go about the king's occasion.' And the king said, 'Do this and hasten.'

So the chamberlain went about that which he needed and assembling his wife's kinsfolk, said to them, 'I am resolved to put away my wife.' They took this ill of him and complained of him and summoning him before the king, sat pleading with him. Now the king had no knowledge of that which had passed; so he said to the chamberlain, 'Why wilt thou put her away and how can thy soul consent unto this and why takest thou unto thyself a goodly piece of land and after forsakest it? 'May God amend the king!' answered the husband. 'By Allah, O king, I saw therein the track of the lion and fear to enter the land, lest the lion devour me; and indeed the like of my affair with her is that which befell between the old woman and the draper's wife.' 'What is their story?' asked the king; and the chamberlain said, 'Know, O king, that

Story of the Old Woman and the Draper's Wife.

THERE was once a man of the drapers, who had a fair wife, and she was curtained and chaste. A certain young man saw her coming forth of the bath and loved her and his heart was occupied with her. So he cast about [to get access to her] with all manner of devices, but availed not to win to her; and when he was weary of endeavour and his patience was exhausted for weariness and his fortitude failed him and he was at an end of his resources against her, he complained of this to an old woman of ill-omen, who promised him to bring about union between him and her. He thanked her for this and promised her all manner of good; and she said to him, "Get thee to her husband and buy of him a turban-cloth of fine linen, and let it be of the goodliest of stuffs."

So he repaired to the draper and buying of him a turban-cloth of lawn, returned with it to the old woman, who took it and burned it in two places. Then she donned devotees' apparel and taking the turban-cloth with her, went to the draper's house and knocked at the door. When the draper's wife saw her, she opened to her and received her kindly and made much of her and welcomed her. So the old woman went in to her and conversed with her awhile. Then said she to her, "[I desire to make] the ablution [preparatory] to prayer." So the wife brought her water and she made the ablution and standing up to pray, prayed and did her occasion. When she had made an end of her prayers, she left the turban-cloth in the place of prayer and went away.

Presently, in came the draper, at the hour of evening prayer, and sitting down in the place where the old woman had prayed, looked about him and espied the turban. He knew it [for that which he had that day sold to the young man] and misdoubted of the case, wherefore anger appeared in his face and he was wroth with his wife and reviled her and abode his day and his night, without speaking to her, what while she knew not the cause of his anger. Then she looked and seeing the turban-cloth before him and noting the traces of burning thereon, understood that his anger was on account of this and concluded that he was wroth because it was burnt.

When the morning morrowed, the draper went out, still angered against his wife, and the old woman returned to her and found her changed of colour, pale of face, dejected and heart-broken. [So she questioned her of the cause of her dejection and she told her how her husband was angered against her (as she supposed) on account of the burns in the turban-cloth.] "O my daughter," rejoined the old woman, "be not concerned; for I have a son, a fine-drawer, and he, by thy life, shall fine-draw [the holes] and restore the turban-cloth as it was. "The wife rejoiced in her saying and said to her, "And when shall this be?" "To-morrow, if it please God the Most High," answered the old woman, "I will bring him to thee, at the time of thy husband's going forth from thee, and he shall mend it and depart forth-right." Then she comforted her heart and going forth from her, returned to the young man and told him what had passed.

Now, when the draper saw the turban-cloth, he resolved to put away his wife and waited but till he should get together that which was obligatory on him of the dowry and what not else, for fear of her people. When the old woman arose in the morning,

she took the young man and carried him to the draper's house. The wife opened the door to her and the ill-omened old woman entered with him and said to the lady, "Go, fetch that which thou wouldst have fine-drawn and give it to my son." So saying, she locked the door on her, whereupon the young man forced her and did his occasion of her and went forth. Then said the old woman to her, "Know that this is my son and that he loved thee with an exceeding love and was like to lose his life for longing after thee. So I practised on thee with this device and came to thee with this turban-cloth, which is not thy husband's, but my son's. Now have I accomplished my desire; so do thou trust in me and I will put a trick on thy husband for the setting thee right with him, and thou wilt be obedient to me and to him and to my son." And the wife answered, saying, "It is well. Do so."

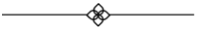
So the old woman returned to the lover and said to him, "I have skilfully contrived the affair for thee with her; [and now it behoveth us to amend that we have marred]. So go now and sit with the draper and bespeak him of the turban-cloth, [saying, 'The turban-cloth I bought of thee I chanced to burn in two places; so I gave it to a certain old woman, to get mended, and she took it and went away, and I know not her dwelling-place.'] When thou seest me pass by, rise and lay hold of me [and demand of me the turban-cloth], to the intent that I may amend her case with her husband and that thou mayst be even with her." So he repaired to the draper's shop and sat down by him and said to him, "Thou knowest the turban-cloth I bought of thee?" "Yes," answered the draper, and the other said, "Knowest thou what is come of it?" "No," replied the husband, and the youth said, "After I bought it of thee, I fumigated myself and it befell that the turban-cloth was burnt in two places. So I gave it to a woman, whose son, they said, was a fine-drawer, and she took it and went away with it; and I know not her abiding-place." When the draper heard this, he misdoubted him [of having wrongly suspected his wife] and marvelled at the story of the turban-cloth, and his mind was set at ease concerning her.

Presently, up came the old woman, whereupon the young man sprang to his feet and laying hold of her, demanded of her the turban-cloth. Quoth she, "Know that I entered one of the houses and made the ablution and prayed in the place of prayer; and I forgot the turban-cloth there and went out. Now I know not the house in which I prayed, nor have I been directed thereto, and I go round about every day till the night, so haply I may light on it, for I know not its owner." When the draper heard this, he said to the old woman, "Verily, Allah restoreth unto thee vhat which thou hast lost. Rejoice, for the turban-cloth is with me and in my house." And he arose forthright and gave her the turban-cloth, as it was. She gave it to the young man, and the draper made his peace with his wife and gave her raiment and jewellery, [by way of peace-offering], till she was content and her heart was appeased.

When the king heard his chamberlain's story, he was confounded and abashed and said to him, 'Abide on thy wonted service and till thy land, for that the lion entered it, but marred it not, and he will never more return thither.' Then he bestowed on him a dress of honour and made him a sumptuous present; and the man returned to his wife and people, rejoicing and glad, for that his heart was set at rest concerning his wife. Nor," added the vizier, "O king of the age, is this rarer or more extraordinary

than the story of the fair and lovely woman, endowed with amorous grace, with the foul-favoured man."

When the king heard the vizier's speech, he deemed it goodly and it pleased him; so he bade him go away to his house, and there he abode his day long.



The Twenty-fifth Night of the Month.

WHEN the evening evened, the king summoned his vizier and bade him tell the [promised] story. So he said, "It is well. Know, O king, that

Story of the Foul-favoured Man and His Fair Wife.

THERE was once a man of the Arabs who had a number of sons, and amongst them a boy, never was seen a fairer than he of favour nor a more accomplished in loveliness, no, nor a more perfect of wit. When he came to man's estate, his father married him to the daughter of one of his uncles, and she excelled not in beauty, neither was she praiseworthy of attributes; wherefore she pleased not the youth, but he bore with her, for kinship's sake.

One day, he went forth in quest of certain stray camels of his and fared on all his day and night till eventide, when he [came to an Arab encampment and] was fain to seek hospitality of one of the inhabitants. So he alighted at one of the tents of the camp and there came forth to him a man of short stature and loathly aspect, who saluted him and lodging him in a corner of the tent, sat entertaining him with talk, the goodliest that might be. When his food was dressed, the Arab's wife brought it to the guest, and he looked at the mistress of the tent and saw a favour than which no goodlier might be. Indeed, her beauty and grace and symmetry amazed him and he abode confounded, looking now at her and now at her husband. When his looking grew long, the man said to him, 'Harkye, O son of the worthy! Occupy thyself with thine own concerns, for by me and this woman hangeth a rare story, that is yet goodlier than that which thou seest of her beauty; and when we have made an end of our food, I will tell it thee.'

So, when they had made an end of eating and drinking, the young man asked his host for the story, and he said, 'Know that in my youth I was even as thou seest me in the matter of loathliness and foul favour; and I had brethren of the comeliest of the folk; wherefore my father preferred them over me and used to show them kindness, to my exclusion, and employ me, in their room [in menial service], like as one employeth slaves. One day, a she-camel of his went astray and he said to me, "Go thou forth in quest of her and return not but with her." Quoth I, "Send other than I of thy sons." But he would not consent to this and reviled me and insisted upon me, till the matter came to such a pass with him that he took a whip and fell to beating me. So I arose and taking a riding-camel, mounted her and sallied forth at a venture, purposing to go out into the deserts and return to him no more. I fared on all my night [and the next day] and coming at eventide to [the encampment of] this my wife's people, alighted down with her father, who was a very old man, and became his guest.

When the night was half spent, I arose [and went forth the tent] to do an occasion of mine, and none knew of my case save this woman. The dogs misdoubted of me and followed me and gave not over besetting me, till I fell on my back into a deep pit, wherein was water, and one of the dogs fell in with me. The woman, who was then a girl in the first bloom of youth, full of strength and spirit, was moved to pity on me, for that wherein I was fallen, and coming to me with a rope, said to me, "Lay hold of this rope." So I laid hold of the rope and clung to it and she pulled me up; but, when I was halfway up, I pulled her [down] and she fell with me into the pit; and there we abode three days, she and I and the dog.

When her people arose in the morning and saw her not, they sought her in the camp, but, finding her not and missing me also, doubted not but she had fled with me. Now she had four brothers, as they were falcons, and they mounted and dispersed in quest of us. When the day dawned [on the fourth morning], the dog began to bark and the other dogs answered him and coming to the mouth of the pit, stood howling to him. My wife's father, hearing the howling of the dogs, came up and standing at the brink of the pit, [looked in and] beheld a marvel. Now he was a man of valour and understanding, an elder versed in affairs so he fetched a rope and bringing us both forth, questioned us of our case. I told him all that had betided and he abode pondering the affair.

Presently, her brothers returned, whereupon the old man acquainted them with the whole case and said to them, "O my sons, know that your sister purposed not aught but good, and if ye slay this man, ye will earn abiding reproach and ye will wrong him, ay, and wrong yourselves and your sister, to boot; for indeed there appeareth no cause [of offence] such as calleth for slaughter, and it may not be denied that this incident is a thing the like whereof may well betide and that he may well have been baffled by the like of this chance." Then he turned to me and questioned me of my lineage; so I set forth to him my genealogy and he said, "A man of equal rank, honourable [and] understanding." And he offered me [his daughter in] marriage. I consented to him of this and marrying her, took up my abode with him and God the Most High hath opened on me the gates of weal and fortune, so that I am become the most abounding in substance of the folk of the tribe; and He hath stablished me in that which He hath given me of His bounties.'

The young man marvelled at his story and lay the night with him; and when he arose in the morning, he found his strays. So he took them and returning [to his family.], acquainted them with what he had seen and that which had betided him. Nor," added the vizier, "is this more marvellous or rarer than the story of the king who lost kingdom and wealth and wife and children and God restored them unto him and requited him with a kingdom more magnificent than that which he had lost and goodlier and rarer and greater of wealth and elevation."

The vizier's story pleased the king and he bade depart to his dwelling.

The Twenty-Sixth Night of the Month.

WHEN came the night, the king summoned his vizier and bade him tell the story of the king who lost kingdom and wife and wealth. “Hearkening and obedience,” replied Er Rehwan. “Know, O king, that

Story of the King Who Lost Kingdom and Wife and Wealth and God Restored Them to Him.

THERE was once a king of the kings of Hind, who was goodly of polity, praiseworthy in administration, just to his subjects, beneficent to men of learning and piety and asceticism and devoutness and worship and shunning traitors and froward folk and those of lewd life. On this wise of polity he abode in his kingship what God the Most High willed of days and hours and years, and he married the daughter of his father's brother, a beautiful and lovesome woman, endowed with brightness and perfection, who had been reared in the king's house in splendour and delight. She bore him two sons, the comeliest that might be of boys. Then came fore-ordained fate, which there is no warding off, and God the Most High raised up against the king another king, who came forth upon his realm, and all the folk of the city, who had a mind unto evil and lewdness, joined themselves unto him. So he fortified himself against the king and made himself master of his kingdom, putting his troops to the rout and slaying his guards.

The king took his wife, the mother of his sons, and what he might [of good] and saved himself and fled in the darkness of the night, unknowing whither he should go. When travel grew sore upon them, there met them robbers by the way, who took all that was with them, [even to their clothes], so that there was left unto each of them but a shirt and trousers; yea, they left them without victual or camels or [other] riding-cattle, and they ceased not to fare on afoot, till they came to a coppice, to wit, a garden of trees, on the shore of the sea. Now the road which they would have followed was crossed by an arm of the sea, but it was scant of water. So, when they came to that place, the king took up one of his children and fording the water with him, set him down on the other bank and returned for his other son. Him also he set by his brother and returning for their mother, took her up and passing the water with her, came to the place [where he had left his children], but found them not. Then he looked at the midst of the island and saw there an old man and an old woman, engaged in making themselves a hut of reeds. So he put down his wife over against them and set off in quest of his children, but none gave him news of them and he went round about right and left, but found not the place where they were.

Now the children had entered the coppice, to make water, and there was there a forest of trees, wherein, if a horseman entered, he might wander by the week, [before finding his way out], for none knew the first thereof from the last. So the boys entered therein and knew not how they should return and went astray in that wood, to an end that was willed of God the Most High, whilst their father sought them, but found them not. So he returned to their mother and they abode weeping for their children. As for these latter, when they entered the wood, it swallowed them up and they went wandering in it many days, knowing not where they had entered, till they came forth, at another side, upon the open country.

Meanwhile, the king and queen abode in the island, over against the old man and woman, and ate of the fruits that were in the island and drank of its waters, till, one

day, as they sat, there came a ship and moored to the side of the island, to fill up with water, whereupon they looked at each other and spoke. The master of the ship was a Magian and all that was therein, both men and goods, belonged to him, for that he was a merchant and went round about the world. Now covetise deluded the old man, the owner of the island, and he went up [into the ship] and gave the Magian news of the king's wife, setting out to him her charms, till he made him yearn unto her and his soul prompted him to use treachery and practise upon her and take her from her hnsband. So he sent to her, saying, 'With us in the ship is a woman with child, and we fear lest she be delivered this night. Hast thou skill in the delivering of women?' And she answered, 'Yes.' Now it was the last of the day; so he sent to her to come up into the ship and deliver the woman, for that the pangs of labour were come upon her; and he promised her clothes and spending-money. Accordingly, she embarked in all assurance, with a heart at ease for herself, and transported her gear to the ship; but no sooner was she come thither than the anchors were weighed and the canvas spread and the ship set sail.

When the king saw this, he cried out and his wife wept in the ship and offered to cast herself into the sea; but the Magian bade the sailors lay hands on her. So they seized her and it was but a little while ere the night darkened and the ship disappeared from the king's eyes; whereupon he swooned away for excess of weeping and lamentation and passed his night bewailing his wife and children.

When the morning morrowed, he recited the following verses:

How long, O Fate, wilt thou oppress and baffle me?
Tell me, was ever yet a mortal spared of thee?
Behold, my loved ones all are ta'en from me away.
They left me and content forthright forsook my heart,
Upon that day my loves my presence did depart;
My pleasant life for loss of friends is troubled aye.
By Allah, I knew not their worth nor yet how dear
A good it is to have one's loved ones ever near,
Until they left my heart on fire without allay.
Ne'er shall I them forget, nay, nor the day they went
And left me all forlorn, to pine for languishment,
My severance to bewail in torment and dismay.
I make a vow to God, if ever day or night
The herald of good news my hearing shall delight,
Announcing the return o' th' absent ones,
I'll lay Upon their threshold's dust my cheeks and to my soul,
"Take comfort, for the loved are come again,"
I'll say. If for my loved ones' loss I rent my heart for dole,
Before I rent my clothes, reproach me not, I pray.

He abode weeping for the loss of his wife and children till the morning, when he went forth wandering at a venture, knowing not what he should do, and gave not over faring along the sea-shore days and nights, unknowing whither he went and taking no food therein other than the herbs of the earth and seeing neither man nor beast nor

other living thing, till his travel brought him to the top of a mountain. He took up his sojourn in the mountain and abode there [awhile] alone, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters. Then he came down thence and fared on along the high road three days, at the end of which time he came upon tilled fields and villages and gave not over going till he sighted a great city on the shore of the sea and came to the gate thereof at the last of the day. The gatekeepers suffered him not to enter; so he abode his night anhungred, and when he arose in the morning, be sat down hard by the gate.

Now the king of the city was dead and had left no son, and the townsfolk fell out concerning who should be king over them: and their sayings differed and their counsels, so that turmoil was like to betide between them by reason of this. At last, after long dissension, they came to an accord and agreed to leave the choice to the late king's elephant and that he unto whom he consented should be king and that they would not contest the commandment with him. So they made oath of this and on the morrow, they brought out the elephant and came forth to the utterward of the city; nor was there man or woman left in the place but was present at that time. Then they adorned the elephant and setting up the throne on his back, gave him the crown in his trunk; and he went round about examining the faces of the folk, but stopped not with any of them till he came to the banished king, the forlorn, the exile, him who had lost his children and his wife, when he prostrated himself to him and placing the crown on his head, took him up and set him on his back.

Thereupon the folk all prostrated themselves and gave one another joy of this and the drums of good tidings beat before him, and he entered the city [and went on] till he came to the House of Justice and the audience-hall of the palace and sat down on the throne of the kingdom, with the crown on his head; whereupon the folk came in to him to give him joy and offer up prayers for him. Then he addressed himself, after his wont in the kingship, to ordering the affairs of the folk and ranging the troops according to their ranks and looking into their affairs and those of all the people. Moreover, he released those who were in the prisons and abolished the customs dues and gave dresses of honour and bestowed gifts and largesse and conferred favours on the amirs and viziers and dignitaries, and the chamberlains and deputies presented themselves before him and did him homage. So the people of the city rejoiced in him and said, 'Indeed this is none other than a king of the greatest of the kings.'

Moreover, he assembled the sages and the theologians and the sons of the kings and devised with them and asked them questions and problems and examined with them into many things of all fashions that might direct him to well-doing in the kingly office; and he questioned them also of subtleties and religious obligations and of the laws of the kingdom and the fashions of administration and of that which it behoveth the king to do of looking into the affairs of the people and repelling the enemy [from the realm] and fending off his malice with war; wherefore the people's contentment redoubled and their joy in that which God the Most High had vouchsafed them of his elevation to the kingship over them. So he upheld the ordinance of the realm and the affairs thereof abode established upon the accepted customs.

Now the late king had left a wife and a daughter, and the people would fain have married the latter to the new king, to the intent that the kingship might not pass out of the old royal family. So they proposed to him that he should take her to wife, and he

promised them this, but put them off from him, of his respect for the covenant he had made with his former wife, to wit, that he would take none other to wife than herself. Then he betook himself to fasting by day and standing up by night [to pray], giving alms galore and beseeching God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) to reunite him with his children and his wife, the daughter of his father's brother.

When a year had elapsed, there came to the city a ship, wherein were merchants and goods galore. Now it was of their usance, from time immemorial, that, when there came a ship to the city, the king sent unto it such of his servants as he trusted in, who took charge of the goods, so they might be [first of all] shown to the king, who bought such of them as befitted him and gave the merchants leave to sell the rest. So he sent, as of wont, one who should go up to the ship and seal up the goods and set over them who should keep watch over them.

To return to the queen his wife. When the Magian fled with her, he proffered himself to her and lavished unto her wealth galore, but she rejected his suit and was like to slay herself for chagrin at that which had befallen and for grief for her separation from her husband. Moreover, she refused meat and drink and offered to cast herself into the sea; but the Magian shackled her and straitened her and clad her in a gown of wool and said to her, 'I will continue thee in misery and abjection till thou obey me and consent to my wishes.' So she took patience and looked for God to deliver her from the hand of that accursed one; and she ceased not to travel with him from place to place till he came with her to the city wherein her husband was king and his goods were put under seal.

Now the woman was in a chest and two youths of the pages of the late king, who were now in the new king's service, were those who had been charged with the guardianship of the vessel and the goods. When the evening evened on them, the two youths fell a-talking and recounted that which had befallen them in their days of childhood and the manner of the going forth of their father and mother from their country and royal estate, whenas the wicked overcame their land, and [called to mind] how they had gone astray in the forest and how fate had made severance between them and their parents; brief, they recounted their story, from beginning to end. When the woman heard their talk, she knew that they were her very sons and cried out to them from the chest, saying, 'I am your mother such an one, and the token between you and me is thus and thus.' The young men knew the token and falling upon the chest, broke the lock and brought out their mother, who strained them to her breast, and they fell upon her and swooned away, all three.

When they came to themselves, they wept awhile and the folk assembled about them, marvelling at that which they saw, and questioned them of their case. So the young men vied with each other who should be the first to discover the story to the folk; and when the Magian saw this, he came up, crying out, 'Alas!' and 'Woe worth the day!' and said to them, 'Why have ye broken open my chest? I had in it jewels and ye have stolen them, and this damsel is my slave-girl and she hath agreed with you upon a device to take the good.' Then he rent his clothes and called aloud for succour, saying, 'I appeal to God and to the just king, so he may quit me of these wrong-doing youths!' Quoth they, 'This is our mother and thou stolest her.' Then words waxed many between them and the folk plunged into talk and prate and discussion concerning their

affair and that of the [pretended] slave-girl, and the strife waxed amain between them, so that [at last] they carried them up to the king.

When the two young men presented themselves before him and set forth their case to him and to the folk and the king heard their speech, he knew them and his heart was like to fly for joyance in them: the tears poured from his eyes at their sight and that of his wife, and he thanked God the Most High and praised Him for that He had reunited [him with] them. Then he dismissed the folk who were present about him and bade commit the Magian and the woman and the two youths to his armoury [for the night], commanding that they should keep guard over them till God caused the morning morrow, so he might assemble the cadis and the judges and assessors and judge between them, according to the Holy Law, in the presence of the four cadis. So they did his bidding and the king passed the night praying and praising God the Most High for that which He had vouchsafed him of kingship and puissance and victory over him who had wronged him and thanking Him who had reunited him with his family.

When the morning morrowed, he assembled the cadis and judges and assessors and sending for the Magian and the two youths and their mother, questioned them of their case, whereupon the two young men began and said, 'We are the sons of the king Such-an-one and enemies and wicked men got the mastery of out realm; so our father fled forth with us and wandered at a venture, for fear of the enemies.' [And they recounted to him all that had betided them, from beginning to end.] Quoth he, 'Ye tell a marvellous story; but what hath [Fate] done with your father?' 'We know not how fortune dealt with him after our loss,' answered they; and he was silent.

Then he turned to the woman and said to her, 'And thou, what sayst thou?' So she expounded to him her case and recounted to him all that had betided her and her husband, first and last, up to the time when they took up their abode with the old man and woman who dwelt on the sea-shore. Then she set out that which the Magian had practised on her of knavery and how he had carried her off in the ship and all that had betided her of humiliation and torment, what while the cadis and judges and deputies hearkened to her speech. When the king heard the last of his wife's story, he said, 'Verily, there hath betided thee a grievous matter; but hast thou knowledge of what thy husband did and what came of his affair?' 'Nay, by Allah,' answered she; 'I have no knowledge of him, save that I leave him no hour unremembered in fervent prayer, and never, whilst I live, will he cease to be to me the father of my children and my father's brother's son and my flesh and my blood.' Then she wept and the king bowed his head, whilst his eyes brimmed over with tears at her story.

Then he raised his head to the Magian and said to him, 'Say thy say, thou also.' So the Magian said, 'This is my slave-girl, whom I bought with my money from such a land and for so many dinars, and I made her my favourite and loved her with an exceeding love and gave her charge over my good; but she betrayed me in my substance and plotted with one of my servants to slay me, tempting him by promising him that she would be his wife. When I knew this of her and was certified that she purposed treason against me, I awoke [from my heedlessness] and did with her that which I did, of fear for myself from her craft and perfidy; for indeed she is a beguiler with her

tongue and she hath taught these two youths this pretence, by way of trickery and of her perfidy and malice: so be thou not deluded by her and by her talk.'

'Thou liest, O accursed one,' cried the king and bade lay hands on him and clap him in irons. Then he turned to the two youths, his sons, and strained them to his breast, weeping sore and saying, 'O all ye who are present of cadis and assessors and officers of state, know that these twain are my sons and that this is my wife and the daughter of my father's brother; for that I was king aforetime in such a region.' And he recounted to them his history from beginning to end, nor is there aught of profit in repetition; whereupon the folk cried out with weeping and lamentation for the stress of that which they heard of marvellous chances and that rare story. As for the king's wife, he caused carry her into his palace and lavished upon her and upon her sons all that behoved and beseemed them of bounties, whilst the folk flocked to offer up prayers for him and give him joy of [his reunion with] his wife and children.

When they had made an end of pious wishes and congratulations, they besought the king to hasten the punishment of the Magian and heal their hearts of him with torment and humiliation. So he appointed them for a day on which they should assemble to witness his punishment and that which should betide him of torment, and shut himself up with his wife and sons and abode thus private with them three days, during which time they were sequestered from the folk. On the fourth day the king entered the bath, and coming forth, sat down on the throne of his kingship, with the crown on his head, whereupon the folk came in to him, according to their wont and after the measure of their several ranks and degrees, and the amirs and viziers entered, ay, and the chamberlains and deputies and captains and men of war and the falconers and armbearers. Then he seated his two sons, one on his right and the other on his left hand, whilst all the folk stood before him and lifted up their voices in thanksgiving to God the Most High and glorification of Him and were strenuous in prayer for the king and in setting forth his virtues and excellences.

He returned them the most gracious of answers and bade carry the Magian forth of the town and set him on a high scaffold that had been builded for him there; and he said to the folk, 'Behold, I will torture him with all kinds of fashions of torment.' Then he fell to telling them that which he had wrought of knavery with the daughter of his father's brother and what he had caused betide her of severance between her and her husband and how he had required her of herself, but she had sought refuge against him with God (to whom belong might and majesty) and chose rather humiliation than yield to his wishes, notwithstanding stress of torment; neither recked she aught of that which he lavished to her of wealth and raiment and jewels.

When the king had made an end of his story, he bade the bystanders spit in the Magian's face and curse him; and they did this. Then he bade cut out his tongue and on the morrow he bade cut off his ears and nose and pluck out his eyes. On the third day he bade cut off his hands and on the fourth his feet; and they ceased not to lop him limb from limb, and each member they cast into the fire, after its cutting-off, before his face, till his soul departed, after he had endured torments of all kinds and fashions. The king bade crucify his trunk on the city-wall three days' space; after which he let burn it and reduce its ashes to powder and scatter them abroad in the air.

Then the king summoned the cadi and the witnesses and bade them many the old king's daughter and sister to his own sons; so they married them, after the king had made a bride-feast three days and displayed their brides to them from eventide to peep of day. Then the two princes went in to their brides and did away their maidenhead and loved them and were vouchsafed children by them.

As for the king their father, he abode with his wife, their mother, what while God (to whom belong might and majesty) willed, and they rejoiced in reunion with each other. The kingship endured unto them and glory and victory, and the king continued to rule with justice and equity, so that the people loved him and still invoked on him and on his sons length of days and durance; and they lived the most delightsome of lives till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, He who layeth waste the palaces and peopleth the tombs; and this is all that hath come down to us of the story of the king and his wife and children. Nor," added the vizier, "if this story be a solace and a diversion, is it pleasanter or more diverting than that of the young man of Khorassan and his mother and sister."

When King Shah Bekht heard this story, it pleased him and he bade the vizier go away to his own house.

The Twenty-Seventh Night of the Month

When the evening came, the king bade fetch the vizier; so he presented himself before him and the king bade him tell the [promised] story. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, O king (but God alone knoweth His secret purpose and is versed in all that is past and was foredone among bygone peoples), that

Story of Selim and Selma.

THERE was once, in the parts of Khorassan, a man of the affluent of the country, who was a merchant of the chiefest of the merchants and was blessed with two children, a son and a daughter. He was assiduous in rearing them and making fair their education, and they grew up and throve after the goodliest fashion. He used to teach the boy, who taught his sister all that he learnt, so that the girl became perfect in the knowledge of the Traditions of the Prophet and in polite letters, by means of her brother. Now the boy's name was Selim and that of the girl Selma. When they grew up and waxed, their father built them a mansion beside his own and lodged them apart therein and appointed them slave-girls and servants to tend them and assigned unto each of them pensions and allowances and all that they needed of high and low, meat and bread and wine and raiment and vessels and what not else. So Selim and Selma abode in that mansion, as they were one soul in two bodies, and they used to sleep on one couch; and rooted in each one's heart was love and affection and familiar friendship [for the other of them].

One night, when the night was half spent, as Selim and Selma sat talking and devising with each other, they heard a noise below the house; so they looked out from a lattice that gave upon the gate of their father's mansion and saw a man of goodly presence, whose clothes were hidden by a wide cloak, which covered him. He came up to the gate and laying hold of the door-ring, gave a light knock; whereupon the door opened and out came their sister, with a lighted flambeau, and after her their mother, who saluted the stranger and embraced him, saying, 'O beloved of my heart and light of mine eyes and fruit of mine entrails, enter.' So he entered and shut the door, whilst Selim and Selma abode amazed.

Then Selim turned to Selma and said to her, 'O sister mine, how deemest thou of this calamity and what counsellest thou thereanent?' 'O my brother,' answered she, 'indeed I know not what I shall say concerning the like of this; but he is not disappointed who seeketh direction [of God], nor doth he repent who taketh counsel. One getteth not the better of the traces of burning by haste, and know that this is an affliction that hath descended on us; and we have need of management to do it away, yea, and contrivance to wash withal our shame from our faces.' And they gave not over watching the gate till break of day, when the young man opened the door and their mother took leave of him; after which he went his way and she entered, she and her handmaid.

Then said Selim to his sister, 'Know that I am resolved to slay yonder man, if he return this next night, and I will say to the folk, "He was a thief," and none shall know that which hath befallen. Moreover, I will address myself to the slaughter of whosoever knoweth that which is between yonder fellow and my mother.' But Selma said, ' I fear lest, if thou slay him in our dwelling-place and he savour not of robberhood, suspicion will revert upon ourselves, and we cannot be assured but that he belongeth unto folk whose mischief is to be feared and their hostility dreaded, and thus wilt thou have fled from privy shame to open shame and abiding public dishonour.' 'How then deemest thou we should do?' asked Selim and she said, 'Is there nothing for it but to slay him?

Let us not hasten unto slaughter, for that the slaughter of a soul without just cause is a grave [matter].'

(When Shehriyar heard this, he said in himself, 'By Allah, I have indeed been reckless in the slaying of women and girls, and praised be God who hath occupied me with this damsel from the slaughter of souls, for that the slaughter of souls is a grave [matter!] By Allah, if Shah Bekht spare the vizier, I will assuredly spare Shehrzad!' Then he gave ear to the story and heard her say to her sister:)

Quoth Selma to Selim, 'Hasten not to slay him, but ponder the matter and consider the issue to which it may lead; for whoso considereth not the issues [of his actions], fortune is no friend to him.' Then they arose on the morrow and occupied themselves with devising how they should turn away their mother from that man, and she forebode mischief from them, by reason of that which she saw in their eyes of alteration, for that she was keen of wit and crafty. So she took precaution for herself against her children and Selma said to Selim, 'Thou seest that whereinto we have fallen through this woman, and indeed she hath gotten wind of our purpose and knoweth that we have discovered her secret. So, doubtless, she will plot against us the like of that which we plot for her; for indeed up to now she had concealed her affair, and now she will forge lies against us; wherefore, methinks, there is a thing [fore-]written to us, whereof God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) knew in His foreknowledge and wherein He executeth His ordinances.' 'What is that?' asked he, and she said, 'It is that we arise, I and thou, and go forth this night from this land and seek us a land wherein we may live and witness nought of the doings of yonder traitress; for whoso is absent from the eye is absent from the heart, and quoth one of the poets in the following verse:

Twere better and meeter thy presence to leave, For, if the eye see not, the heart doth not grieve.'

Quoth Selim to her, 'It is for thee to decide and excellent is that which thou counsellest; so let us do this, in the name of God the Most High, trusting in Him for grace and guidance.' So they arose and took the richest of their clothes and the lightest of that which was in their treasuries of jewels and things of price and gathered together a great matter. Then they equipped them ten mules and hired them servants of other than the people of the country; and Selim bade his sister Selma don man's apparel. Now she was the likest of all creatures to him, so that, [when she was clad in man's attire,] the folk knew no difference between them, extolled be the perfection of Him who hath no like, there is no God but He! Then he bade her mount a horse, whilst he himself bestrode another, and they set out, under cover of the night. None of their family nor of the people of their house knew of them; so they fared on into the wide world of God and gave not over going night and day two months' space, at the end of which time they came to a city on the sea-shore of the land of Mekran, by name Es Sherr, and it is the first city in Sind.

They lighted down without the place and when they arose in the morning, they saw a populous and goodly city, fair of seeming and great, abounding in trees and streams and fruits and wide of suburbs. So the young man said to his sister Selma, 'Abide thou here in thy place, till I enter the city and examine it and make assay of its

people and seek out a place which we may buy and whither we may remove. If it befit us, we will take up our abode therein, else will we take counsel of departing elsewhither.' Quoth she, 'Do this, trusting in the bounty of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and in His blessing.'

So he took a belt, wherein were a thousand dinars, and binding it about his middle, entered the city and gave not over going round about its streets and markets and gazing upon its houses and sitting with those of its folk whose aspect bespoke them men of worth, till the day was half spent, when he resolved to return to his sister and said in himself, 'Needs must I buy what we may eat of ready-[dressed] food] I and my sister.' Accordingly, he accosted a man who sold roast meat and who was clean [of person], though odious in his [means of getting a] living, and said to him, 'Take the price of this dish [of meat] and add thereto of fowls and chickens and what not else is in your market of meats and sweetmeats and bread and arrange it in dishes.' So the cook set apart for him what he desired and calling a porter, laid it in his basket, and Selim paid the cook the price of his wares, after the fullest fashion.

As he was about to go away, the cook said to him, 'O youth, doubtless thou art a stranger?' And he answered, 'Yes.' Quoth the cook, 'It is reported in one of the Traditions [of the Prophet that he said,] "Loyal admonition is [a part] of religion;" and the understanding say, "Admonition is of the characteristics of the true believers." And indeed that which I have seen of thy fashions pleaseth me and I would fain give thee a warning.' 'Speak out thy warning,' rejoined Selim, 'and may God strengthen thine affair!' Then said the cook, 'Know, O my son, that in this our country, whenas a stranger entereth therein and eateth of flesh-meat and drinketh not old wine thereon, this is harmful unto him and engendereth in him dangerous disorders. Wherefore, if thou have provided thee somewhat thereof, [it is well;] but, if not, look thou procure it, ere thou take the meat and carry it away.' 'May God requite thee with good!' rejoined Selim. 'Canst thou direct me where it is sold?' And the cook said, 'With me is all that thou seekest thereof.' 'Is there a way for me to see it?' asked the young man; and the cook sprang up and said, 'Pass on.' So he entered and the cook showed him somewhat of wine; but he said, 'I desire better than this.' Whereupon he opened a door and entering, said to Selim, 'Enter and follow me.'

Selim followed him till he brought him to an underground chamber and showed him somewhat of wine that was to his mind. So he occupied him with looking upon it and taking him at unawares, sprang upon him from behind and cast him to the earth and sat upon his breast. Then he drew a knife and set it to his jugular; whereupon there betided Selim [that wherewithal] God made him forget all that He had decreed [unto him], and he said to the cook, 'Why dost thou this thing, O man? Be mindful of God the Most High and fear Him. Seest thou not that I am a stranger? And indeed [I have left] behind me a defenceless woman. Why wilt thou slay me?' Quoth the cook, 'Needs must I slay thee, so I may take thy good.' And Selim said, 'Take my good, but slay me not, neither enter into sin against me; and do with me kindness, for that the taking of my money is lighter than the taking of my life.'

'This is idle talk,' answered the cook. 'Thou canst not deliver thyself with this, O youth, for that in thy deliverance is my destruction.' Quoth Selim, 'I swear to thee and give thee the covenant of God (to whom belong might and majesty) and His bond, that

He took of His prophets, that I will not discover thy secret ever.' But the cook answered, saying, 'Away! Away! This may no wise be.' However, Selim ceased not to conjure him and make supplication to him and weep, while the cook persisted in his intent to slaughter him. Then he wept and recited the following verses:

Haste not to that thou dost desire, for haste is still unblest;
Be merciful to men, as thou on mercy reckonest;
For no hand is there but the hand of God is over it
And no oppressor but shall be with worse than he opprest.

Quoth the cook, 'Nothing will serve but I must slay thee, O fellow; for, if I spare thee, I shall myself be slain.' But Selim said, 'O my brother, I will counsel thee somewhat other than this.' 'What is it?' asked the cook. 'Say and be brief, ere I cut thy throat' And Selim said, '[Do thou suffer me to live and] keep me, that I may be a servant unto thee, and I will work at a craft, of the crafts of the skilled workmen, wherefrom there shall return to thee every day two dinars.' Quoth the cook, 'What is the craft?' and Selim said, 'The cutting [and polishing] of jewels.'

When the cook heard this, he said in himself, 'It will do me no hurt if I imprison him and shackle him and bring him what he may work at. If he tell truth, I will let him live, and if he prove a liar, I will slay him.' So he took a pair of stout shackles and clapping them on Selim's legs, imprisoned him within his house and set over him one who should guard him. Then he questioned him of what tools he needed to work withal. Selim set forth to him that which he required, and the cook went out from him and presently returning, brought him all he needed. So Selim sat and wrought at his craft; and he used every day to earn two dinars; and this was his wont and usance with the cook, whilst the latter fed him not but half his fill.

To return to his sister Selma. She awaited him till the last of the day, but he came not; and she awaited him a second day and a third and a fourth, yet there came no news of him, wherefore she wept and beat with her hands on her breast and bethought her of her affair and her strangerhood and her brother's absence; and she recited the following verses:

Peace on thee! Would our gaze might light on thee once more!
So should our hearts be eased and eyes no longer sore.
Thou only art the whole of our desire; indeed
Thy love is hid within our hearts' most secret core.

She abode awaiting him thus till the end of the month, but discovered no tidings of him neither happened upon aught of his trace; wherefore she was troubled with an exceeding perturbation and despatching her servants hither and thither in quest of him, abode in the sorest that might be of grief and concern. When it was the beginning of the new month, she arose in the morning and bidding cry him throughout the city, sat to receive visits of condolence, nor was there any in the city but betook himself to her, to condole with her; and they were all concerned for her, nothing doubting but she was a man.

When three nights had passed over her with their days of the second month, she despaired of him and her tears dried not up. Then she resolved to take up her abode in

the city and making choice of a dwelling, removed thither. The folk resorted to her from all parts, to sit with her and hearken to her speech and witness her good breeding; nor was it but a little while ere the king of the city died and the folk fell out concerning whom they should invest with the kingship after him, so that strife was like to betide between them. However, the men of judgment and understanding and the folk of experience counselled them to make the youth king who had lost his brother, for that they doubted not but Selma was a man. They all consented unto this and betaking themselves to Selma, proffered her the kingship. She refused, but they were instant with her, till she consented, saying in herself, 'My sole desire in [accepting] the kingship is [to find] my brother.' Then they seated her on the throne of the kingdom and set the crown on her head, whereupon she addressed herself to the business of administration and to the ordinance of the affairs of the people; and they rejoiced in her with the utmost joy.

Meanwhile, Selim abode with the cook a whole year's space, earning him two dinars every day; and when his affair was prolonged, the cook inclined unto him and took compassion on him, on condition that, if he let him go, he should not discover his fashion to the Sultan, for that it was his wont every little while to entrap a man and carry him to his house and slay him and take his money and cook his flesh and give it to the folk to eat. So he said to him, 'O youth, wilt thou that I release thee from this thy plight, on condition that thou be reasonable and discover not aught of thine affair ever?' And Selim answered, 'I will swear to thee by whatsoever oath thou choosest that I will keep thy secret and will not speak one syllable against thy due, what while I abide on life.' Quoth the cook, 'I purpose to send thee forth with my brother and cause thee travel with him on the sea, on condition that thou be unto him a boughten slave; and when he cometh to the land of Hind, he shall sell thee and thus wilt thou be delivered from prison and slaughter.' And Selim said, 'It is well: be it as thou sayst, may God the Most High requite thee with good!'

Therewithal the cook equipped his brother and freighting him a ship, embarked therein merchandise. Then he committed Selim unto him and they set out and departed with the ship. God decreed them safety, so that they arrived [in due course] at the first city [of the land of Hind], the which is known as El Mensoureh, and cast anchor there. Now the king of that city had died, leaving a daughter and a widow, who was the quickest-witted of women and gave out that the girl was a boy, so that the kingship might be stablished unto them. The troops and the amirs doubted not but that the case was as she avouched and that the princess was a male child; so they obeyed her and the queen mother took order for the matter and used to dress the girl in man's apparel and seat her on the throne of the kingship, so that the folk might see her. Accordingly, the grandees of the kingdom and the chief officers of the realm used to go in to her and salute her and do her service and go away, nothing doubting but she was a boy.

On this wise they abode months and years and the queen-mother ceased not to do thus till the cook's brother came to the town in his ship, and with him Selim. So he landed with the youth and showed him to the queen, [that she might buy him]. When she saw him, she augured well of him; so she bought him from the cook's brother and was kind to him and entreated him with honour. Then she fell to proving him in his

parts and making assay of him in his affairs and found in him all that is in kings' sons of understanding and breeding and goodly manners and qualities.

So she sent for him in private and said to him, 'I purpose to do thee a service, so thou canst but keep a secret.' He promised her all that she desired and she discovered to him her secret in the matter of her daughter, saying, 'I will marry thee to her and commit to thee the governance of her affair and make thee king and ruler over this city.' He thanked her and promised to uphold all that she should order him, and she said to him, 'Go forth to such an one of the neighbouring provinces privily.' So he went forth and on the morrow she made ready bales and gear and presents and bestowed on him a great matter, all of which they loaded on the backs of camels.

Then she gave out among the folk that the king's father's brother's son was come and bade the grandees and troops go forth to meet him. Moreover, she decorated the city in his honour and the drums of good tidings beat for him, whilst all the king's household [went out to meet him and] dismounting before him, [escorted him to the city and] lodged him with the queen-mother in her palace. Then she bade the chiefs of the state attend his assembly; so they presented themselves before him and saw of his breeding and accomplishments that which amazed them and made them forget the breeding of those who had foregone him of the kings.

When they were grown familiar with him, the queen-mother fell to sending [privily] for the amirs, one by one, and swearing them to secrecy; and when she was assured of their trustworthiness, she discovered to them that the king had left but a daughter and that she had done this but that she might continue the kingship in his family and that the governance should not go forth from them; after which she told them that she was minded to marry her daughter with the new-comer, her father's brother's son, and that he should be the holder of the kingship. They approved of her proposal and when she had discovered the secret to the last of them [and assured herself of their support], she published the news abroad and sent for the cadis and assessors, who drew up the contract of marriage between Selim and the princess, and they lavished gifts upon the troops and overwhelmed them with bounties. Then was the bride carried in procession to the young man and the kingship was stablished unto him and the governance of the realm.

On this wise they abode a whole year, at the end of which time Selim said to the queen-mother, 'Know that my life is not pleasing to me nor can I abide with you in contentment till I get me tidings of my sister and learn in what issue her affair hath resulted and how she hath fared after me. Wherefore I will go and be absent from you a year's space; then will I return to you, so it please God the Most High and I accomplish of this that which I hope.' Quoth she, 'I will not trust to thy word, but will go with thee and help thee to that which thou desirest of this and further thee myself therein.' So she took a ship and loaded it with all manner things of price, goods and treasures and what not else. Moreover, she appointed one of the viziers, a man in whom she trusted and in his fashion and ordinance, to rule the realm in their absence, saying to him, 'Abide [in the kingship] a full-told year and ordain all that whereof thou hast need.

Then the old queen and her daughter and son-in-law embarked in the ship and setting sail, fared on till they came to the land of Mekran. Their arrival there befell at the last of the day; so they passed the night in the ship, and when the day was near to break, the young king went down from the ship, that he might go to the bath, and made for the market. As he drew near the bath, the cook met him by the way and knew him; so he laid hands on him and binding his arms fast behind him, carried him to his house, where he clapped the old shackles on his feet and straightway cast him back into his whilom place of duresse.

When Selim found himself in that sorry plight and considered that wherewith he was afflicted of tribulation and the contrariness of his fortune, in that he had been a king and was now returned to shackles and prison and hunger, he wept and groaned and lamented and recited the following verses:

My fortitude fails, my endeavour is vain;
My bosom is straitened. To Thee, I complain,
O my God! Who is stronger than Thou in resource?
The Subtle, Thou knowest my plight and my pain.

To return to his wife and her mother. When the former arose in the morning and her husband returned not to her with break of day, she forebode all manner of calamity and straightway despatched her servants and all who were with her in quest of him; but they happened not on any trace of him neither fell in with aught of his news. So she bethought herself concerning her affair and complained and wept and groaned and sighed and blamed perfidious fortune, bewailing that sorry chance and reciting these verses:

God keep the days of love-delight!
How passing sweet they were!
How joyous and how solaceful was life in them whilere!
Would he were not, who sundered us upon the parting-day!
How many a body hath he slain, how many a bone laid bare!
Sans fault of mine, my blood and tears he shed and beggared me
Of him I love, yet for himself gained nought thereby whate'er.

When she had made an end of her verses, she considered her affair and said in herself, 'By Allah, all these things have betided by the ordinance of God the Most High and His providence and this was written and charactered upon the forehead.' Then she landed and fared on till she came to a spacious place, where she enquired of the folk and hired a house. Thither she straightway transported all that was in the ship of goods and sending for brokers, sold all that was with her. Then she took part of the price and fell to enquiring of the folk, so haply she might scent out tidings [of her lost husband]. Moreover, she addressed herself to lavishing alms and tending the sick, clothing the naked and pouring water upon the dry ground of the forlorn. On this wise she abode a whole year, and every little while she sold of her goods and gave alms to the sick and the needy; wherefore her report was bruited abroad in the city and the folk were lavish in her praise.

All this while, Selim lay in shackles and strait prison, and melancholy possessed him by reason of that whereinto he had fallen of that tribulation. Then, when troubles waxed on him and affliction was prolonged, he fell sick of a sore sickness. When the cook saw his plight (and indeed he was like to perish for much suffering), he loosed him from the shackles and bringing him forth of the prison, committed him to an old woman, who had a nose the bigness of a jug, and bade her tend him and medicine him and serve him and entreat him kindly, so haply he might be made whole of that his sickness. So the old woman took him and carrying him to her lodging, fell to tending him and giving him to eat and drink; and when he was quit of that torment, he recovered from his malady.

Now the old woman had heard from the folk of the lady who gave alms to the sick, and indeed [the news of] her bounties reached both poor and rich; so she arose and bringing out Selim to the door of her house, laid him on a mat and wrapped him in a mantle and sat over against him. Presently, it befell that the charitable lady passed by them, which when the old woman saw, she rose to her and offered up prayers for her, saying, 'O my daughter, O thou to whom pertain goodness and beneficence and charity and almsdoing, know that this young man is a stranger, and indeed want and vermin and hunger and nakedness and cold slay him.' When the lady heard this, she gave her alms of that which was with her; and indeed her heart inclined unto Selim, [but she knew him not for her husband].

The old woman received the alms from her and carrying it to Selim, took part thereof herself and with the rest bought him an old shirt, in which she clad him, after she had stripped him of that he had on. Then she threw away the gown she had taken from off him and arising forthright, washed his body of that which was thereon of filth and scented him with somewhat of perfume. Moreover, she bought him chickens and made him broth; so he ate and his life returned to him and he abode with her on the most solaceful of life till the morrow.

Next morning, the old woman said to him, 'When the lady cometh to thee, do thou arise and kiss her hand and say to her, "I am a strange man and indeed cold and hunger slay me;" so haply she may give thee somewhat that thou mayst expend upon thy case.' And he answered, 'Hearkening and obedience.' Then she took him by the hand and carrying him without her house, seated him at the door. As he sat, behold, the lady came up to him, whereupon the old woman rose to her and Selim kissed her hand and offered up prayers for her. Then he looked on her and when he saw her, he knew her for his wife; so he cried out and wept and groaned and lamented; whereupon she came up to him and cast herself upon him; for indeed she knew him with all knowledge, even as he knew her. So she laid hold of him and embraced him and called to her serving-men and attendants and those who were about her; and they took him up and carried him forth of that place.

When the old woman saw this, she cried out to the cook from within the house, and he said to her, 'Go before me.' So she forewent him and he ran after her till he [overtook the party and] catching hold of Selim, said [to the latter's wife,] 'What aileth thee to take my servant?' Whereupon she cried out at him, saying, 'Know that this is my husband, whom I had lost.' And Selim also cried out, saying, 'Mercy! Mercy! I appeal to God and to the Sultan against this Satan!' Therewith the folk gathered

together to them forthright and loud rose the clamours and the cries between them; but the most part of them said, 'Refer their affair to the Sultan.' So they referred the case to the Sultan, who was none other than Selim's sister Selma.

[Then they went up to the palace and] the interpreter went in to Selma and said to her, 'O king of the age, here is an Indian woman, who cometh from the land of Hind, and she hath laid hands on a young man, a servant, avouching that he is her husband, who hath been missing these two years, and she came not hither but on his account, and indeed these many days she hath done almsdeeds [in the city]. And here is a man, a cook, who avoucheth that the young man is his slave.' When the queen heard these words, her entrails quivered and she groaned from an aching heart and called to mind her brother and that which had betided him. Then she bade those who were about her bring them before her, and when she saw them, she knew her brother and was like to cry aloud; but her reason restrained her; yet could she not contain herself, but she must needs rise up and sit down. However, she enforced herself unto patience and said to them, 'Let each of you acquaint me with his case.'

So Selim came forward and kissing the earth before the [supposed] king, praised him and related to him his story from beginning to end, till the time of their coming to that city, he and his sister, telling him how he had entered the place and fallen into the hands of the cook and that which had betided him [with him] and what he had suffered from him of beating and bonds and shackles and pinioning. Moreover, he told him how the cook had made him his brother's slave and how the latter had sold him in Hind and he had married the princess and become king and how life was not pleasant to him till he should foregather with his sister and how the cook had fallen in with him a second time and acquainted her with that which had betided him of sickness and disease for the space of a full-told year.

When he had made an end of his speech, his wife came forward forthright and told her story, from first to last, how her mother bought him from the cook's partner and the people of the kingdom came under his rule; nor did she leave telling till she came, in her story, to that city [and acquainted the queen with the manner of her falling in with her lost husband]. When she had made an end of her story, the cook exclaimed, 'Alack, what impudent liars there be! By Allah, O king, this woman lieth against me, for this youth is my rearling and he was born of one of my slave-girls. He fled from me and I found him again.

When the queen heard the last of the talk, she said to the cook, 'The judgment between you shall not be but in accordance with justice.' Then she dismissed all those who were present and turning to her brother, said to him, 'Indeed thy soothfastness is established with me and the truth of thy speech, and praised be God who hath brought about union between thee and thy wife! So now begone with her to thy country and leave [seeking] thy sister Selma and depart in peace.' But Selim answered, saying, 'By Allah, by the virtue of the All-knowing King, I will not turn back from seeking my sister till I die or find her, if it please God the Most High!' Then he called his sister to mind and broke out with the following verses from a heart endolored, afflicted, disappointed, saying:

O thou that blamest me for my heart and railest at my ill,
Hadst them but tasted my spirit's grief, thou wouldst excuse me still.
By Allah, O thou that chid'st my heart concerning my sister's love,
Leave chiding and rather bemoan my case and help me to my will.
For indeed I am mated with longing love in public and privily,
Nor ever my heart, alas I will cease from mourning, will I or nill.
A fire in mine entrails burns, than which the fire of the hells denounced
For sinners' torment less scathing is: it seeketh me to slay.

When his sister Selma heard what he said, she could no longer contain herself, but cast herself upon him and discovered to him her case. When he knew her, he threw himself upon her [and lay without life] awhile; after which he came to himself and said, 'Praised be God, the Bountiful, the Beneficent!' Then they complained to each other of that which they had suffered for the anguish of separation, whilst Selim's wife abode wondered at this and Selma's patience and constancy pleased her. So she saluted her and thanked her for her fashion, saying, 'By Allah, O my lady, all that we are in of gladness is of thy blessing alone; so praised be God who hath vouchsafed us thy sight!' Then they abode all three in joy and happiness and delight three days, sequestered from the folk; and it was bruited abroad in the city that the king had found his brother, who was lost years agone.

On the fourth day, all the troops and the people of the realm assembled together to the [supposed] king and standing at his gate, craved leave to enter. Selma bade admit them; so they entered and paid her the service of the kingship and gave her joy of her brother's safe return. She bade them do suit and service to Selim, and they consented and paid him homage; after which they kept silence awhile, so they might hear what the king should command. Then said Selma, 'Harkye, all ye soldiers and subjects, ye know that ye enforced me to [accept] the kingship and besought me thereof and I consented unto your wishes concerning my investment [with the royal dignity]; and I did this [against my will]; for know that I am a woman and that I disguised myself and donned man's apparel, so haply my case might be hidden, whenas I lost my brother. But now, behold, God hath reunited me with my brother, and it is no longer lawful to me that I be king and bear rule over the people, and I a woman; for that there is no governance for women, whenas men are present. Wherefore, if it like you, do ye set my brother on the throne of the kingdom, for this is he; and I will busy myself with the worship of God the Most High and thanksgiving [to Him] for my reunion with my brother. Or, if it like you, take your kingship and invest therewith whom ye will.'

Thereupon the folk all cried out, saying, 'We accept him to king over us!' And they did him suit and service and gave him joy of the kingship. So the preachers preached in his name and the poets praised him; and he lavished gifts upon the troops and the officers of his household and overwhelmed them with favours and bounties and was prodigal to the people of justice and equitable dealings and goodly usance and polity. When he had accomplished this much of his desire, he caused bring forth the cook and his household to the divan, but spared the old woman who had tended him, for that she had been the cause of his deliverance. Then they assembled them all without the town and he tormented the cook and those who were with him with all

manner of torments, after which he put him to death on the sorriest wise and burning him with fire, scattered his ashes abroad in the air.

Selim abode in the governance, invested with the sultanate, and ruled the people a whole year, after which he returned to El Mensoureh and sojourned there another year. And he [and his wife] ceased not to go from city to city and abide in this a year and that a year, till he was vouchsafed children and they grew up, whereupon he appointed him of his sons, who was found fitting, to be his deputy in [one] kingdom [and abode himself in the other]; and he lived, he and his wife and children, what while God the Most High willed. Nor," added the vizier, "O king of the age, is this story rarer or more extraordinary than that of the king of Hind and his wronged and envied vizier."

When the king heard this, his mind was occupied [with the story he had heard and that which the vizier promised him], and he bade the latter depart to his own house.

The Twenty-Eighth and Last Night of the Month

When the evening evened, the king summoned the vizier and bade him tell the story of the King of Hind and his vizier. So he said, "Hearkening and obedience. Know, O king of august lineage, that

Story of the King of Hind and His Vizier.

THERE was once in the land of Hind a king of illustrious station, endowed with understanding and good sense, and his name was Shah Bekht. He had a vizier, a man of worth and intelligence, prudent in counsel, conformable to him in his governance and just in his judgment; wherefore his enviers were many and many were the hypocrites, who sought in him faults and set snares for him, so that they insinuated into King Shah Bekht's eye hatred and rancour against him and sowed despite against him in his heart; and plot followed after plot, till [at last] the king was brought to arrest him and lay him in prison and confiscate his good and avoid his estate.

When they knew that there was left him no estate that the king might covet, they feared lest he be brought to release him, by the incidence of the vizier's [good] counsel upon the king's heart, and he return to his former case, so should their plots be marred and their ranks degraded, for that they knew that the king would have need of that which he had known from that man nor would forget that wherewith he was familiar in him. Now it befell that a certain man of corrupt purpose found a way to the perversion of the truth and a means of glozing over falsehood and adorning it with a semblance of fair-seeming and there proceeded from him that wherewith the hearts of the folk were occupied, and their minds were corrupted by his lying tales; for that he made use of Indian subtleties and forged them into a proof for the denial of the Maker, the Creator, extolled be His might and exalted be He! Indeed, God is exalted and magnified above the speech of the deniers. He avouched that it is the planets that order the affairs of all creatures and he set down twelve mansions to twelve signs [of the Zodiac] and made each sign thirty degrees, after the number of the days of the month, so that in twelve mansions there are three hundred and threescore [degrees], after the number of the days of the year; and he wrought a scheme, wherein he lied and was an infidel and denied [God]. Then he got possession of the king's mind and the enviers and haters aided him against the vizier and insinuated themselves into his favour and corrupted his counsel against the vizier, so that he suffered of him that which he suffered and he banished him and put him away.

So the wicked man attained that which he sought of the vizier and the case was prolonged till the affairs of the kingdom became disordered, by dint of ill governance, and the most part of the king's empery fell away from him and he came nigh unto ruin. Therewithal he was certified of the loyalty of his [late] skilful vizier and the excellence of his governance and the justness of his judgment. So he sent after him and brought him and the wicked man before him and summoning the grandees of his realm and the chiefs of his state to his presence, gave them leave to talk and dispute and forbade the wicked man from that his lewd opinion. Then arose that wise and skilful vizier and praised God the Most High and lauded Him and glorified Him and hallowed Him and attested His unity and disputed with the wicked man and overcame him and put him to silence; nor did he cease from him till he enforced him to make confession of repentance [and turning away] from that which he had believed.

Therewith King Shah Bekht rejoiced with an exceeding great joy and said, 'Praise be to God who hath delivered me from yonder man and hath preserved me from the loss of the kingship and the cessation of prosperity from me!' So the affair of the vizier returned to order and well-being and the king restored him to his place and advanced him in rank. Moreover, he assembled the folk who had missaid of him and destroyed them all, to the last man. And how like," continued the vizier, "is this story unto that of myself and King Shah Bekht, with regard to that whereinto I am fallen of the changing of the king's heart and his giving credence to others against me; but now is the righteousness of my dealing established in thine eyes, for that God the Most High hath inspired me with wisdom and endowed thee with longanimity and patience [to hearken] from me unto that which He allotted unto those who had foregone us, till He hath shown forth my innocence and made manifest unto thee the truth. For now the days are past, wherein it was avouched to the king that I should endeavour for the destruction of my soul, [to wit,] the month; and behold, the probation time is over and gone, and past is the season of evil and ceased, by the king's good fortune." Then he bowed his head and was silent.

When King Shah Bekht heard his vizier's speech, he was confounded before him and abashed and marvelled at the gravity of his understanding and his patience. So he sprang up to him and embraced him and the vizier kissed his feet. Then the king called for a sumptuous dress of honour and cast it over Er Rehwan and entreated him with the utmost honour and showed him special favour and restored him to his rank and vizierate. Moreover he imprisoned those who had sought his destruction with leasing and committed unto himself to pass judgment upon the interpreter who had expounded to him the dream. So the vizier abode in the governance of the realm till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights; and this (added Shehrzad) is all, O king of the age, that hath come down to us of King Shah Bekht and his vizier.

Shehrzad and Shehriyar.

AS for King Shehriyar, he marvelled at Shehrzad with the utmost wonder and drew her near to his heart, of his much love for her; and she was magnified in his eyes and he said in himself, "By Allah, the like of this woman is not deserving of slaughter, for indeed the time affordeth not her like. By Allah, I have been heedless of mine affair, and had not God overcome me with His mercy and put this woman at my service, so she might adduce to me manifest instances and truthful cases and goodly admonitions and edifying traits, such as should restore me to the [right] road, [I had come to perdition!]. Wherefore to God be the praise for this and I beseech Him to make my end with her like unto that of the vizier and Shah Bekht." Then sleep overcame the king and glory be unto Him who sleepeth not!

When it was the Nine hundred and thirtieth Night, Shehrzad said, "O king, there is present in my thought a story which treateth of women's craft and wherein is a warning to whoso will be warned and an admonishment to whoso will be admonished and whoso hath discernment; but I fear lest the hearing of this lessen me with the king and lower my rank in his esteem; yet I hope that this will not be, for that it is a rare story. Women are indeed corruptresses; their craft and their cunning may not be set out nor their wiles known. Men enjoy their company and are not careful to uphold them [in the right way], neither do they watch over them with all vigilance, but enjoy their company and take that which is agreeable and pay no heed to that which is other than this. Indeed, they are like unto the crooked rib, which if thou go about to straighten, thou distortest it, and which if thou persist in seeking to redress, thou breakest it; wherefore it behoveth the man of understanding to be silent concerning them."

"O sister mine," answered Dinarzad, "bring forth that which is with thee and that which is present to thy mind of the story concerning the craft of women and their wiles, and have no fear lest this endamage thee with the king; for that women are like unto jewels, which are of all kinds and colours. When a [true] jewel falleth into the hand of him who is knowing therein, he keepeth it for himself and leaveth that which is other than it. Moreover, he preferreth some of them over others, and in this he is like unto the potter, who filleth his oven with all the vessels [he hath moulded] and kindleth fire thereunder. When the baking is at an end and he goeth about to take forth that which is in the oven, he findeth no help for it but that he must break some thereof, whilst other some are what the folk need and whereof they make use, and yet other some there be that return to their whilom case. Wherefore fear thou not to adduce that which thou knowest of the craft of women, for that in this is profit for all folk."

Then said Shehrzad, "They avouch, O king, (but God [alone] knowest the secret things,) that

El Melik Ez Zahir Rukneddin Bibers El Bunducdari and the Sixteen Officers Of Police.

THERE was once in the land [of Egypt and] the city of Cairo, [under the dynasty] of the Turks, a king of the valiant kings and the exceeding mighty Sultans, by name El Melik ez Zahir Rukneddin Bibers el Bunducdari. He was used to storm the Islamite strongholds and the fortresses of the Coast and the Nazarene citadels, and the governor of his [capital] city was just to the folk, all of them. Now El Melik ez Zahir was passionately fond of stories of the common folk and of that which men purposed and loved to see this with his eyes and hear their sayings with his ears, and it befell that he heard one night from one of his story-tellers that among women are those who are doughtier than men of valour and greater of excellence and that among them are those who will do battle with the sword and others who cozen the quickest-witted of magistrates and baffle them and bring down on them all manner of calamity; whereupon quoth the Sultan, 'I would fain hear this of their craft from one of those who have had to do theiewith, so I may hearken unto him and cause him tell.' And one of the story-tellers said, 'O king, send for the chief of the police of the town.'

Now Ilmeddin Senjer was at that time Master of Police and he was a man of experience, well versed in affairs: so the king sent for him and when he came before him, he discovered to him that which was in his mind. Quoth Ilmeddin Senjer, 'I will do my endeavour for that which our lord the Sultan seeketh.' Then he arose and returning to his house, summoned the captains of the watch and the lieutenants of police and said to them, 'Know that I purpose to marry my son and make him a bride-feast, and it is my wish that ye assemble, all of you, in one place. I also will be present, I and my company, and do ye relate that which ye have heard of extraordinary occurrences and that which hath betided you of experiences.' And the captains and sergeants and agents of police made answer to him, saying, 'It is well: in the name of God! We will cause thee see all this with thine eyes and hear it with thine ears.' Then the master of police arose and going up to El Melik ez Zahir, informed him that the assembly would take place on such a day at his house; and the Sultan said, 'It is well,' and gave him somewhat of money for his expenses.

When the appointed day arrived, the chief of the police set apart for his officers a saloon, that had windows ranged in order and giving upon the garden, and El Melik ez Zahir came to him, and he seated himself, he and the Sultan, in the alcove. Then the tables were spread unto them for eating and they ate; and when the cup went round amongst them and their hearts were gladdened with meat and drink, they related that which was with them and discovered their secrets from concealment. The first to relate was a man, a captain of the watch, by name Muineddin, whose heart was engrossed with the love of women; and he said, 'Harkye, all ye people of [various] degree, I will acquaint you with an extraordinary affair which befell me aforetime. Know that

The First Officer's Story.

WHEN I entered the service of this Amir, I had a great repute and every lewd fellow feared me of all mankind, and whenas I rode through the city, all the folk would point at me with their fingers and eyes. It befell one day, as I sat in the house of the prefecture, with my back against a wall, considering in myself, there fell somewhat in my lap, and behold, it was a purse sealed and tied. So I took it in my hand and behold, it had in it a hundred dirhems, but I found not who threw it and I said, "Extolled be the perfection of God, the King of the Kingdoms!" Another day, [as I sat on like wise,] somewhat fell on me and startled me, and behold, it was a purse like the first. So I took it and concealing its affair, made as if I slept, albeit sleep was not with me.

One day, as I was thus feigning sleep, I felt a hand in my lap, and in it a magnificent purse. So I seized the hand and behold, it was that of a fair woman. Quoth I to her, "O my lady, who art thou?" And she said, "Rise [and come away] from here, that I may make myself known to thee." So I arose and following her, fared on, without tarrying, till she stopped at the door of a lofty house, whereupon quoth I to her,"O my lady, who art thou? Indeed, thou hast done me kindness, and what is the reason of this?" "By Allah," answered she, "O Captain Mum, I am a woman on whom desire and longing are sore for the love of the daughter of the Cadi Amin el Hukm. Now there was between us what was and the love of her fell upon my heart and I agreed with her upon meeting, according to possibility and convenience. But her father Amin el Hukm took her and went away, and my heart cleaveth to her and love-longing and distraction are sore upon me on her account."

I marvelled at her words and said to her, "What wouldst thou have me do?" And she answered, "O Captain Muin, I would have thee give me a helping hand." Quoth I, "What have I to do with the daughter of the Cadi Amin el Hukm?" And she said, "Know that I would not have thee intrude upon the Cadi's daughter, but I would fain contrive for the attainment of my wishes.' This is my intent and my desire, and my design will not be accomplished but by thine aid." Then said she, "I mean this night to go with a stout heart and hire me trinkets of price; then will I go and sit in the street wherein is the house of Amin el Hukm; and when it is the season of the round and the folk are asleep, do thou pass, thou and those who are with thee of the police, and thou wilt see me sitting and on me fine raiment and ornaments and wilt smell on me the odour of perfumes; whereupon do thou question me of my case and I will say, 'I come from the Citadel and am of the daughters of the deputies and I came down [into the town,] to do an occasion; but the night overtook me at unawares and the Zuweyleh gate was shut against me and all the gates and I knew not whither I should go this night Presently I saw this street and noting the goodliness of its ordinance and its cleanness, took shelter therein against break of day.' When I say this to thee with all assurance the chief of the watch will have no suspicion of me, but will say, 'Needs must we leave her with one who will take care of her till morning.' And do thou rejoin, 'It were most fitting that she pass the night with Amin el Hukm and lie with his family and children till the morning.' Then do thou straightway knock at the Cadi's door, and thus shall I

have gained admission into his house, without inconvenience, and gotten my desire; and peace be on thee!" And I said to her, "By Allah, this is an easy matter."

So, when the night darkened, we sallied forth to make our round, attended by men with sharp swords, and went round about the streets and compassed the city, till we came to the by-street where was the woman, and it was the middle of the night Here we smelt rich scents and heard the clink of earrings; so I said to my comrades, "Methinks I spy an apparition," And the captain of the watch said, "See what it is." So I came forward and entering the lane, came presently out again and said, "I have found a fair woman and she tells me that she is from the Citadel and that the night surprised her and she espied this street and seeing its cleanness and the goodliness of its ordinance, knew that it appertained to a man of rank and that needs must there be in it a guardian to keep watch over it, wherefore she took shelter therein." Quoth the captain of the watch to me, "Take her and carry her to thy house." But I answered, "I seek refuge with Allah! My house is no place of deposit and on this woman are trinkets and apparel [of price]. By Allah, we will not deposit her save with Amin el Hukrn, in whose street she hath been since the first of the darkness; wherefore do thou leave her with him till the break of day." And he said, "As thou wilt." Accordingly, I knocked at the Cadi's door and out came a black slave of his slaves, to whom said I, "O my lord, take this woman and let her be with you till break of day, for that the lieutenant of the Amir Ilmeddin hath found her standing at the door of your house, with trinkets and apparel [of price] on her, and we feared lest her responsibility be upon you; wherefore it is most fit that she pass the night with you." So the slave opened and took her in with him.

When the morning morrowed, the first who presented himself before the Amir was the Cadi Amin el Hukm, leaning on two of his black slaves; and he was crying out and calling [on God] for aid and saying, "O crafty and perfidious Amir, thou depositedst with me a woman [yesternight] and broughtest her into my house and my dwelling-place, and she arose [in the night] and took from me the good of the little orphans, six great bags, [containing each a thousand dinars, and made off;] but as for me, I will say no more to thee except in the Sultan's presence." When the Master of the Police heard these words, he was troubled and rose and sat down; then he took the Cadi and seating him by his side, soothed him and exhorted him to patience, till he had made an end of talk, when he turned to the officers and questioned them. They fixed the affair on me and said, "We know nothing of this affair but from Captain Muineddin." So the Cadi turned to me and said, "Thou wast of accord with this woman, for she said she came from the Citadel."

As for me, I stood, with my head bowed to the earth, forgetting both Institutes and Canons, and abode sunk in thought, saying, "How came I to be the dupe of yonder worthless baggage?" Then said the Amir to me, "What aileth thee that thou answerest not?" And I answered, saying, "O my lord, it is a custom among the folk that he who hath a payment to make at a certain date is allowed three days' grace; [so do thou have patience with me so long,] and if, [by the end of that time,] the culprit be not found, I will be answerable for that which is lost." When the folk heard my speech, they all deemed it reasonable and the Master of Police turned to the Cadi and swore to him that he would do his utmost endeavour to recover the stolen money and that it

should be restored to him. So he went away, whilst I mounted forthright and fell to going round about the world without purpose, and indeed I was become under the dominion of a woman without worth or honour; and I went round about on this wise all that my day and night, but happened not upon tidings of her; and thus I did on the morrow.

On the third day I said to myself, "Thou art mad or witless!" For I was going about in quest of a woman who knew me and I knew her not, seeing that indeed she was veiled, [whenas I saw her]. Then I went round about the third day till the hour of afternoon prayer, and sore was my concern and my chagrin, for I knew that there abode to me of my life but [till] the morrow, when the chief of the police would seek me. When it was the time of sundown, I passed through one of the streets, and beheld a woman at a window. Her door was ajar and she was clapping her hands and casting furtive glances at me, as who should say, "Come up by the door." So I went up, without suspicion, and when I entered, she rose and clasped me to her breast 1 marvelled at her affair and she said to me, "I am she whom thou depositedst with Amin el Hukm." Quoth I to her, "O my sister, I have been going round and round in quest of thee, for indeed thou hast done a deed that will be chronicled in history and hast cast me into slaughter on thine account." "Sayst thou this to me," asked she, "and thou captain of men?" And I answered, "How should I not be troubled, seeing that I am in concern [for an affair] that I turn over and over [in my mind], more by token that I abide my day long going about [searching for thee] and in the night I watch its stars [for wakefulness]?" Quoth she, "Nought shall betide but good, and thou shalt get the better of him."

So saying, she rose [and going] to a chest, took out therefrom six bags full of gold and said to me, "This is what I took from Amin el Hukm's house. So, if thou wilt, restore it; else the whole is lawfully thine; and if thou desire other than this, [thou shalt have it;] for I have wealth in plenty and I had no design in this but to marry thee." Then she arose and opening [other] chests, brought out therefrom wealth galore and I said to her, "O my sister, I have no desire for all this, nor do I covet aught but to be quit of that wherein I am." Quoth she, "I came not forth of the [Cadi's] house without [making provision for] thine acquittance."

Then said she to me, "To-morrow morning, when Amin el Hukm cometh, have patience with him till he have made an end of his speech, and when he is silent, return him no answer; and if the prefect say to thee, 'What ailest thee that thou answereth him not?' do thou reply, 'O lord, know that the two words are not alike, but there is no [helper] for him who is undermost, save God the Most High.' The Cadi will say, 'What is the meaning of thy saying," The two words are not alike"?' And do thou make answer, saying, 'I deposited with thee a damsel from the palace of the Sultan, and most like some losel of thy household hath transgressed against her or she hath been privily murdered. Indeed, there were on her jewels and raiment worth a thousand dinars, and hadst thou put those who are with thee of slaves and slave-girls to the question, thou hadst assuredly lit on some traces [of the crime].' When he heareth this from thee, his agitation will redouble and he will be confounded and will swear that needs must thou go with him to his house; but do thou say, 'That will I not do, for that I am the party aggrieved, more by token that I am under suspicion with thee.' If he redouble in calling

[on God for aid] and conjure thee by the oath of divorce, saying, 'Needs must thou come,' do thou say, 'By Allah, I will not go, except the prefect come also.'

When thou comest to the house, begin by searching the roofs; then search the closets and cabinets; and if thou find nought, humble thyself unto the Cadi and make a show of abjection and feign thyself defeated, and after stand at the door and look as if thou soughtest a place wherein to make water, for that there is a dark corner there. Then come forward, with a heart stouter than granite, and lay hold upon a jar of the jars and raise it from its place. Thou wilt find under it the skirt of a veil; bring it out publicly and call the prefect in a loud voice, before those who are present. Then open it and thou wilt find it full of blood, exceeding of redness, and in it [thou wilt find also] a woman's shoes and a pair of trousers and somewhat of linen." When I heard this from her, I rose to go out and she said to me, "Take these hundred dinars, so they may advantage thee; and this is my guest-gift to thee." So I took them and bidding her farewell, returned to my lodging.

Next morning, up came the Cadi, with his face like the ox-eye, and said, "In the name of God, where is my debtor and where is my money?" Then he wept and cried out and said to the prefect, "Where is that ill-omened fellow, who aboundeth in thievery and villainy?" Therewith the prefect turned to me and said, "Why dost thou not answer the Cadi?" And I replied, "O Amir, the two heads are not equal, and I, I have no helper but God; but, if the right be on my side, it will appear." At this the Cadi cried out and said, "Out on thee, O ill-omened fellow! How wilt thou make out that the right is on thy side?" "O our lord the Cadi," answered I, "I deposited with thee a trust, to wit, a woman whom we found at thy door, and on her raiment and trinkets of price. Now she is gone, even as yesterday is gone; and after this thou turnest upon us and makest claim upon me for six thousand dinars. By Allah, this is none other than gross unright, and assuredly some losel of thy household hath transgressed against her!"

With this the Cadi's wrath redoubled and he swore by the most solemn of oaths that I should go with him and search his house. "By Allah," replied I, "I will not go, except the prefect be with us; for, if he be present, he and the officers, thou wilt not dare to presume upon me." And the Cadi rose and swore an oath, saying, "By Him who created mankind, we will not go but with the Amir!" So we repaired to the Cadi's house, accompanied by the prefect, and going up, searched high and low, but found nothing; whereupon fear gat hold upon me and the prefect turned to me and said, "Out on thee, O ill-omened fellow! Thou puttest us to shame before the men." And I wept and went round about right and left, with the tears running down my face, till we were about to go forth and drew near the door of the house. I looked at the place [behind the door] and said, "What is yonder dark place that I see?" And I said to the sergeants, "Lift up this jar with me." They did as I bade them and I saw somewhat appearing under the jar and said, "Rummage and see what is under it." So they searched and found a woman's veil and trousers full of blood, which when I beheld, I fell down in a swoon.

When the prefect saw this, he said, "By Allah, the captain is excused!" Then my comrades came round about me and sprinkled water on my face, [till I came to myself,] when I arose and accosting the Cadi, who was covered with confusion, said to him,

"Thou seest that suspicion is fallen on thee, and indeed this affair is no light matter, for that this woman's family will assuredly not sit down under her loss." Therewith the Cadi's heart quaked and he knew that the suspicion had reverted upon him, wherefore his colour paled and his limbs smote together; and he paid of his own money, after the measure of that which he had lost, so we would hush up the matter for him. Then we departed from him in peace, whilst I said in myself, "Indeed, the woman deceived me not."

After that I tarried till three days had elapsed, when 1 went to the bath and changing my clothes, betook myself to her house, but found the door locked and covered with dust. So I questioned the neighbours of her and they said, "This house hath been empty these many days; but three days agone there came a woman with an ass, and yesternight, at eventide, she took her gear and went away." So I turned back, confounded in my wit, and every day [after this, for many a day,] I inquired of the inhabitants [of the street] concerning her, but could light on no tidings of her. And indeed I marvelled at the eloquence of her tongue and [the readiness of] her speech; and this is the most extraordinary of that which hath betided me.'

When El Melik ez Zahir heard Muineddin's story, he marvelled thereat Then rose another officer and said, 'O lord, bear what befell me in bygone days.

The Second Officer's Story.

I WAS once an officer in the household of the Amir Jemaleddin El Atwesh El Mujhidi, who was invested with the governance of the Eastern and Western districts, and I was dear to his heart and he concealed from me nought of that which he purposed to do; and withal he was master of his reason. It chanced one day that it was reported to him that the daughter of such an one had wealth galore and raiment and jewels and she loved a Jew, whom every day she invited to be private with her, and they passed the day eating and drinking in company and he lay the night with her. The prefect feigned to give no credence to this story, but one night he summoned the watchmen of the quarter and questioned them of this. Quoth one of them, "O my lord, I saw a Jew enter the street in question one night; but know not for certain to whom he went in." And the prefect said, "Keep thine eye on him henceforth and note what place he entereth." So the watchman went out and kept his eye on the Jew.

One day, as the prefect sat [in his house], the watchman came in to him and said, "O my lord, the Jew goeth to the house of such an one." Whereupon El Atwesh arose and went forth alone, taking with him none but myself. As he went along, he said to me, "Indeed, this [woman] is a fat piece of meat." And we gave not over going till we came to the door of the house and stood there till a slave-girl came out, as if to buy them somewhat. We waited till she opened the door, whereupon, without further parley, we forced our way into the house and rushed in upon the girl, whom we found seated with the Jew in a saloon with four estrades, and cooking-pots and candles therein. When her eyes fell on the prefect, she knew him and rising to her feet, said, "Welcome and fair welcome! Great honour hath betided me by my lord's visit and indeed thou honourest my dwelling."

Then she carried him up [to the estrade] and seating him on the couch, brought him meat and wine and gave him to drink; after which she put off all that was upon her of raiment and jewels and tying them up in a handkerchief, said to him, "O my lord, this is thy portion, all of it." Moreover she turned to the Jew and said to him, "Arise, thou also, and do even as I." So he arose in haste and went out, scarce crediting his deliverance. When the girl was assured of his escape, she put out her hand to her clothes [and jewels] and taking them, said to the prefect, "Is the requital of kindness other than kindness? Thou hast deigned [to visit me and eat of my victual]; so now arise and depart from us without ill-[doing]; or I will give one cry and all who are in the street will come forth." So the Amir went out from her, without having gotten a single dirhem; and on this wise she delivered the Jew by the excellence of her contrivance.'

The folk marvelled at this story and as for the prefect and El Melik ez Zahir, they said, 'Wrought ever any the like of this device?' And they marvelled with the utterest of wonderment Then arose a third officer and said, 'Hear what betided me, for it is yet stranger and more extraordinary.

The Third Officer's Story

I WAS one day abroad on an occasion with certain of my comrades, and as we went along, we fell in with a company of women, as they were moons, and among them one, the tallest and handsomest of them. When I saw her and she saw me, she tarried behind her companions and waited for me, till I came up to her and bespoke her. Quoth she, "O my lord, (God favour thee!) I saw thee prolong thy looking on me and imagined that thou knewest me. If it be thus, vouchsafe me more knowledge of thee." "By Allah," answered I, "I know thee not, save that God the Most High hath cast the love of thee into my heart and the goodliness of thine attributes hath confounded me and that wherewith God hath gifted thee of those eyes that shoot with arrows; for thou hast captivated me." And she rejoined, "By Allah, I feel the like of that which thou feelest; so that meseemeth I have known thee from childhood."

Then said I, "A man cannot well accomplish all whereof he hath need in the market-places." "Hast thou a house?" asked she. "No, by Allah," answered I; "nor is this town my dwelling-place." "By Allah," rejoined she, "nor have I a place; but I will contrive for thee." Then she went on before me and I followed her till she came to a lodging-house and said to the housekeeper, "Hast thou an empty chamber?" "Yes," answered she; and my mistress said, "Give us the key." So we took the key and going up to see the room, entered it; after which she went out to the housekeeper and [giving her a dirhem], said to her, "Take the key-money, for the room pleaseth us, and here is another dirhem for thy trouble. Go, fetch us a pitcher of water, so we may [refresh ourselves] and rest till the time of the noonday siesta pass and the heat decline, when the man will go and fetch the [household] stuff." Therewith the housekeeper rejoiced and brought us a mat and two pitchers of water on a tray and a leather rug.

We abode thus till the setting-in of the time of mid-afternoon, when she said, "Needs must I wash before I go." Quoth I, "Get water wherewithal we may wash," and pulled out from my pocket about a score of dirhems, thinking to give them to her; but she said, "I seek refuge with God!" and brought out of her pocket a handful of silver, saying, "But for destiny and that God hath caused the love of thee fall into my heart, there had not happened that which hath happened." Quoth I, "Take this in requital of that which thou hast spent;" and she said, "O my lord, by and by, whenas companionship is prolonged between us, thou wilt see if the like of me looketh unto money and gain or no." Then she took a pitcher of water and going into the lavatory, washed and presently coming forth, prayed and craved pardon of God the Most High for that which she had done.

Now I had questioned her of her name and she answered, "My name is Rihaneh," and described to me her dwelling-place. When I saw her make the ablution, I said in myself, "This woman doth on this wise, and shall I not do the like of her?" Then said I to her, "Belike thou wilt seek us another pitcher of water?" So she went out to the housekeeper and said to her, "Take this para and fetch us water therewith, so we may wash the flags withal." Accordingly, the housekeeper brought two pitchers of water and I took one of them and giving her my clothes, entered the lavatory and washed.

When I had made an end of washing, I cried out, saying, "Harkye, my lady Rihaneh!" But none answered me. So I went out and found her not; and indeed she had taken my clothes and that which was therein of money, to wit, four hundred dirhems. Moreover, she had taken my turban and my handkerchief and I found not wherewithal to cover my nakedness; wherefore I suffered somewhat than which death is less grievous and abode looking about the place, so haply I might espy wherewithal to hide my shame. Then I sat a little and presently going up to the door, smote upon it; whereupon up came the housekeeper and I said to her, "O my sister, what hath God done with the woman who was here?" Quoth she, "She came down but now and said, 'I am going to cover the boys with the clothes and I have left him sleeping. If he awake, tell him not to stir till the clothes come to him.'" Then said I, "O my sister, secrets are [safe] with the worthy and the freeborn. By Allah, this woman is not my wife, nor ever in my life have I seen her before this day!" And I recounted to her the whole affair and begged her to cover me, informing her that I was discovered of the privities.

She laughed and cried out to the women of the house, saying, "Ho, Fatimeh! Ho, Khedijeh! Ho, Herifeh! Ho, Senineh!" Whereupon all those who were in the place of women and neighbours flocked to me and fell a-laughing at me and saying, "O blockhead, what ailed thee to meddle with gallantry?" Then one of them came and looked in my face and laughed, and another said, "By Allah, thou mightest have known that she lied, from the time she said she loved thee and was enamoured of thee? What is there in thee to love?" And a third said, "This is an old man without understanding." And they vied with each other in making mock of me, what while I suffered sore chagrin.

However, after awhile, one of the women took pity on me and brought me a rag of thin stuff and cast it on me. With this I covered my privities, and no more, and abode awhile thus. Then said I in myself, "The husbands of these women will presently gather together on me and I shall be disgraced." So I went out by another door of the house, and young and old crowded about me, running after me and saying, "A madman! A madman!" till I came to my house and knocked at the door; whereupon out came my wife and seeing me naked, tall, bareheaded, cried out and ran in again, saying,"This is a madman, a Satan!" But, when she and my family knew me, they rejoiced and said to me, "What aileth thee?" I told them that thieves had taken my clothes and stripped me and had been like to kill me; and when I told them that they would have killed me, they praised God the Most High and gave me joy of my safety. So consider the craft of this woman and this device that she practised upon me, for all my pretensions to sleight and quickwittedness.'

The company marvelled at this story and at the doings of women. Then came forward a fourth officer and said, 'Verily, that which hath betided me of strange adventures is yet more extraordinary than this; and it was on this wise.

The Fourth Officer's Story.

WE were sleeping one night on the roof, when a woman made her way into the house and gathering into a bundle all that was therein, took it up, that she might go away with it. Now she was great with child and near upon her term and the hour of her deliverance; so, when she made up the bundle and offered to shoulder it and make off with it, she hastened the coming of the pangs of labour and gave birth to a child in the dark. Then she sought for the flint and steel and striking a light, kindled the lamp and went round about the house with the little one, and it was weeping. [The noise awoke us,] as we lay on the roof, and we marvelled. So we arose, to see what was to do, and looking down through the opening of the saloon, saw a woman, who had kindled the lamp, and heard the little one weeping. She heard our voices and raising her eyes to us, said, "Are ye not ashamed to deal with us thus and discover our nakedness? Know ye not that the day belongeth to you and the night to us? Begone from us! By Allah, were it not that ye have been my neighbours these [many] years, I would bring down the house upon you!" We doubted not but that she was of the Jinn and drew back our heads; but, when we arose on the morrow, we found that she had taken all that was with us and made off with it; wherefore we knew that she was a thief and had practised [on us] a device, such as was never before practised; and we repented, whenas repentance advantaged us not.'

When the company heard this story, they marvelled thereat with the utmost wonderment. Then the fifth officer, who was the lieutenant of the bench, came forward and said, '[This is] no wonder and there befell me that which is rarer and more extraordinary than this.

The Fifth Officer's Story.

AS I sat one day at the door of the prefecture, a woman entered and said to me privily, "O my lord, I am the wife of such an one the physician, and with him is a company of the notables of the city, drinking wine in such a place." When I heard this, I misliked to make a scandal; so I rebuffed her and sent her away. Then I arose and went alone to the place in question and sat without till the door opened, when I rushed in and entering, found the company engaged as the woman had set out, and she herself with them. I saluted them and they returned my greeting and rising, entreated me with honour and seated me and brought me to eat. Then I informed them how one had denounced them to me, but I had driven him away and come to them by myself; wherefore they thanked me and praised me for my goodness. Then they brought out to me from among them two thousand dirhems and I took them and went away.

Two months after this occurrence, there came to me one of the Cadi's officers, with a scroll, wherein was the magistrate's writ, summoning me to him. So I accompanied the officer and went in to the Cadi, whereupon the plaintiff, to wit, he who had taken out the summons, sued me for two thousand dirhems, avouching that I had borrowed them of him as the woman's agent. I denied the debt, but he produced against me a bond for the amount, attested by four of those who were in company [on the occasion]; and they were present and bore witness to the loan. So I reminded them of my kindness and paid the amount, swearing that I would never again follow a woman's counsel. Is not this marvellous?'

The company marvelled at the goodliness of his story and it pleased El Melik ez Zahir; and the prefect said, 'By Allah, this story is extraordinary!' Then came forward the sixth officer and said to the company, 'Hear my story and that which befell me, to wit, that which befell such an one the assessor, for it is rarer than this and stranger.

The Sixth Officer's Story.

A CERTAIN assessor was one day taken with a woman and much people assembled before his house and the lieutenant of police and his men came to him and knocked at the door. The assessor looked out of window and seeing the folk, said, "What aileth you?" Quoth they, "[Come,] speak with the lieutenant of police such an one." So he came down and they said to him, "Bring forth the woman that is with thee." Quoth he, "Are ye not ashamed? How shall I bring forth my wife?" And they said, "Is she thy wife by contract or without contract?" ["By contract,"] answered he, "according to the Book of God and the Institutes of His Apostle." "Where is the contract?" asked they; and he replied, "Her contract is in her mother's house." Quoth they, "Arise and come down and show us the contract." And he said to them, "Go from her way, so she may come forth." Now, as soon as he got wind of the matter, he had written the contract and fashioned it after her fashion, to suit with the case, and written therein the names of certain of his friends as witnesses and forged the signatures of the drawer and the wife's next friend and made it a contract of marriage with his wife and appointed it for an excuse. So, when the woman was about to go out from him, he gave her the contract that be had forged, and the Amir sent with her a servant of his, to bring her to her father. So the servant went with her and when she came to her door, she said to him, "I will not return to the citation of the Amir; but let the witnesses present themselves and take my contract."

Accordingly, the servant carried this message to the lieutenant of police, who was standing at the assessor's door, and he said, "This is reasonable." Then said [the assessor] to the servant, "Harkye, O eunuch! Go and fetch us such an one the notary;" for that he was his friend [and it was he whose name he had forged as the drawer-up of the contract]. So the lieutenant of police sent after him and fetched him to the assessor, who, when he saw him, said to him, "Get thee to such an one, her with whom thou marriedst me, and cry out upon her, and when she cometh to thee, demand of her the contract and take it from her and bring it to us." And he signed to him, as who should say, "Bear me out in the lie and screen me, for that she is a strange woman and I am in fear of the lieutenant of police who standeth at the door; and we beseech God the Most High to screen us and you from the trouble of this world. Amen."

So the notary went up to the lieutenant, who was among the witnesses, and said "It is well. Is she not such an one whose marriage contract we drew up in such a place?" Then he betook himself to the woman's house and cried out upon her; whereupon she brought him the [forged] contract and he took it and returned with it to the lieutenant of police. When the latter had taken cognizance [of the document and professed himself satisfied, the assessor] said [to the notary,] "Go to our lord and master, the Cadi of the Cadis, and acquaint him with that which befalleth his assessors." The notary rose to go, but the lieutenant of police feared [for himself] and was profuse in beseeching the assessor and kissing his hands, till he forgave him; whereupon the lieutenant went away in the utterest of concern and affright. On this wise the assessor ordered the case and carried out the forgery and feigned marriage with the woman; [and thus was calamity warded off from him] by the excellence of his contrivance."

The folk marvelled at this story with the utmost wonderment and the seventh officer said, 'There befell me in Alexandria the [God-]guarded a marvellous thing, [and it was that one told me the following story].

The Seventh Officer's Story.

THERE came one day an old woman [to the stuff-market], with a casket of precious workmanship, containing trinkets, and she was accompanied by a damsel great with child. The old woman sat down at the shop of a draper and giving him to know that the damsel was with child by the prefect of police of the city, took of him, on credit, stuffs to the value of a thousand dinars and deposited with him the casket as security. [She opened the casket and] showed him that which was therein; and he found it full of trinkets [apparently] of price; [so he trusted her with the goods] and she took leave of him and carrying the stuffs to the damsel, who was with her, [went her way]. Then the old woman was absent from him a great while, and when her absence was prolonged, the draper despaired of her; so he went up to the prefect's house and enquired of the woman of his household, [who had taken his stuffs on credit;] but could get no tidings of her nor lit on aught of her trace.

Then he brought out the casket of jewellery [and showed it to an expert,] who told him that the trinkets were gilt and that their worth was but an hundred dirhems. When he heard this, he was sore concerned thereat and presenting himself before the Sultan's deputy, made his complaint to him; whereupon the latter knew that a trick had been put off upon him and that the folk had cozened him and gotten the better of him and taken his stuffs. Now the magistrate in question was a man of good counsel and judgment, well versed in affairs; so he said to the draper, "Remove somewhat from thy shop, [and amongst the rest the casket,] and on the morrow break the lock and cry out and come to me and complain that they have plundered all thy shop. Moreover, do thou call [upon God for succour] and cry aloud and acquaint the folk, so that all the people may resort to thee and see the breach of the lock and that which is missing from thy shop; and do thou show it to every one who presenteth himself, so the news may be noised abroad, and tell them that thy chief concern is for a casket of great value, deposited with thee by a great man of the town and that thou standest in fear of him. But be thou not afraid and still say in thy converse, 'My casket belonged to such an one, and I fear him and dare not bespeak him; but you, O company and all ye who are present, I call you to witness of this for me.' And if there be with thee more than this talk, [say it;] and the old woman will come to thee."

The draper answered with "Hearkening and obedience" and going forth from the deputy's presence, betook himself to his shop and brought out thence [the casket and] somewhat considerable, which he removed to his house. At break of day he arose and going to his shop, broke the lock and cried out and shrieked and called [on God for help,] till the folk assembled about him and all who were in the city were present, whereupon he cried out to them, saying even as the prefect had bidden him; and this was bruited abroad. Then he made for the prefecture and presenting himself before the chief of the police, cried out and complained and made a show of distraction.

After three days, the old woman came to him and bringing him the [thousand dinars, the] price of the stuffs, demanded the casket. When he saw her, he laid hold of her and carried her to the prefect of the city; and when she came before the Cadi, he said to her, "O Sataness, did not thy first deed suffice thee, but thou must come a

second time?" Quoth she, "I am of those who seek their salvation in the cities, and we foregather every month; and yesterday we foregathered." "Canst thou [bring me to] lay hold of them?" asked the prefect; and she answered, "Yes; but, if thou wait till to-morrow, they will have dispersed. So I will deliver them to thee to-night." Quoth he to her, "Go;" and she said, "Send with me one who shall go with me to them and obey me in that which I shall say to him, and all that I bid him he shall give ear unto and obey me therein." So he gave her a company of men and she took them and bringing them to a certain door, said to them, "Stand at this door, and whoso cometh out to you, lay hands on him; and I will come out to you last of all." "Hearkening and obedience," answered they and stood at the door, whilst the old woman went in. They waited a long while, even as the Sultan's deputy had bidden them, but none came out to them and their standing was prolonged. When they were weary of waiting, they went up to the door and smote upon it heavily and violently, so that they came nigh to break the lock. Then one of them entered and was absent a long while, but found nought; so he returned to his comrades and said to them,"This is the door of a passage, leading to such a street; and indeed she laughed at you and left you and went away."When they heard his words, they returned to the Amir and acquainted him with the case, whereby he knew that the old woman was a crafty trickstress and that she had laughed at them and cozened them and put a cheat on them, to save herself. Consider, then, the cunning of this woman and that which she contrived of wiles, for all her lack of foresight in presenting herself [a second time] to the draper and not apprehending that his conduct was but a trick; yet, when she found herself in danger, she straightway devised a shift for her deliverance.'

When the company heard the seventh officer's story, they were moved to exceeding mirth, and El Melik ez Zahir Bibers rejoiced in that which he heard and said, 'By Allah, there betide things in this world, from which kings are shut out, by reason of their exalted station!" Then came forward another man from amongst the company and said, 'There hath reached me from one of my friends another story bearing on the malice of women and their craft, and it is rarer and more extraordinary and more diverting than all that hath been told to you."

Quoth the company, 'Tell us thy story and expound it unto us, so we may see that which it hath of extraordinary.' And he said 'Know, then, that

The Eighth Officer's Story.

A FRIEND of mine once invited me to an entertainment; so I went with him, and when we came into his house and sat down on his couch, he said to me, "This is a blessed day and a day of gladness, and [blessed is] he who liveth to [see] the like of this day. I desire that thou practise with us and deny us not, for that thou hast been used to hearken unto those who occupy themselves with this." I fell in with this and their talk happened upon the like of this subject. Presently, my friend, who had invited me, arose from among them and said to them, "Hearken to me and I will tell you of an adventure that happened to me. There was a certain man who used to visit me in my shop, and I knew him not nor he me, nor ever in his life had he seen me; but he was wont, whenever he had need of a dirhem or two, by way of loan, to come to me and ask me, without acquaintance or intermediary between me and him, [and I would give him what he sought]. I told none of him, and matters abode thus between us a long while, till he fell to borrowing ten at twenty dirhems [at a time], more or less.

One day, as I stood in my shop, there came up to me a woman and stopped before me; and she as she were the full moon rising from among the stars, and the place was illumined by her light. When I saw her, I fixed my eyes on her and stared in her face; and she bespoke me with soft speech. When I heard her words and the sweetness of her speech, I lusted after her; and when she saw that I lusted after her, she did her occasion and promising me [to come again], went away, leaving my mind occupied with her and fire kindled in my heart. Then I abode, perplexed and pondering my affair, whilst fire flamed in my heart, till the third day, when she came again and I scarce credited her coming. When I saw her, I talked with her and cajoled her and courted her and strove to win her favour with speech and invited her [to my house]; but she answered, saying, 'I will not go up into any one's house.' Quoth I, 'I will go with thee;' and she said, 'Arise and come with me.'

So I arose and putting in my sleeve a handkerchief, wherein was a good sum of money, followed the woman, who went on before me and gave not over walking till she brought me to a by-street and to a door, which she bade me open. I refused and she opened it and brought me into the vestibule. As soon as I had entered, she locked the door of entrance from within and said to me, 'Sit [here] till I go in to the slave-girls and cause them enter a place where they shall not see me.' 'It is well,' answered I and sat down; whereupon she entered and was absent from me a moment, after which she returned to me, without a veil, and said, 'Arise, [enter,] in the name of God.' So I arose and went in after her and we gave not over going till we entered a saloon. When I examined the place, I found it neither handsome nor agreeable, but unseemly and desolate, without symmetry or cleanliness; nay, it was loathly to look upon and there was a foul smell in it.

I seated myself amiddleward the saloon, misdoubting, and as I sat, there came down on me from the estrade seven naked men, without other clothing than leather girdles about their waists. One of them came up to me and took my turban, whilst another took my handkerchief, that was in my sleeve, with my money, and a third stripped me of my clothes; after which a fourth came and bound my hands behind me

with his girdle. Then they all took me up, pinioned as I was, and casting me down, fell a-dragging me towards a sink-hole that was there and were about to cut my throat, when, behold, there came a violent knocking at the door. When they heard this, they were afraid and their minds were diverted from me by fear; so the woman went out and presently returning, said to them, 'Fear not; no harm shall betide you this day. It is only your comrade who hath brought you your noon-meal.' With this the new-comer entered, bringing with him a roasted lamb; and when he came in to them, he said to them, 'What is to do with you, that ye have tucked up [your sleeves and trousers]?' Quoth they, '[This is] a piece of game we have caught.'

When he heard this, he came up to me and looking in my face, cried out and said, 'By Allah, this is my brother, the son of my mother and father! Allah! Allah!' Then he loosed me from my bonds and kissed my head, and behold it was my friend who used to borrow money of me. When I kissed his head, he kissed mine and said, 'O my brother, be not affrighted.' Then he called for my clothes [and money and restored to me all that had been taken from me] nor was aught missing to me. Moreover, he brought me a bowl full of [sherbet of] sugar, with lemons therein, and gave me to drink thereof; and the company came and seated me at a table. So I ate with them and he said to me, 'O my lord and my brother, now have bread and salt passed between us and thou hast discovered our secret and [become acquainted with] our case; but secrets [are safe] with the noble.' Quoth I, 'As I am a lawfully-begotten child, I will not name aught [of this] neither denounce [you!*]' And they assured themselves of me by an oath. Then they brought me out and I went my way, scarce crediting but that I was of the dead.

I abode in my house, ill, a whole month; after which I went to the bath and coming out, opened my shop [and sat selling and buying as usual], but saw no more of the man or the woman, till, one day, there stopped before my shop a young man, [a Turcoman], as he were the full moon; and he was a sheep-merchant and had with him a bag, wherein was money, the price of sheep that he had sold. He was followed by the woman, and when he stopped at my shop, she stood by his side and cajoled him, and indeed he inclined to her with a great inclination. As for me, I was consumed with solicitude for him and fell to casting furtive glances at him and winked at him, till he chanced to look round and saw me winking at him; whereupon the woman looked at me and made a sign with her hand and went away. The Turcoman followed her and I counted him dead, without recourse; wherefore I feared with an exceeding fear and shut my shop. Then I journeyed for a year's space and returning, opened my shop; whereupon, behold, the woman came up to me and said, 'This is none other than a great absence.' Quoth I, 'I have been on a journey;' and she said, 'Why didst thou wink at the Turcoman?' 'God forbid!' answered I. 'I did not wink at him.' Quoth she, 'Beware lest thou cross me;' and went away.

Awhile after this a friend of mine invited me to his house and when I came to him, we ate and drank and talked. Then said he to me, 'O my friend, hath there befallen thee in thy life aught of calamity?' 'Nay,' answered I; 'but tell me [first], hath there befallen thee aught?' ['Yes,'] answered he. 'Know that one day I espied a fair woman; so I followed her and invited her [to come home with me]. Quoth she, "I will not enter any one's house; but come thou to my house, if thou wilt, and be it on such a

day." Accordingly, on the appointed day, her messenger came to me, purposing to carry me to her; so I arose and went with him, till we came to a handsome house and a great door. He opened the door and I entered, whereupon he locked the door [behind me] and would have gone in, but I feared with an exceeding fear and foregoing him to the second door, whereby he would have had me enter, locked it and cried out at him, saying, "By Allah, an thou open not to me, I will kill thee; for I am none of those whom thou canst cozen!" Quoth he, "What deemest thou of cozenage?" And I said, "Verily, I am affrighted at the loneliness of the house and the lack of any at the door thereof; for I see none appear." "O my lord," answered he, "this is a privy door." "Privy or public," answered I, "open to me."

So he opened to me and I went out and had not gone far from the house when I met a woman, who said to me, "Methinks a long life was fore-ordained to thee; else hadst thou not come forth of yonder house." "How so?" asked I, and she answered, "Ask thy friend [such an one," naming thee,] "and he will acquaint thee with strange things." So, God on thee, O my friend, tell me what befell thee of wonders and rarities, for I have told thee what befell me.' 'O my brother,' answered I, 'I am bound by a solemn oath.' And he said, 'O my friend, break thine oath and tell me.' Quoth I, 'Indeed, I fear the issue of this.' [But he importuned me] till I told him all, whereat he marvelled. Then I went away from him and abode a long while, [without farther news].

One day, another of my friends came to me and said 'A neighbour of mine hath invited me to hear [music]. [And he would have me go with him;] but I said, 'I will not foregather with any one.' However, he prevailed upon me [to accompany him]; so we repaired to the place and found there a man, who came to meet us and said, '[Enter,] in the name of God!' Then he pulled out a key and opened the door, whereupon we entered and he locked the door after us. Quoth I, 'We are the first of the folk; but where are their voices?' '[They are] within the house,' answered he. 'This is but a privy door; so be not amazed at the absence of the folk.' And my friend said to me, 'Behold, we are two, and what can they avail to do with us?' [Then he brought us into the house,] and when we entered the saloon, we found it exceeding desolate and repulsive of aspect Quoth my friend, 'We are fallen [into a trap]; but there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' And I said, 'May God not requite thee for me with good!'

Then we sat down on the edge of the estrade and presently I espied a closet beside me; so I looked into it and my friend said to me, 'What seest thou?' Quoth I, 'I see therein good galore and bodies of murdered folk. Look.' So he looked and said, 'By Allah, we are lost men!' And we fell a-weeping, I and he. As we were thus, behold, there came in upon us, by the door at which we had entered, four naked men, with girdles of leather about their middles, and made for my friend. He ran at them and dealing one of them a buffet, overthrew him, whereupon the other three fell all upon him. I seized the opportunity to escape, what while they were occupied with him, and espying a door by my side, slipped into it and found myself in an underground chamber, without window or other issue. So I gave myself up for lost and said, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!' Then I looked to the top of the vault and saw in it a range of glazed lunettes; so I clambered up for dear life, till I reached the lunettes, and I distracted [for fear]. I made shift to break the glass and

scrambling out through the frames, found a wall behind them. So I bestrode the wall and saw folk walking in the road; whereupon I cast myself down to the ground and God the Most High preserved me, so that I reached the earth, unhurt. The folk flocked round me and I acquainted them with my story.

As fate would have it, the chief of the police was passing through the market; so the people told him [what was to do] and he made for the door and burst it open. We entered with a rush and found the thieves, as they had overthrown my friend and cut his throat; for they occupied not themselves with me, but said, 'Whither shall yonder fellow go? Indeed, he is in our grasp.' So the prefect took them with the hand and questioned them, and they confessed against the woman and against their associates in Cairo. Then he took them and went forth, after he had locked up the house and sealed it; and I accompanied him till he came without the [first] house. He found the door locked from within; so he bade break it open and we entered and found another door. This also he caused burst in, enjoining his men to silence till the doors should be opened, and we entered and found the band occupied with a new victim, whom the woman had just brought in and whose throat they were about to cut.

The prefect released the man and gave him back all that the thieves had taken from him; and he laid hands on the woman and the rest and took forth of the house treasures galore. Amongst the rest, they found the money-bag of the Turcoman sheep-merchant. The thieves they nailed up incontinent against the wall of the house, whilst, as for the woman, they wrapped her in one of her veils and nailing her [to a board, set her] upon a camel and went round about the town with her. Thus God razed their dwelling-places and did away from me that which I feared. All this befell, whilst I looked on, and I saw not my friend who had saved me from them the first time, whereat I marvelled to the utterest of marvel. However, some days afterward, he came up to me, and indeed he had renounced [the world] and donned a fakir's habit; and he saluted me and went away.

Then he again began to pay me frequent visits and I entered into converse with him and questioned him of the band and how he came to escape, he alone of them all. Quoth he, 'I left them from the day on which God the Most High delivered thee from them, for that they would not obey my speech; wherefore I swore that I would no longer consort with them.' And I said, 'By Allah, I marvel at thee, for that thou wast the cause of my preservation!' Quoth he, 'The world is full of this sort [of folk]; and we beseech God the Most High for safety, for that these [wretches] practise upon men with every kind of device.' Then said I to him, 'Tell me the most extraordinary adventure of all that befell thee in this villainy thou wast wont to practise.' And he answered, saying, 'O my brother, I was not present when they did on this wise, for that my part with them was to concern myself with selling and buying and [providing them with] food; but I have heard that the most extraordinary thing that befell them was on this wise.

The Thief's Story.

THE woman who used to act as decoy for them once caught them a woman from a bride-feast, under pretence that she had a wedding toward in her own house, and appointed her for a day, whereon she should come to her. When the appointed day arrived, the woman presented herself and the other carried her into the house by a door, avouching that it was a privy door. When she entered [the saloon], she saw men and champions [and knew that she had fallen into a trap]; so she looked at them and said, "Harkye, lads! I am a woman and there is no glory in my slaughter, nor have ye any feud of blood-revenge against me, wherefore ye should pursue me; and that which is upon me of [trinkets and apparel] ye are free to take." Quoth they, "We fear thy denunciation." But she answered, saying, "I will abide with you, neither coming in nor going out." And they said, "We grant thee thy life."

Then the captain looked on her [and she pleased him]; so he took her for himself and she abode with him a whole year, doing her endeavour in their service. till they became accustomed to her [and felt assured of her]. One night she plied them with drink and they drank [till they became intoxicated]; whereupon she arose and took her clothes and five hundred dinars from the captain; after which she fetched a razor and shaved all their chins. Then she took soot from the cooking-pots and blackening their faces withal, opened the doors and went out; and when the thieves awoke, they abode confounded and knew that the woman had practised upon them.""

The company marvelled at this story and the ninth officer came forward and said, 'I will tell you a right goodly story I heard at a wedding.

The Ninth Officer's Story.

A CERTAIN singing-woman was fair of favour and high in repute, and it befell one day that she went out apleasuring. As she sat, behold, a man lopped of the hand stopped to beg of her, and he entered in at the door. Then he touched her with his stump, saying, "Charity, for the love of God!" but she answered, "God open [on thee the gate of subsistence]!" and reviled him. Some days after this, there came to her a messenger and gave her the hire of her going forth. So she took with her a handmaid and an accompanyist; and when she came to the appointed place, the messenger brought her into a long passage, at the end whereof was a saloon. So (quoth she) we entered and found none therein, but saw the [place made ready for an] entertainment with candles and wine and dessert, and in another place we saw food and in a third beds.

We sat down and I looked at him who had opened the door to us, and behold he was lopped of the hand. I misliked this of him, and when I had sat a little longer, there entered a man, who filled the lamps in the saloon and lit the candles; and behold, he also was handlopped. Then came the folk and there entered none except he were lopped of the hand, and indeed the house was full of these. When the assembly was complete, the host entered and the company rose to him and seated him in the place of honour. Now he was none other than the man who had fetched me, and he was clad in sumptuous apparel, but his hands were in his sleeves, so that I knew not how it was with them. They brought him food and he ate, he and the company; after which they washed their hands and the host fell to casting furtive glances at me.

Then they drank till they were drunken, and when they had taken leave [of their wits], the host turned to me and said, "Thou dealtest not friendly with him who sought an alms of thee and thou saidst to him, 'How loathly thou art!'" I considered him and behold, he was the lophand who had accosted me in my pleasaunce. So I said, "O my lord, what is this thou sayest?" And he answered, saying, "Wait; thou shall remember it." So saying, he shook his head and stroked his beard, whilst I sat down for fear. Then he put out his hand to my veil and shoes and laying them by his side, said to me, "Sing, O accursed one!" So I sang till I was weary, whilst they occupied themselves with their case and intoxicated themselves and their heat redoubled. Presently, the doorkeeper came to me and said, "Fear not, O my lady; but, when thou hast a mind to go, let me know." Quoth I, "Thinkest thou to delude me?" And he said, "Nay, by Allah! But I have compassion on thee for that our captain and our chief purposeth thee no good and methinketh he will slay thee this night." Quoth I to him, "An thou be minded to do good, now is the time." And he answered, saying, "When our chief riseth to do his occasion and goeth to the draught-house, I will enter before him with the light and leave the door open; and do thou go whithersoever thou wilt."

Then I sang and the captain said, "It is good," Quoth I, "Nay, but thou art loathly." He looked at me and said, "By Allah, thou shalt never more scent the odour of the world!" But his comrades said to him, "Do it not," and appeased him, till he said, "If it must be so, she shall abide here a whole year, not going forth." And I said, "I am content to submit to whatsoever pleaseth thee. If I have erred, thou art of those to

whom pertaineth clemency." He shook his head and drank, then arose and went out to do his occasion, what while his comrades were occupied with what they were about of merry-making and drunkenness and sport. So I winked to my fellows and we slipped out into the corridor. We found the door open and fled forth, unveiled and knowing not whither we went; nor did we halt till we had left the house far behind and happened on a cook cooking, to whom said I, "Hast thou a mind to quicken dead folk?" And he said, "Come up." So we went up into the shop, and he said, 'Lie down." Accordingly, we lay down and he covered us with the grass, wherewith he was used to kindle [the fire] under the food.

Hardly had we settled ourselves in the place when we heard a noise of kicking [at the door] and people running right and left and questioning the cook and saying, "Hath any one passed by thee?" "Nay," answered he; "none hath passed by me." But they ceased not to go round about the shop till the day broke, when they turned back, disappointed. Then the cook removed the grass and said to us, "Arise, for ye are delivered from death." So we arose, and we were uncovered, without mantle or veil; but the cook carried us up into his house and we sent to our lodgings and fetched us veils; and we repented unto God the Most High and renounced singing, for indeed this was a great deliverance after stress.'

The company marvelled at this story and the tenth officer came forward and said, 'As for me, there befell me that which was yet more extraordinary than all this.' Quoth El Melik ez Zahir, 'What was that?' And he said,

The Tenth Officer's Story.

'A GREAT theft had been committed in the city and I was cited, I and my fellows. Now it was a matter of considerable value and they pressed hard upon us; but we obtained of them some days' grace and dispersed in quest of the stolen goods. As for me, I sallied forth with five men and went round about the city that day; and on the morrow we fared forth [into the suburbs]. When we came a parasang or two parasangs' distance from the city, we were athirst; and presently we came to a garden. So I went in and going up to the water-wheel, entered it and drank and made the ablution and prayed. Presently up came the keeper of the garden and said to me, "Out on thee! Who brought thee into this water-wheel?" And he cuffed me and squeezed my ribs till I was like to die. Then he bound me with one of his bulls and made me turn in the water-wheel, flogging me the while with a cattle whip he had with him, till my heart was on fire; after which he loosed me and I went out, knowing not the way.

When I came forth, I swooned away: so I sat down till my trouble subsided; then I made for my comrades and said to them, "I have found the booty and the thief, and I affrighted him not neither troubled him, lest he should flee; but now, come, let us go to him, so we may make shift to lay hold upon him." Then I took them and repaired to the keeper of the garden, who had tortured me with beating, meaning to make him taste the like of that which he had done with me and lie against him and cause him eat stick. So we rushed into the water-wheel and seizing the keeper, pinioned him.

Now there was with him a youth and he said, "By Allah, I was not with him and indeed it is six months since I entered the city, nor did I set eyes on the stuffs until they were brought hither." Quoth we, "Show us the stuffs." So he carried us to a place wherein was a pit, beside the water-wheel, and digging there, brought out the stolen goods, with not a stitch of them missing. So we took them and carried the keeper to the prefecture, where we stripped him and beat him with palm-rods till he confessed to thefts galore. Now I did this by way of mockery against my comrades, and it succeeded.'

The company marvelled at this story with the utmost wonderment, and the eleventh officer rose and said, 'I know a story yet rarer than this: but it happened not to myself.

The Eleventh Officer's Story.

THERE was once aforetime a chief officer [of police] and there passed by him one day a Jew, with a basket in his hand, wherein were five thousand dinars; whereupon quoth the officer to one of his slaves, "Canst thou make shift to take that money from yonder Jew's basket?" "Yes," answered he, nor did he tarry beyond the next day before he came to his master, with the basket in his hand. So (quoth the officer) I said to him, "Go, bury it in such a place." So he went and buried it and returned and told me. Hardly had he done this when there arose a clamour and up came the Jew, with one of the king's officers, avouching that the money belonged to the Sultan and that he looked to none but us for it. We demanded of him three days' delay, as of wont, and I said to him who had taken the money, "Go and lay somewhat in the Jew's house, that shall occupy him with himself." So he went and played a fine trick, to wit, he laid in a basket a dead woman's hand, painted [with henna] and having a gold seal- ring on one of the fingers, and buried the basket under a flagstone in the Jew's house. Then came we and searched and found the basket, whereupon we straightway clapped the Jew in irons for the murder of a woman.

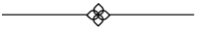
When it was the appointed time, there came to us the man of the Sultan's guards, [who had accompanied the Jew, when he came to complain of the loss of the money,] and said, "The Sultan biddeth you nail up the Jew and bring the money, for that there is no way by which five thousand dinars can be lost." Wherefore we knew that our device sufficed not. So I went forth and finding a young man, a Haurani, passing the road, laid hands on him and stripped him and beat him with palm-rods. Then I clapped him in irons and carrying him to the prefecture, beat him again, saying to them, "This is the thief who stole the money." And we strove to make him confess; but he would not confess. So we beat him a third and a fourth time, till we were weary and exhausted and he became unable to return an answer. But, when we had made an end of beating and tormenting him, he said, "I will fetch the money forthright."

So we went with him till he came to the place where my slave had buried the money and dug there and brought it out; whereat I marvelled with the utmost wonder and we carried it to the prefect's house. When the latter saw the money, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bestowed on me a dress of honour. Then he restored the money straightway to the Sultan and we left the youth in prison; whilst I said to my slave who had taken the money, "Did yonder young man see thee, what time thou buriedst the money?" "No, by the Great God!" answered he. So I went in to the young man, the prisoner, and plied him with wine till he recovered, when I said to him, "Tell me how thou stolest the money." "By Allah," answered he, "I stole it not, nor did I ever set eyes on it till I brought it forth of the earth!" Quoth I, "How so?" And he said, "Know that the cause of my falling into your hands was my mother's imprecation against me; for that I evil entreated her yesternight and beat her and she said to me, 'By Allah, O my son, God shall assuredly deliver thee into the hand of the oppressor!' Now she is a pious woman. So I went out forthright and thou sawest me in the way and didst that which thou didst; and when beating was prolonged on me, my senses failed me and I heard one saying to me, 'Fetch it.' So I said to you what I said and he guided

me till I came to the place and there befell what befell of the bringing out of the money."

I marvelled at this with the utmost wonderment and knew that he was of the sons of the pious. So I bestirred myself for his release and tended him [till he recovered] and besought him of quittance and absolution of responsibility.'

All those who were present marvelled at this story with the utmost marvel, and the twelfth officer came forward and said, 'I will tell you a pleasant trait that I had from a certain man, concerning an adventure that befell him with one of the thieves. (Quoth he)



The Twelfth Officer's Story.

AS I was passing one day in the market, I found that a thief had broken into the shop of a money-changer and taken thence a casket, with which he had made off to the burial-grounds. So I followed him thither [and came up to him, as] he opened the casket and fell a-looking into it; whereupon I accosted him, saying, "Peace be on thee!" And he was startled at me. Then I left him and went away from him.

Some months after this, I met him again under arrest, in the midst of the guards and officers of the police, and he said to them, "Seize yonder man." So they laid hands on me and carried me to the chief of the police, who said, "What hast thou to do with this fellow?" The thief turned to me and looking a long while in my face, said, "Who took this man?" Quoth the officers, "Thou badest us take him; so we took him." And he said, "I seek refuge with God! I know not this man, nor knoweth he me; and I said not that to you but of a man other than this." So they released me, and awhile afterward the thief met me in the street and saluted me, saying, "O my lord, fright for fright! Hadst thou taken aught from me, thou hadst had a part in the calamity." And I said to him, "God [judge] between thee and me!" And this is what I have to tell'

Then came forward the thirteenth officer and said, 'I will tell you a story that a man of my friends told me. (Quoth he)

The Thirteenth Officer's Story.

I WENT out one night to the house of one of my friends and when it was the middle of the night, I sallied forth alone [to go home]. When I came into the road, I espied a sort of thieves and they saw me, whereupon my spittle dried up; but I feigned myself drunken and staggered from side to side, crying out and saying, "I am drunken." And I went up to the walls right and left and made as if I saw not the thieves, who followed me till I reached my house and knocked at the door, when they went away.

Some days after this, as I stood at the door of my house, there came up to me a young man, with a chain about his neck and with him a trooper, and he said to me, "O my lord, charity for the love of God!" Quoth I, "God open!" and he looked at me a long while and said, "That which thou shouldst give me would not come to the value of thy turban or thy waistcloth or what not else of thy raiment, to say nothing of the gold and the silver that was about thee." "How so?" asked I, and he said, "On such a night, when thou fellest into peril and the thieves would have stripped thee, I was with them and said to them, 'Yonder man is my lord and my master who reared me.' So was I the cause of thy deliverance and thus I saved thee from them." When I heard this, I said to him, "Stop;" and entering my house, brought him that which God the Most High made easy [to me]. So he went his way. And this is my story.'

Then came forward the fourteenth officer and said, 'Know that the story I have to tell is pleasanter and more extraordinary than this; and it is as follows.

The Fourteenth Officer's Story.

BEFORE I entered this corporation, I had a draper's shop and there used to come to me a man whom I knew not, save by his face, and I would give him what he sought and have patience with him, till he could pay me. One day, I foregathered with certain of my friends and we sat down to drink. So we drank and made merry and played at Tab; and we made one of us Vizier and another Sultan and a third headsman.

Presently, there came in upon us a spunger, without leave, and we went on playing, whilst he played with us. Then quoth the Sultan to the Vizier, "Bring the spunger who cometh in to the folk, without leave or bidding, that we may enquire into his case. Then will I cut off his head." So the headsman arose and dragged the spunger before the Sultan, who bade cut off his head. Now there was with them a sword, that would not cut curd; so the headsman smote him therewith and his head flew from his body. When we saw this, the wine fled from our heads and we became in the sorriest of plights. Then my friends took up the body and went out with it, that they might hide it, whilst I took the head and made for the river.

Now I was drunken and my clothes were drenched with the blood; and as I passed along the road, I met a thief. When he saw me, he knew me and said to me, "Harkye, such an one!" "Well?" answered I, and he said, "What is that thou hast with thee?" So I acquainted him with the case and he took the head from me. Then we went on till we came to the river, where he washed the head and considering it straitly, said, "By Allah, this is my brother, my father's son. and he used to spunge upon the folk." Then he threw the head into the river. As for me, I was like a dead man [for fear]; but he said to me, "Fear not neither grieve, for thou art quit of my brother's blood."

Then he took my clothes and washed them and dried them, and put them on me; after which he said to me, "Get thee gone to thy house." So I returned to my house and he accompanied me, till I came thither, when he said to me, "May God not forsake thee! I am thy friend [such an one, who used to take of thee goods on credit,] and I am beholden to thee for kindness; but henceforward thou wilt never see me more."'

The company marvelled at the generosity of this man and his clemency and courtesy, and the Sultan said, 'Tell us another of thy stories.' 'It is well,' answered the officer, 'They avouch that

A Merry Jest of a Thief.

A THIEF of the thieves of the Arabs went [one night] to a certain man's house, to steal from a heap of wheat there, and the people of the house surprised him. Now on the heap was a great copper measure, and the thief buried himself in the corn and covered his head with the measure, so that the folk found him not and went away; but, as they were going, behold, there came a great crack of wind forth of the corn. So they went up to the measure and [raising it], discovered the thief and laid hands on him. Quoth he, "I have eased you of the trouble of seeking me: for I purposed, [in letting wind], to direct you to my [hiding-]place; wherefore do ye ease me and have compassion on me, so may God have compassion on you!" So they let him go and harmed him not.

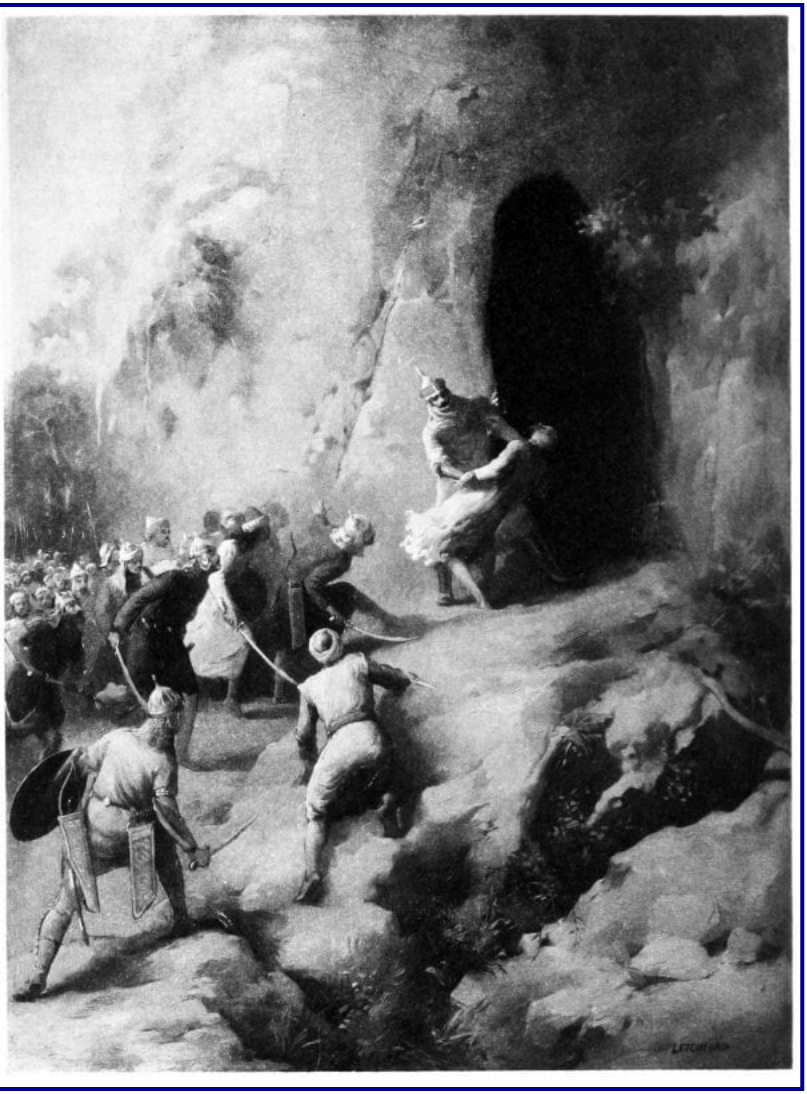
And for another story of the same kind,' continued the officer,

Story of the Old Sharper.

'THERE was once an old man renowned for roguery, and he went, he and his mates, to one of the markets and stole thence a parcel of stuffs. Then they separated and returned each to his quarter. Awhile after this, the old man assembled a company of his fellows and one of them pulled out a costly piece of stuff and said, "Will any one of you sell this piece of stuff in its own market whence it was stolen, that we may confess his [pre-eminence in] sharping?" Quoth the old man, "I will;" and they said, "Go, and God the Most High prosper thee!"

So on the morrow, early, he took the stuff and carrying it to the market whence it had been stolen, sat down at the shop whence it had been stolen and gave it to the broker, who took it and cried it for sale. Its owner knew it and bidding for it, [bought it] and sent after the chief of the police, who seized the sharper and seeing him an old man of venerable appearance, handsomely clad, said to him, "Whence hadst thou this piece of stuff?" "I had it from this market," answered he, "and from yonder shop where I was sitting." Quoth the prefect, "Did its owner sell it to thee?" "Nay," replied the thief; "I stole it and other than it." Then said the magistrate, "How camest thou to bring it [for sale] to the place whence thou stolest it?" And he answered, "I will not tell my story save to the Sultan, for that I have an advertisement wherewith I would fain bespeak him." Quoth the prefect, "Name it." And the thief said, "Art thou the Sultan?" "No," replied the other; and the old man said, "I will not tell it but to himself."

So the prefect carried him up to the Sultan and he said, "I have an advertisement for thee, O my lord." "What is thine advertisement?" asked the Sultan; and the thief said, "I repent and will deliver into thy hand all who are evildoers; and whomsoever I bring not, I will stand in his stead." Quoth the Sultan, "Give him a dress of honour and accept his profession of repentance." So he went down from the presence and returning to his comrades, related to them that which had passed and they confessed his subtlety and gave him that which they had promised him. Then he took the rest of the stolen goods and went up with them to the Sultan. When the latter saw him, he was magnified in his eyes and he commanded that nought should be taken from him. Then, when he went down, [the Sultan's] attention was diverted from him, little by little, till the case was forgotten, and so he saved the booty [for himself].' The folk marvelled at this and the fifteenth officer came forward and said, 'Know that among those who make a trade of knavery are those whom God the Most High taketh on their own evidence against themselves.' 'How so?' asked they; and he said.



The Fifteenth Officer's Story.

"IT is told of a certain doughty thief, that he used to rob and stop the way by himself upon caravans, and whenever the prefect of police and the magistrates sought him, he would flee from them and fortify himself in the mountains. Now it befell that a certain man journeyed along the road wherein was the robber in question, and this man was alone and knew not the perils that beset his way. So the highwayman came out upon him and said to him, "Bring out that which is with thee, for I mean to slay thee without fail." Quoth the traveller, "Slay me not, but take these saddle-bags and divide [that which is in] them and take the fourth part [thereof]." And the thief answered, "I will not take aught but the whole." "Take half," rejoined the traveller, "and let me go." But the robber replied, "I will take nought but the whole, and I will slay thee [to boot]." And the traveller said, "Take it."

So the highwayman took the saddle-bags and offered to kill the traveller, who said, "What is this? Thou hast no blood-feud against me, that should make my slaughter incumbent [on thee]. Quoth the other, "Needs must I slay thee;" whereupon the traveller dismounted from his horse and grovelled on the earth, beseeching the robber and speaking him fair. The latter hearkened not to his prayers, but cast him to the ground; whereupon the traveller [raised his eyes and seeing a francolin flying over him,] said, in his agony," O francolin, bear witness that this man slayeth me unjustly and wickedly; for indeed I have given him all that was with me and besought him to let me go, for my children's sake; yet would he not consent unto this. But be thou witness against him, for God is not unmindful of that which is done of the oppressors." The highwayman paid no heed to this speech, but smote him and cut off his head.

After this, the authorities compounded with the highwayman for his submission, and when he came before them, they enriched him and he became in such favour with the Sultan's deputy that he used to eat and drink with him and there befell familiar converse between them. On this wise they abode a great while, till, one day, the Sultan's deputy made a banquet, and therein, for a wonder, was a roasted francolin, which when the robber saw, he laughed aloud. The deputy was angered against him and said to him, "What is the meaning of thy laughter? Seest thou default [in the entertainment] or dost thou mock at us, of thy lack of breeding?" "Not so, by Allah, O my lord," answered the highwayman. "But I saw yonder francolin and bethought myself thereanent of an extraordinary thing; and it was on this wise. In the days of my youth, I used to stop the way, and one day I fell in with a man, who had with him a pair of saddle-bags and money therein. So I said to him, 'Leave these bags, for I mean to kill thee.' Quoth he, 'Take the fourth part of [that which is in] them and leave [me] the rest.' And I said, 'Needs must I take the whole and slay thee, to boot.' Then said he, 'Take the saddle-bags and let me go my way.' But I answered, 'Needs must I slay thee.' As we were in this contention, he and I, behold, he saw a francolin and turning to it, said, 'Bear witness against him, O francolin, that he slayeth me unjustly and letteth me not go to my children, for all he hath gotten my money.' However, I took no pity on him neither hearkened to that which he said, but slew him and concerned not myself with the francolin's testimony."

His story troubled the Sultan's deputy and he was sore enraged against him; so he drew his sword and smiting him, cut off his head; whereupon one recited the following verses:

An you'd of evil be quit, look that no evil yon do;
Nay, but do good, for the like God will still render to you.
All things, indeed, that betide to you are fore-ordered of God;
Yet still in your deeds is the source to which their fulfilment is due.

Now this was the francolin that bore witness against him.'

The company marvelled at this story and said all, 'Woe to the oppressor!' Then came forward the sixteenth officer and said, 'And I also will tell you a marvellous story, and it is on this wise.

The Sixteenth Officer's Story.

I WENT forth one day, purposing to make a journey, and fell in with a man whose wont it was to stop the way. When he came up with me, he offered to slay me and I said to him, "I have nothing with me whereby thou mayst profit." Quoth he, "My profit shall be the taking of thy life." "What is the cause of this?" asked I. "Hath there been feud between us aforetime?" And he answered, "No; but needs must I slay thee." Therewithal I fled from him to the river-side; but he overtook me and casting me to the ground, sat down on my breast. So I sought help of the Sheikh El Hejjaj and said to him, "Protect me from this oppressor!" And indeed he had drawn a knife, wherewith to cut my throat, when, behold, there came a great crocodile forth of the river and snatching him up from off my breast, plunged with him into the water, with the knife still in his hand; whilst I abode extolling the perfection of God the Most High and rendering thanks for my preservation to Him who had delivered me from the hand of that oppressor.'

Abdallah Ben Nafi and The King's Son of Cashghar.

THERE abode once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the city of Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, and he had boon-companions and story-tellers, to entertain him by night Among his boon-companions was a man called Abdallah ben Nan, who was high in favour with him and dear unto him, so that he was not forgetful of him a single hour. Now it befell, by the ordinance of destiny, that it became manifest to Abdallah that he was grown of little account with the Khalif and that he paid no heed unto him; nor, if he absented himself, did he enquire concerning him, as had been his wont. This was grievous to Abdallah and he said in himself, "Verily, the heart of the Commander of the Faithful and his fashions are changed towards me and nevermore shall I get of him that cordiality wherewith he was wont to entreat me." And this was distressful to him and concern waxed upon him, so that he recited the following verses:

If, in his own land, midst his folk, abjection and despite
Afflict a man, then exile sure were better for the wight.
So get thee gone, then, from a house wherein thou art abased
And let not severance from friends lie heavy on thy spright.
Crude amber in its native land unheeded goes, but, when
It comes abroad, upon the necks to raise it men delight.
Kohl in its native country, too, is but a kind of stone;
Cast out and thrown upon the ways, it lies unvalued quite;
But, when from home it fares, forthright all glory it attains
And 'twixt the eyelid and the eye incontinent 'tis dight.

Then he could brook this no longer; so he went forth from the dominions of the Commander of the Faithful, under pretence of visiting certain of his kinsmen, and took with him servant nor companion, neither acquainted any with his intent, but betook himself to the road and fared on into the desert and the sandwastes, knowing not whither he went. After awhile, he fell in with travellers intending for the land of Hind [and journeyed with them]. When he came thither, he lighted down [in a city of the cities of the land and took up his abode] in one of the lodging-places; and there he abode a while of days, tasting not food neither solacing himself with the delight of sleep; nor was this for lack of dirhems or dinars, but for that his mind was occupied with musing upon [the reverses of] destiny and bemoaning himself for that the revolving sphere had turned against him and the days had decreed unto him the disfavour of our lord the Imam.

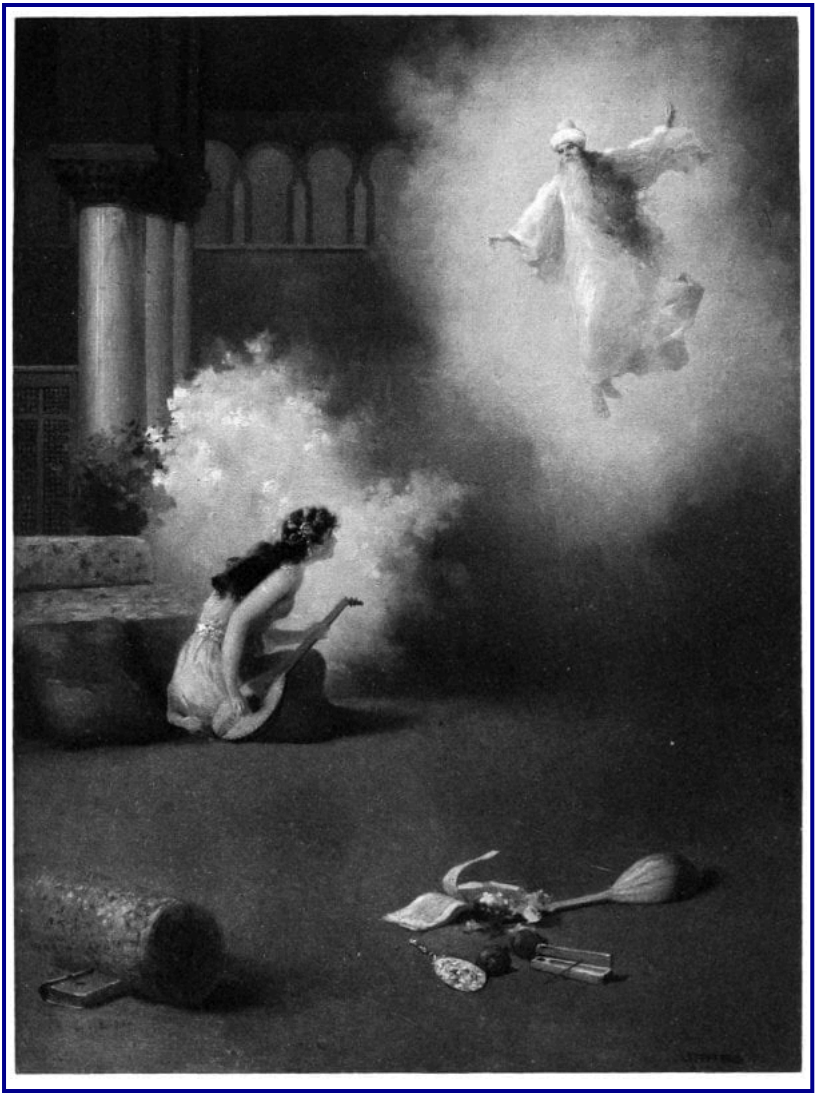
On this wise he abode a space of days, after which he made himself at home in the land and took to himself comrades and got him friends galore, with whom he addressed himself to diversion and good cheer. Moreover, he went a-pleasuring with his friends and their hearts were solaced [by his company] and he entertained them with stories and civilities and diverted them with pleasant verses and told them abundance of histories and anecdotes. Presently, the report of him reached King Jemhour, lord of Cashghar of Hind, and great was his desire [for his company]. So he went in quest of

him and Abdallah repaired to his court and going in to him, kissed the earth before him. Jemhour welcomed him and entreated him with kindness and bade commit him to the guest-house, where he abode three days, at the end of which time the king sent [to him] a chamberlain of his chamberlains and let bring him to his presence. When he came before him, he greeted him [with the usual compliment], and the interpreter accosted him, saying, "King Jemhour hath heard of thy report, that thou art a goodly boon-companion and an eloquent story-teller, and he would have thee company with him by night and entertain him with that which thou knowest of anecdotes and pleasant stories and verses." And he made answer with "Hearkening and obedience."

(Quoth Abdallah ben Nan) So I became his boon-companion and entertained him by night [with stories and the like]; and this pleased him to the utmost and he took me into especial favour and bestowed on me dresses of honour and assigned me a separate lodging; brief, he was everywise bountiful to me and could not brook to be parted from me a single hour. So I abode with him a while of time and every night I caroused with him [and entertained him], till the most part of the night was past; and when drowsiness overcame him, he would rise [and betake himself] to his sleeping-place, saying to me, "Forsake not my service for that of another than I and hold not aloof from my presence." And I made answer with "Hearkening and obedience."

Now the king had a son, a pleasant child, called the Amir Mohammed, who was comely of youth and sweet of speech; he had read in books and studied histories and above all things in the world he loved the telling and hearing of verses and stories and anecdotes. He was dear to his father King Jemhour, for that he had none other son than he on life, and indeed he had reared him in the lap of fondness and he was gifted with the utterest of beauty and grace and brightness and perfection. Moreover, he had learnt to play upon the lute and upon all manner instruments of music and he was used to [carouse and] company with friends and brethren. Now it was of his wont that, when the king rose to go to his sleeping-chamber, he would sit in his place and seek of me that I should entertain him with stories and verses and pleasant anecdotes; and on this wise I abode with them a great while in all cheer and delight, and the prince still loved me with an exceeding great love and entreated me with the utmost kindness.

It befell one day that the king's son came to me, after his father had withdrawn, and said to me, "Harkye, Ibn Nafil" "At thy service, O my lord," answered I; and he said, "I would have thee tell me an extraordinary story and a rare matter, that thou hast never related either to me or to my father Jemhour." "O my lord," rejoined I, "what story is this that thou desirest of me and of what kind shall it be of the kinds?" Quoth he, "It matters little what it is, so it be a goodly story, whether it befell of old days or in these times." "O my lord," said I, "I know many stories of various kinds; so whether of the kinds preferrest thou, and wilt thou have a story of mankind or of the Jinn?" "It is well," answered he; "if thou have seen aught with thine eyes and heard it with thine ears, [tell it me."Then he bethought himself] and said to me, "I conjure thee by my life, tell me a story of the stories of the Jinn and that which thou hast heard and seen of them!" "O my son," replied I, "indeed thou conjurest [me] by a mighty conjuration; so [hearken and thou shalt] hear the goodliest of stories, ay, and the most extraordinary of them and the pleasantest and rarest." Quoth the prince, "Say on, for I am attentive to thy speech." And I said, "Know, then, O my son, that



Story of the Damsel Tuhfet El Culoub and the Khalif Haroun Er Reshid.

THE Vicar of the Lord of the Worlds Haroun er Reshid had a boon-companion of the number of his boon-companions, by name Ishac ben Ibrahim en Nedim el Mausili, who was the most accomplished of the folk of his time in the art of smiting upon the lute; and of the Commander of the Faithful's love for him, he assigned him a palace of the choicest of his palaces, wherein he was wont to instruct slave-girls in the arts of lute-playing and singing. If any slave-girl became, by his instruction, accomplished in the craft, he carried her before the Khalif, who bade her play upon the lute; and if she pleased him, he would order her to the harem; else would he restore her to Ishac's palace.

One day, the Commander of the Faithful's breast was straitened; so he sent after his Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide and Ishac the boon-companion and Mesrour the eunuch, the swordsman of his vengeance; and when they came, he changed his raiment and disguised himself, whilst Jaafer [and Ishac] and Mesrour and El Fezll and Younus (who were also present) did the like. Then he went out, he and they, by the privy gate, to the Tigris and taking boat, fared on till they came to near Et Taf, when they landed and walked till they came to the gate of the thoroughfare street. Here there met them an old man, comely of hoariness and of a venerable and dignified bearing, pleasing of aspect and apparel. He kissed the earth before Ishac el Mausili (for that be knew but him of the company, the Khalif being disguised, and deemed the others certain of his friends) and said to him, 'O my lord, there is presently with me a slave-girl, a lutanist, never saw eyes the like of her nor the like of her grace, and indeed I was on my way to pay my respects to thee and give thee to know of her; but Allah, of His favour, hath spared me the trouble. So now I desire to show her to thee, and if she be to thy liking, well and good: else I will sell her.' Quoth Ishac, 'Go before me to thy barrack, till I come to thee and see her.'

The old man kissed his hand and went away; whereupon quoth Er Reshid to him, 'O Ishac, who is yonder man and what is his occasion?' 'O my lord,' answered the other, 'this is a man called Said the Slave-dealer, and he it is who buyeth us slave-girls and mamelukes. He avoucheth that with him is a fair [slave-girl, a] lutanist, whom he hath withheld from sale, for that he could not fairly sell her till he had shown her to me.' 'Let us go to him,' said the Khalif,'so we may look on her, by way of diversion, and see what is in the slave-dealer's barrack of slave-girls.' And Ishac answered, 'Commandment belongeth to God and to the Commander of the Faithful.' Then he went on before them and they followed in his track till they came to the slave-dealer's barrack and found it high of building and spacious of continence, with sleeping-cells and chambers therein, after the number of the slave-girls, and folk sitting upon the benches.

Ishac entered, he and his company, and seating themselves in the place of honour, amused themselves by looking on the slave-girls and mamelukes and watching how they were sold, till the sale came to an end, when some of the folk went away and other

some sat. Then said the slave-dealer, 'Let none sit with us except him who buyeth by the thousand [dinars] and upwards.' So those who were present withdrew and there remained none but Er Reshid and his company; whereupon the slave-dealer called the damsel, after he had caused set her a chair of fawwak, furnished with Greek brocade, and it was as she were the sun shining in the clear sky. When she entered, she saluted and sitting down, took the lute and smote upon it, after she had touched its strings and tuned it, so that all present were amazed. Then she sang thereto the following verses:

Wind of the East, if thou pass by the land where my loved ones dwell,
I pray, The fullest of greetings bear to them from me, their lover, and say
That I am the pledge of passion still and that my longing love
And eke my yearning do overpass all longing that was aye.
O ye who have withered my heart and marred my hearing and my sight,
Desire and transport for your sake wax on me night and day.
My heart with yearning is ever torn and tortured without cease,
Nor can my lids lay hold on sleep, that Sees from them away.

'Well done, O damsel!' cried Ishac. 'By Allah, this is a fair hour!' Whereupon she rose and kissed his hand, saying, 'O my lord, the hands stand still in thy presence and the tongues at thy sight, and the eloquent before thee are dumb; but thou art the looser of the veil.' Then she clung to him and said, 'Stand.' So he stood and said to her, 'Who art thou and what is thy need?' She raised a corner of the veil, and he beheld a damsel as she were the rising full moon or the glancing lightning, with two side locks of hair that fell down to her anklets. She kissed his hand and said to him, 'O my lord, know that I have been in this barrack these five months, during which time I have been withheld from sale till thou shouldst be present [and see me]; and yonder slave-dealer still made thy coming a pretext to me and forbade me, for all I sought of him night and day that he should cause thee come hither and vouchsafe me thy presence and bring me and thee together.' Quoth Ishac, 'Say what thou wouldst have.' And she answered, 'I beseech thee, by God the Most High, that thou buy me, so I may be with thee, by way of service.' 'Is that thy desire?' asked he, and she replied, ' Yes.'

So Ishac returned to the slave-dealer and said to him, 'Harkye, Gaffer Said!*' 'At thy service, O my lord,' answered the old man; and Ishac said, 'In the corridor is a cell and therein a damsel pale of colour. What is her price in money and how much dost thou ask for her?, Quoth the slave-dealer, 'She whom thou mentionest is called Tuhfet el Hemca.' 'What is the meaning of El Hemca?' asked Ishac, and the old man replied, 'Her price hath been paid down an hundred times and she still saith, "Show me him who desireth to buy me;" and when I show her to him, she saith, "This fellow is not to my liking; he hath in him such and such a default." And in every one who would fain buy her she allegeth some default or other, so that none careth now to buy her and none seeketh her, for fear lest she discover some default in him.' Quoth Ishac, 'She seeketh presently to sell herself; so go thou to her and enquire of her and see her price and send her to the palace.' 'O my lord,' answered Said, 'her price is an hundred dinars, though, were she whole of this paleness that is upon her face, she would be worth a thousand; but folly and pallor have diminished her value; and behold, I will go to her and consult her of this.' So he betook himself to her, and said to her, 'Wilt thou be sold to Ishac ben Ibrahim el Mausili?' 'Yes,' answered she, and he said, 'Leave

frowardness, for to whom doth it happen to be in the house of Ishac the boon-companion?'

Then Ishac went forth of the barrack and overtook Er Reshid [who had foregone him]; and they walked till they came to their [landing-]place, where they embarked in the boat and fared on to Theghr el Khanekah. As for the slave-dealer, he sent the damsel to the house of Ishac en Nedim, whose slave-girls took her and carried her to the bath. Then each damsel gave her somewhat of her apparel and they decked her with earrings and bracelets, so that she redoubled in beauty and became as she were the moon on the night of its full. When Ishac returned home from the Khalifs palace, Tuhfeh rose to him and kissed his hand; and he saw that which the slave-girls had done with her and thanked them therefor and said to them, 'Let her be in the house of instruction and bring her instruments of music, and if she be apt unto singing, teach her; and may God the Most High vouchsafe her health and weal!' So there passed over her three months, what while she abode with him in the house of instruction, and they brought her the instruments of music. Moreover, as time went on, she was vouchsafed health and soundness and her beauty waxed many times greater than before and her pallor was changed to white and red, so that she became a ravishment to all who looked on her.

One day, Ishac let bring all who were with him of slave-girls from the house of instruction and carried them up to Er Reshid's palace, leaving none in his house save Tuhfeh and a cookmaid; for that he bethought him not of Tuhfeh, nor did she occur to his mind, and none of the damsels remembered him of her. When she saw that the house was empty of the slave-girls, she took the lute (now she was unique in her time in smiting upon the lute, nor had she her like in the world, no, not Ishac himself, nor any other) and sang thereto the following verses:

Whenas the soul desireth one other than its peer,
It winneth not of fortune the wish it holdeth dear.
Him with my life I'd ransom whose rigours waste away
My frame and cause me languish; yet, if he would but hear,
It rests with him to heal me; and I (a soul he hath
Must suffer that which irks it), go saying, in my fear
Of spies, "How long, O scoffer, wilt mock at my despair,
As 'twere God had created nought else whereat to jeer?"

Now Ishac had returned to his house upon an occasion that presented itself to him; and when he entered the vestibule, he heard a sound of singing, the like whereof he had never heard in the world, for that it was [soft] as the breeze and richer than almond oil. So the delight of it gat hold of him and joyance overcame him, and he fell down aswoon in the vestibule, Tuhfeh heard the noise of steps and laying the lute from her hand, went out to see what was to do. She found her lord Ishac lying aswoon in the vestibule; so she took him up and strained him to her bosom, saying, 'I conjure thee in God's name, O my lord, tell me, hath aught befallen thee?' When he heard her voice, he recovered from his swoon and said to her, 'Who art thou? ' Quoth she, 'I am thy slave-girl Tuhfeh.' And he said to her, 'Art thou indeed Tuhfeh?' 'Yes,' answered she; and he, 'By Allah, I had forgotten thee and remembered thee not till now!' Then he

looked at her and said, 'Indeed, thy case is altered and thy pallor is grown changed to rosiness and thou hast redoubled in beauty and lovesomeness. But was it thou who was singing but now?' And she was troubled and affrighted and answered, 'Even I, O my lord.'

Then Ishac seized upon her hand and carrying her into the house, said to her, 'Take the lute and sing; for never saw I nor heard thy like in smiting upon the lute; no, not even myself!' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'thou makest mock of me. Who am I that thou shouldst say all this to me? Indeed, this is but of thy kindness.' 'Nay, by Allah,' exclaimed he, 'I said but the truth to thee and I am none of those on whom pretence imposeth. These three months hath nature not moved thee to take the lute and sing thereto, and this is nought but an extraordinary thing. But all this cometh of strength in the craft and self-restraint.' Then he bade her sing; and she said, 'Hearkening and obedience.' So she took the lute and tightening its strings, smote thereon a number of airs, so that she confounded Ishac's wit and he was like to fly for delight. Then she returned to the first mode and sang thereto the following verses:

Still by your ruined camp a dweller I abide;
Ne'er will I change nor e'er shall distance us divide.
Far though you dwell, I'll ne'er your neighbourhood forget,
O friends, whose lovers still for you are stupefied.
Your image midst mine eye sits nor forsakes me aye;
Ye are my moons in gloom of night and shadowtide.
Still, as my transports wax, grows restlessness on me
And woes have ta'en the place of love-delight denied.

When she had made an end of her song and laid down the lute, Ishac looked fixedly on her, then took her hand and offered to kiss it; but she snatched it from him and said to him, 'Allah, O my lord, do not that!' Quoth he, 'Be silent. By Allah, I had said that there was not in the world the like of me; but now I have found my dinar in the craft but a danic, "for thou art, beyond comparison or approximation or reckoning, more excellent of skill than I! This very day will I carry thee up to the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid, and whenas his glance lighteth on thee, thou wilt become a princess of womankind. So, Allah, Allah upon thee, O my lady, whenas thou becomest of the household of the Commander of the Faithful, do not thou forget me!' And she replied, saying, 'Allah, O my lord, thou art the source of my fortunes and in thee is my heart fortified.' So he took her hand and made a covenant with her of this and she swore to him that she would not forget him.

Then said he to her, 'By Allah, thou art the desire of the Commander of the Faithful! So take the lute and sing a song that thou shalt sing to the Khalif, whenas thou goest in to him.' So she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

His love on him took pity and wept for his dismay:
Of those that him did visit she was, as sick he lay.
She let him taste her honey and wine before his death:
This was his last of victual until the Judgment Day.

Ishac stared at her and seizing her hand, said to her, 'Know that I am bound by an oath that, when the singing of a damsel pleaseth me, she shall not make an end of her song but before the Commander of the Faithful. But now tell me, how came it that thou abodest with the slave-dealer five months and wast not sold to any, and thou of this skill, more by token that the price set on thee was no great matter?'

She laughed and answered, 'O my lord, my story is a strange one and my case extraordinary. Know that I belonged aforetime to a Mughrebi merchant, who bought me, when I was three years old, and there were in his house many slave-girls and eunuchs; but I was the dearest to him of them all. So he kept me with him and used not to call me but "daughterling," and indeed I am presently a clean maid. Now there was with him a damsel, a lutanist, and she reared me and taught me the craft, even as thou seest. Then was my master admitted to the mercy of God the Most High and his sons divided his good. I fell to the lot of one of them; but it was only a little while ere he had squandered all his substance and there was left him no tittle of money. So I left the lute, fearing lest I should fall into the hand of a man who knew not my worth, for that I was assured that needs must my master sell me; and indeed it was but a few days ere he carried me forth to the barrack of the slave-merchant who buyeth slave-girls and showeth them to the Commander of the Faithful. Now I desired to learn the craft; so I refused to be sold to other than thou, till God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) vouchsafed me my desire of thy presence; whereupon I came out to thee, whenas I heard of thy coming, and besought thee to buy me. Thou healedst my heart and boughtedst me; and since I entered thy house, O my lord, I have not taken up the lute till now; but to-day, whenas I was quit of the slave-girls, [I took it]; and my purpose in this was that I might see if my hand were changed or no. As I was singing, I heard a step in the vestibule; so I laid the lute from my hand and going forth to see what was to do, found thee, O my lord, on this wise.'

Quoth Ishac, 'Indeed, this was of thy fair fortune. By Allah, I know not that which thou knowest in this craft!' Then he arose and going to a chest, brought out therefrom striped clothes of great price, netted with jewels and great pearls, and said to her, 'In the name of God, don these, O my lady Tuhfeh.' So she arose and donned those clothes and veiled herself and went up [with Ishac] to the palace of the Khalifate, where he made her stand without, whilst he himself went in to the Commander of the Faithful (with whom was Jaafer the Barmecide) and kissing the earth before him, said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I have brought thee a damsel, never saw eyes her like for excellence in singing and touching the lute; and her name is Tuhfeh." 'And where,' asked Er Reshed, 'is this Tuhfeh, who hath not her like in the world?' Quoth Ishac, 'Yonder she stands, O Commander of the Faithful;' and he acquainted the Khalif with her case from first to last. Then said Er Reshid, 'It is a marvel to hear thee praise a slave-girl after this fashion. Admit her, so we may see her, for that the morning may not be hidden.'

Accordingly, Ishac bade admit her; so she entered, and when her eyes fell upon the Commander of the Faithful, she kissed the earth before him and said, 'Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful and asylum of the people of the faith and reviver of justice among all creatures! May God make plain the treading of thy feet and vouchsafe thee enjoyment of that which He hath bestowed on thee and make Paradise

thy harbourage and the fire that of thine enemies!' Quoth Er Reshid, 'And on thee be peace, O damsel! Sit.' So she sat down and he bade her sing; whereupon she took the lute and tightening its strings, played thereon in many modes, so that the Commander of the Faithful and Jaafer were confounded and like to fly for delight. Then she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

By Him whom I worship, indeed, I swear, O thou that mine eye dost fill,
By Him in whose honour the pilgrims throng and fare to Arafat's hill,
Though over me be the tombstone laid, if ever thou call on me,
Though rotten my bone should be, thy voice I'll answer, come what will.
I crave none other than thou for friend, beloved of my heart;
So trust in my speech, for the generous are true and trusty still.

Er Reshid considered her beauty and the goodliness of her singing and her eloquence and what not else she comprised of qualities and rejoiced with an exceeding joyance; and for the stress of that which overcame him of delight, he descended from the couch and sitting down with her upon the ground, said to her, 'Thou hast done well, O Tuhfeh. By Allah, thou art indeed a gift' Then he turned to Ishac and said to him, 'Thou dealtest not equitably, O Ishac, in the description of this damsel, neither settest out all that she compriseth of goodliness and skill; for that, by Allah, she is incomparably more skilful than thou; and I know of this craft that which none knoweth other than I!' 'By Allah,' exclaimed Jaafer, 'thou sayst sooth, O my lord, O Commander of the Faithful. Indeed, this damsel hath done away my wit' Quoth Ishac, 'By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I had said that there was not on the face of the earth one who knew the craft of the lute like myself; but, when I heard her, my skill became nothing worth in mine eyes.'

Then said the Khalif to her, 'Repeat thy playing, O Tuhfeh.' So she repeated it and he said to her, 'Well done!' Moreover, he said to Ishac, 'Thou hast indeed brought me that which is extraordinary and worth in mine eyes the empire of the earth.' Then he turned to Mesrour the eunuch and said to him, 'Carry Tuhfeh to the lodging of honour.' Accordingly, she went away with Mesrour and the Khalif looked at her clothes and seeing her clad in raiment of choice, said to Ishac, 'O Ishac, whence hath she these clothes?' 'O my lord, answered he, 'these are somewhat of thy bounties and thy largesse, and they are a gift to her from me. By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, the world, all of it, were little in comparison with her!' Then the Khalif turned to the Vizier Jaafer and said to him, 'Give Ishac fifty thousand dirhems and a dress of honour of the apparel of choice.' 'Hearkening and obedience,' replied Jaafer and gave him that which the Khalif ordered him.

As for Er Reshid, he shut himself up with Tuhfeh that night and found her a clean maid and rejoiced in her; and she took high rank in his heart, so that he could not endure from her a single hour and committed to her the keys of the affairs of the realm, for that which he saw in her of good breeding and wit and modesty. Moreover, he gave her fifty slave-girls and two hundred thousand dinars and clothes and trinkets and jewels and precious stones, worth the kingdom of Egypt; and of the excess of his love for her, he would not entrust her to any of the slave-girls or eunuchs; but, whenas he went out from her, he locked the door upon her and took the key with him, against

he should return to her, forbidding the damsels to go in to her, of his fear lest they should slay her or practise on her with knife or poison; and on this wise he abode awhile.

One day as she sang before the Commander of the Faithful, he was moved to exceeding delight, so that he took her and offered to kiss her hand; but she drew it away from him and smote upon her lute and broke it and wept Er Reshid wiped away her tears and said, 'O desire of the heart, what is it maketh thee weep? May God not cause an eye of thine to weep!' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'what am I that thou shouldst kiss my hand? Wilt thou have God punish me for this and that my term should come to an end and my felicity pass away? For this is what none ever attained unto.' Quoth he, 'Well said, O Tuhfeh. Know that thy rank in my esteem is mighty and for that which wondered me of what I saw of thee, I offered to do this, but I will not return unto the like thereof; so be of good heart and cheerful eye, for I have no desire for other than thyself and will not die but in the love of thee, and thou to me art queen and mistress, to the exclusion of all humankind.' Therewith she fell to kissing his feet; and this her fashion pleased him, so that his love for her redoubled and he became unable to brook an hour's severance from her.

One day he went forth to the chase and left Tuhfeh in her pavilion. As she sat looking upon a book, with a candlestick of gold before her, wherein was a perfumed candle, behold, a musk-apple fell down before her from the top of the saloon. So she looked up and beheld the Lady Zubeideh bint el Casim, who saluted her and acquainted her with herself, whereupon Tuhfeh rose to her feet and said, 'O my lady, were I not of the number of the upstarts, I had daily sought thy service; so do not thou bereave me of thine august visits.' The Lady Zubeideh called down blessings upon her and answered, 'By the life of the Commander of the Faithful, I knew this of thee, and but that it is not of my wont to go forth of my place, I had come out to do my service to thee.' Then said she to her, 'Know, O Tuhfeh, that the Commander of the Faithful hath forsaken all his concubines and favourites on thine account, even to myself. Yea, me also hath he deserted on this wise, and I am not content to be as one of the concubines; yet hath he made me of them and forsaken me, and I am come to thee, so thou mayst beseech him to come to me, though it be but once a month, that I may not be the like of the handmaids and concubines nor be evened with the slave-girls; and this is my occasion with thee.' 'Hearkening and obedience,' answered Tuhfeh. 'By Allah, O my lady, I would well that he might be with thee a whole month and with me but one night, so thy heart might be comforted, for that I am one of thy handmaids and thou art my lady in every event.' The Lady Zubeideh thanked her for this and taking leave of her, returned to her palace.

When the Khalif returned from the chase, he betook himself to Tuhfeh's pavilion and bringing out the key, opened the door and went in to her. She rose to receive him and kissed his hand, and he took her to his breast and seated her on his knee. Then food was brought to them and they ate and washed their hands; after which she took the lute and sang, till Er Reshid was moved to sleep. When she was ware of this, she left singing and told him her adventure with the Lady Zubeideh, saying, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I would have thee do me a favour and heal my heart and accept my intercession and reject not my word, but go forthright to the Lady Zubeideh's lodging.'

Now this talk befell after he had stripped himself naked and she also had put off her clothes; and he said, 'Thou shouldst have named this before we stripped ourselves naked.' But she answered, saying, ' O Commander of the Faithful, I did this not but in accordance with the saying of the poet in the following verses:

All intercessions come and all alike do ill succeed,
Save Tuhfeh's, daughter of Merjan, for that, in very deed,
The intercessor who to thee herself presenteth veiled
Is not her like who naked comes with thee to intercede.'

When the Khalif heard this, her speech pleased him and he strained her to his bosom. Then he went forth from her and locked the door upon her, as before; whereupon she took the book and sat looking in it awhile. Presently, she laid it down and taking the lute, tightened its strings. Then she smote thereon, after a wondrous fashion, such as would have moved inanimate things [to delight], and fell to singing marvellous melodies and chanting the following verses:

Rail not at the vicissitudes of Fate,
For Fortune still spites those who her berate.
Be patient under its calamities,
For all things have an issue soon or late.
How many a mirth-exciting joy amid
The raiment of ill chances lies in wait!
How often, too, hath gladness come to light
Whence nought but dole thou didst anticipate!

Then she turned and saw within the chamber an old man, comely of hoariness, venerable of aspect, who was dancing on apt and goodly wise, a dance the like whereof none might avail unto. So she sought refuge with God the Most High from Satan the Stoned and said, 'I will not give over what I am about, for that which God decreeth, He carrieth into execution.' Accordingly, she went on singing till the old man came up to her and kissed the earth before her, saying, 'Well done, O Queen of the East and the West! May the world be not bereaved of thee! By Allah, indeed thou art perfect of qualities and ingredients, O Tuhfet es Sudour! Dost thou know me?' 'Nay, by Allah,' answered she; 'but methinks thou art of the Jinn.' Quoth he, 'Thou sayst sooth; I am the Sheikh Aboultawaif Iblis, and I come to thee every night, and with me thy sister Kemeriyeh, for that she loveth thee and sweareth not but by thy life; and her life is not pleasant to her, except she come to thee and see thee, what while thou seest her not. As for me, I come to thee upon an affair, wherein thou shall find thine advantage and whereby thou shalt rise to high rank with the kings of the Jinn and rule them, even as thou rulest mankind; [and to that end I would have thee come with me and be present at the festival of my son's circumcision;] for that the Jinn are agreed upon the manifestation of thine affair.' And she answered, 'In the name of God.'

So she gave him the lute and he forewent her, till he came to the house of easance, and behold, therein was a door and a stairway. When Tuhfeh saw this, her reason fled; but Iblis cheered her with discourse. Then he descended the stair and she followed him to the bottom thereof, where she found a passage and they fared on therein, till they came to a horse standing, Teady saddled and bridled and accoutred. Quoth Iblis,

'[Mount], in the name of God, O my lady Tuhfeh;' and he held the stirrup for her. So she mounted and the horse shook under her and putting forth wings, flew up with her, whilst the old man flew by her side; whereat she was affrighted and clung to the pummel of the saddle; nor was it but an hour ere they came to a fair green meadow, fresh-flowered as if the soil thereof were a goodly robe, embroidered with all manner colours.

Midmost that meadow was a palace soaring high into the air, with battlements of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, and a two-leaved gate; and in the gateway thereof were much people of the chiefs of the Jinn, clad in sumptuous apparel. When they saw the old man, they all cried out, saying, 'The Lady Tuhfeh is come!' And as soon as she reached the palace-gate, they came all and dismounting her from the horse's back, carried her into the palace and fell to kissing her hands. When she entered, she beheld a palace whereof never saw eyes the like; for therein were four estrades, one facing other, and its walls were of gold and its ceilings of silver. It was lofty of building, wide of continence, and those who beheld it would be puzzled to describe it. At the upper end of the hall stood a throne of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, unto which led up five steps of silver, and on the right thereof and on its left were many chairs of gold and silver; and over the dais was a curtain let down, gold and silver wrought and broidered with pearls and jewels.

The old man carried Tuhfeh up [to the dais and seated her] on a chair of gold beside the throne, whilst she was amazed at that which she saw in that place and magnified her Lord (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) and hallowed Him. Then the kings of the Jinn came up to the throne and seated themselves thereon; and they were in the semblance of mortals, excepting two of them, who were in the semblance of the Jinn, with eyes slit endlong and jutting horns and projecting tusks. After this there came up a young lady, fair of favour and pleasant of parts; the light of her face outshone that of the flambeaux, and about her were other three women, than whom there were no fairer on the face of the earth. They saluted Tuhfeh and she rose to them and kissed the earth before them; whereupon they embraced her and sat down on the chairs aforesaid.

Now the four women who thus accosted Tuhfeh were the princess Kemeriyeh, daughter of King Es Shisban, and her sisters; and Kemeriyeh loved Tuhfeh with an exceeding love. So, when she came up to her, she fell to kissing and embracing her, and Iblis said, 'Fair befall you! Take me between you.' At this Tuhfeh laughed and Kemeriyeh said, 'O my sister, I love thee and doubtless hearts have their evidences, for, since I saw thee, I have loved thee.' 'By Allah,' replied Tuhfeh, 'hearts have deeps, and thou, by Allah, art dear to me and I am thy handmaid.' Kemeriyeh thanked her for this and said to her, 'These are the wives of the kings of the Jinn: salute them. This is Queen Jemreh, that is Queen Wekhimeh and this other is Queen Sherareh, and they come not but for thee.' So Tuhfeh rose to her feet and kissed their hands, and the three queens kissed her and welcomed her and entreated her with the utmost honour.

Then they brought trays and tables and amongst the rest a platter of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels; its margents were of gold and emerald, and thereon were graven the following verses:

For the uses of food I was fashioned and made;
The hands of the noble me wrought and inlaid.
My maker reserved me for generous men
And the niggard and sland'rer to use me forebade.
So eat what I offer in surety and be
The Lord of all things with thanks- giving repaid!

So they ate and Tuhfeh looked at the two kings, who had not changed their favour and said to Kemeriyeh, 'O my lady, what is yonder wild beast and that other like unto him? By Allah, mine eye brooketh not the sight of them.' Kemeriyeh laughed and answered, 'O my sister, that is my father Es Shisban and the other is Meimoun the Sworder; and of the pride of their souls and their arrogance, they consented not to change their [natural] fashion. Indeed, all whom thou seest here are, by nature, like unto them in fashion; but, on thine account, they have changed their favour, for fear lest thou be disquieted and for the comforting of thy mind, so thou mightest make friends with them and be at thine ease.' 'O my lady,' quoth Tuhfeh, 'indeed I cannot look at them. How frightful is yonder Meimoun, with his [one] eye! Mine eye cannot brook the sight of him, and indeed I am fearful of him.' Kemeriyeh laughed at her speech, and Tuhfeh said, 'By Allah, O my lady, I cannot fill my eye with them!' Then said her father Es Shisban to her, 'What is this laughing?' So she bespoke him in a tongue none understood but they [two] and acquainted him with that which Tuhfeh had said; whereat he laughed a prodigious laugh, as it were the pealing thunder.

Then they ate and the tables were removed and they washed their hands; after which Iblis the Accursed came up to Tuhfeh and said to her, 'O my lady Tuhfeh, thou gladdenest the place and with thy presence enlightenest and embellishest it; but now fain would these kings hear somewhat of thy singing, for the night hath spread its wings for departure and there abideth thereof but a little.' Quoth she, 'Hearkening and obedience.' So she took the lute and touching its strings on rare wise, played thereon after a wondrous fashion, so that it seemed to those who were present as if the palace stirred with them for the music. Then she fell a-singing and chanted the following verses:

Peace on you, people of my troth! With peace I do you greet.
Said ye not truly, aforetime, that we should live and meet?
Ah, then will I begin on you with chiding than the breeze
More soft, ay pleasanter than clear cold water and more sweet.
Indeed, mine eyelids still with tears are ulcered and to you
My bowels yearn to be made whole of all their pain and heat.
Parting hath sundered us, belov'd; indeed, I stood in dread
Of this, whilst yet our happiness in union was complete.
To God of all the woes I've borne I plain me, for I pine
For longing and lament, and Him for solace I entreat.

The kings of the Jinn were moved to delight by that fair singing and fluent speech and praised Tuhfeh; and Queen Kemeriyeh rose to her and embraced her and kissed her between the eyes, saying, 'By Allah, it is good, O my sister and solace of mine eyes and darling of my heart!' Then said she, 'I conjure thee by Allah, give us more of this

lovely singing.' And Tuhfeh answered with 'Hearkening and obedience.' So she took the lute and playing thereon after a different fashion from the former one, sang the following verses:

Oft as my yearning waxeth, my heart consoleth me
With hopes of thine enjoyment in all security.
Sure God shall yet, in pity, reknit our severed lives,
Even as He did afflict me with loneness after thee.
Thou whose desire possesseth my soul, the love of whom
Hold on my reins hath gotten and will not let me free,
Compared with thine enjoyment, the hardest things are light
To win and all things distant draw near and easy be.
God to a tristful lover be light! A man of wit,
Yet perishing for yearning and body-worn is he.
Were I cut off, beloved, from hope of thy return,
Slumber, indeed, for ever my wakeful lids would flee.
For nought of worldly fortune I weep! my only joy
In seeing thee consisteth and in thy seeing me.

At this the accursed Iblis was moved to delight and put his finger to his arse, whilst Meimoun danced and said, 'O Tuhfet es Sudour, soften the mode; for, as delight, entereth into my heart, it bewildereth my vital spirits.' So she took the lute and changing the mode, played a third air; then she returned to the first and sang the following verses:

The billows of thy love o'erwhelm me passing sore;
I sink and all in vain for succour I implore.
Ye've drowned me in the sea of love for you; my heart
Denies to be consoled for those whom I adore.
Think not that I forget our trothplight after you.
Nay; God to me decreed remembrance heretofore.
Love to its victim clings without relent, and he
Of torments and unease complaineth evermore.

The kings and all those who were present rejoiced in this with an exceeding delight and the accursed Iblis came up to Tuhfeh and kissing her hand, said to her, 'There abideth but little of the night; so do thou tarry with us till the morrow, when we will apply ourselves to the wedding and the circumcision.' Then all the Jinn went away, whereupon Tuhfeh rose to her feet and Iblis said, 'Go ye up with Tuhfeh to the garden for the rest of the night.' So Kemeriyeh took her and carried her into the garden. Now this garden contained all manner birds, nightingale and mocking-bird and ringdove and curlew and other than these of all the kinds, and therein were all kinds of fruits. Its channels were of gold and silver and the water thereof, as it broke forth of its conduits, was like unto fleeing serpents' bellies, and indeed it was as it were the Garden of Eden.

When Tuhfeh beheld this, she called to mind her lord and wept sore and said, 'I beseech God the Most High to vouchsafe me speedy deliverance, so I may return to my

palace and that my high estate and queendom and glory and be reunited with my lord and master Er Reshid.' Then she walked in that garden and saw in its midst a dome of white marble, raised on columns of black teak and hung with curtains embroidered with pearls and jewels. Amiddleward this pavilion was a fountain, inlaid with all manner jacinths, and thereon a statue of gold, and [beside it] a little door. She opened the door and found herself in a long passage; so she followed it and behold, a bath lined with all kinds of precious marbles and floored with a mosaic of pearls and jewels. Therein were four cisterns of alabaster, one facing other, and the ceiling of the bath was of glass coloured with all manner colours, such as confounded the understanding of the folk of understanding and amazed the wit.

Tuhfeh entered the bath, after she had put off her clothes, and behold, the basin thereof was overlaid with gold set with pearls and red rubies and green emeralds and other jewels; so she extolled the perfection of God the Most High and hallowed Him for the magnificence of that which she saw of the attributes of that bath. Then she made her ablutions in that basin and pronouncing the Magnification of Prohibition, prayed the morning prayer and what else had escaped her of prayers; after which she went out and walked in that garden among jessamine and lavender and roses and camomile and gillyflowers and thyme and violets and sweet basil, till she came to the door of the pavilion aforesaid and sat down therein, pondering that which should betide Er Reshid after her, whenas he should come to her pavilion and find her not. She abode sunken in the sea of her solicitude, till presently sleep took her and she slept

Presently she felt a breath upon her face; whereupon she awoke and found Queen Kemeriyeh kissing her, and with her her three sisters, Queen Jemreh, Queen Wekhimeh and Queen Sherareh. So she arose and kissed their hands and rejoiced in them with the utmost joy and they abode, she and they, in talk and converse, what while she related to them her history, from the time of her purchase by the Mughrebi to that of her coming to the slave-dealers' barrack, where she besought Ishac en Nedim to buy her, and how she won to Er Reshid, till the moment when Iblis came to her and brought her to them. They gave not over talking till the sun declined and turned pale and the season of sundown drew near and the day departed, whereupon Tuhfeh was instant in supplication to God the Most High, on the occasion of the prayer of sundown, that He would reunite her with her lord Er Reshid.

After this, she abode with the four queens, till they arose and entered the palace, where she found the candles lit and ranged in candlesticks of gold and silver and censing-vessels of gold and silver, filled with aloes-wood and ambergris, and there were the kings of the Jinn sitting. So she saluted them, kissing the earth before them and doing them worship; and they rejoiced in her and in her sight. Then she ascended [the estrade] and sat down upon her chair, whilst King Es Shisban and King El Muzfir and Queen Loulouеh and [other] the kings of the Jinn sat on chairs, and they brought tables of choice, spread with all manner meats befitting kings. They ate their fill; after which the tables were removed and they washed their hands and wiped them with napkins. Then they brought the wine-service and set on bowls and cups and flagons and hanaps of gold and silver and beakers of crystal and gold; and they poured out the wines and filled the flagons.

Then Iblis took the cup and signed to Tuhfeh to sing; and she said, 'Hearkening and obedience.' So she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

Drink ever, O lovers, I rede you, of wine
And praise his desert who for yearning doth pine,
Where lavender, myrtle, narcissus entwine,
With all sweet-scented herbs, round the juice of the vine.

So Iblis the Accursed drank and said, 'Well done, O desire of hearts! but thou owest me yet another song.' Then he filled the cup and signed to her to sing. Quoth she, 'Hearkening and obedience,' and sang the following verses:

Ye know I'm passion-maddened, racked with love and languishment,
Yet ye torment me, for to you 'tis pleasing to torment.
Between mine eyes and wake ye have your dwelling-place, and thus
My tears flow on unceasingly, my sighs know no relent.
How long shall I for justice sue to you, whilst, with desire
For aid, ye war on me and still on slaying me are bent!
To me your rigour love-delight, your distance nearness is;
Ay, your injustice equity, and eke your wrath consent.
Accuse me falsely, cruelly entreat me; still ye are
My heart's beloved, at whose hands no rigour I resent.

All who were present were delighted and the sitting-chamber shook with mirth, and Iblis said, 'Well done, O Tuhfet es Sudour!' Then they gave not over wine-bibbing and rejoicing and making merry and tambourining and piping till the night waned and the dawn drew near; and indeed exceeding delight entered into them. The most of them in mirth was the Sheikh Iblis, and for the excess of that which betided him of delight, he put off all that was upon him of coloured clothes and cast them over Tuhfeh, and among the rest a robe broidered with jewels and jacinths, worth ten thousand dinars. Then he kissed the earth and danced and put his finger to his arse and taking his beard in his hand, said to her, 'Sing about this beard and endeavour after mirth and pleasance, and no blame shall betide thee for this.' So she improvised and sang the following verses:

Beard of the old he-goat, the one-eyed, what shall be
My saying of a knave, his fashion and degree?
I rede thee vaunt thee not of praise from us, for lo!
Even as a docktailed cur thou art esteemed of me.
By Allah, without fail, to-morrow thou shalt see
Me with ox-leather dress and drub the nape of thee!

All those who were present laughed at her mockery of Iblis and marvelled at the goodliness of her observation and her readiness in improvising verses; whilst the Sheikh himself rejoiced and said to her, 'O Tuhfet es Sudour, the night is gone; so arise and rest thyself ere the day; and to-morrow all shall be well.' Then all the kings of the Jinn departed, together with those who were present of guards, and Tuhfeh abode alone, pondering the affair of Er Reshid and bethinking her of how it was with him, after her, and of that which had betided him for her loss, till the dawn gleamed, when

she arose and walked in the palace. Presently she saw a handsome door; so she opened it and found herself in a garden goodlier than the first, never saw eyes a fairer than it. When she beheld this garden, delight moved her and she called to mind her lord Er Reshid and wept sore, saying, 'I crave of the bounty of God the Most High that my return to him and to my palace and my home may be near at hand!'

Then she walked in the garden till she came to a pavilion, lofty of building and wide of continence, never saw mortal nor heard of a goodlier than it [So she entered] and found herself in a long corridor, which led to a bath goodlier than that whereof it hath been spoken, and the cisterns thereof were full of rose-water mingled with musk. Quoth Tuhfeh, 'Extolled be the perfection of God! Indeed, this is none other than a mighty king.' Then she put off her clothes and washed her body and made her ablution, after the fullest fashion, and prayed that which was due from her of prayer from the evening [of the previous day]. When the sun rose upon the gate of the garden and she saw the wonders thereof, with that which was therein of all manner flowers and streams, and heard the voices of its birds, she marvelled at what she saw of the surpassing goodliness of its ordinance and the beauty of its disposition and sat meditating the affair of Er Reshid and pondering what was come of him after her. Her tears ran down upon her cheek and the zephyr blew on her; so she slept and knew no more till she felt a breath on her cheek, whereupon she awoke in affright and found Queen Kemeriyeh kissing her face, and with her her sisters, who said to her, 'Arise, for the sun hath set.'

So she arose and making the ablution, prayed that which behoved her of prayers and accompanied the four queens to the palace, where she saw the candles lighted and the kings sitting. She saluted them and seated herself upon her couch; and behold, King Es Shisban had changed his favour, for all the pride of his soul. Then came up Iblis (whom God curse!) and Tuhfeh rose to him and kissed his hands. He in turn kissed her hand and called down blessings on her and said, 'How deemest thou? Is [not] this place pleasant, for all its loneliness and desolation?' Quoth she, 'None may be desolate in this place;' and he said, 'Know that no mortal dare tread [the soil of] this place.' But she answered, 'I have dared and trodden it, and this is of the number of thy favours.' Then they brought tables and meats and viands and fruits and sweetmeats and what not else, to the description whereof mortal man availeth not, and they ate till they had enough; after which the tables were removed and the trays and platters set on, and they ranged the bottles and flagons and vessels and phials, together with all manner fruits and sweet-scented flowers.

The first to take the cup was Iblis the Accursed, who said, 'O Tuhfet es Sudour, sing over my cup.' So she took the lute and touching it, sang the following verses:

Awaken, O ye sleepers all, and profit, whilst it's here
By what's vouchsafed of fortune fair and life untroubled, clear.
Drink of the first-run wine, that shows as very flame it were,
When from the pitcher 'tis outpoured, or ere the day appear.
O skinker of the vine-juice, let the cup 'twixt us go round,
For in its drinking is my hope and all I hold most dear.

What is the pleasance of the world, except it be to see
My lady's face, to drink of wine and ditties still to hear?

So Iblis drank off his cup, and when he had made an end of his draught, he waved his hand to Tuhfeh, and putting off that which was upon him of clothes, delivered them to her. Amongst them was a suit worth ten thousand dinars and a tray full of jewels worth a great sum of money. Then he filled again and gave the cup to his son Es Shisban, who took it from his hand and kissing it, stood up and sat down again. Now there was before him a tray of roses; so he said to her 'O Tuhfeh sing upon these roses.' Hearkening and obedience,' answered she and sang the following verses:

O'er all the fragrant flowers that be I have the prefrence aye,
For that I come but once a year, and but a little stay.
And high is my repute, for that I wounded aforetime
My lord, whom God made best of all the treaders of the clay.

So Es Shisban drank off the cup in his turn and said, 'Well done, O desire of hearts!' And he bestowed on her that which was upon him, to wit, a dress of cloth-of-pearl, fringed with great pearls and rubies and broidered with precious stones, and a tray wherein were fifty thousand dinars. Then Meimoun the Sworder took the cup and fell to gazing intently upon Tuhfeh. Now there was in his hand a pomegranate-flower and he said to her, 'Sing upon this pomegranate-flower, O queen of men and Jinn; for indeed thou hast dominion over all hearts.' Quoth she, 'Hearkening and obedience;' and she improvised and sang the following verses:

The zephyr's sweetness on the coppice blew,
And as with falling fire 'twas clad anew;
And to the birds' descant in the foredawns,
From out the boughs it flowered forth and grew,
Till in a robe of sandal green 'twas clad
And veil that blended rose and flame in hue.

Meinsoun drank off his cup and said to her, 'Well done, O perfect of attributes!' Then he signed to her and was absent awhile, after which he returned and with him a tray of jewels worth an hundred thousand dinars, [which he gave to Tuhfeh]. So Kemeriyeh arose and bade her slave-girl open the closet behind her, wherein she laid all that wealth. Then she delivered the key to Tuhfeh, saying, 'All that cometh to thee of riches, lay thou in this closet that is by thy side, and after the festival, it shall be carried to thy palace on the heads of the Jinn.' Tuhfeh kissed her hand, and another king, by name Munir, took the cup and filling it, said to her, 'O fair one, sing to me over my cup upon the jasmine.' 'Hearkening and obedience,' answered she and improvised the following verses:

It is as the jasmine, when it I espy,
As it glitters and gleams midst its boughs, were a sky
Of beryl, all glowing with beauty, wherein
Thick stars of pure silver shine forth to the eye.

Munir drank off his cup and ordered her eight hundred thousand dinars, whereat Kemeriyeh rejoiced and rising to her feet, kissed Tuhfeh on her face and said to her,

'May the world not be bereaved of thee, O thou who lordest it over the hearts of Jinn and mortals!' Then she returned to her place and the Sheikh Iblis arose and danced, till all present were confounded; after which he said to Tuhfeh, 'Indeed, thou embellishest my festival, O thou who hast commandment over men and Jinn and rejoicest their hearts with thy loveliness and the excellence of thy faithfulness to thy lord. All that thy hands possess shall be borne to thee [in thy palace and placed] at thy service; but now the dawn is near at hand; so do thou rise and rest thee, as of thy wont' Tuhfeh turned and found with her none of the Jinn; so she laid her head on the ground and slept till she had gotten her rest; after which she arose and betaking herself to the pool, made the ablution and prayed. Then she sat beside the pool awhile and pondered the affair of her lord Er Reshid and that which had betided him after her and wept sore.

Presently, she heard a blowing behind her; so she turned and behold, a head without a body and with eyes slit endlong; it was of the bigness of an elephant's head and bigger and had a mouth as it were an oven and projecting tusks, as they were grapnels, and hair that trailed upon the earth. So Tuhfeh said, 'I take refuge with God from Satan the Stoned!' and recited the Two Amulets; what while the head drew near her and said to her, 'Peace be upon thee, O princess of Jinn and men and unique pearl of her age and her time! May God still continue thee on life, for all the lapsing of the days, and reunite thee with thy lord the Imam!' 'And upon thee be peace,' answered she, 'O thou whose like I have not seen among the Jinn!' Quoth the head, 'We are a people who avail not to change their favours and we are called ghouls. The folk summon us to their presence, but we may not present ourselves before them [without leave]. As for me, I have gotten leave of the Sheikh Aboultawaif to present myself before thee and I desire of thy favour that thou sing me a song, so I may go to thy palace and question its haunters concerning the plight of thy lord after thee and return to thee; and know, O Tuhfet es Sudour, that between thee and thy lord is a distance of fifty years' journey to the diligent traveller.' 'Indeed,' rejoined Tuhfeh, 'thou grievest me [for him] between whom and me is fifty years' journey. And the head said to her, 'Be of good heart and cheerful eye, for the kings of the Jinn will restore thee to him in less than the twinkling of an eye.' Quoth she,' I will sing thee an hundred songs, so thou wilt bring me news of my lord and that which hath befallen him after me.' And the head answered, saying, 'Do thou favour me and sing me a song, so I may go to thy lord and bring thee news of him, for that I desire, before I go, to hear thy voice, so haply my thirst may be quenched.' So she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

They have departed; but the steads yet full of them remain:
Yea, they have left me, but my heart of them doth not complain.
My heart bereavement of my friends forebode; may God of them
The dwellings not bereave, but send them timely home again!
Though they their journey's goal, alas I have hidden, in their track
Still will I follow on until the very planets wane.
Ye sleep; by Allah, sleep comes not to ease my weary lids;
But from mine eyes, since ye have passed away, the blood doth rain.
The railers for your loss pretend that I should patient be:
'Away!' I answer them: ' 'tis I, not you, that feel the pain.'

What had it irked them, had they'd ta'en farewell of him they've left
Lone, whilst estrangement's fires within his entrails rage amain?
Great in delight, beloved mine, your presence is with me;
Yet greater still the miseries of parting and its bane.
Ye are the pleasaunce of my soul; or present though you be
Or absent from me, still my heart and thought with you remain.

The head wept exceeding sore and said, 'O my lady, indeed thou hast solaced my heart, and I have nought but my life; so take it.' Quoth she, 'An I but knew that thou wouldst bring me news of my lord Er Reshid, it were liefer to me than the empery of the world.' And the head answered her, saying, 'It shall be done as thou desirest.' Then it disappeared and returning to her at the last of the night, said, 'Know, O my lady, that I have been to thy palace and have questioned one of the haunters thereof of the case of the Commander of the Faithful and that which befell him after thee; and he said, "When the Commander of the Faithful came to Tuhfeh's lodging and found her not and saw no sign of her, he buffeted his face and head and rent his clothes. Now there was in thy lodging the eunuch, the chief of thy household, and he cried out at him, saying, 'Bring me Jaafer the Barmecide and his father and brother forthright.' The eunuch went out, confounded in his wit for fear of the Commander of the Faithful, and whenas he came to Jaafer, he said to him, 'Come to the Commander of the Faithful, thou and thy father and brother.' So they arose in haste and betaking themselves to the Khalif's presence, said to him, 'O Commander of the Faithful, what is to do?' Quoth he, 'There is that to do which overpasseth description. Know that I locked the door and taking the key with me, betook myself to the daughter of mine uncle, with whom I lay the night; but, when I arose in the morning and came and opened the door, I found no sign of Tuhfeh.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Jaafer, 'have patience, for that the damsel hath been snatched away, and needs must she return, seeing she took the lute with her, and it is her [own] lute. The Jinn have assuredly carried her off and we trust in God the Most High that she will return.' Quoth the Khalif, ' This is a thing that may nowise be' And he abode in her lodging, eating not neither drinking, what while the Barmecides besought him to go forth to the folk; and he weepeth and abideth on this wise till she shall return." This, then, is that which hath betided him after thee.'

When Tuhfeh heard this, it was grievous to her and she wept sore; whereupon quoth the head to her, 'The relief of God the Most High is near at hand; but now let me hear somewhat of thy speech.' So she took the lute and sang three songs, weeping the while. 'By Allah,' said the head, 'thou hast been bountiful to me, may God be with thee!' Then it disappeared and the season of sundown came. So she arose [and betook herself] to her place [in the hall]; whereupon the candles rose up from under the earth and kindled themselves. Then the kings of the Jinn appeared and saluted her and kissed her hands and she saluted them. Presently, up came Kemeriyeh and her three sisters and saluted Tuhfeh and sat down; whereupon the tables were brought and they ate. Then the tables were removed and there came the wine-tray and the drinking-service. So Tuhfeh took the lute and one of the three queens filled the cup and signed to Tuhfeh [to sing]. Now she had in her hand a violet; so Tuhfeh sang the following verses:

Behold, I am clad in a robe of leaves green
And a garment of honour of ultramarine.
Though little, with beauty myself I've adorned;
So the flowers are my subjects and I am their queen.
If the rose be entitled the pride of the morn,
Before me nor after she wins it, I ween.

The queen drank off her cup and bestowed on Tuhfeh a dress of cloth-of-pearl, fringed with red rubies, worth twenty thousand dinars, and a tray wherein were ten thousand dinars.

All this while Meimoun's eye was upon her and presently he said to her, 'Harkye, Tuhfeh! Sing to me.' But Queen Zelzeleh cried out at him and said, 'Desist, O Meimoun. Thou sufferest not Tuhfeh to pay heed unto us.' Quoth he, 'I will have her sing to me.' And words waxed between them and Queen Zelzeleh cried out at him. Then she shook and became like unto the Jinn and taking in her hand a mace of stone, said to him, 'Out on thee! What art thou that thou shouldst bespeak us thus? By Allah, but for the king's worship and my fear of troubling the session and the festival and the mind of the Sheikh Iblis, I would assuredly beat the folly out of thy head!' When Meimoun heard these her words, he rose, with the fire issuing from his eyes, and said, 'O daughter of Imlac, what art thou that thou shouldst outrage me with the like of this talk?' 'Out on thee, O dog of the Jinn,' replied she, 'knowest thou not thy place?' So saying, she ran at him and offered to strike him with the mace, but the Sheikh Iblis arose and casting his turban on the ground, said, 'Out on thee, O Meimoun! Thou still dost with us on this wise. Wheresoever thou art present, thou troubleth our life! Canst thou not hold thy peace till thou goest forth of the festival and this bride-feast be accomplished? When the circumcision is at an end and ye all return to your dwelling-places, then do as thou wilt. Out on thee, O Meimoun! Knowest thou not that Imlac is of the chiefs of the Jinn? But for my worship, thou shouldst have seen what would have betided thee of humiliation and punishment; but by reason of the festival none may speak. Indeed thou exceedest: knowest thou not that her sister Wekhimeh is doughtier than any of the Jinn? Learn to know thyself: hast thou no regard for thy life?'

Meimoun was silent and Iblis turned to Tuhfeh and said to her, 'Sing to the kings of the Jinn this day and to-night until the morrow, when the boy will be circumcised and each shall return to his own place.' So she took the lute and Kemeriyeh said to her, (now she had in her hand a cedrat), 'O my sister, sing to me on this cedrat.' 'Hearkening and obedience,' replied Tuhfeh, and improvising, sang the following verses:

My fruit is a jewel all wroughten of gold,
Whose beauty amazeth all those that behold.
My juice among kings is still drunken for wine
And a present am I betwixt friends, young and old.

At this Queen Kemeriyeh was moved to exceeding delight and drank off her cup, saying, 'Well done, O queen of hearts!' Moreover, she took off a surcoat of blue brocade, fringed with red rubies, and a necklace of white jewels, worth an hundred thousand dinars, and gave them to Tuhfeh. Then she passed the cup to her sister

Zelzeleh, who had in her hand sweet basil, and she said to Tuhfeh, 'Sing to me on this sweet basil.' 'Hearkening and obedience,' answered she and improvised and sang the following verses:

The crown of the flow'rets am I, in the chamber of wine, And Allah makes mention of me 'mongst the pleasures divine; Yea, ease and sweet basil and peace, the righteous are told, In Eternity's Garden of sweets shall to bless them combine. Where, then, is the worth that in aught with my worth can compare And where is the rank in men's eyes can be likened to mine?

Thereat Queen Zelzeleh was moved to exceeding delight and bidding her treasuress bring a basket, wherein were fifty pairs of bracelets and the like number of earrings, all of gold, set with jewels of price, the like whereof nor men nor Jinn possessed, and an hundred robes of coloured brocade and an hundred thousand dinars, gave the whole to Tuhfeh. Then she passed the cup to her sister Sherareh, who had in her hand a stalk of narcissus; so she took it from her and turning to Tuhfeh, said to her, 'O Tuhfeh, sing to me on this.' 'Hearkening and obedience,' answered she and improvised and sang the following verses:

Most like a wand of emerald my shape it is, trow I;
Amongst the fragrant flow'rets there's none with me can vie.
The eyes of lovely women are likened unto me;
Indeed, amongst the gardens I open many an eye.

When she had made an end of her song, Sherareh was moved to exceeding delight and drinking off her cup, said to her, 'Well done, O gift of hearts!' Then she ordered her an hundred dresses of brocade and an hundred thousand dinars and passed the cup to Queen Wekhimeh. Now she had in her hand somewhat of blood-red anemone; so she took the cup from her sister and turning to Tuhfeh, said to her, 'O Tuhfeh, sing to me on this.' Quoth she, 'I hear and obey,' and improvised the following verses:

The Merciful dyed me with that which I wear
Of hues with whose goodliness none may compare.
The earth is my birth-place, indeed; but my place
Of abidance is still in the cheeks of the fair.

Therewith Wekhimeh was moved to exceeding delight and drinking off the cup, ordered her twenty dresses of Greek brocade and a tray, wherein were thirty thousand dinars. Then she gave the cup to Queen Shuaaeh, Queen of the Fourth Sea, who took it and said, 'O my lady Tuhfeh, sing to me on the gillyflower.' Quoth she 'Hearkening and obedience,' and improvised the following verses:

The season of my presence is never at an end
'Mongst all their time in gladness and solacement who spend,
Whenas the folk assemble for birling at the wine,
Whether in morning's splendour or when night's shades descend.
The pitcher then of goblets filled full and brimming o'er
With limpid wine we plunder, that pass from friend to friend.

Queen Shuaaeh was moved to exceeding delight and emptying her cup, gave Tuhfeh an hundred thousand dinars. Then arose Iblis (may God curse him!) and said, 'Verily, the dawn gleameth.' Whereupon the folk arose and disappeared, all of them, and there abode not one of them save Tuhfeh, who went forth to the garden and entering the bath, made her ablutions and prayed that which had escaped her of prayers. Then she sat down and when the sun rose, behold, there came up to her near an hundred thousand green birds; the branches of the trees were filled with their multitudes and they warbled in various voices, whilst Tuhfeh marvelled at their fashion. Presently, up came eunuchs, bearing a throne of gold, set with pearls and jewels and jacinths white and red and having four steps of gold, together with many carpets of silk and brocade and Egyptian cloth of silk welted with gold. These latter they spread amiddleward the garden and setting up the throne thereon, perfumed the place with virgin musk and aloes and ambergris.

After that, there appeared a queen, never saw eyes a goodlier than she nor than her attributes; she was clad in rich raiment, embroidered with pearls and jewels, and on her head was a crown set with various kinds of pearls and jewels. About her were five hundred slave-girls, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons, screening her, right and left, and she among them as she were the moon on the night of its full, for that she was the most of them in majesty and dignity. She gave not over walking, till she came to Tuhfeh, whom she found gazing on her in amazement; and when the latter saw her turn to her, she rose to her, standing on her feet, and saluted her and kissed the earth before her.

The queen rejoiced in her and putting out her hand to her, drew her to herself and seated her by her side on the couch; whereupon Tuhfeh kissed her hands and the queen said to her, 'Know, O Tuhfeh, that all that thou treadest of these belong not to any of the Jinn, for that I am the queen of them all and the Sheikh Aboultawaif Iblis sought my permission and prayed me to be present at the circumcision of his son. So I sent to him, in my stead, a slave-girl of my slave-girls, to wit, Shuaaeh, Queen of the Fourth Sea, who is vice-queen of my kingdom. When she was present at the wedding and saw thee and heard thy singing, she sent to me, giving me to know of thee and setting forth to me thine elegance and pleasantness and the goodliness of thy breeding and thy singing. So I am come to thee, for that which I have heard of thy charms, and this shall bring thee great worship in the eyes of all the Jinn.'

Tuhfeh arose and kissed the earth and the queen thanked her for this and bade her sit. So she sat down and the queen called for food; whereupon they brought a table of gold, inlaid with pearls and jacinths and jewels and spread with various kinds of birds and meats of divers hues, and the queen said, 'O Tuhfeh, in the name of God, let us eat bread and salt together, thou and I.' So Tuhfeh came forward and ate of those meats and tasted somewhat the like whereof she had never eaten, no, nor aught more delicious than it, what while the slave-girls stood compassing about the table and she sat conversing and laughing with the queen. Then said the latter, 'O my sister, a slave-girl told me of thee that thou saidst, "How loathly is yonder genie Meimoun! There is no eating [in his presence]."' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered Tuhfeh, 'I cannot brook the sight of him, and indeed I am fearful of him.' When the queen heard this, she laughed, till she fell backward, and said, 'O my sister, by the virtue of the inscription

upon the seal-ring of Solomon, prophet of God, I am queen over all the Jinn, and none dare so much as look on thee a glance of the eye.' And Tuhfeh kissed her hand. Then the tables were removed and they sat talking.

Presently up came the kings of the Jinn from every side and kissed the earth before the queen and stood in her service; and she thanked them for this, but stirred not for one of them. Then came the Sheikh Aboultawaif Iblis (God curse him!) and kissed the earth before her, saying, 'O my lady, may I not be bereft of these steps!' O Sheikh Aboultawalf,' answered she, 'it behoveth thee to thank the bounty of the Lady Tuhfeh, who was the cause of my coming.' 'True,' answered he and kissed the earth. Then the queen fared on [towards the palace] and there [arose and] alighted upon the trees an hundred thousand birds of various colours. Quoth Tuhfeh, 'How many are these birds!' And Queen Wekhimeh said to her, 'Know, O my sister, that this queen is called Queen Es Shuhba and that she is queen over all the Jinn from East to West. These birds that thou seest are of her troops, and except they came in this shape, the earth would not contain them. Indeed, they came forth with her and are present with her presence at this circumcision. She will give thee after the measure of that which hath betided thee from the first of the festival to the last thereof; and indeed she honoureth us all with her presence.'

Then the queen entered the palace and sat down on the throne of the circumcision at the upper end of the hall, whereupon Tuhfeh took the lute and pressing it to her bosom, touched its strings on such wise that the wits of all present were bewildered and the Sheikh Iblis said to her, 'O my lady Tuhfeh, I conjure thee, by the life of this worshipful queen, sing for me and praise thyself, and gainsay me not.' Quoth she, 'Hearkening and obedience; yet, but for the adjuration by which thou conjurest me, I had not done this. Doth any praise himself? What manner of thing is this?' Then she improvised and sang the following verses:

In every rejoicing a boon midst the singers and minstrels am I;
The folk witness bear of my worth and none can my virtues deny.
My virtues 'mongst men are extolled and my glory and station rank high.

Her verses pleased the kings of the Jinn and they said, 'By Allah, thou sayst sooth!' Then she rose to her feet, with the lute in her hand, and played and sang, whilst the Jinn and the Sheikh Aboultawaif danced. Then the latter came up to her and gave her a carbuncle he had taken from the hidden treasure of Japhet, son of Noah (on whom be peace), and which was worth the kingdom of the world; its light was as the light of the sun and he said to her, 'Take this and glorify thyself withal over the people of the world.' She kissed his hand and rejoiced in the jewel and said, 'By Allah, this beseemeth none but the Commander of the Faithful.'

Now the dancing of Iblis pleased Queen Es Shuhba and she said to him, 'By Allah, this is a goodly dancing!' He thanked her for this and said to Tuhfeh, 'O Tuhfeh, there is not on the face of the earth a skilfuller than Ishac en Nedim; but thou art more skilful than he. Indeed, I have been present with him many a time and have shown him passages on the lute, and there have betided me such and such things with him. Indeed, the story of my dealings with him is a long one and this is no time to repeat it; but now I would fain show thee a passage on the lute, whereby thou shall be

exalted over all the folk.' Quoth she to him, 'Do what seemeth good to thee.' So he took the lute and played thereon on wondrous wise, with rare divisions and extraordinary modulations, and showed her a passage she knew not; and this was liefer to her than all that she had gotten. Then she took the lute from him and playing thereon, [sang and] presently returned to the passage that he had shown her; and he said, 'By Allah, thou singest better than I!' As for Tuhfeh, it was made manifest to her that her former usance was all of it wrong and that what she had learnt from the Sheikh Aboultawaif Iblis was the origin and foundation [of all perfection] in the art. So she rejoiced in that which she had gotten of [new skill in] touching the lute far more than in all that had fallen to her lot of wealth and raiment and kissed the Sheikh's hand.

Then said Queen Es Shuhba, 'By Allah, O Sheikh, my sister Tuhfeh is indeed unique among the folk of her time, and I hear that she singeth upon all sweet- scented flowers.' 'Yes, O my lady,' answered Iblis, 'and I am in the utterest of wonderment thereat. But there remaineth somewhat of sweet-scented flowers, that she hath not besung, such as the myrtle and the tuberose and the jessamine and the moss-rose and the like.' Then he signed to her to sing upon the rest of the flowers, that Queen Es Shuhba might hear, and she said, 'Hearkening and obedience.' So she took the lute and played thereon in many modes, then returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

One of the host am I of lovers sad and sere
For waiting long drawn out and expectation drear.
My patience underneath the loss of friends and folk
With pallor's sorry garb hath clad me, comrades dear.
Abasement, misery and heart-break after those
I suffer who endured before me many a year.
All through the day its light and when the night grows dark,
My grief forsakes me not, no, nor my heavy cheer.
My tears flow still, nor aye of bitterness I'm quit,
Bewildered as I am betwixten hope and fear.

Therewithal Queen Es Shuhba was moved to exceeding delight and said, 'Well done, O queen of delight! None can avail to describe thee. Sing to us on the apple,' Quoth Tuhfeh, 'Hearkening and obedience.' Then she improvised and sang the following verses:

Endowed with amorous grace past any else am I;
Graceful of shape and lithe and pleasing to the eye.
The hands of noble folk do tend me publicly;
With waters clear and sweet my thirsting tongue they ply.
My clothes of sendal are, my veil of the sun's light,
The very handiwork of God the Lord Most High.
Whenas my sisters dear forsake me, grieved that they
Must leave their native place and far away must hie,
The nobles' hands, for that my place I must forsake,
Do solace me with beds, whereon at ease I lie.

Lo! in the garden-ways, the place of ease and cheer,
Still, like the moon at full, my light thou mayst espy.

Queen Es Shubha rejoiced in this with an exceeding delight and said, 'Well done! By Allah, there is none surpasseth thee.' Tuhfeh kissed the earth, then returned to her place and improvised on the tuberose, saying:

My flower a marvel on your heads doth show,
Yet homeless am I in your land, I trow.
Make drink your usance in my company
And flout the time that languishing doth go.
Camphor itself to me doth testify
And in my presence owns me white as snow.
So make me in your morning a delight
And set me in your houses, high and low;
So shall we quaff the cups in ease and cheer,
In endless joyance, quit of care and woe.

At this Queen Es Shuhba was stirred to exceeding delight and said, 'Well done, O queen of delight! By Allah, I know not how I shall do to render thee thy due! May God the Most High grant us to enjoy thy long continuance [on life]!' Then she strained her to her breast and kissed her on the cheek; whereupon quoth Iblis (on whom be malison!), 'Indeed, this is an exceeding honour!' Quoth the queen, 'Know that this lady Tuhfeh is my sister and that her commandment is my commandment and her forbiddance my forbiddance. So hearken all to her word and obey her commandment.' Therewithal the kings rose all and kissed the earth before Tuhfeh, who rejoiced in this. Moreover, Queen Es Shuhba put off on her a suit adorned with pearls and jewels and jacinths, worth an hundred thousand dinars, and wrote her on a sheet of paper a patent in her own hand, appointing her her deputy. So Tuhfeh rose and kissed the earth before the queen, who said to her, 'Sing to us, of thy favour, concerning the rest of the sweet-scented flowers and herbs, so I may hear thy singing and divert myself with witnessing thy skill.' 'Hearkening and obedience, O lady mine,' answered Tuhfeh and taking the lute, improvised the following verses:

Midst colours, my colour excelleth in light
And I would every eye of my charms might have sight.
My place is the place of the fillet and pearls
And the fair are most featly with jasmine bedight,
How bright and how goodly my lustre appears!
Yea, my wreaths are like girdles of silver so white.

Then she changed the measure and improvised the following:

I'm the crown of every sweet and fragrant weed;
When the loved one calls, I keep the tryst agreed.
My favours I deny not all the year;
Though cessation be desired, I nothing heed.
I'm the keeper of the promise and the troth,
And my gathering is eath, without impede.

Then she changed the measure and the mode [and played] so that she amazed the wits of those who were present, and Queen Es Shuhba was moved to mirth and said, 'Well done, O queen of delight!' Then she returned to the first mode and improvised the following verses on the water-lily:

I fear to be seen in the air, Without my consent, unaware; So I stretch out my root neath the flood And my branches turn back to it there.

Therewithal Queen Es Shuhba was moved to delight and said, 'Well done, O Tuhfeh! Let me have more of thy singing.' So she smote the lute and changing the mode, improvised the following verses on the moss-rose:

Look at the moss-rose, on its branches seen,
Midmost its leafage, covered all with green.
Tis gazed at for its slender swaying shape
And cherished for its symmetry and sheen.
Lovely with longing for its love's embrace,
The fear of his estrangement makes it lean.

Then she changed the measure and the mode and sang the following verses:

O thou that questionest the lily of its scent,
Give ear unto my words and verses thereanent.
Th' Amir (quoth it) am I whose charms are still desired;
Absent or present, all in loving me consent.

When she had made an end of her song, Queen Es Shuhba arose and said, 'Never heard I from any the like of this.' And she drew Tuhfeh to her and fell to kissing her. Then she took leave of her and flew away; and all the birds took flight with her, so that they walled the world; whilst the rest of the kings tarried behind.

When it was the fourth night, there came the boy whom they were minded to circumcise, adorned with jewels such as never saw eye nor heard ear of, and amongst the rest a crown of gold, set with pearls and jewels, the worth whereof was an hundred thousand dinars. He sat down upon the throne and Tuhfeh sang to him, till the surgeon came and they circumcised him, in the presence of all the kings, who showered on him great store of jewels and jacinths and gold. Queen Kemeriyeh bade the servants gather up all this and lay it in Tuhfeh's closet, and it was [as much in value as] all that had fallen to her, from the first of the festival to the last thereof. Moreover, the Sheikh Iblis (whom God curse!) bestowed upon Tuhfeh the crown worn by the boy and gave the latter another, whereat her reason fled. Then the Jinn departed, in order of rank, whilst Iblis took leave of them, band by band.

Whilst the Sheikh was thus occupied with taking leave of the kings, Meimoun sought his opportunity, whenas he saw the place empty, and taking up Tuhfeh on his shoulders, soared up with her to the confines of the sky and flew away with her. Presently, Iblis came to look for Tuhfeh and see what she purposed, but found her not and saw the slave-girls buffeting their faces; so he said to them, 'Out on ye! What is to do?' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'Meimoun hath snatched up Tuhfeh and flown away with her.' When Iblis heard this, he gave a cry, to which the earth trembled, and said,

'What is to be done? Out on ye! Shall he carry off Tuhfeh from my very palace and outrage mine honour? Doubtless, this Meimoun hath lost his wits.' Then he cried out a second time, that the earth quaked therefor, and rose up into the air.

The news came to the rest of the kings; so they [flew after him and] overtaking him, found him full of trouble and fear, with fire issuing from his nostrils, and said to him, 'O Sheikh Aboultawaif, what is to do?' Quoth he, 'Know that Meimoun hath carried off Tuhfeh from my palace and outraged mine honour.' When they heard this, they said, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! By Allah, he hath ventured upon a grave matter and indeed he destroyeth himself and his people!' Then the Sheikh Iblis gave not over flying till he fell in with the tribes of the Jinn, and there gathered themselves together unto him much people, none may tell the tale of them save God the Most High. So they came to the Fortress of Copper and the Citadel of Lead, and the people of the strongholds saw the tribes of the Jinn issuing from every steep mountain-pass and said, 'What is to do?' Then Iblis went in to King Es Shisban and acquainted him with that which had befallen, whereupon quoth he, 'May God destroy Meimoun and his folk! He thinketh to possess Tuhfeh, and she is become queen of the Jinn! But have patience till we contrive that which befitteth in the matter of Tuhfeh.' Quoth Iblis, 'And what befitteth it to do?' And Es Shisban said, *We will fall upon him and slay him and his people with the sword.'

Then said the Sheikh Iblis, 'We were best acquaint Queen Kemeriyeh and Queen Zelzeleh and Queen Sherareh and Queen Wekhimeh; and when they are assembled, God shall ordain [that which He deemeth] good in the matter of her release.' 'It is well seen of thee,' answered Es Shisban and despatched to Queen Kemeriyeh an Afrit called Selheb, who came to her palace and found her asleep; so he aroused her and she said, 'What is to do, O Selheb?' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'come to the succour of thy sister Tuhfeh, for that Meimoun hath carried her off and outraged thine honour and that of the Sheikh Iblis.' Quoth she, 'What sayest thou?' And she sat up and cried out with a great cry. And indeed she feared for Tuhfeh and said, 'By Allah, indeed she used to say that he looked upon her and prolonged the looking on her; but ill is that to which his soul hath prompted him.' Then she arose in haste and mounting a she-devil of her devils, said to her, 'Fly.' So she flew off and alighted with her in the palace of her sister Sherareh, whereupon she sent for her sisters Zelzeleh and Wekhimeh and acquainted them with the news, saying, 'Know that Meimoun hath snatched up Tuhfeh and flown off with her swiftlier than the blinding lightning.'

[Then they all flew off in haste and] lighting down in the place where were their father Es Shisban and their grandfather the Sheikh Aboultawaif, found the folk on the sorriest of plights. When their grandfather Iblis saw them, he rose to them and wept, and they all wept for Tuhfeh. Then said Iblis to them, 'Yonder dog hath outraged mine honour and taken Tuhfeh, and I doubt not but that she is like to perish [of concern] for herself and her lord Er Reshid and saying "All that they said and did was false."' Quoth Kemeriyeh, 'O grandfather mine, there is nothing left for it but [to use] stratagem and contrivance for her deliverance, for that she is dearer to me than everything; and know that yonder accursed one, whenas he is ware of your coming upon him, will know that he hath no power to cope with you, he who is the least and meanest [of the Jinn]; but we fear that, when he is assured of defeat, he will kill Tuhfeh;

wherefore nothing will serve but that we contrive for her deliverance; else will she perish.' 'And what hast thou in mind of device?' asked he; and she answered, 'Let us take him with fair means, and if he obey, [all will be well]; else will we practise stratagem against him; and look thou not to other than myself for her deliverance.' Quoth Iblis, 'The affair is thine; contrive what thou wilt, for that Tuhfeh is thy sister and thy solicitude for her is more effectual than [that of] any.'

So Kemeriyeh cried out to an Afrit of the Afrits and a calamity of the calamities, by name El Ased et Teyyar, and said to him, 'Go with my message to the Crescent Mountain, the abiding-place of Meimoun the Sworder, and enter in to him and salute him in my name and say to him, "How canst thou be assured for thyself, O Meimoun? Couldst thou find none on whom to vent thy drunken humour and whom to maltreat save Tuhfeh, more by token that she is a queen? But thou art excused, for that thou didst this not but of thine intoxication, and the Shekh Aboultawaif pardoneth thee, for that thou wast drunken. Indeed, thou hast outraged his honour; but now restore her to her palace, for that she hath done well and favoured us and done us service, and thou knowest that she is presently our queen. Belike she may bespeak Queen Es Shuhba, whereupon the matter will be aggravated and that wherein there is no good will betide. Indeed, thou wilt get no tittle of profit [from this thine enterprise]; verily, I give thee good counsel, and so peace be on thee!"'

'Hearkening and obedience,' answered El Ased and flew till he came to the Crescent Mountain, when he sought audience of Meimoun, who bade admit him. So he entered and kissing the earth before him, gave him Queen Kemeriyeh's message, which when he heard he said to the Afrit, 'Return whence thou comest and say to thy mistress, "Be silent and thou wilt do wisely." Else will I come and seize upon her and make her serve Tuhfeh; and if the kings of the Jinn assemble together against me and I be overcome of them, I will not leave her to scent the wind of this world and she shall be neither mine nor theirs, for that she is presently my soul from between my ribs; and how shall any part with his soul?' When the Afrit heard Meimoun's words, he said to him, 'By Allah, O Meimoun, thou hast lost thy wits, that thou speakest these words of my mistress, and thou one of her servants!' Whereupon Meimoun cried out and said to him, 'Out on thee, O dog of the Jinn! Wilt thou bespeak the like of me with these words?' Then, he bade those who were about him smite El Ased, but he took flight and soaring into the air, betook himself to his mistress and told her that which had passed; and she said, 'Thou hast done well, O cavalier.'

Then she turned to her father and said to him, 'Give ear unto that which I shall say to thee.' Quoth he, 'Say on;' and she said, 'Take thy troops and go to him, for that, when he heareth this, he in his turn will levy his troops and come forth to thee; wherepon do thou give him battle and prolong the fighting with him and make a show to him of weakness and giving way. Meantime, I will practise a device for winning to Tuhfeh and delivering her, what while he is occupied with you in battle; and when my messenger cometh to thee and giveth thee to know that I have gotten possession of Tuhfeh and that she is with me, do thou return upon Meimoun forthright and destroy him, him and his hosts, and take him prisoner. But, if my device succeed not with him and we avail not to deliver Tuhfeh, he will assuredly go about to slay her, without recourse, and regret for her will abide in our hearts.' Quoth Iblis, 'This is the right

counsel,' and let call among the troops to departure, whereupon an hundred thousand cavaliers, doughty men of war, joined themselves to him and set out for Meimoun's country.

As for Queen Kemeriyeh, she flew off to the palace of her sister Wekhimeh and told her what Meimoun had done and how [he avouched that], whenas he saw defeat [near at hand], he would slay Tuhfeh; 'and indeed,' added she, 'he is resolved upon this; else had he not dared to commit this outrage. So do thou contrive the affair as thou deemest well, for thou hast no superior in judgment.' Then they sent for Queen Zelzeleh and Queen Sherareh and sat down to take counsel, one with another, of that which they should do in the matter. Then said Wekhimeh, 'We were best fit out a ship in this island [wherein is my palace] and embark therein, in the guise of mortals, and fare on till we come to a little island, that lieth over against Meimoun's palace. There will we [take up our abode and] sit drinking and smiting the lute and singing. Now Tuhfeh will of a surety be sitting looking upon the sea, and needs must she see us and come down to us, whereupon we will take her by force and she will be under our hands, so that none shall avail more to molest her on any wise. Or, if Meimoun be gone forth to do battle with the Jinn, we will storm his stronghold and take Tuhfeh and raze his palace and put to death all who are therein. When he hears of this, his heart will be rent in sunder and we will send to let our father know, whereupon he will return upon him with his troops and he will be destroyed and we shall be quit of him.' And they answered her, saying, 'This is a good counsel.' Then they bade fit out a ship from behind the mountain, and it was fitted out in less than the twinkling of an eye. So they launched it on the sea and embarking therein, together with four thousand Afrits, set out, intending for Meimoun's palace. Moreover, they bade other five thousand Afrits betake themselves to the island under the Crescent Mountain and lie in wait for them there.

Meanwhile, the Sheikh Aboultawaif Iblis and his son Es Shisban set out, as we have said, with their troops, who were of the doughtiest of the Jinn and the most accomplished of them in valour and horsemanship, [and fared on till they drew near the Crescent Mountain], When the news of their approach reached Meimoun, he cried out with a great cry to the troops, who were twenty thousand horse, [and bade them make ready for departure]. Then he went in to Tuhfeh and kissing her, said to her, 'Know that thou art presently my life of the world, and indeed the Jinn are gathered together to wage war on me on thine account. If I am vouchsafed the victory over them and am preserved alive, I will set all the kings of the Jinn under thy feet and thou shall become queen of the world.' But she shook her head and wept; and he said, 'Weep not, for, by the virtue of the mighty inscription engraven on the seal-ring of Solomon, thou shall never again see the land of men! Can any one part with his life? So give ear unto that which I say; else will I kill thee.' And she was silent.

Then he sent for his daughter, whose name was Jemreh, and when she came, he said to her, 'Harkye, Jemreh! Know that I am going to [meet] the clans of Es Shisban and Queen Kemeriyeh and the kings of the Jinn. If I am vouchsafed the victory over them, to Allah be the praise and thou shall have of me largesse; but, if thou see or hear that I am worsted and any come to thee with news of me [to this effect], hasten to slay Tuhfeh, so she may fall neither to me nor to them.' Then he took leave of her and

mounted, saying, 'When this cometh about, pass over to the Crescent Mountain and take up thine abode there, and await what shall befall me and what I shall say to thee.' And Jemreh answered with 'Hearkening and obedience.'

When Tuhfeh heard this, she fell to weeping and wailing and said, 'By Allah, nought irketh me save separation from my lord Er Reshid; but, when I am dead, let the world be ruined after me.' And she doubted not in herself but that she was lost without recourse. Then Meimoun set forth with his army and departed in quest of the hosts [of the Jinn], leaving none in the palace save his daughter Jemreh and Tuhfeh and an Afrit who was dear unto him. They fared on till they met with the army of Es Shisban; and when the two hosts came face to face, they fell upon each other and fought a passing sore battle. After awhile, Es Shisban's troops began to give back, and when Meimoun saw them do thus, he despised them and made sure of victory over them.

Meanwhile, Queen Kemeriyeh and her company sailed on, without ceasing, till they came under the palace wherein was Tuhfeh, to wit, that of Meimoun the Sworder; and by the ordinance of destiny, Tuhfeh herself was then sitting on the belvedere of the palace, pondering the affair of Haroun er Reshid and her own and that which had befallen her and weeping for that she was doomed to slaughter. She saw the ship and what was therein of those whom we have named, and they in mortal guise, and said, 'Alas, my sorrow for yonder ship and the mortals that be therein!' As for Kemeriyeh and her company, when they drew near the palace, they strained their eyes and seeing Tuhfeh sitting, said, 'Yonder sits Tuhfeh. May God not bereave [us] of her!' Then they moored their ship and making for the island, that lay over against the palace, spread carpets and sat eating and drinking; whereupon quoth Tuhfeh, 'Welcome and fair welcome to yonder faces! These are my kinswomen and I conjure thee by Allah, O Jemreh, that thou let me down to them, so I may sit with them awhile and make friends with them and return.' Quoth Jemreh, 'I may on no wise do that.' And Tuhfeh wept. Then the folk brought out wine and drank, what while Kemeriyeh took the lute and sang the following verses:

By Allah, but that I trusted that I should meet you again,
Your camel-leader to parting had summoned you in vain!
Parting afar hath borne you, but longing still is fain
To bring you near; meseemeth mine eye doth you contain.

When Tuhfeh heard this, she gave a great cry, that the folk heard her and Kemeriyeh said, 'Relief is at hand.' Then she looked out to them and called to them, saying, 'O daughters of mine uncle, I am a lonely maid, an exile from folk and country. So, for the love of God the Most High, repeat that song!' So Kemeriyeh repeated it and Tuhfeh swooned away. When she came to herself, she said to Jemreh, 'By the virtue of the Apostle of God (whom may He bless and preserve!) except thou suffer me go down to them and look on them and sit with them awhile, [I swear] I will cast myself down from this palace, for that I am weary of my life and know that I am slain without recourse; wherefore I will slay myself, ere thou pass sentence upon me.' And she was instant with her in asking.

When Jemreh heard her words, she knew that, if she let her not down, she would assuredly destroy herself. So she said to her, 'O Tuhfeh, between thee and them are a

thousand fathoms; but I will bring them up to thee.' 'Nay,' answered Tuhfeh, 'needs must I go down to them and take my pleasance in the island and look upon the sea anear; then will we return, thou and I; for that, if thou bring them up to us, they will be affrighted and there will betide them neither easance nor gladness. As for me, I do but wish to be with them, that they may cheer me with their company neither give over their merrymaking, so haply I may make merry with them, and indeed I swear that needs must I go down to them; else will I cast myself upon them.' And she cajoled Jemreh and kissed her hands, till she said, 'Arise and I will set thee down beside them.'

Then she took Tuhfeh under her armpit and flying up, swiftlier than the blinding lightning, set her down with Kemeriyeh and her company; whereupon she went up to them and accosted them, saying, 'Fear not, no harm shall betide you; for I am a mortal, like unto you, and I would fain look on you and talk with you and hear your singing.' So they welcomed her and abode in their place, whilst Jemreh sat down beside them and fell a-snuffing their odours and saying, 'I smell the scent of the Jinn! I wonder whence [it cometh!'] Then said Wekhimeh to her sister Kemeriyeh, 'Yonder filthy one [smelleth us] and presently she will take to flight; so what is this remissness concerning her?' Thereupon Kemeriyeh put out a hand, as it were a camel's neck, and dealt Jemreh a buffet on the head, that made it fly from her body and cast it into the sea. Then said she, 'God is most great!' And they uncovered their faces, whereupon Tuhfeh knew them and said to them, 'Protection!'

Queen Kemeriyeh embraced her, as also did Queen Zelzeleh and Queen Wekhimeh and Queen Sherareh, and the former said to her, 'Rejoice in assured deliverance, for there abideth no harm for thee; but this is no time for talk.' Then they cried out, whereupon up came the Afrits ambushed in the island, with swords and maces in their hands, and taking up Tuhfeh, flew with her to the palace and made themselves masters thereof, whilst the Afrit aforesaid, who was dear to Meimoun and whose name was Dukhan, fled like an arrow and stayed not in his flight till he carne to Meimoun and found him engaged in sore battle with the Jinn. When his lord saw him, he cried out at him, saying, 'Out on thee! Whom hast thou left in the palace?' And Dukhan answered, saying, 'And who abideth in the palace? Thy beloved Tuhfeh they have taken and Jemreh is slain and they have gotten possession of the palace, all of it.' With this Meimoun buffeted his face and head and said, 'Out on it for a calamity!' And he cried aloud. Now Kemeriyeh had sent to her father and acquainted him with the news, whereat the raven of parting croaked for them. So, when Meimoun saw that which had betided him, (and indeed the Jinn smote upon him and the wings of death overspread his host,) he planted the butt of his spear in the earth and turning the point thereof to his heart, urged his charger upon it and pressed upon it with his breast, till the point came forth, gleaming, from his back.

Meanwhile the messenger had reached the opposite camp with the news of Tuhfeh's deliverance, whereat the Sheikh Aboultawaif rejoiced and bestowed on the bringer of good tidings a sumptuous dress of honour and made him commander over a company of the Jinn. Then they fell upon Meimoun's troops and destroyed them to the last man; and when they came to Meimoun, they found that he had slain himself and was even as we have said. Presently Kemeriyeh and her sister [Wekhimeh] came up to their grandfather and told him what they had done; whereupon he came to Tuhfeh

and saluted her and gave her joy of her deliverance. Then he delivered Meimoun's palace to Selheb and took all the former's riches and gave them to Tuhfeh, whilst the troops encamped upon the Crescent Mountain. Moreover, the Sheikh Aboultawaif said to Tuhfeh, 'Blame me not,' and she kissed his hands. As they were thus engaged, there appeared to them the tribes of the Jinn, as they were clouds, and Queen Es Shuhba flying in their van, with a drawn sword in her hand.

When she came in sight of the folk, they kissed the earth before her and she said to them, 'Tell me what hath betided Queen Tuhfeh from yonder dog Meimoun and why did ye not send to me and tell me?' Quoth they, 'And who was this dog that we should send to thee, on his account? Indeed, he was the least and meanest [of the Jinn].' Then they told her what Kemeriyeh and her sisters had done and how they had practised upon Meimoun and delivered Tuhfeh from his hand, fearing lest he should slay her, whenas he found himself discomfited; and she said, 'By Allah, the accursed one was wont to prolong his looking upon her!' And Tuhfeh fell to kissing Queen Es Shuhba's hand, whilst the latter strained her to her bosom and kissed her, saying, 'Trouble is past; so rejoice in assurance of relief.'

Then they arose and went up to the palace, whereupon the trays of food were brought and they ate and drank; after which quoth Queen Es Shuhba, 'O Tuhfeh, sing to us, by way of thankoffering for thy deliverance, and favour us with that which shall solace our minds, for that indeed my mind hath been occupied with thee.' Quoth Tuhfeh 'Hearkening and obedience, O my lady.' So she improvised and sang the following verses:

Wind of the East, if thou pass by the land where my loved ones dwell,
I pray, The fullest of greetings bear to them from me, their lover, and say
That I am the pledge of passion still and that my longing love
And eke my yearning do overpass all longing that was aye.

Therewithal Queen Es Shuhba rejoiced and all who were present rejoiced also and admired her speech and fell to kissing her; and when she had made an end of her song, Queen Kemeriyeh said to her, 'O my sister, ere thou go to thy palace, I would fain bring thee to look upon El Anca, daughter of Behram Gour, whom El Anca, daughter of the wind, carried off, and her beauty; for that there is not her match on the face of the earth.' And Queen Es Shuhba said, 'O Kemeriyeh, I [also] have a mind to see her.' Quoth Kemeriyeh, 'I saw her three years agone; but my sister Wekhimeh seeth her at all times, for that she is near unto her, and she saith that there is not in the world a fairer than she. Indeed, this Queen El Anca is become a byword for loveliness and proverbs are made upon her beauty and grace' And Wekhimeh said, 'By the mighty inscription [on the seal-ring of Solomon], there is not her like in the world!' Then said Queen Es Shuhba, 'If it needs must be and the affair is as ye say, I will take Tuhfeh and go with her [to El Anca], so she may see her.'

So they all arose and repaired to El Anca, who abode in the Mountain Caf. When she saw them, she rose to them and saluted them, saying, 'O my ladies, may I not be bereaved of you!' Quoth Wekhimeh to her, 'Who is like unto thee, O Anca? Behold, Queen Es Shuhba is come to thee.' So El Anca kissed the queen's feet and lodged them in her palace; whereupon Tuhfeh came up to her and fell to kissing her and saying,

'Never saw I a goodlier than this favour.' Then she set before them somewhat of food and they ate and washed their hands; after which Tuhfeh took the lute and played excellent well; and El Anca also played, and they fell to improvising verses in turns, whilst Tuhfeh embraced El Anca every moment. Quoth Es Shuhba, 'O my sister, each kiss is worth a thousand dinars;' and Tuhfeh answered, 'Indeed, a thousand dinars were little for it.' Whereat El Anca laughed and on the morrow they took leave of her and went away to Meimoun's palace.

Here Queen Es Shuhba bade them farewell and taking her troops, returned to her palace, whilst the kings also went away to their abodes and the Sheikh Aboultawaif addressed himself to divert Tuhfeh till nightfall, when he mounted her on the back of one of the Afrits and bade other thirty gather together all that she had gotten of treasure and raiment and jewels and dresses of honour. [Then they flew off,] whilst Iblis went with her, and in less than the twinkling of an eye he set her down in her sleeping-chamber. Then he and those who were with him took leave of her and went away. When Tuhfeh found herself in her own chamber and on her couch, her reason fled for joy and it seemed to her as if she had never stirred thence. Then she took the lute and tuned it and touched it on wondrous wise and improvised verses and sang.

The eunuch heard the smiting of the lute within the chamber and said, 'By Allah, that is my lady Tuhfeh's touch!' So he arose and went, as he were a madman, falling down and rising up, till he came to the eunuch on guard at the door at the Commander of the Faithful and found him sitting. When the latter saw him, and he like a madman, falling down and rising up, he said to him, 'What aileth thee and what bringeth thee hither at this hour?' Quoth the other, 'Wilt thou not make haste and awaken the Commander of the Faithful?' And he fell to crying out at him; whereupon the Khalif awoke and heard them bandying words together and Tuhfeh's servant saying to the other, 'Out on thee! Awaken the Commander of the Faithful in haste.' So he said, 'O Sewab, what aileth thee?' And the chief eunuch answered, saying, 'O our lord, the eunuch of Tuhfeh's lodging hath taken leave of his wits and saith, "Awaken the Commander of the Faithful in haste!"' Then said Er Reshid to one of the slave-girls, 'See what is to do.'

So she hastened to admit the eunuch, who entered; and when he saw the Commander of the Faithful, he saluted not neither kissed the earth, but said, 'Quick, quick! Arise in haste! My lady Tuhfeh sitteth in her chamber, singing a goodly ditty. Come to her in haste and see all that I say to thee! Hasten! She sitteth [in her chamber].' The Khalif was amazed at his speech and said to him, 'What sayst thou?' 'Didst thou not hear the first of the speech?' replied the eunuch. 'Tuhfeh sitteth in the sleeping-chamber, singing and playing the lute. Come thy quickliest! Hasten!' So Er Reshid arose and donned his clothes; but he credited not the eunuch's words and said to him, 'Out on thee! What is this thou sayst? Hast thou not seen this in a dream?' 'By Allah,' answered the eunuch, 'I know not what thou sayest, and I was not asleep.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'If thy speech be true, it shall be for thy good luck, for I will enfranchise thee and give thee a thousand dinars; but, if it be untrue and thou have seen this in sleep, I will crucify thee.' And the eunuch said in himself, 'O Protector, let me not have seen this in Sleep!' Then he left the Khalif and going to the chamber-door,

heard the sound of singing and lute-playing; whereupon he returned to Er Reshid and said to him, 'Go and hearken and see who is asleep.'

When Er Reshid drew near the door of the chamber, he heard the sound of the lute and Tuhfeh's voice singing; whereat he could not restrain his reason and was like to swoon away for excess of joy. Then he pulled out the key, but could not bring his hand to open the door. However, after awhile, he took heart and applying himself, opened the door and entered, saying, 'Methinks this is none other than a dream or an illusion of sleep.' When Tuhfeh saw him, she rose and coming to meet him, strained him to her bosom; and he cried out with a cry, wherein his soul was like to depart, and fell down in a swoon. She strained him to her bosom and sprinkled on him rose-water, mingled with musk, and washed his face, till he came to himself, as he were a drunken man, for the excess of his joy in Tuhfeh's return to him, after he had despaired of her.

Then she took the lute and smote thereon, after the fashion she had learnt from the Sheikh Iblis, so that Er Reshid's wit was dazed for excess of delight and his understanding was confounded for joy; after which she improvised and sang the following verses:

My heart will never credit that I am far from thee;
In it thou art, nor ever the soul can absent be.
Or if to me "I'm absent" thou sayest, "'Tis a lie,"
My heart replies, bewildered 'twixt doubt and certainty.

When she had made an end of her verses, Er Reshid said to her, 'O Tuhfeh, thine absence was extraordinary, but thy presence is yet more extraordinary.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered she, 'thou sayst sooth.' And she took his hand and said to him, 'See what I have brought with me.' So he looked and saw riches such as neither words could describe nor registers avail to set out, pearls and jewels and jacinths and precious stones and great pearls and magnificent dresses of honour, adorned with pearls and jewels and embroidered with red gold. Moreover, she showed him that which Queen Es Shuhba had bestowed on her of those carpets, which she had brought with her, and that her throne, the like whereof neither Chosroes nor Cassar possessed, and those tables inlaid with pearls and jewels and those vessels, that amazed all who looked on them, and the crown, that was on the head of the circumcised boy, and those dresses of honour, which Queen Es Shuhba and the Sheikh Aboultawaif had put off upon her, and the trays wherein were those riches; brief, she showed him treasures the like whereof he had never in his life set eyes on and which the tongue availeth not to describe and whereat all who looked thereon were amazed.

Er Reshid was like to lose his wits for amazement at this sight and was confounded at this that he beheld and witnessed. Then said he to Tuhfeh, 'Come, tell me thy story from first to last, [and let me know all that hath betided thee,] as if I had been present' She answered with 'Hearkening and obedience,' and fell to telling him [all that had betided her] first and last, from the time when she first saw the Sheikh Aboultawaif, how he took her and descended with her through the side of the draught-house; and she told him of the horse she had ridden, till she came to the meadow aforesaid and described it to him, together with the palace and that which was therein of furniture, and related to him how the Jinn rejoiced in her and that which she had

seen of the kings of them, men and women, and of Queen Kemeriyeh and her sisters and Queen Shuaaeh, Queen of the Fourth Sea, and Queen Es Shuhba, Queen of Queens, and King Es Shisban, and that which each one of them had bestowed upon her. Moreover, she told him the story of Meimoun the Sworder and described to him his loathly favour, which he had not consented to change, and related to him that which befell her from the kings of the Jinn, men and women, and the coming of the Queen of Queens, Es Shuhba, and how she had loved her and appointed her her vice-queen and how she was thus become ruler over all the kings of the Jinn; and she showed him the patent of investiture that Queen Es Shuhba had written her and told him that which had betided her with the Ghoul-head, whenas it appeared to her in the garden, and how she had despatched it to her palace, beseeching it to bring her news of the Commander of the Faithful and that which had betided him after her. Then she described to him the gardens, wherein she had taken her pleasure, and the baths inlaid with pearls and jewels and told him that which had befallen Meimoun the Sworder, whenas he carried her off, and how he had slain himself; brief, she told him all that she had seen of wonders and rarities and that which she had beheld of all kinds and colours among the Jinn.

Then she told him the story of Anca, daughter of Behram Gour, with Anca, daughter of the wind, and described to him her dwelling-place and her island, whereupon quoth Er Reshid, 'O Tuhfet es Sedr, tell me of El Anca, daughter of Behram Gour; is she of the Jinn or of mankind or of the birds? For this long time have I desired to find one who should tell me of her.' 'It is well, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Tuhfeh. 'I asked the queen of this and she acquainted me with her case and told me who built her the palace.' Quoth Er Reshid, 'I conjure thee by Allah, tell it me.' And Tuhfeh answered, 'It is well,' and proceeded to tell him. And indeed he was amazed at that which he heard from her and what she told him and at that which she had brought back of jewels and jacinths of various colours and preciots stones of many kinds, such as amazed the beholder and confounded thought and mind. As for this, it was the means of the enrichment of the Barmecides and the Abbasicles, and they abode in their delight.

Then the Khalif went forth and bade decorate the city: [so they decorated it] and the drums of glad tidings were beaten. Moreover they made banquets to the people and the tables were spread seven days. And Tuhfeh and the Commander of the Faithful ceased not to be in the most delightsome of life and the most prosperous thereof till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and thu is all that hath come down to as of their story."

Calcutta (1814-18) Text.

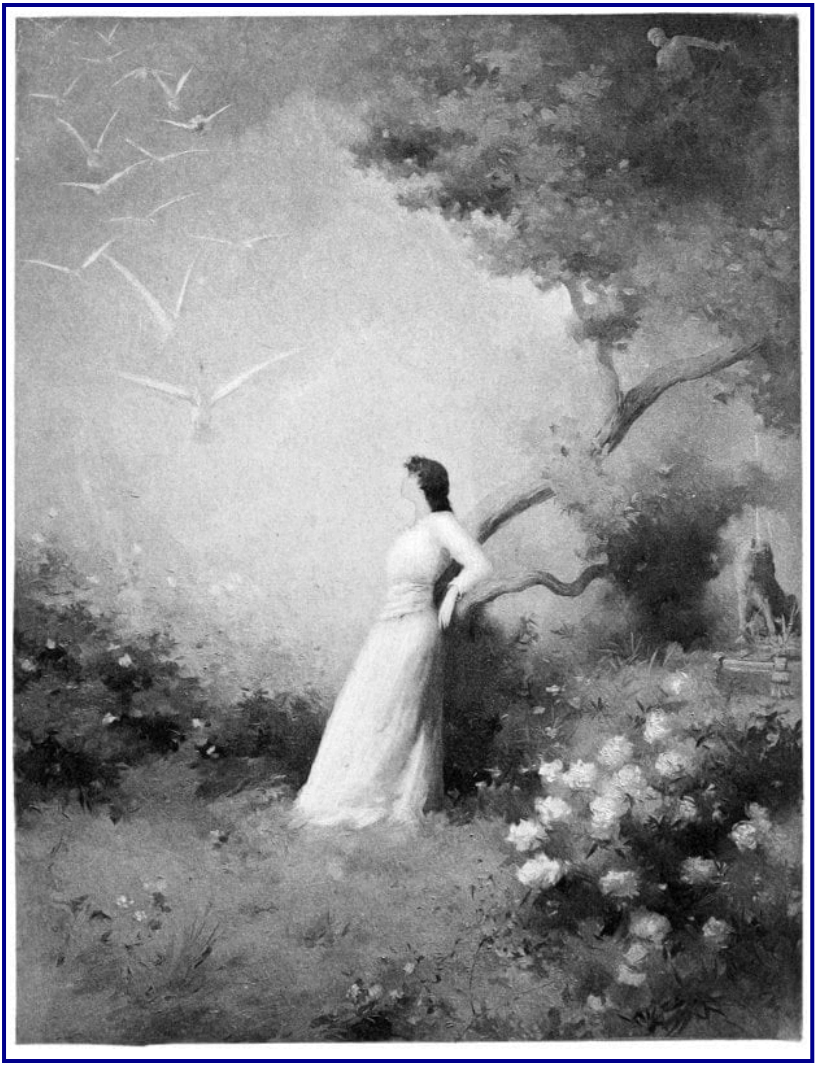
Note.

The following story occupies the last five Nights (cxcv-cc) of the unfinished Calcutta Edition of 1814-18. The only other text of it known to me is that published by Monsieur Langles (Paris, 1814), as an appendix to his Edition of the Voyages of Sindbad, and of this I have freely availed myself in making the present translation, comparing and collating with it the Calcutta (1814-18) Text and filling up and correcting omissions and errors that occur in the latter. In the Calcutta (1814-18) Text this story (Vol. II. p-378) is immediately succeeded by the Seven Voyages of Sindbad (Vol. II. p-458), which conclude the work.

Women's Craft.

IT is told that there was once, in the city of Baghdad, a comely and well-bred youth, fair of face, tall of stature and slender of shape. His name was Alaeddin and he was of the chiefs of the sons of the merchants and had a shop wherein he sold and bought One day, as he sat in his shop, there passed by him a girl of the women of pleasure, who raised her eyes and casting a glance at the young merchant, saw written in a flowing hand on the forepart of the door of his shop, these words, "VERILY, THERE IS NO CRAFT BUT MEN'S CRAFT, FORASMUCH AS IT OVERCOMETH WOMEN'S CRAFT." When she beheld this, she was wroth and took counsel with herself, saying, "As my head liveth, I will assuredly show him a trick of the tricks of women and prove the untruth of this his inscription!"

So, on the morrow, she made her ready and donning the costliest of apparel, adorned herself with the most magnificent of ornaments and the highest of price and stained her hands with henna. Then she let down her tresses upon her shoulders and went forth, walking along with coquettish swimming gait and amorous grace, followed by her slave-girls, till she came to the young merchant's shop and sitting down thereat, under colour of seeking stuffs, saluted him and demanded of him somewhat of merchandise. So he brought out to her various kinds of stuffs and she took them and turned them over, talking with him the while. Then said she to him, "Look at the goodliness of my shape and my symmetry. Seest thou in me any default?" And he answered, "No, O my lady." "Is it lawful," continued she, "in any one that he should slander me and say that I am humpbacked?"



Then she discovered to him a part of her bosom, and when he saw her breasts, his reason took flight from his head and he said to her, "Cover it up, so may God have thee in His safeguard!" Quoth she, "Is it fair of any one to missay of my charms?" And he answered, "How shall any missay of thy charms, and thou the sun of loveliness?" Then said she, "Hath any the right to say of me that I am lophanded? "And tucking up her sleeves, showed him forearms, as they were crystal; after which she unveiled to him a face, as it were a full moon breaking forth on its fourteenth night, and said to him, "Is it lawful for any to missay of me [and avouch] that my face is pitted with smallpox or that I am one-eyed or crop-eared?" And he answered her, saying, "O my lady, what is it moveth thee to discover unto me that lovely face and those fair members, [of wont so jealously] veiled and guarded? Tell me the truth of the matter, may I be thy ransom!" And he recited the following verses:

A white one, from her sheath of tresses now laid bare
And now again concealed in black, luxuriant hair;
As if the maid the day resplendent and her locks
The night that o'er it spreads its shrouding darkness were.

"Know, O my lord," answered she, "that I am a maiden oppressed of my father, for that he misspeaketh of me and saith to me, 'Thou art foul of favour and it befitteth not that thou wear rich clothes; for thou and the slave-girls, ye are equal in rank, there is no distinguishing thee from them.' Now he is a rich man, having wealth galore, [and saith not on this wise but] because he is a niggard and grudgeth the spending of a farthing; [wherefore he is loath to marry me,] lest he be put to somewhat of charge in my marriage, albeit God the Most High hath been bountiful to him and he is a man puissant in his time and lacking nothing of the goods of the world." "Who is thy father," asked the young merchant, "and what is his condition?" And she replied, "He is the Chief Cadi of the Supreme Court, under whose hand are all the Cadis who administer justice in this city."

The merchant believed her and she took leave of him and went away, leaving in his heart a thousand regrets, for that the love of her had gotten possession of him and he knew not how he should win to her; wherefore he abode enamoured, love-distraught, unknowing if he were alive or dead. As soon as she was gone, he shut his shop and going up to the Court, went in to the Chief Cadi and saluted him. The magistrate returned his salutation and entreated him with honour and seated him by his side. Then said Alaeddin to him, "I come to thee, a suitor, seeking thine alliance and desiring the hand of thy noble daughter." "O my lord merchant," answered the Cadi, "indeed my daughter beseemeth not the like of thee, neither sorteth she with the goodliness of thy youth and the pleasantness of thy composition and the sweetness of thy discourse;" but Alaeddin rejoined, saying, "This talk behoveth thee not, neither is it seemly in thee; if I be content with her, how should this irk thee?" So they came to an accord and concluded the treaty of marriage at a dower precedent of five purses paid down then and there and a dower contingent of fifteen purses, so it might be uneath unto him to put her away, forasmuch as her father had given him fair warning, but he would not be warned.

Then they drew up the contract of marriage and the merchant said, "I desire to go in to her this night." So they carried her to him in procession that very night, and he prayed the prayer of eventide and entered the privy chamber prepared for him; but, when he lifted the veil from the face of the bride and looked, he saw a foul face and a blameworthy aspect; yea, he beheld somewhat the like whereof may God not show thee! loathly, dispensing from description, inasmuch as there were reckoned in her all legal defects. So he repented, whenas repentance availed him not, and knew that the girl had cheated him. However, he lay with the bride, against his will, and abode that night sore troubled in mind, as he were in the prison of Ed Dilem. Hardly had the day dawned when he arose from her and betaking himself to one of the baths, dozed there awhile, after which he made the ablution of defilement and washed his clothes. Then he went out to the coffee-house and drank a cup of coffee; after which he returned to his shop and opening the door, sat down, with discomfiture and chagrin written on his face.

Presently, his friends and acquaintances among the merchants and people of the market began to come up to him, by ones and twos, to give him joy, and said to him, laughing, "God's blessing on thee! Where an the sweetmeats? Where is the coffee? It would seem thou hast forgotten us; surely, the charms of the bride have disordered thy reason and taken thy wit, God help thee! Well, well; we give thee joy, we give thee joy." And they made mock of him, whilst he gave them no answer and was like to tear his clothes and weep for vexation. Then they went away from him, and when it was the hour of noon, up came his mistress, trailing her skirts and swaying in her gait, as she were a cassia-branch in a garden. She was yet more richly dressed and adorned and more bewitching in her symmetry and grace than on the previous day, so that she made the passers stop and stand in ranks to look on her.

When she came to Alaeddin's shop, she sat down thereat and said to him, "May the day be blessed to thee, O my lord Alaeddin! God prosper thee and be good to thee and accomplish thy gladness and make it a wedding of weal and content!" He knitted his brows and frowned in answer to her; then said he to her, "Tell me, how have I failed of thy due, or what have I done to injure thee, that thou shouldst play me this trick?" Quoth she, "Thou hast no wise offended against me; but this inscription that is written on the door of thy shop irketh me and vexeth my heart. If thou wilt change it and write up the contrary thereof, I will deliver thee from thy predicament." And he answered, "This that thou seekest is easy. On my head and eyes be it." So saying, he brought out a ducat and calling one of his mamelukes, said to him, "Get thee to such an one the scribe and bid him write us an inscription, adorned with gold and ultramarine, in these words, to wit, 'THERE IS NO CRAFT BUT WOMEN'S CRAFT, FOR THAT INDEED THEIR CRAFT IS A MIGHTY CRAFT AND OVERCOMETH AND HUMBLETH THE FABLES OF MEN.'" And she said to the servant, "Go forthright."

So he repaired to the scribe, who wrote him the scroll, and he brought it to his master, who set it on the door and said to the damsel, "Art thou satisfied?" "Yes," answered she. "Arise forthright and get thee to the place before the citadel, where do thou foregather with all the mountebanks and ape-dancers and bear-leaders and drummers and pipers and bid them come to thee to-morrow early, with their drums and pipes, what time thou drinkest coffee with thy father-in-law the Cadi, and

congratulate thee and wish thee joy, saying, 'A blessed day, O son of our uncle! Indeed, thou art the vein of our eye! We rejoice for thee, and if thou be ashamed of us, verily, we pride ourselves upon thee; so, though thou banish us from thee, know that we will not forsake thee, albeit thou forsakest us.' And do thou fall to strewing dinars and dirhems amongst them; whereupon the Cadi will question thee, and do thou answer him, saying, 'My father was an ape-dancer and this is our original condition; but out Lord opened on us [the gate of fortune] and we have gotten us a name among the merchants and with their provost.'

Then will he say to thee, 'Then thou art an ape-leader of the tribe of the mountebanks?' And do thou reply, 'I may in nowise deny my origin, for the sake of thy daughter and in her honour.' The Cadi will say, 'It may not be that thou shalt be given the daughter of a sheikh who sitteth upon the carpet of the Law and whose descent is traceable by genealogy to the loins of the Apostle of God, nor is it seemly that his daughter be in the power of a man who is an ape-dancer, a minstrel.' And do thou rejoin, 'Nay, O Effendi, she is my lawful wife and every hair of her is worth a thousand lives, and I will not let her go, though I be given the kingship of the world.' Then be thou persuaded to speak the word of divorce and so shall the marriage be dissolved and ye be delivered from each other."

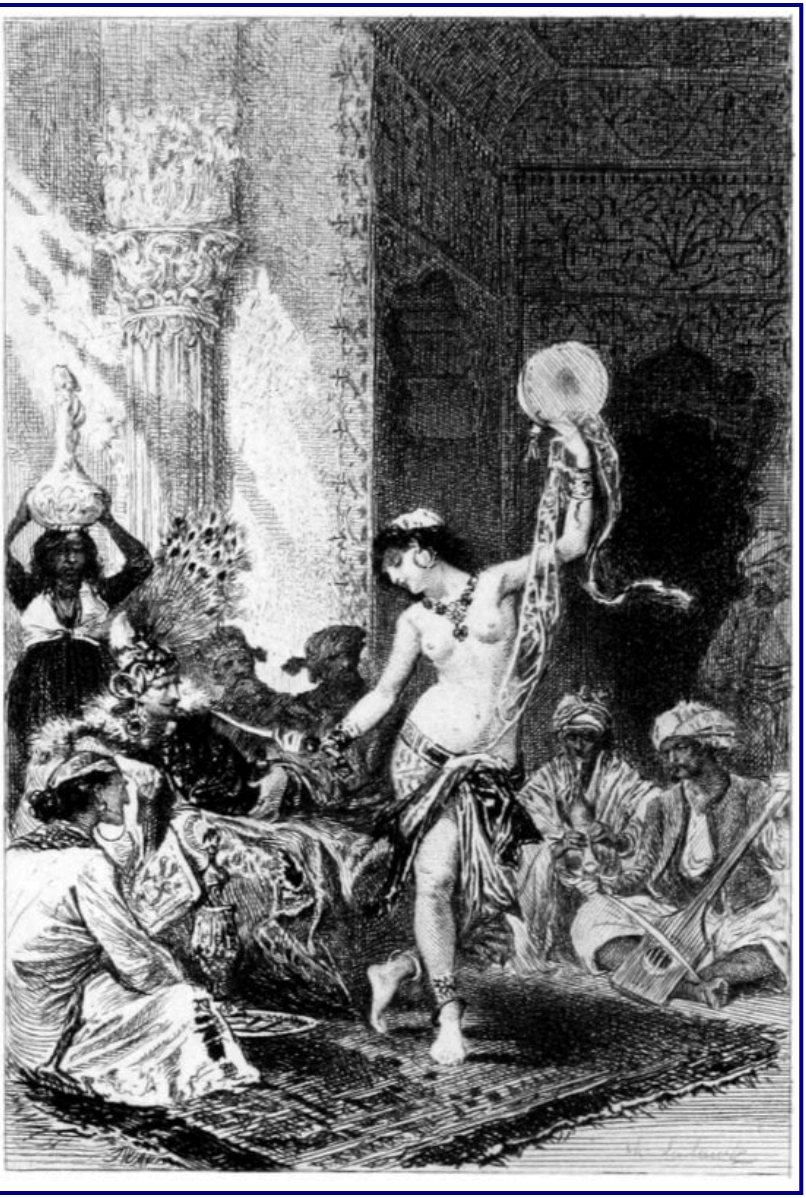
Quoth Alaeddin, "Thou counsellest well," and locking up his shop, betook himself to the place before the citadel, where he foregathered with the drummers and pipers and instructed them how they should do, [even as his mistress had counselled him,] promising them a handsome reward. So they answered him with "Hearkening and obedience" and on the morrow, after the morning-prayer, he betook himself to the presence of the Cadi, who received him with obsequious courtesy and seated him beside himself. Then he turned to him and fell to conversing with him and questioning him of matters of selling and buying and of the price current of the various commodities that were exported to Baghdad from all parts, whilst Alaeddin replied to him of all whereof he asked him.

As they were thus engaged, behold, up came the dancers and mountebanks, with their pipes and drums, whilst one of their number forewent them, with a great banner in his hand, and played all manner antics with his voice and limbs. When they came to the Courthouse, the Cadi exclaimed, "I seek refuge with God from yonder Satans!" And the merchant laughed, but said nothing. Then they entered and saluting his highness the Cadi, kissed Alaeddin's hands and said, "God's blessing on thee, O son of our uncle! Indeed, thou solacest our eyes in that which thou dost, and we beseech God to cause the glory of our lord the Cadi to endure, who hath honoured us by admitting thee to his alliance and allotted us a part in his high rank and dignity." When the Cadi heard this talk, it bewildered his wit and he was confounded and his face flushed with anger and he said to his son-in-law, "What words are these?" Quoth the merchant, "Knowest thou not, O my lord, that I am of this tribe? Indeed this man is the son of my mother's brother and that other the son of my father's brother, and I am only reckoned of the merchants [by courtesy]!"

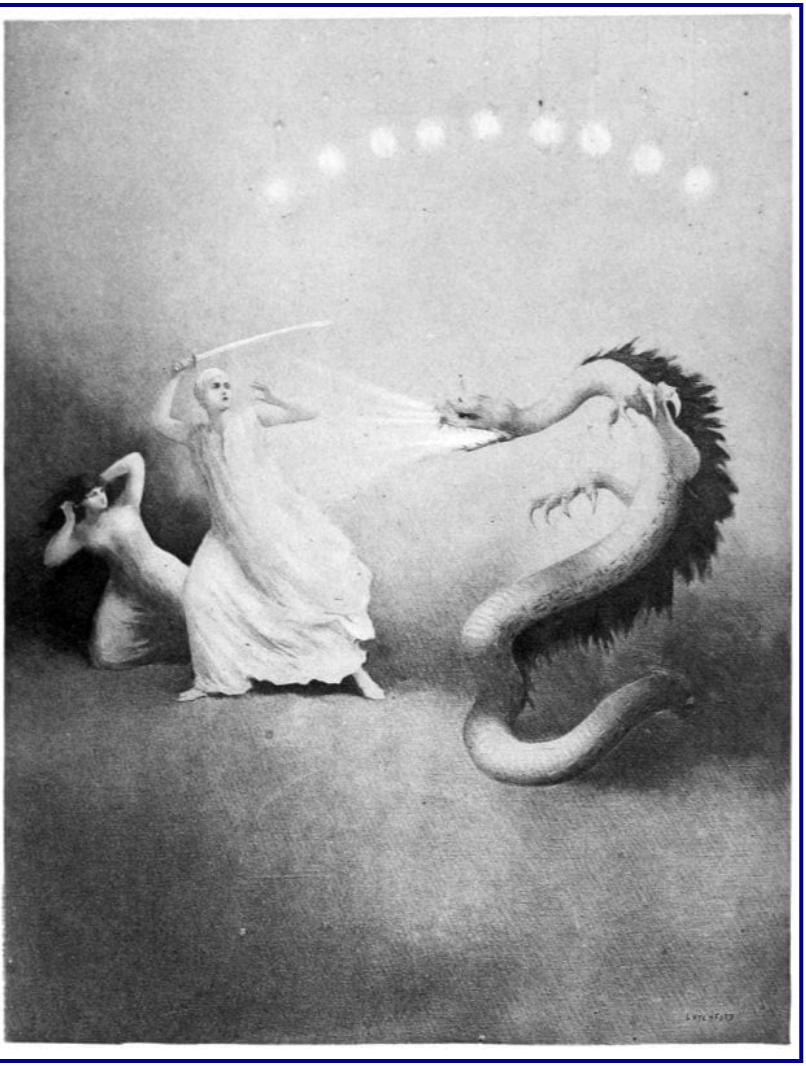
When the Cadi heard this, his colour changed and he was troubled and waxed exceeding wroth and was rike to burst for excess of rage. Then said he to the merchant, "God forbid that this should be! How shall it be permitted that the daughter of the

Cadi of the Muslims abide with a man of the dancers and vile of origin? By Allah, except thou divorce her forthright, I will bid beat thee and cast thee into prison till thou die! Had I foreknown that thou wast of them, I had not suffered thee to approach me, but had spat in thy face, for that thou art filthier than a dog or a hog." Then he gave him a push and casting him down from his stead, commanded him to divorce; but he said, "Be clement to me, O Effendi, for that God is clement, and hasten not. I will not divorce my wife, though thou give me the kingdom of Irak."

The Cadi was perplexed and knew that constraint was not permitted of the law; so he spoke the young merchant fair and said to him, "Protect me, so may God protect thee. If thou divorce her not, this disgrace will cleave to me till the end of time." Then his rage got the better of him and he said to him, "An thou divorce her not with a good grace, I will bid strike off thy head forthright and slay myself; rather flame than shame." The merchant bethought himself awhile, then divorced her with a manifest divorcement and on this wise he delivered himself from that vexation. Then he returned to his shop and sought in marriage of her father her who had played him the trick aforesaid and who was the daughter of the chief of the guild of the blacksmiths. So he took her to wife and they abode with each other and lived the most solaceful of lives, in all prosperity and contentment and joyance, till the day of death; and God [alone] is All-Knowing.



VOLUME XII.
Tales from the Arabic III



Noureddin Ali of Damascus and the Damsel Sitt El Milah.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, a merchant of the merchants of Damascus, by name Aboulhusn, who had money and riches and slaves and slave-girls and lands and houses and baths; but he was not blessed with a child and indeed his years waxed great; wherefore he addressed himself to supplicate God the Most High in private and in public and in his inclining and his prostration and at the season of the call to prayer, beseeching Him to vouchsafe him, before his admittance [to His mercy], a son who should inherit his wealth and possessions; and God answered his prayer. So his wife conceived and the days of her pregnancy were accomplished and her months and her nights and the pangs of her travail came upon her and she gave birth to a male child, as he were a piece of the moon. He had not his match for beauty and he put to shame the sun and the resplendent moon; for he had a shining face and black eyes of Babylonian witchery and aquiline nose and ruby lips; brief, he was perfect of attributes, the loveliest of the folk of his time, without doubt or gainsaying.

His father rejoiced in him with the utmost joy and his heart was solaced and he was glad; and he made banquets to the folk and clad the poor and the widows. He named the boy Sidi Noureddin Ali and reared him in fondness and delight among the slaves and servants. When he came to seven years of age, his father put him to school, where he learned the sublime Koran and the arts of writing and reckoning: and when he reached his tenth year, he learned horsemanship and archery and to occupy himself with arts and sciences of all kinds, part and parts. He grew up pleasant and subtle and goodly and lovesome, ravishing all who beheld him, and inclined to companying with brethren and comrades and mixing with merchants and travellers. From these latter he heard tell of that which they had seen of the marvels of the cities in their travels and heard them say, "He who leaveth not his native land diverteth not himself [with the sight of the marvels of the world,] and especially of the city of Baghdad."

So he was concerned with an exceeding concern for his lack of travel and discovered this to his father, who said to him, "O my son, why do I see thee chagrined?" And he answered, "I would fain travel." Quoth Aboulhusn, "O my son, none travelleth save those whose occasion is urgent and those who are compelled thereunto [by need]. As for thee, O my son, thou enjoyest ample fortune; so do thou content thyself with that which God hath given thee and be bounteous [unto others], even as He hath been bounteous unto thee; and afflict not thyself with the toil and hardship of travel, for indeed it is said that travel is a piece of torment." But the youth said, "Needs must I travel to Baghdad, the abode of peace."

When his father saw the strength of his determination to travel, he fell in with his wishes and equipped him with five thousand dinars in cash and the like in merchandise and sent with him two serving-men. So the youth set out, trusting in the blessing of God the Most High, and his father went out with him, to take leave of him, and returned [to Damascus]. As for Noureddin Ali, he gave not over travelling days and nights till he entered the city of Baghdad and laying up his loads in the caravanserai, made for the bath, where he did away that which was upon him of the

dirt of the road and putting off his travelling clothes, donned a costly suit of Yemen stuff, worth an hundred dinars. Then he put in his sleeve a thousand mithcals of gold and sallied forth a-walking and swaying gracefully as he went. His gait confounded all those who beheld him, as he shamed the branches with his shape and belittled the rose with the redness of his cheeks and his black eyes of Babylonian witchcraft; indeed, thou wouldst deem that whoso looked on him would surely be preserved from calamity; [for he was] even as saith of him one of his describers in the following verses:

Thy haters say and those who malice to thee bear
A true word, profiting its hearers everywhere;
"The glory's not in those whom raiment rich makes fair,
But those who still adorn the raiment that they wear."

So he went walking in the thoroughfares of the city and viewing its ordinance and its markets and thoroughfares and gazing on its folk. Presently, Abou Nuwas met him. (Now he was of those of whom it is said, "They love the fair," and indeed there is said what is said concerning him. When he saw Noureddin Ali, he stared at him in amazement and exclaimed, "Say, I take refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak!" Then he accosted the young Damascene and saluting him, said to him, "Why do I see my lord alone and forlorn? Meseemeth thou art a stranger and knowest not this country; so, with my lord's permission, I will put myself at his service and acquaint him with the streets, for that I know this city." Quoth Noureddin, "This will be of thy favour, O uncle." Whereat Abou Nuwas rejoiced and fared on with him, showing him the markets and thoroughfares, till they came to the house of a slave-dealer, where he stopped and said to the youth, "From what city art thou?" "From Damascus," answered Noureddin; and Abou Nuwas said, "By Allah, thou art from a blessed city, even as saith of it the poet in the following verses:

Damascus is all gardens decked for the pleasance of the eyes; For the seeker there are black-eyed girls and boys of Paradise."

Noureddin thanked him and they entered the slave-merchant's house. When the people of the house saw Abou Nuwas, they rose to do him worship, for that which they knew of his station with the Commander of the Faithful. Moreover, the slave-dealer himself came up to them with two chairs, and they seated themselves thereon. Then the slave-merchant went into the house and returning with the slave-girl, as she were a willow-wand or a bamboo-cane, clad in a vest of damask silk and tired with a black and white turban, the ends whereof fell down over her face, seated her on a chair of ebony; after which quoth he to those who were present, "I will discover to you a face as it were a full moon breaking forth from under a cloud." And they said, "Do so." So he unveiled the damsel's face and behold, she was like the shining sun, with comely shape and day-bright face and slender [waist and heavy] hips; brief, she was endowed with elegance, the description whereof existeth not, [and was] even as saith of her the poet:

A fair one, to idolaters if she herself should show,
They'd leave their idols and her face for only Lord would know;
And if into the briny sea one day she chanced to spit,
Assuredly the salt sea's floods straight fresh and sweet would grow.

The dealer stood at her head and one of the merchants said, "I bid a thousand dinars for her." Quoth another, "I bid eleven hundred dinars;" [and a third, "I bid twelve hundred"]. Then said a fourth merchant, "Be she mine for fourteen hundred dinars." And the biddings stood still at that sum. Quoth her owner, "I will not sell her save with her consent. If she desire to be sold, I will sell her to whom she willeth." And the slave-dealer said to him, "What is her name?" "Her name is Sitt el Milah," answered the other; whereupon the dealer said to her, "By thy leave, I will sell thee to yonder merchant for this price of fourteen hundred dinars." Quoth she, "Come hither to me." So he came up to her and when he drew near, she gave him a kick with her foot and cast him to the ground, saying, "I will not have that old man." The slave-dealer arose, shaking the dust from his clothes and head, and said, "Who biddeth more? Who is desirous [of buying?]" Quoth one of the merchants, "I," and the dealer said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, shall I sell thee to this merchant?" "Come hither to me," answered she; but he said "Nay; speak and I will hearken to thee from my place, for I will not trust myself to thee," And she said, "I will not have him."

Then he looked at her and seeing her eyes fixed on the young Damascene, for that in very deed he had ravished her with his beauty and grace, went up to the latter and said to him, "O my lord, art thou a looker-on or a buyer? Tell me." Quoth Noureddin, "I am both looker-on and buyer. Wilt thou sell me yonder slave-girl for sixteen hundred dinars?" And he pulled out the purse of gold. So the dealer returned, dancing and clapping his hands and saying, "So be it, so be it, or not [at all]!" Then he came to the damsel and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, shall I sell thee to yonder young Damascene for sixteen hundred dinars?" But she answered, "No," of shamefastness before her master and the bystanders; whereupon the people of the bazaar and the slave-merchant departed, and Abou Nuwas and Ali Noureddin arose and went each his own way, whilst the damsel returned to her master's house, full of love for the young Damascene.

When the night darkened on her, she called him to mind and her heart clave to him and sleep visited her not; and on this wise she abode days and nights, till she sickened and abstained from food. So her lord went in to her and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, how findest thou thyself?" "O my lord," answered she, "I am dead without recourse and I beseech thee to bring me my shroud, so I may look on it before my death." Therewithal he went out from her, sore concerned for her, and betook himself to a friend of his, a draper, who had been present on the day when the damsel was cried [for sale]. Quoth his friend to him, "Why do I see thee troubled?" And he answered, "Sitt el Milah is at the point of death and these three days she hath neither eaten nor drunken. I questioned her to-day of her case and she said, 'O my lord, buy me a shroud, so I may look on it before my death.'" Quoth the draper, "Methinks nought ails her but that she is enamoured of the young Damascene and I counsel thee to mention his name to her and avouch to her that he hath foregathered with thee on her account and is desirous of coming to thy house, so he may hear somewhat of her singing. If she say, 'I reck not of him, for there is that to do with me which distracteth me from the Damascene and from other than he,' know that she saith sooth concerning her sickness; but, if she say to thee other than this, acquaint me therewith.'"

So the man returned to his lodging and going in to his slave-girl, said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, I went out on thine occasion and there met me the young man of Damascus, and he saluted me and saluteth thee. Indeed, he seeketh to win thy favour and would fain be a guest in our dwelling, so thou mayst let him hear somewhat of thy singing." When she heard speak of the young Damascene, she gave a sob, that her soul was like to depart her body, and answered, saying, "He knoweth my plight and is ware that these three days past I have eaten not nor drunken, and I beseech thee, O my lord, by the Great God, to accomplish the stranger his due and bring him to my lodging and make excuse to him for me."

When her master heard this, his reason fled for joy and he went to his friend the draper and said to him, "Thou wast right in the matter of the damsel, for that she is enamoured of the young Damascene; so how shall I do?" Quoth the other, "Go to the bazaar and when thou seest him, salute him and say to him, 'Indeed, thy departure the other day, without accomplishing thine occasion, was grievous to me; so, if thou be still minded to buy the girl, I will abate thee an hundred dinars of that which thou badest for her, by way of hospitable entreatment of thee and making myself agreeable to thee; for that thou art a stranger in our land.' If he say to thee, 'I have no desire for her' and hold off from thee, know that he will not buy; in which case, let me know, so I may contrive thee another device; and if he say to thee other than this, conceal not from me aught.

So the girl's owner betook himself to the bazaar, where he found the youth seated at the upper end of the merchants' place of session, selling and buying and taking and giving, as he were the moon on the night of its full, and saluted him. The young man returned his salutation and he said to him, "O my lord, be not thou vexed at the girl's speech the other day, for her price shall be less than that [which thou badest], to the intent that I may propitiate thy favour. If thou desire her for nought, I will send her to thee, or if thou wouldst have me abate thee of her price, I will well, for I desire nought but what shall content thee; for that thou art a stranger in our land and it behoveth us to entreat thee hospitably and have consideration for thee." "By Allah," answered the youth, "I will not take her from thee but at an advance on that which I bade thee for her aforetime; so wilt thou now sell her to me for seventeen hundred dinars?" And the other answered," O my lord, I sell her to thee, may God bless thee in her."

So the young man went to his lodging and fetching a purse, returned to the girl's owner and counted out to him the price aforesaid, whilst the draper was between them. Then said he, "Bring her forth;" but the other answered, "She cannot come forth at this present; but be thou my guest the rest of this day and night, and on the morrow thou shall take thy slave-girl and go in the protection of God." The youth fell in with him of this and he carried him to his house, where, after a little, he let bring meat and wine, and they [ate and] drank. Then said Noureddin to the girl's owner, "I beseech thee bring me the damsel, for that I bought her not but for the like of this time." So he arose and [going in to the girl], said to her, "O Sitt el Milan, the young man hath paid down thy price and we have bidden him hither; so he hath come to our dwelling and we have entertained him, and he would fain have thee be present with him."

Therewithal the damsel rose briskly and putting off her clothes, washed and donned sumptuous apparel and perfumed herself and went out to him, as she were a

willow-wand or a bamboo-cane, followed by a black slave girl, bearing the lute. When she came to the young man, she saluted him and sat down by his side. Then she took the lute from the slave-girl and tuning it, smote thereon in four-and-twenty modes, after which she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

Unto me the world's whole gladness is thy nearness and thy sight;
All incumbent thy possession and thy love a law of right.
In my tears I have a witness; when I call thee to my mind,
Down my cheeks they run like torrents, and I cannot stay their flight.
None, by Allah, 'mongst all creatures, none I love save thee alone!
Yea, for I am grown thy bondman, by the troth betwixt us plight.
Peace upon thee! Ah, how bitter were the severance from thee!
Be not this thy troth-plight's ending nor the last of our delight!

Therewithal the young man was moved to delight and exclaimed, "By Allah, thou sayest well, O Sitt el Milan! Let me hear more." Then he handselled her with fifty dinars and they drank and the cups went round among them; and her seller said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, this is the season of leave-taking; so let us hear somewhat on the subject." Accordingly she struck the lute and avouching that which was in her heart, sang the following verses:

I am filled full of longing pain and memory and dole,
That from the wasted body's wounds distract the anguished soul.
Think not, my lords, that I forget: the case is still the same.
When such a fever fills the heart, what leach can make it whole?
And if a creature in his tears could swim, as in a sea,
I to do this of all that breathe were surely first and sole.
O skinker of the wine of woe, turn from a love-sick maid,
Who drinks her tears still, night and morn, thy bitter-flavoured bowl.
I had not left you, had I known that severance would prove
My death; but what is past is past, Fate stoops to no control.

As they were thus in the enjoyment of all that in most delicious of easance and delight, and indeed the wine was sweet to them and the talk pleasant, behold, there came a knocking at the door. So the master of the house went out, that he might see what was to do, and found ten men of the Khalif's eunuchs at the door. When he saw this, he was amazed and said to them, "What is to do?" Quoth they, "The Commander of the Faithful saluteth thee and requireth of thee the slave-girl whom thou hast for sale and whose name is Sitt el Milah." By Allah," answered the other, "I have sold her." And they said, "Swear by the head of the Commander of the Faithful that she is not in thy dwelling." He made oath that he had sold her and that she was no longer at his disposal; but they paid no *need to his word and forcing their way into the house, found the damsel and the young Damascene in the sitting-chamber. So they laid hands upon her, and the youth said, "This is my slave-girl, whom I have bought with my money." But they hearkened not to his speech and taking her, carried her off to the Commander of the Faithful.

Therewithal Noureddin's life was troubled; so he arose and donned his clothes, and his host said, "Whither away this night, O my lord?" Quoth Noureddin, "I mean to go to my lodging, and to-morrow I will betake myself to the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and demand my slave-girl." "Sleep till the morning," said the other, "and go not forth at the like of this hour." But he answered, "Needs must I go;" and the host said to him, "[Go] in the safeguard of God." So Noureddin went forth, and drunkenness had got the mastery of him, wherefore he threw himself down on [a bench before one of] the shops. Now the watch were at that hour making their round and they smelt the sweet scent [of essences] and wine that exhaled from him; so they made for it and found the youth lying on the bench, without sense or motion. They poured water upon him, and he awoke, whereupon they carried him to the house of the Chief of the Police and he questioned him of his affair. "O my lord," answered Noureddin, "I am a stranger in this town and have been with one of my friends. So I came forth from his house and drunkenness overcame me."

The prefect bade carry him to his lodging; but one of those in attendance upon him, by name El Muradi, said to him, "What wilt thou do? This man is clad in rich clothes and on his finger is a ring of gold, the beazel whereof is a ruby of great price; so we will carry him away and slay him and take that which is upon him of raiment [and what not else] and bring it to thee; for that thou wilt not [often] see profit the like thereof, more by token that this fellow is a stranger and there is none to enquire concerning him." Quoth the prefect, "This fellow is a thief and that which he saith is leasing." And Noureddin said, "God forbid that I should be a thief!" But the prefect answered, "Thou liest." So they stripped him of his clothes and taking the ring from his finger, beat him grievously, what while he cried out for succour, but none succoured him, and besought protection, but none protected him. Then said he to them, "O folk, ye are quit of that which ye have taken from me; but now restore me to my lodging." But they answered, saying, "Leave this knavery, O cheat! Thine intent is to sue us for thy clothes on the morrow." "By Allah, the One, the Eternal," exclaimed he, "I will not sue any for them!" But they said, "We can nowise do this." And the prefect bade them carry him to the Tigris and there slay him and cast him into the river.

So they dragged him away, what while he wept and spoke the words which whoso saith shall nowise be confounded, to wit, "There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Sublime!" When they came to the Tigris, one of them drew the sword upon him and El Muradi said to the swordbearer, "Smite off his head." But one of them, Ahmed by name, said, "O folk, deal gently with this poor wretch and slay him not unjustly and wickedly, for I stand in fear of God the Most High, lest He burn me with his fire." Quoth El Muradi, "A truce to this talk!" And Ahmed said, "If ye do with him aught, I will acquaint the Commander of the Faithful." "How, then, shall we do with him?" asked they; and he answered, "Let us deposit him in prison and I will be answerable to you for his provision; so shall we be quit of his blood, for indeed he is wrongfully used." So they took him up and casting him into the Prison of Blood,went away.

Meanwhile, they carried the damsel into the Commander of the Faithful and she pleased him; so he assigned her a lodging of the apartments of choice. She abode in the palace, eating not neither drinking and ceasing not from weeping night nor day, till,

one night, the Khalif sent for her to his sitting-chamber and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, be of good heart and cheerful eye, for I will make thy rank higher than [any of] the concubines and thou shall see that which shall rejoice thee." She kissed the earth and wept; whereupon the Khalif called for her lute and bade her sing. So she improvised and sang the following verses, in accordance with that which was in her heart:

Say, by the lightnings of thy teeth and thy soul's pure desire,
Moan'st thou as moan the doves and is thy heart for doubt on fire?
How many a victim of the pangs of love-liking hath died!
Tired is my patience, but of blame my censors never tire.

When she had made an end of her song, she cast the lute from her hand and wept till she swooned away, whereupon the Khalif bade carry her to her chamber. Now he was ravished with her and loved her with an exceeding love; so, after awhile, he again commanded to bring her to his presence, and when she came, he bade her sing. Accordingly, she took the lute and spoke forth that which was in her heart and sang the following verses:

What strength have I solicitude and long desire to bear?
Why art thou purposed to depart and leave me to despair?
Why to estrangement and despite inclin'st thou with the spy?
Yet that a bough from side to side incline small wonder 'twere.
Thou layst on me a load too great to bear, and thus thou dost
But that my burdens I may bind and so towards thee fare.

Then she cast the lute from her hand and swooned away; so she was carried to her chamber and indeed passion waxed upon her. After a long while, the Commander of the Faithful sent for her a third time and bade her sing. So she took the lute and sang the following verses:

O hills of the sands and the rugged piebald plain,
Shall the bondman of love win ever free from pain!
I wonder, shall I and the friend who's far from me
Once more be granted of Fate to meet, we twain!
Bravo for a fawn with a houri's eye of black,
Like the sun or the shining moon midst the starry train!
To lovers, "What see ye?" he saith, and to hearts of stone,
"What love ye," quoth he, "[if to love me ye disdain?"]
I supplicate Him, who parted us and doomed
Our separation, that we may meet again.

When she had made an end of her song, the Commander of the Faithful said to her, "O damsel, thou art in love." "Yes," answered she. And he said, "With whom?" Quoth she, "With my lord and my master, my love for whom is as the love of the earth for rain, or as the love of the female for the male; and indeed the love of him is mingled with my flesh and my blood and hath entered into the channels of my bones. O Commander of the Faithful, whenas I call him to mind, mine entrails are consumed, for that I have not accomplished my desire of him, and but that I fear to

die, without seeing him, I would assuredly kill myself." And he said, "Art thou in my presence and bespeakest me with the like of these words? I will assuredly make thee forget thy lord."

Then he bade take her away; so she was carried to her chamber and he sent her a black slave-girl, with a casket, wherein were three thousand dinars and a carcanet of gold, set with pearls, great and small, and jewels, worth other three thousand, saying to her, "The slave-girl and that which is with her are a gift from me to thee." When she heard this, she said, "God forbid that I should be consoled for the love of my lord and my master, though with the earth full of gold!" And she improvised and recited the following verses:

I swear by his life, yea, I swear by the life of my love without peer,
To please him or save him from hurt, I'd enter the fire without fear!
"Console thou thyself for his love," quoth they, "with another than he;"
But, "Nay, by his life," answered I, "I'll never forget him my dear!"
A moon is my love, in a robe of loveliness proudly arrayed,
And the splendours of new-broken day from his cheeks and his forehead shine clear.

Then the Khalif summoned her to his presence a fourth time and said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, sing." So she improvised and sang the following verses:

To his beloved one the lover's heart's inclined;
His soul's a captive slave, in sickness' hands confined.
"What is the taste of love?" quoth one, and I replied,
"Sweet water 'tis at first; but torment lurks behind."
Love's slave, I keep my troth with them; but, when they vowed,
Fate made itself Urcoub, whom never oath could bind.
What is there in the tents? Their burdens are become
A lover's, whose belov'd is in the litters' shrined.
In every halting-place like Joseph she appears
And he in every stead with Jacob's grief is pined.

When she had made an end of her song, she threw the lute from her hand and wept till she swooned away. So they sprinkled on her rose-water, mingled with musk, and willow-flower water; and when she came to herself, Er Reshid said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, this is not fair dealing in thee. We love thee and thou lovest another." "O Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "there is no help for it." Therewithal he was wroth with her and said, "By the virtue of Hemzeh and Akil and Mohammed, Prince of the Apostles, if thou name one other than I in my presence, I will bid strike off thy head!" Then he bade return her to her chamber, whilst she wept and recited the following verses:

If I must die, then welcome death to heal
My woes; 'twere lighter than the pangs I feel.
What if the sabre cut me limb from limb!
No torment 'twere for lovers true and leal.

Then the Khalif went in to the Lady Zubeideh, pale with anger, and she noted this in him and said to him, "How cometh it that I see the Commander of the Faithful changed of colour?" "O daughter of my uncle," answered he, "I have a beautiful slave-girl, who reciteth verses and telleth stories, and she hath taken my whole heart; but she loveth other than I and avoucheth that she loveth her [former] master; wherefore I have sworn a great oath that, if she come again to my sitting-chamber and sing for other than I, I will assuredly take a span from her highest part."Quoth Zubeideh, "Let the Commander of the Faithful favour me with her presence, so I may look on her and hear her singing." So he bade fetch her and she came, whereupon the Lady Zubeideh withdrew behind the curtain, whereas she saw her not, and Er Reshid said to her, "Sing to us." So she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

Lo, since the day I left you, O my masters,
Life is not sweet, no aye my heart is light.
Yea, in the night the thought of you still slays me;
Hidden are my traces from the wise men's sight,
All for a wild deer's love, whose looks have snared me
And on whose brows the morning glitters bright
I am become, for severance from my loved one,
Like a left hand, forsaken of the right.
Beauty on his cheek hath written, "Blest be Allah,
He who created this enchanting wight!"
Him I beseech our loves who hath dissevered,
Us of his grace once more to reunite.

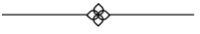
When Er Reshid heard this, he waxed exceeding wroth and said, "May God not reunite you twain in gladness!" Then he summoned the headsman, and when he presented himself, he said to him, "Strike off the head of this accursed slave-girl." So Mesrour took her by the hand and [led her away; but], when she came to the door, she turned and said to the Khalif, "O Commander of the Faithful, I conjure thee, by thy fathers and forefathers, give ear unto that I shall say!" Then she improvised and recited the following verses:

O Amir of justice, be kind to thy subjects;
For justice, indeed,of thy nature's a trait.
O thou my inclining to love him that blamest,
Shall lovers be blamed for the errors of Fate?
Then spare me, by Him who vouchsafed thee the kingship;
For a gift in this world is the regal estate.

Then Mesrour carried her to the other end of the sitting-chamber and bound her eyes and making her sit, stood awaiting a second commandment; whereupon quoth the Lady Zubeideh, "O Commander of the Faithful, with thy permission, wilt thou not vouchsafe this damsel a share of thy clemency? Indeed, if thou slay her, it were injustice." Quoth he, "What is to be done with her?" And she said, "Forbear to slay her and send for her lord. If he be as she describeth him in grace and goodliness, she is excused, and if he be not on this wise, then slay her, and this shall be thy justification against her."

"Be it as thou deemest," answered Er Reshid and caused return the damsel to her chamber, saying to her, "The Lady Zubeideh saith thus and thus." Quoth she, "God requite her for me with good! Indeed, thou dealest equitably, O Commander of the Faithful, in this judgment." And he answered, "Go now to thy place, and to-morrow we will let bring thy lord." So she kissed the earth and recited the following verses:

I am content, for him I love, to all abide;
So, who will, let him blame, and who will, let him chide.
At their appointed terms souls die; but for despair
My soul is like to die, or ere its term betide.
O thou with love of whom I'm smitten, yet content,
I prithee come to me and hasten to my side.



Then she arose and returned to her chamber.

ON the morrow, the Commander of the Faithful sat [in his hall of audience] and his Vizier Jaafer ben Yehya the Barmecide came in to him; whereupon he called to him, saying, "I would have thee bring me a youth who is lately come to Baghdad, hight [Sidi Noureddin Ali] the Damascene." Quoth Jaafer, "Hearkening and obedience," and going forth in quest of the youth, sent to the markets and khans and caravanserais three days' space, but found no trace of him, neither lit upon tidings of him. So on the fourth day he presented himself before the Khalif and said to him, "O our lord, I have sought him these three days, but have not found him." Quoth Er Reshid, "Make ready letters to Damascus. Belike he hath returned to his own land." So Jaafer wrote a letter and despatched it by a dromedary-courier to the city of Damascus; and they sought him there and found him not.

Meanwhile, news was brought that Khorassan had been conquered; whereupon Er Reshid rejoiced and bade decorate Baghdad and release all who were in the prisons, giving each of them a dinar and a dress. So Jaafer addressed himself to the decoration of the city and bade his brother El Fezl ride to the prison and clothe and release the prisoners. El Fezl did his brother's bidding and released all but the young Damascene, who abode still in the Prison of Blood, saying, "There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Sublime! Verily, we are God's and to Him we return." Then said El Fezl to the gaoler, "Is there any prisoner left in the prison?" "No," answered he, and El Fezl was about to depart, when Noureddin called out to him from within the prison, saying, "O my lord, tarry, for there remaineth none in the prison other than I and indeed I am oppressed. This is a day of clemency and there is no disputing concerning it." El Fezl bade release him; so they set him free and he gave him a dress and a dinar. So the young man went out, bewildered and knowing not whither he should go, for that he had abidden in the prison nigh a year and indeed his condition was changed and his favour faded, and he abode walking and turning round, lest El Muradi should come upon him and cast him into another calamity.

When El Muradi heard of his release, he betook himself to the chief of the police and said to him, "O our lord, we are not assured from yonder youth, [the Damascene], for that he hath been released from prison and we fear lest he complain of us." Quoth the prefect, "How shall we do?" And El Muradi answered, saying, "I will cast him into a calamity for thee." Then he ceased not to follow the young Damascene from place to place till he came up with him in a strait place and a by-street without an issue; whereupon he accosted him and putting a rope about his neck, cried out, saying, "A thief!" The folk flocked to him from all sides and fell to beating and reviling Noureddin, whilst he cried out for succour, but none succoured him, and El Muradi still said to him, "But yesterday the Commander of the Faithful released thee and to-day thou stealest!" So the hearts of the folk were hardened against him and El Muradi carried him to the master of police, who bade cut off his hand.

Accordingly, the hangman took him and bringing out the knife, offered to cut off his hand, what while El Muradi said to him, "Cut and sever the bone and sear it not for him, so he may lose his blood and we be rid of him." But Ahmed, he who had

aforetime been the means of his deliverance, sprang up to him and said, "O folk, fear God in [your dealings with] this youth, for that I know his affair from first to last and he is void of offence and guiltless. Moreover, he is of the folk of condition, and except ye desist from him, I will go up to the Commander of the Faithful and acquaint him with the case from first to last and that the youth is guiltless of crime or offence." Quoth El Muradi, "Indeed, we are not assured from his mischief." And Ahmed answered, "Release him and commit him to me and I will warrant you against his affair, for ye shall never see him again after this." So they delivered Noureddin to him and he took him from their hands and said to him, "O youth, have compassion on thyself, for indeed thou hast fallen into the hands of these folk twice and if they lay hold of thee a third time, they will make an end of thee; and [in dealing thus with thee], I aim at reward and recompense for thee and answered prayer."

Noureddin fell to kissing his hand and calling down blessings on him and said to him, "Know that I am a stranger in this your city and the completion of kindness is better than the beginning thereof; wherefore I beseech thee of thy favour that thou complete to me thy good offices and kindness and bring me to the gate of the city. So will thy beneficence be accomplished unto me and may God the Most High requite thee for me with good!" ["Fear not,"] answered Ahmed; "no harm shall betide thee. Go; I will bear thee company till thou come to thy place of assurance." And he left him not till he brought him to the gate of the city and said to him, "O youth, go in the safeguard of God and return not to the city; for, if they fall in with thee [again], they will make an end of thee." Noureddin kissed his hand and going forth the city, gave not over walking till he came to a mosque that stood in one of the suburbs of Baghdad and entered therein with the night.

Now he had with him nought wherewithal he might cover himself; so he wrapped himself up in one of the rugs of the mosque [and abode thus till daybreak], when the Muezzins came and finding him sitting in that case, said to him, "O youth, what is this plight?" Quoth he, "I cast myself on your hospitality, imploring your protection from a company of folk who seek to kill me unjustly and oppressively, without cause." And [one of] the Muezzin[s] said, "Be of good heart and cheerful eye." Then he brought him old clothes and covered him withal; moreover, he set before him somewhat of meat and seeing upon him signs of gentle breeding, said to him, "O my son, I grow old and desire thee of help, [in return for which] I will do away thy necessity." "Hearkening and obedience," answered Noureddin and abode with the old man, who rested and took his ease, what while the youth [did his service in the mosque], celebrating the praises of God and calling the faithful to prayer and lighting the lamps and filling the ewers and sweeping and cleaning out the place.

Meanwhile, the Lady Zubeideh, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, made a banquet in her palace and assembled her slave-girls. As for Sitt el Milah, she came, weeping-eyed and mournful-hearted, and those who were present blamed her for this, whereupon she recited the following verses:

Ye chide at one who weepeth for troubles ever new;
Needs must th' afflicted warble the woes that make him rue.

Except I be appointed a day [to end my pain],
I'll weep until mine eyelids with blood their tears ensue.

When she had made an end of her verses, the Lady Zubeideh bade each damsel sing a song, till the turn came round to Sitt el Milah, whereupon she took the lute and tuning it, sang thereto four-and-twenty songs in four-and-twenty modes; then she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

Fortune its arrows all, through him I love, let fly
At me and parted me from him for whom I sigh.
Lo, in my heart the heat of every heart burns high
And in mine eyes unite the tears of every eye.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept till she made the bystanders weep and the Lady Zubeideh condoled with her and said to her, "God on thee, O Sitt el Milah, sing us somewhat, so we may hearken to thee." "Hearkening and obedience," answered the damsel and sang the following verses:

Assemble, ye people of passion, I pray;
For the hour of our torment hath sounded to-day.
The raven of parting croaks loud at our door;
Alas, for our raven cleaves fast to us aye!
For those whom we cherish are parted and gone;
They have left us in torment to pine for dismay.
So arise, by your lives I conjure you, arise
And come let us fare to our loved ones away.

Then she cast the lute from her hand and wept till she made the Lady Zubeideh weep, and she said to her, "O Sitt el Milah, methinks he whom thou lovest is not in this world, for that the Commander of the Faithful hath sought him in every place, but hath not found him." Whereupon the damsel arose and kissing the Lady Zubeideh's hands, said to her, "O my lady, if thou wouldst have him found, I have a request to make to thee, wherein thou mayst accomplish my occasion with the Commander of the Faithful." Quoth the princess, "And what is it?" "It is," answered Sitt el Milah, "that thou get me leave to go forth by myself and go round about in quest of him three days, for the adage saith, 'She who mourneth for herself is not the like of her who is hired to mourn.' If I find him, I will bring him before the Commander of the Faithful, so he may do with us what he will; and if I find him not, I shall be cut off from hope of him and that which is with me will be assuaged." Quoth the Lady Zubeideh, "I will not get thee leave from him but for a whole month; so be of good heart and cheerful eye." Whereupon Sitt el Milah was glad and rising, kissed the earth before her once more and went away to her own place, rejoicing.

As for Zubeideh, she went in to the Khalif and talked with him awhile; then she fell to kissing him between the eyes and on his hand and asked him that which she had promised Sitt el Milah, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, I doubt me her lord is not found in this world; but, if she go about in quest of him and find him not, her hopes will be cut off and her mind will be set at rest and she will sport and laugh; for that, what while she abideth in hope, she will never cease from her frowardness." And

she gave not over cajoling him till he gave Sitt el Milah leave to go forth and make search for her lord a month's space and ordered her an eunuch to attend her and bade the paymaster [of the household] give her all she needed, were it a thousand dirhems a day or more. So the Lady Zubeideh arose and returning to her palace, sent for Sitt el Milah and acquainted her with that which had passed [between herself and the Khalif]; whereupon she kissed her hand and thanked her and called down blessings on her.

Then she took leave of the princess and veiling her face, disguised herself; after which she mounted the mule and sallying forth, went round about seeking her lord in the thoroughfares of Baghdad three days' space, but lit on no tidings of him; and on the fourth day, she rode forth without the city. Now it was the noontide hour and great was the heat, and she was aweary and thirst waxed upon her. Presently, she came to the mosque, wherein the young Damascene had taken shelter, and lighting down at the door, said to the old man, [the Muezzin], "O elder, hast thou a draught of cold water? Indeed, I am overcome with heat and thirst." Quoth he, "[Come up] with me into my house." So he carried her up into his lodging and spreading her [a carpet and cushions], seated her [thereon]; after which he brought her cold water and she drank and said to the eunuch, "Go thy ways with the mule and on the morrow come back to me here." [So he went away] and she slept and rested herself.

When she awoke, she said to the old man, "O elder, hast thou aught of food?" And he answered, "O my lady, I have bread and olives." Quoth she, "That is food fit but for the like of thee. As for me, I will have nought but roast lamb and broths and fat rissoled fowls and stuffed ducks and all manner meats dressed with [pounded nuts and almond-]kernels and sugar." "O my lady," replied the Muezzin, "I never heard of this chapter in the Koran, nor was it revealed unto our lord Mohammed, whom God bless and keep!" She laughed and said, "O elder, the matter is even as thou sayest; but bring me inkhorn and paper." So he brought her what she sought and she wrote a letter and gave it to him, together with a seal-ring from her finger, saying, "Go into the city and enquire for such an one the money-changer and give him this my letter."

The old man betook himself to the city, as she bade him, and enquired for the money-changer, to whom they directed him. So he gave him the ring and the letter, which when he saw, he kissed the letter and breaking it open, read it and apprehended its purport. Then he repaired to the market and buying all that she bade him, laid it in a porter's basket and bade him go with the old man. So the latter took him and went with him to the mosque, where he relieved him of his burden and carried the meats in to Sitt el Milah. She seated him by her side and they ate, he and she, of those rich meats, till they were satisfied, when the old man rose and removed the food from before her.

She passed the night in his lodging and when she arose in the morning, she said to him, "O elder, may I not lack thy kind offices for the morning-meal! Go to the money-changer and fetch me from him the like of yesterday's food." So he arose and betaking himself to the money-changer, acquainted him with that which she had bidden him. The money-changer brought him all that she required and set it on the heads of porters; and the old man took them and returned with them to Sitt el Milah. So she sat down with him and they ate their sufficiency, after which he removed the rest of the food. Then she took the fruits and the flowers and setting them over against

herself, wrought them into rings and knots and letters, whilst the old man looked on at a thing whose like he had never in his life seen and rejoiced therein.

Then said she to him, "O elder, I would fain drink." So he arose and brought her a gugglet of water; but she said to him, "Who bade thee fetch that?" Quoth he, "Saidst thou not to me, 'I would fain drink'?" And she answered, "I want not this; nay, I want wine, the delight of the soul, so haply, O elder, I may solace myself therewith." "God forbid," exclaimed the old man, "that wine should be drunk in my house, and I a stranger in the land and a Muezzin and an imam, who prayeth with the true-believers, and a servant of the house of the Lord of the Worlds! "Quoth she, "Why wilt thou forbid me to drink thereof in thy house?" "Because," answered he, "it is unlawful." "O elder," rejoined she, "God hath forbidden [the eating of] blood and carrion and hog's flesh. Tell me, are grapes and honey lawful or unlawful?" Quoth he, "They are lawful;" and she said, "This is the juice of grapes and the water of honey." But he answered, "Leave this thy talk, for thou shall never drink wine in my house." "O Sheikh," rejoined she, "folk eat and drink and enjoy themselves and we are of the number of the folk and God is very forgiving, clement." Quoth he, "This is a thing that may not be." And she said, "Hast thou not heard what the poet saith ... ?" And she recited the following verses:

O son of Simeon, give no ear to other than my say.
How bitter from the convent 'twas to part and fare away!
Ay, and the monks, for on the Day of Palms a fawn there was
Among the servants of the church, a loveling blithe and gay.
By God, how pleasant was the night we passed, with him for third!
Muslim and Jew and Nazarene, we sported till the day.
The wine was sweet to us to drink in pleasance and repose,
And in a garden of the garths of Paradise we lay,
Whose streams beneath the myrtle's shade and cassia's welled amain
And birds made carol jubilant from every blossomed spray.
Quoth he, what while from out his hair the morning glimmered white,
"This, this is life indeed, except, alas! it doth not stay."

"O elder," added she, "if Muslims and Jews and Nazarenes drink wine, who are we [that we should abstain from it]?" "By Allah, O my lady," answered he, "spare thine endeavour, for this is a thing to which I will not hearken." When she knew that he would not consent to her desire, she said to him, "O elder, I am of the slave-girls of the Commander of the Faithful and the food waxeth on me and if I drink not, I shall perish, nor wilt thou be assured against the issue of my affair. As for me, I am quit of blame towards thee, for that I have made myself known to thee and have bidden thee beware of the wrath of the Commander of the Faithful."

When the old man heard her words and that wherewith she menaced him, he arose and went out, perplexed and knowing not what he should do, and there met him a Jew, who was his neighbour, and said to him, "O Sheikh, how cometh it that I see thee strait of breast? Moreover, I hear in thy house a noise of talk, such as I use not to hear with thee." Quoth the Muezzin, "Yonder is a damsel who avoucheth that she is of the slave-girls of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid; and she hath eaten

food and now would fain drink wine in my house, but I forbade her. However she avoucheth that except she drink thereof, she will perish, and indeed I am bewildered concerning my affair." "Know, O my neighbour," answered the Jew, "that the slave-girls of the Commander of the Faithful are used to drink wine, and whenas they eat and drink not, they perish; and I fear lest some mishap betide her, in which case thou wouldst not be safe from the Khalifs wrath." "What is to be done?" asked the Sheikh; and the Jew replied, "I have old wine that will suit her." Quoth the old man, "[I conjure thee] by the right of neighbourship, deliver me from this calamity and let me have that which is with thee!" "In the name of God," answered the Jew and going to his house, brought out a flagon of wine, with which the Sheikh returned to Sitt el Milah. This pleased her and she said to him, "Whence hadst thou this?" "I got it from my neighbour the Jew," answered he. "I set out to him my case with thee and he gave me this."

Sitt el Milah filled a cup and emptied it; after which she drank a second and a third. Then she filled the cup a fourth time and handed it to the old man, but he would not accept it from her. However, she conjured him, by her own head and that of the Commander of the Faithful, that he should take it from her, till he took the cup from her hand and kissed it and would have set it down; but she conjured him by her life to smell it. So he smelt it and she said to him, "How deemest thou?" "Its smell is sweet," replied he; and she conjured him, by the life of the Commander of the Faithful, to taste it. So he put it to his mouth and she rose to him and made him drink; whereupon, "O princess of the fair," said he, "this is none other than good." Quoth she, "So deem I. Hath not our Lord promised us wine in Paradise?" And he answered, "Yes. Quoth the Most High, 'And rivers of wine, a delight to the drinkers.' And we will drink it in this world and the world to come." She laughed and emptying the cup, gave him to drink, and he said, "O princess of the fair, indeed thou art excusable in thy love for this." Then he took from her another and another, till he became drunken and his talk waxed great and his prate.

The folk of the quarter heard him and assembled under the window; and when he was ware of them, he opened the window and said to them, "Are ye not ashamed, O pimps? Every one in his own house doth what he will and none hindereth him; but we drink one poor day and ye assemble and come, cuckoldy varlets that ye are! To-day, wine, and to-morrow [another] matter; and from hour to hour [cometh] relief." So they laughed and dispersed. Then the girl drank till she was intoxicated, when she called to mind her lord and wept, and the old man said to her, "What maketh thee weep, O my lady?" "O elder," replied she, "I am a lover and separated [from him I love]." Quoth he, "O my lady, what is this love?" "And thou," asked she, "hast thou never been in love?" "By Allah, O my lady," answered he, "never in all my life heard I of this thing, nor have I ever known it! Is it of the sons of Adam or of the Jinn?" She laughed and said, "Verily, thou art even as those of whom the poet speaketh, when as he saith ..." And she repeated the following verses:

How long will ye admonished be, without avail or heed?
The shepherd still his flocks forbids, and they obey his rede.
I see yon like unto mankind in favour and in form;
But oxen, verily, ye are in fashion and in deed.

The old man laughed at her speech and her verses pleased him. Then said she to him, "I desire of thee a lute." So he arose and brought her a piece of firewood. Quoth she, "What is that?" And he said, "Didst thou not bid me bring thee wood?" "I do not want this," answered she, and he rejoined, "What then is it that is called wood, other than this?" She laughed and said, "The lute is an instrument of music, whereunto I sing." Quoth he, "Where is this thing found and of whom shall I get it for thee?" And she said, "Of him who gave thee the wine." So he arose and betaking himself to his neighbour the Jew, said to him, "Thou favouredst us aforetime with the wine; so now complete thy favours and look me out a thing called a lute, to wit, an instrument for singing; for that she seeketh this of me and I know it not" "Hearkening and obedience," replied the Jew and going into his house, brought him a lute. [The old man took it and carried it to Sitt el Milah,] whilst the Jew took his drink and sat by a window adjoining the other's house, so he might hear the singing.

The damsel rejoiced, when the old man returned to her with the lute, and taking it from him, tuned its strings and sang the following verses:

After your loss, nor trace of me nor vestige would remain,
Did not the hope of union some whit my strength sustain.
Ye're gone and desolated by your absence is the world:
Requital, ay, or substitute to seek for you 'twere vain.
Ye, of your strength, have burdened me, upon my weakliness,
With burdens not to be endured of mountain nor of plain.
When from your land the breeze I scent that cometh, as I were
A reveller bemused with wine, to lose my wits I'm fain.
Love no light matter is, O folk, nor are the woe and care
And blame a little thing to brook that unto it pertain.
I wander seeking East and West for you, and every time
Unto a camp I come, I'm told, "They've fared away again."
My friends have not accustomed me to rigour; for, of old,
When I forsook them, they to seek accord did not disdain.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept sore, till presently sleep overcame her and she slept.

On the morrow, she said to the old man, "Get thee to the money-changer and fetch me the ordinary." So he repaired to the money-changer and delivered him the message, whereupon he made ready meat and drink, as of his wont, [with which the old man returned to the damsel and they ate till they had enough. When she had eaten,] she sought of him wine and he went to the Jew and fetched it. Then they sat down and drank; and when she grew drunken, she took the lute and smiting it, fell a-singing and chanted the following verses:

How long shall I thus question my heart that's drowned in woe?
I'm mute for my complaining; but tears speak, as they flow.
They have forbid their image to visit me in sleep;
So even my nightly phantom forsaketh me, heigho!

And when she had made an end of her song, she wept sore.

ALL this time, the young Damascene was hearkening, and whiles he likened her voice to that of his slave-girl and whiles he put away from him this thought, and the damsel had no whit of knowledge of him. Then she broke out again into song and chanted the following verses:

"Forget him," quoth my censurers, "forget him; what is he?"
"If I forget him, ne'er may God," quoth I, "remember me!"
Now God forbid a slave forget his liege lord's love!
And how Of all things in the world should I forget the love of thee?
Pardon of God for everything I crave, except thy love,
For on the day of meeting Him, that will my good deed be.

Then she drank three cups and filling the old man other three, sang the following verses:

His love he'd have hid, but his tears denounced him to the spy,
For the heat of a red-hot coal that 'twixt his ribs did lie.
Suppose for distraction he seek in the Spring and its blooms one day,
The face of his loved one holds the only Spring for his eye.
O blamer of me for the love of him who denieth his grace,
Which be the delightsome of things, but those which the people deny?
A sun [is my love;] but his heat in mine entrails still rageth, concealed;
A moon, in the hearts of the folk he riseth, and not in the sky.

When she had made an end of her song, she threw the lute from her hand and wept, whilst the old man wept for her weeping. Then she fell down in a swoon and presently coming to herself, filled the cup and drinking it off, gave the old man to drink, after which she took the lute and breaking out into song, chanted the following verses:

Thy loss is the fairest of all my heart's woes;
My case it hath altered and banished repose.
The world is upon me all desolate grown.
Alack, my long grief and forlornness! Who knows
But the Merciful yet may incline thee to me
And unite us again, in despite of our foes!

Then she wept till her voice rose high and her lamentation was discovered [to those without]; after which she again began to drink and plying the old man with wine, sang the following verses:

They have shut out thy person from my sight; They cannot shut thy memory from my spright. Favour or flout me, still my soul shall be Thy ransom, in contentment or despite. My outward of my inward testifies And this bears witness that that tells aright.

When she had made an end of her song, she threw the lute from her hand and wept and lamented. Then she slept awhile and presently awaking, said, "O elder, hast thou what we may eat?" "O my lady," answered the old man, "there is the rest of the food;" but she said, "I will not eat of a thing I have left. Go down to the market and fetch us what we may eat." Quoth he, "Excuse me, O my lady; I cannot stand up, for that I am overcome with wine; but with me is the servant of the mosque, who is a sharp youth and an intelligent. I will call him, so he may buy thee that which thou desirest." "Whence hast thou this servant?" asked she; and he replied, "He is of the people of Damascus." When she heard him speak of the people of Damascus, she gave a sob, that she swooned away; and when she came to herself, she said, "Woe's me for the people of Damascus and for those who are therein! Call him, O elder, that he may do our occasions."

So the old man put his head forth of the window and called the youth, who came to him from the mosque and sought leave [to enter]. The Muezzin bade him enter, and when he came in to the damsel, he knew her and she knew him; whereupon he turned back in bewilderment and would have fled; but she sprang up to him and seized him, and they embraced and wept together, till they fell down on the ground in a swoon. When the old man saw them in this plight, he feared for himself and fled forth, seeing not the way for drunkenness. His neighbour the Jew met him and said to him, "How comes it that I see thee confounded?" "How should I not be confounded," answered the old man, "seeing that the damsel who is with me is fallen in love with the servant of the mosque and they have embraced and fallen down in a swoon? Indeed, I fear lest the Khalif come to know of this and be wroth with me; so tell me thou what is to be done in this wherewith I am afflicted of the affair of this damsel." Quoth the Jew, "For the nonce, take this casting-bottle of rose-water and go forth-right and sprinkle them therewith. If they be aswoon for this their foregathering and embracement, they will come to themselves, and if otherwise, do thou flee."

The old man took the casting-bottle from the Jew and going up to Noureddin and the damsel, sprinkled their faces, whereupon they came to themselves and fell to relating to each other that which they had suffered, since their separation, for the anguish of severance. Moreover, Noureddin acquainted Sitt el Milah with that which he had endured from the folk who would have slain him and made away with him; and she said to him, "O my lord, let us presently give over this talk and praise God for reunion of loves, and all this shall cease from us." Then she gave him the cup and he said, "By Allah, I will nowise drink it, whilst I am in this plight!" So she drank it off before him and taking the lute, swept the strings and sang the following verses:

Thou that wast absent from my stead, yet still with me didst bide,
Thou wast removed from mine eye, yet still wast by my side.
Thou left'st unto me, after thee, languor and carefulness;
I lived a life wherein no jot of sweetness I espied.
For thy sweet sake, as 'twere, indeed, an exile I had been,
Lone and deserted I became, lamenting, weeping-eyed.
Alack, my grief! Thou wast, indeed, grown absent from my yiew,
Yet art the apple of mine eye nor couldst from me divide.

When she had made an end of her song, she wept and Noureddin wept also. Then she took the lute and improvised and sang the following verses:

God knows I ne'er recalled thy memory to my thought,
But still with brimming tears straightway mine eyes were fraught;
Yea, passion raged in me and love-longing was like
To slay me; yet my heart to solace still it wrought.
Light of mine eyes, my hope, my wish, my thirsting eyes
With looking on thy face can never sate their drought.

When Noureddin heard these his slave-girl's verses, he fell a-weeping, what while she strained him to her bosom and wiped away his tears with her sleeve and questioned him and comforted his mind. Then she took the lute and sweeping its strings, played thereon, after such a wise as would move the phlegmatic to delight, and sang the following verses:

Whenas mine eyes behold thee not, that day
As of my life I do not reckon aye;
And when I long to look upon thy face,
My life is perished with desire straightway.

On this wise they abode till the morning, tasting not the savour of sleep; and when the day lightened, behold, the eunuch came with the mule and said to Sitt el Milah, "The Commander of the Faithful calleth for thee." So she arose and taking her lord by the hand, committed him to the old man, saying, "I commend him to thy care, under God, till this eunuch cometh to thee; and indeed, O elder, I owe thee favour and largesse such as filleth the interspace betwixt heaven and earth."

Then she mounted the mule and repairing to the palace of the Commander of the Faithful, went in to him and kissed the earth before him. Quoth he to her, as who should make mock of her, "I doubt not but thou hast found thy lord." "By thy felicity and the length of thy continuance [on life,]" answered she, "I have indeed found him!" Now Er Reshid was leaning back; but, when he heard this, he sat up and said to her, "By my life, [is this thou sayest] true?" "Ay, by thy life!" answered she; and he said, "Bring him into my presence, so I may see him." But she replied, "O my lord, there have betided him many stresses and his charms are changed and his favour faded; and indeed the Commander of the Faithful vouchsafed me a month; wherefore I will tend him the rest of the month and then bring him to do his service to the Commander of the Faithful." Quoth Er Reshid, "True; the condition was for a month; but tell me what hath betided him." "O my lord," answered she, "may God prolong thy continuance and make Paradise thy place of returning and thy harbourage and the fire the abiding-place of thine enemies, when he presenteth himself to pay his respects to thee, he will expound to thee his case and will name unto thee those who have wronged him; and indeed this is an arrear that is due to the Commander of the Faithful, in whom may God fortify the Faith and vouchsafe him the mastery over the rebel and the froward!"

Therewithal he ordered her a handsome house and bade furnish it with carpets and other furniture and vessels of choice and commanded that all she needed should be given her. This was done during the rest of the day, and when the night came, she

despatched the eunuch with the mule and a suit of clothes, to fetch Noureddin from the Muezzin's lodging. So the young man donned the clothes and mounting; rode to the house, where he abode in luxury and delight a full-told month, what while she solaced him with four things, to wit, the eating of fowls and the drinking of wine and the lying upon brocade and the entering the bath after copulation. Moreover, she brought him six suits of clothes and fell to changing his apparel day by day; nor was the appointed time accomplished ere his beauty returned to him and his goodliness; nay, his charms waxed tenfold and he became a ravishment to all who looked on him.

One day the Commander of the Faithful bade bring him to the presence; so his slave-girl changed his raiment and clothing him in sumptuous apparel, mounted him on the mule. Then he rode to the palace and presenting himself before the Khalif, saluted him with the goodliest of salutations and bespoke him with eloquent and deep-thoughted speech. When Er Reshid saw him, he marvelled at the goodliness of his favour and his eloquence and the readiness of his speech and enquiring of him, was told that he was Sitt el Milah's lord; whereupon quoth he, "Indeed, she is excusable in her love for him, and if we had put her to death unrighteously, as we were minded to do, her blood would have been upon our heads." Then he turned to the young man and entering into discourse with him, found him well bred, intelligent, quick of wit and apprehension, generous, pleasant, elegant, erudite. So he loved him with an exceeding love and questioned him of his native city and of his father and of the manner of his journey to Baghdad. Noureddin acquainted him with that which he would know in the goodliest of words and with the concisest of expressions; and the Khalif said to him, "And where hast thou been absent all this while? Indeed, we sent after thee to Damascus and Mosul and other the towns, but lit on no tidings of thee." "O my lord," answered the young man, "there betided thy slave in thy city that which never yet betided any." And he acquainted him with his case from first to last and told him that which had befallen him of evil [from El Muradi and his crew].

When Er Reshid heard this, he was sore chagrined and waxed exceeding wroth and said, "Shall this happen in a city wherein I am?" And the Hashimi vein started out between his eyes. Then he bade fetch Jaafer, and when he came before him, he acquainted him with the matter and said to him, "Shall this come to pass in my city and I have no news of it?" Then he bade Jaafer fetch all whom the young Damascene had named [as having maltreated him], and when they came, he let smite off their heads. Moreover, he summoned him whom they called Ahmed and who had been the means of the young man's deliverance a first time and a second, and thanked him and showed him favour and bestowed on him a sumptuous dress of honour and invested him with the governance over his city.

Then he sent for the old man, the Muezzin, and when the messenger came to him and told him that the Commander of the Faithful sought him, he feared the denunciation of the damsel and accompanied him to the palace, walking and letting wind as he went, whilst all who passed him by laughed at him. When he came into the presence of the Commander of the Faithful, he fell a-trembling and his tongue was embarrassed, [so that he could not speak]. The Khalif laughed at him and said to him, "O elder, thou hast done no offence; so [why] fearest thou?" "O my lord," answered the old man (and indeed he was in the sorest of that which may be of fear,) "by the virtue

of thy pure forefathers, indeed I have done nought, and do thou enquire of my conduct." The Khalif laughed at him and ordering him a thousand dinars, bestowed on him a sumptuous dress of honour and made him chief of the Muezzins in his mosque.

Then he called Sitt el Milah and said to her, "The house [wherein thou lodgest] and that which is therein Is a guerdon [from me] to thy lord. So do thou take him and depart with him in the safeguard of God the Most High; but absent not yourselves from our presence." [So she went forth with Noureddin and] when she came to the house, she found that the Commander of the Faithful had sent them gifts galore and abundance of good things. As for Noureddin, he sent for his father and mother and appointed him agents and factors in the city of Damascus, to take the rent of the houses and gardens and khans and baths; and they occupied themselves with collecting that which accrued to him and sending it to him every year. Meanwhile, his father and mother came to him, with that which they had of monies and treasures and merchandise, and foregathering with their son, saw that he was become of the chief officers of the Commander of the Faithful and of the number of his session-mates and entertainers, wherefore they rejoiced in reunion with him and he also rejoiced in them.

The Khalif assigned them pensions and allowances and as for Noureddin, his father brought him those riches and his wealth waxed and his case was goodly, till he became the richest of the folk of his time in Baghdad and left not the presence of the Commander of the Faithful night or day. Moreover, he was vouchsafed children by Sitt el Milah, and he ceased not to live the most delightsome of lives, he and she and his father and mother, a while of time, till Aboulhusn sickened of a sore sickness and was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High. After awhile, his mother died also and he carried them forth and shrouded them and buried and made them expiations and nativities. Then his children grew up and became like unto moons, and he reared them in splendour and fondness, what while his wealth waxed and his case flourished. He ceased not to pay frequent visits to the Commander of the Faithful, he and his children and his slave-girl Sitt el Milah, and they abode, he and they, in all solace of life and prosperity till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies; and extolled be the perfection of the Abiding One, the Eternal! This is all that hath come down to us of their story.

El Abbas and the King's Daughter of Baghdad.

THERE was once, of old days and in bygone ages and times, in the city of Baghdad, the Abode of Peace, a king mighty of estate, lord of understanding and beneficence and liberality and generosity, and he was strong of sultanate and endowed with might and majesty and magnificence. His name was Ins ben Cais ben Rebiya es Sheibani, and when he took horse, there rode unto him [warriors] from the farthest parts of the two Iraks. God the Most High decreed that he should take to wife a woman hight Afifeh, daughter of Ased es Sundusi, who was endowed with beauty and grace and brightness and perfection and justness of shape and symmetry; her face was like unto the new moon and she had eyes as they were gazelle's eyes and an aquiline nose like the crescent moon. She had learned horsemanship and the use of arms and had thoroughly studied the sciences of the Arabs; moreover, she had gotten by heart all the dragomanish tongues and indeed she was a ravishment to mankind.

She abode with Ins ben Cais twelve years, during which time he was blessed with no children by her; wherefore his breast was straitened, by reason of the failure of lineage, and he besought his Lord to vouchsafe him a child. Accordingly the queen conceived, by permission of God the Most High; and when the days of her pregnancy were accomplished, she gave birth to a maid-child, than whom never saw eyes a goodlier, for that her face was as it were a pure pearl or a shining lamp or a golden candle or a full moon breaking forth of a cloud, extolled be the perfection of Him who created her from vile water and made her a delight to the beholders! When her father saw her on this wise of loveliness, his reason fled for joy, and when she grew up, he taught her the art of writing and polite letters and philosophy and all manner of tongues. So she excelled the folk of her time and overpassed her peers; and the sons of the kings heard of her and all of them desired to look upon her.

The first who sought her in marriage was King Nebhan of Mosul, who came to her with a great company, bringing with him an hundred she-camels laden with musk and aloes-wood and ambergris and as many laden with camphor and jewels and other hundred laden with silver money and yet other hundred laden with raiment of silken and other stuffs and brocade, besides an hundred slave-girls and an hundred magnificent horses of swift and generous breeds, completely housed and accoutred, as they were brides; and all this he laid before her father, demanding her of him in marriage. Now King Ins ben Cais had bound himself by an oath that he would not marry his daughter but to him whom she should choose; so, when King Nebhan sought her in marriage, her father went in to her and consulted her concerning his affair. She consented not and he repeated to Nebhan that which she said, whereupon he departed from him. After this came King Behram, lord of the White Island, with riches more than the first; but she accepted not of him and he returned, disappointed; nor did the kings give over coming to her father, on her account, one after other, from the farthest of the lands and the climes, each glorying in more than those who forewent him; but she paid no heed unto any of one them.

Presently, El Abbas, son of King El Aziz, lord of the land of Yemen and Zebidoun and Mecca (which God increase in honour and brightness and beauty!), heard of her;

and he was of the great ones of Mecca and the Hejaz and was a youth without hair on his cheeks. So he presented himself one day in his father's sitting-chamber, whereupon the folk made way for him and the king seated him on a chair of red gold, set with pearls and jewels. The prince sat, with his head bowed to the ground, and spoke not to any; whereby his father knew that his breast was straitened and bade the boon-companions and men of wit relate marvellous histories, such as beseem the assemblies of kings; nor was there one of them but spoke forth the goodliest of that which was with him; but El Abbas still abode with his head bowed down. Then the king bade his session-mates withdraw, and when the chamber was void, he looked at his son and said to him, "By Allah, thou rejoicest me with thy coming in to me and chagrinest me for that thou payest no heed to any of the session-mates nor of the boon-companions. What is the cause of this?"

"O father mine," answered the prince, "I have heard tell that in the land of Irak is a woman of the daughters of the kings, and her father is called King Ins ben Cais, lord of Baghdad; she is renowned for beauty and grace and brightness and perfection, and indeed many folk have sought her in marriage of the kings; but her soul consented not unto any one of them. Wherefore I am minded to travel to her, for that my heart cleaveth unto her, and I beseech thee suffer me to go to her." "O my son," answered his father, "thou knowest that I have none other than thyself of children and thou art the solace of mine eyes and the fruit of mine entrails; nay, I cannot brook to be parted from thee an instant and I purpose to set thee on the throne of the kingship and marry thee to one of the daughters of the kings, who shall be fairer than she." El Abbas gave ear to his father's word and dared not gainsay him; so he abode with him awhile, whilst the fire raged in his entrails.

Then the king took counsel with himself to build his son a bath and adorn it with various paintings, so he might show it to him and divert him with the sight thereof, to the intent that his body might be solaced thereby and that the obsession of travel might cease from him and he be turned from [his purpose of] removal from his parents. So he addressed himself to the building of the bath and assembling architects and builders and artisans from all the towns and citadels and islands [of his dominions], assigned them a site and marked out its boundaries. Then the workmen occupied themselves with the making of the bath and the setting out and adornment of its cabinets and roofs. They used paints and precious stones of all kinds, according to the variousness of their hues, red and green and blue and yellow and what not else of all manner colours; and each artisan wrought at his handicraft and each painter at his art, whilst the rest of the folk busied themselves with transporting thither varicoloured stones.

One day, as the [chief] painter wrought at his work, there came in to him a poor man, who looked long upon him and observed his handicraft; whereupon quoth the painter to him, "Knowest thou aught of painting?" "Yes," answered the stranger; so he gave him tools and paints and said to him, "Make us a rare piece of work." So the stranger entered one of the chambers of the bath and drew [on the walls thereof] a double border, which he adorned on both sides, after a fashion than which never saw eyes a fairer. Moreover, [amiddleward the chamber] he drew a picture to which there lacked but the breath, and it was the portraiture of Mariyeh, the king's daughter of

Baghdad. Then, when he had made an end of the portrait, he went his way [and told none of what he had done], nor knew any the chambers and doors of the bath and the adornment and ordinance thereof.

Presently, the chief workman came to the palace and sought an audience of the king, who bade admit him. So he entered and kissing the earth, saluted him with a salutation beseeming kings and said, "O king of the time and lord of the age and the day, may felicity endure unto thee and acceptance and be thy rank exalted over all the kings both morning and evening! The work of the bath is accomplished, by the king's fair fortune and the eminence of his magnanimity, and indeed we have done all that behoved us and there remaineth but that which behoveth the king." El Aziz ordered him a sumptuous dress of honour and expended monies galore, giving unto each who had wroughten, after the measure of his work. Then he assembled in the bath all the grandees of his state, amirs and viziers and chamberlains and lieutenants, and the chief officers of his realm and household, and sending for his son El Abbas, said to him,"O my son, I have builded thee a bath, wherein thou mayst take thy pleasance; so enter thou therein, that thou mayst see it and divert thyself by gazing upon it and viewing the goodliness of its ordinance and decoration." "With all my heart," replied the prince and entered the bath, he and the king and the folk about them, so they might divert themselves with viewing that which the workmen's hands had wroughten.

El Abbas went in and passed from place to place and chamber to chamber, till he came to the chamber aforesaid and espied the portrait of Mariyeh, whereupon he fell down in a swoon and the workmen went to his father and said to him, "Thy son El Abbas hath swooned away." So the king came and finding the prince cast down, seated himself at his head and bathed his face with rose-water. After awhile he revived and the king said to him, "God keep thee, O my son! What hath befallen thee?" "O my father," answered the prince, "I did but look on yonder picture and it bequeathed me a thousand regrets and there befell me that which thou seest." Therewithal the king bade fetch the [chief] painter, and when he stood before him, he said to him, "Tell me of yonder portrait and what girl is this of the daughters of the kings; else will I take thy head." "By Allah, O king," answered the painter, "I limned it not, neither know I who she is; but there came to me a poor man and looked at me. So I said to him, 'Knowest thou the art of painting?' And he replied, 'Yes.' Whereupon I gave him the gear and said to him, 'Make us a rare piece of work.' So he wrought yonder portrait and went away and I know him not neither have I ever set eyes on him save that day."

Therewithal the king bade all his officers go round about in the thoroughfares and colleges [of the town] and bring before him all strangers whom they found there. So they went forth and brought him much people, amongst whom was the man who had painted the portrait. When they came into the presence, the Sultan bade the crier make proclamation that whoso wrought the portrait should discover himself and have whatsoever he desired. So the poor man came forward and kissing the earth before the king, said to him, "O king of the age, I am he who painted yonder portrait." Quoth El Aziz, "And knowest thou who she is?" "Yes," answered the other; "this is the portrait of Mariyeh, daughter of the king of Baghdad." The king ordered him a dress of honour and a slave-girl [and he went his way]. Then said El Abbas, "O father mine, give me leave to go to her, so I may look upon her; else shall I depart the world, without fail."

The king his father wept and answered, saying, "O my son, I builded thee a bath, that it might divert thee from leaving me, and behold it hath been the cause of thy going forth; but the commandment of God is a foreordained decree."

Then he wept again and El Abbas said to him, "Fear not for me, for thou knowest my prowess and my puissance in returning answers in the assemblies of the land and my good breeding and skill in rhetoric; and indeed he whose father thou art and whom thou hast reared and bred and in whom thou hast united praiseworthy qualities, the repute whereof hath traversed the East and the West, thou needest not fear for him, more by token that I purpose but to seek diversion and return to thee, if it be the will of God the Most High." Quoth the king, "Whom wilt thou take with thee of attendants and [what] of good?" "O father mine," replied El Abbas, "I have no need of horses or camels or arms, for I purpose not battle, and I will have none go forth with me save my servant Aamir and no more."

As he and his father were thus engaged in talk, in came his mother and caught hold of him; and he said to her, "God on thee, let me go my gait and strive not to turn me from my purpose, for that needs must I go." "O my son," answered she, "if it must be so and there is no help for it, swear to me that them wilt not be absent from me more than a year." And he swore to her. Then he entered his father's treasuries and took therefrom what he would of jewels and jacinths and everything heavy of worth and light of carriage. Moreover, he bade his servant Aamir saddle him two horses and the like for himself, and whenas the night darkened behind him, he rose from his couch and mounting his horse, set out for Baghdad, he and Aamir, whilst the latter knew not whither he intended.

He gave not over going and the journey was pleasant to him, till they came to a goodly land, abounding in birds and wild beasts, whereupon El Abbas started a gazelle and shot it with an arrow. Then he dismounted and cutting its throat, said to his servant, "Alight thou and skin it and carry it to the water." Aamir answered him [with "Hearkening and obedience"] and going down to the water, kindled a fire and roasted the gazelle's flesh. Then they ate their fill and drank of the water, after which they mounted again and fared on diligently, and Aamir still unknowing whither El Abbas was minded to go. So he said to him, "O my lord, I conjure thee by God the Great, wilt thou not tell me whither thou intendest?" El Abbas looked at him and made answer with the following verses:

In my soul the fire of yearning and affliction rageth aye;
Lo, I burn with love and longing; nought in answer can I say.
To Baghdad upon a matter of all moment do I fare,
For the love of one whose beauties have my reason led astray.
Under me's a slender camel, a devourer of the waste;
Those who pass a cloudlet deem it, as it flitteth o'er the way.
So, O Aamir, haste thy going, e'en as I do, so may
I Heal my sickness and the draining of the cup of love essay;
For the longing that abideth in my heart is hard to bear.
Fare with me, then, to my loved one. Answer nothing, but obey.

When Aamir heard his lord's verses, he knew that he was a slave of love [and that she of whom he was enamoured abode] in Baghdad. Then they fared on night and day, traversing plains and stony wastes, till they came in sight of Baghdad and lighted down in its suburbs and lay the night there. When they arose in the morning, they removed to the bank of the Tigris and there they encamped and sojourned three days.

As they abode thus on the fourth day, behold, a company of folk giving their beasts the rein and crying aloud and saying, "Quick! Quick! Haste to our rescue, O King!" Therewithal the king's chamberlains and officers accosted them and said to them, "What is behind you and what hath befallen you?" Quoth they, "Bring us before the king." [So they carried them to Ins ben Cais;] and when they saw him, they said to him, "O king, except thou succour us, we are dead men; for that we are a folk of the Benou Sheiban, who have taken up our abode in the parts of Bassora, and Hudheifeh the Arab hath come down on us with his horses and his men and hath slain our horsemen and carried off our women and children; nor was one saved of the tribe but he who fled; wherefore we crave help [first] by God the Most High, then by thy life."

When the king heard their speech, he bade the crier make proclamation in the thoroughfares of the city that the troops should prepare [for the march] and that the horsemen should mount and the footmen come forth; nor was it but the twinkling of the eye ere the drums beat and the trumpets sounded; and scarce was the forenoon of the day passed when the city was blocked with horse and foot. So the king passed them in review and behold, they were four-and-twenty thousand in number, horsemen and footmen. He bade them go forth to the enemy and gave the commandment over them to Said ibn el Wakidi, a doughty cavalier and a valiant man of war. So the horsemen set out and fared on along the bank of the Tigris.

El Abbas looked at them and saw the ensigns displayed and the standards loosed and heard the drums beating; so he bade his servant saddle him a charger and look to the girths and bring him his harness of war. Quoth Aamir, "And indeed I saw El Abbas his eyes flash and the hair of his hands stood on end, for that indeed horsemanship abode [rooted in his heart]."So he mounted his charger, whilst Aamir also bestrode a war-horse, and they went forth with the troops and fared on two days. On the third day, after the hour of the mid-afternoon prayer, they came in sight of the enemy and the two armies met and the ranks joined battle. The strife raged amain and sore was the smiting, whilst the dust rose in clouds and hung vaulted [over them], so that all eyes were blinded; and they ceased not from the battle till the night overtook them, when the two hosts drew off from the mellay and passed the night, perplexed concerning themselves [and the issue of their affair].

When God caused the morning morrow, the two armies drew out in battle array and the troops stood looking at one another. Then came forth El Harith ibn Saad between the two lines and played with his lance and cried out and recited the following verses:

Algates ye are our prey become; this many a day and night
Right instantly of God we've craved to be vouchsafed your sight.
So hath the Merciful towards Hudheifeh driven you,
A champion ruling over all, a lion of great might.

Is there a man of you will come, that I may heal his paint
With blows right profitful for him who's sick for lust of fight?

By Allah, come ye forth to me, for lo, I'm come to you I May he who's wronged the victory get and God defend the right!

Thereupon there sallied forth to him Zuheir ben Hebib, and they wheeled about and feinted awhile, then came to dose quarters and exchanged strokes. El Harith forewent his adversary in smiting and stretched him weltering in his gore; whereupon Hudheifeh cried out to him, saying, "Gifted of God art thou, O Harith! Call another of them." So he cried out, saying, "Is there a comer-forth [to battle?]" But they of Baghdad held back froni him; and when it appeared to El Harith that confusion was amongst them, he fell upon them and overthrew the first of them upon their last and slew of them twelve men. Then the evening overtook him and the Baghdadis addressed themselves to flight.

When the morning morrowed, they found themselves reduced to a fourth part of their number and there was not one of them had dismounted from his horse. So they made sure of destruction and Hudheifeh came out between the ranks (now he was reckoned for a thousand cavaliers) and cried out, saying, "Harkye, my masters of Baghdad! Let none come forth to me but your Amir, so I may talk with him and he with me; and he shall meet me in single combat and I will meet him, and may he who is void of offence come off safe!" Then he repeated his speech and said, "Why do I not hear your Amir return me an answer?" But Saad, the amir of the army of Baghdad, [replied not to him], and indeed his teeth chattered in his head, whenas he heard him summon him to single combat.

When El Abbas heard Hudheifeh's challenge and saw Saad in this case, he came up to the latter and said to him, "Wilt thou give me leave to reply to him and I will stand thee in stead in the answering of him and the going forth to battle with him and will make myself thy sacrifice?" Saad looked at him and seeing valour shining from between his eyes, said to him, "O youth, by the virtue of the Chosen [Prophet,] (whom God bless and keep,) tell me [who thou art and] whence thou comest to our succour." "This is no place for questioning," answered the prince; and Saad said to him, "O champion, up and at Hudheifeh! Yet, if his devil prove too strong for thee, afflict not thyself in thy youth." Quoth El Abbas, "It is of Allah that help is to be sought," and taking his arms, fortified his resolution and went down [into the field], as he were a castle of the castles or a piece of a mountain.

[When] Hudheifeh [saw him], he cried out to him, saying, "Haste thee not, O youth! Who art thou of the folk?" And he answered, "I am Saad [ibn] el Wakidi, commander of the host of King Ins, and but that thou vauntedst thyself in challenging me, I had not come forth to thee; for that thou art not of my peers neither art counted equal to me in prowess and canst not avail against my onslaught. Wherefore prepare thee for departure, seeing that there abideth but a little of thy life." When Hudheifeh heard this his speech, he threw himself backward, as if in mockery of him, whereat El Abbas was wroth and called out to him, saying, "O Hudheifeh, guard thyself against me." Then he rushed upon him, as he were a swooper of the Jinn, and Hudheifeh met him and they wheeled about a long while.

Presently, El Abbas cried out at Hudheifeh a cry that astonied him and dealt him a blow, saying, "Take this from the hand of a champion who feareth not the like of thee." Hudheifeh met the stroke with his shield, thinking to ward it off from him; but the sword shore the target in sunder and descending upon his shoulder, came forth gleaming from the tendons of his throat and severed his arm at the armpit; whereupon he fell down, wallowing in his blood, and El Abbas turned upon his host; nor had the sun departed the pavilion of the heavens ere Hudheifeh's army was in full flight before El Abbas and the saddles were empty of men. Quoth Saad, "By the virtue of the Chosen [Prophet], whom God bless and keep, I saw El Abbas with the blood upon his saddle pads, [in gouts] like camels' livers, smiting with the sword right and left, till he scattered them abroad in every mountain-pass and desert; and when he turned [back to the camp], the men of Baghdad were fearful of him."

When the Baghdadis saw this succour that had betided them against their enemies [and the victory that El Abbas had gotten them], they turned back and gathering together the spoils [of the defeated host], arms and treasures and horses, returned to Baghdad, victorious, and all by the valour of El Abbas. As for Saad, he foregathered with the prince, and they fared on in company till they came to the place where El Abbas had taken horse, whereupon the latter dismounted from his charger and Saad said to him, "O youth, wherefore alightest thou in other than thy place? Indeed, thy due is incumbent upon us and upon our Sultan; so go thou with us to the dwellings, that we may ransom thee with our souls." "O Amir Saad," replied El Abbas, "from this place I took horse with thee and herein is my lodging. So, God on thee, name me not to the king, but make as if thou hadst never seen me, for that I am a stranger in the land."

So saying, he turned away from him and Saad fared on to the palace, where he found all the suite in attendance on the king and recounting to him that which had betided them with El Abbas. Quoth the king, "Where is he?" And they answered, "He is with the Amir Saad." [So, when the latter entered], the king [looked, but] found none with him; and Saad, seeing that he hankered after the youth, cried out to him, saying, "God prolong the king's days! Indeed, he refuseth to present himself before thee, without leave or commandment." "O Saad," asked the king, "whence cometh this man?" And the Amir answered, "O my lord, I know not; but he is a youth fair of favour, lovesome of aspect, accomplished in discourse, goodly of repartee, and valour shineth from between his eyes."

Quoth the king, "O Saad, fetch him to me, for indeed thou describest to me a masterful man." And he answered, saying, "By Allah, O my lord, hadst thou but seen our case with Hudheifeh, what while he challenged me to the field of war and the stead of thrusting and smiting and I held back from doing battle with him! Then, whenas I thought to go forth to him, behold, a cavalier gave loose to his bridle-rein and called out to me, saying, 'O Saad, wilt thou suffer me to fill thy room in waging war with him and I will ransom thee with myself?' And I said, 'By Allah, O youth, whence cometh thou?' Quoth he, 'This is no time for thy questions.'" Then he recounted to the king all that had passed between himself and El Abbas from first to last; whereupon quoth Ins ben Cais, "Bring him to me in haste, so we may learn his tidings and question him

of his case." "It is well," answered Saad, and going forth of the king's presence, repaired to his own house, where he put off his harness of war and took rest for himself.

To return to El Abbas, when he alighted from his charger, he put off his harness of war and rested awhile; after which he brought out a shirt of Venetian silk and a gown of green damask and donning them, covered himself with a turban of Damietta stuff and girt his middle with a handkerchief. Then he went out a-walking in the thoroughfares of Baghdad and fared on till he came to the bazaar of the merchants. There he found a merchant, with chess before him; so he stood watching him and presently the other looked up at him and said to him, "O youth, what wilt thou stake upon the game?" And he answered, "Be it thine to decide." "Then be it a hundred dinars," said the merchant, and El Abbas consented to him, whereupon quoth he, "O youth, produce the money, so the game may be fairly stablished." So El Abbas brought out a satin purse, wherein were a thousand dinars, and laid down an hundred dinars therefrom on the edge of the carpet, whilst the merchant did the like, and indeed his reason fled for joy, whenas he saw the gold in El Abbas his possession.

The folk flocked about them, to divert themselves with watching the play, and they called the bystanders to witness of the wager and fell a-playing. El Abbas forbore the merchant, so he might lead him on, and procrastinated with him awhile; and the merchant won and took of him the hundred dinars. Then said the prince, "Wilt thou play another game?" And the other answered, "O youth, I will not play again, except it be for a thousand dinars." Quoth the prince, "Whatsoever thou stakest, I will match thy stake with the like thereof." So the merchant brought out a thousand dinars and the prince covered them with other thousand. Then they fell a-playing, but El Abbas was not long with him ere he beat him in the square of the elephant, nor did he leave to do thus till he had beaten him four times and won of him four thousand dinars.

This was all the merchant's good; so he said, "O youth, I will play thee another game for the shop." Now the value of the shop was four thousand dinars; so they played and El Abbas beat him and won his shop, with that which was therein; whereupon the other arose, shaking his clothes, and said to him, "Up, O youth, and take thy shop." So El Abbas arose and repairing to the shop, took possession thereof, after which he returned to [the place where he had left] his servant [Aamir] and found there the Amir Saad, who was come to bid him to the presence of the king. El Abbas consented to this and accompanied him till they came before King Ins ben Cais, whereupon he kissed the earth and saluted him and exceeded in the salutation. Quoth the king to him, "Whence comest thou, O youth?" and he answered, "I come from Yemen."

Then said the king, "Hast thou a need we may accomplish unto thee? For indeed we are exceeding beholden to thee for that which thou didst in the matter of Hudheifeh and his folk." And he let cast over him a mantle of Egyptian satin, worth an hundred dinars. Moreover, he bade his treasurer give him a thousand dinars and said to him, "O youth, take this in part of that which thou deserves! of us; and if thou prolong thy sojourn with us, we will give thee slaves and servants." El Abbas kissed the earth and said, "O king, may grant thee abiding prosperity, I deserve not all this." Then he put his hand to his poke and pulling out two caskets of gold, in each of which were rubies, whose value none could tell, gave them to the king, saying, "O king, God

cause thy prosperity to endure, I conjure thee by that which God hath vouchsafed thee, heal my heart by accepting these two caskets, even as I have accepted thy present." So the king accepted the two caskets and El Abbas took his leave and went away to the bazaar.

When the merchants saw him, they accosted him and said, "O youth, wilt thou not open thy shop?" As they were bespeaking him, up came a woman, having with her a boy, bareheaded, and [stood] looking at El Abbas, till he turned to her, when she said to him, "O youth, I conjure thee by Allah, look at this boy and have pity on him, for that his father hath forgotten his cap in the shop [he lost to thee]; so if thou will well to give it to him, thy reward be with God! For indeed the child maketh our hearts ache with his much weeping, and God be witness for us that, were there left us aught wherewithal to buy him a cap in its stead, we had not sought it of thee." "O adornment of womankind," replied El Abbas, "indeed, thou bespeakest me with thy fair speech and supplicatest me with thy goodly words ...But bring me thy husband." So she went and fetched the merchant, whilst the folk assembled to see what El Abbas would do. When the man came, he returned him the gold he had won of him, all and part, and delivered him the keys of the shop, saying, "Requite us with thy pious prayers."Therewithal the woman came up to him and kissed his feet, and on like wise did the merchant her husband; and all who were present blessed him, and there was no talk but of El Abbas.

As for the merchant, he bought him a sheep and slaughtering it, roasted it and dressed birds and [other] meats of various kinds and colours and bought dessert and sweetmeats and fresh fruits. Then he repaired to El Abbas and conjured him to accept of his hospitality and enter his house and eat of his victual. The prince consented to his wishes and went with him till they came to his house, when the merchant bade him enter. So El Abbas entered and saw a goodly house, wherein was a handsome saloon, with a vaulted estrade. When he entered the saloon, he found that the merchant had made ready food and dessert and perfumes, such as overpass description; and indeed he had adorned the table with sweet-scented flowers and sprinkled musk and rose-water upon the food. Moreover, he had smeared the walls of the saloon with ambergris and set [the smoke of burning] aloes-wood abroach therein.

Presently, El Abbas looked out of the window of the saloon and saw thereby a house of goodly ordinance, lofty of building and abounding in chambers, with two upper stories; but therein was no sign of inhabitants. So he said to the merchant, "Indeed, thou exceedest in doing us honour; but, by Allah, I will not eat of thy victual till thou tell me what is the reason of the emptiness of yonder house." "O my lord," answered the other, "that was El Ghitrif's house and he was admitted to the mercy of God and left none other heir than myself; so it became mine, and by Allah, if thou hast a mind to sojourn in Baghdad, do thou take up thine abode in this house, so thou mayst be in my neighbourhood; for that indeed my heart inclineth unto thee with love and I would have thee never absent from my sight, so I may still have my fill of thee and hearken to thy speech." El Abbas thanked him and said to him, "Indeed, thou art friendly in thy speech and exceedest [in courtesy] in thy discourse, and needs must I sojourn in Baghdad. As for the house, if it like thee, I will abide therein; so take of me its price."

So saying, he put his hand to his poke and bringing out therefrom three hundred dinars, gave them to the merchant, who said in himself, "Except I take the money, he will not abide in the house." So he pouched the money and sold him the house, taking the folk to witness against himself of the sale. Then he arose and set food before El Abbas and they ate of the good things which he had provided; after which he brought him dessert and sweetmeats. They ate thereof till they had enough, when the tables were removed and they washed their hands with rose-water and willow-flower-water. Then the merchant brought El Abbas a napkin perfumed with the fragrant smoke of aloes-wood, on which he wiped his hand, and said to him, "O my lord, the house is become thy house; so bid thy servant transport thither the horses and arms and stuffs." El Abbas did this and the merchant rejoiced in his neighbourhood and left him not night nor day, so that the prince said to him, "By Allah, I distract thee from thy livelihood." "God on thee, O my lord," replied the merchant, "name not to me aught of this, or thou wilt break my heart, for the best of traffic is thy company and thou art the best of livelihood." So there befell strait friendship between them and ceremony was laid aside from between them.

Meanwhile the king said to his vizier, "How shall we do in the matter of yonder youth, the Yemani, on whom we thought to confer largesse, but he hath largessed us with tenfold [our gift] and more, and we know not if he be a sojourner with us or no?" Then he went into the harem and gave the rubies to his wife Afifeh, who said to him, "What is the worth of these with thee and with [other] the kings?" And he answered, "They are not to be found save with the greatest of kings and none may avail to price them with money." Quoth she, "Whence gottest thou them?" So he recounted to her the story of El Abbas from first to last, and she said, "By Allah, the claims of honour are imperative on us and the king hath fallen short of his due; for that we have not seen him bid him to his assembly, nor hath he seated him on his left hand."

[When the king heard his wife's words], it was as if he had been asleep and awoke; so he went forth of the harem and bade slaughter fowls and dress meats of all kinds and colours. Moreover, he assembled all his retainers and let bring sweetmeats and dessert and all that beseemeth unto kings' tables. Then he adorned his palace and despatched after El Abbas a man of the chief officers of his household, who found him coming forth of the bath, clad in a doublet of fine goats' hair and over it a Baghdadi scarf; his waist was girt with a Rustec kerchief and on his head he wore a light turban of Damietta make.

The messenger wished him joy of the bath and exceeded in doing him worship. Then he said to him, "The king biddeth thee in weal." "Hearkening and obedience," answered El Abbas and accompanied the messenger to the king's palace.

Now Afifeh and her daughter Mariyeh were behind the curtain, looking at him; and when he came before the king, he saluted him and greeted him with the greeting of kings, whilst all who were present stared at him and at his beauty and grace and perfection. The king seated him at the head of the table; and when Afifeh saw him and straitly considered him, she said, "By the virtue of Mohammed, prince of the Apostles, this youth is of the sons of the kings and cometh not to these parts but for some high purpose!" Then she looked at Mariyeh and saw that her face was changed, and indeed her eyes were dead in her face and she turned not her gaze from El Abbas a glance of

the eyes, for that the love of him had gotten hold upon her heart. When the queen saw what had befallen her daughter, she feared for her from reproach concerning El Abbas; so she shut the wicket of the lattice and suffered her not to look upon him more. Now there was a pavilion set apart for Mariyeh, and therein were privy chambers and balconies and lattices, and she had with her a nurse, who served her, after the fashion of kings' daughters.

When the banquet was ended and the folk had dispersed, the king said to El Abbas, "I would fain have thee [abide] with me and I will buy thee a house, so haply we may requite thee the high services for which we are beholden to thee; for indeed thy due is imperative [upon us] and thy worth is magnified in our eyes; and indeed we have fallen short of thy due in the matter of distance." When the prince heard the king's speech, he rose and sat down and kissing the earth, returned thanks for his bounty and said, "I am the king's servant, wheresoever I may be, and under his eye." Then he recounted to him the story of the merchant and the manner of the buying of the house, and the king said, "Indeed, I would fain have had thee with me and in my neighbourhood."

Then El Abbas took leave of the king and went away to his own house. Now it befell that he passed under the palace of Mariyeh the king's daughter, and she was sitting at a window. He chanced to look round and his eyes met those of the princess, whereupon his wit departed and he was like to swoon away, whilst his colour changed and he said, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return!" But he feared for himself lest estrangement betide him; so he concealed his secret and discovered not his case to any of the creatures of God the Most High. When he reached his house, his servant Aamir said to him, "O my lord, I seek refuge for thee with God from change of colour! Hath there betided thee a pain from God the Most High or hath aught of vexation befallen thee? Verily, sickness hath an end and patience doth away vexation." But the prince returned him no answer. Then he brought out inkhorn [and pen] and paper and wrote the following verses:

Quoth I (and mine a body is of passion all forslain,
Ay, and a heart that's all athirst for love and longing pain
And eye that knoweth not the sweet of sleep; yet she, who caused
My dole, may Fortune's perfidies for aye from her abstain!
Yea, for the perfidies of Fate and sev'rance I'm become
Even as was Bishr of old time with Hind, a fearful swain;
A talking-stock among the folk for ever I abide;
Life and the days pass by, yet ne'er my wishes I attain),
"Knoweth my loved one when I see her at the lattice high
Shine as the sun that flameth forth in heaven's blue demesne?"
Her eye is sharper than a sword; the soul with ecstasy
It takes and longing leaves behind, that nothing may assain.
As at the casement high she sat, her charms I might espy,
For from her cheeks the envious veil that hid them she had ta'en.
She shot at me a shaft that reached my heart and I became
The bond- man of despair, worn out with effort all in vain.

Fawn of the palace, knowst thou not that I, to look on thee,
The world have traversed, far and wide, o'er many a hill and plain?
Read then my writ and pity thou the blackness of my fate,
Sick, love- distraught, without a friend to whom I may complain.

Now the merchant's wife aforesaid, who was the nurse of the king's daughter, was watching him from a window, unknown of him, and [when she heard his verses], she knew that there hung some rare story by him; so she went in to him and said, "Peace be on thee, O afflicted one, who acquaintest not physician with thy case! Verily, thou exposest thyself unto grievous peril! I conjure thee by the virtue of Him who hath afflicted thee and stricken thee with the constraint of love-liking, that thou acquaint me with thine affair and discover to me the truth of thy secret; for that indeed I have heard from thee verses that trouble the wit and dissolve the body." So he acquainted her with his case and enjoined her to secrecy, whereof she consented unto him, saying, "What shall be the recompense of whoso goeth with thy letter and bringeth thee an answer thereto?" He bowed his head for shamefastness before her [and was silent]; and she said to him, "Raise thy head and give me thy letter." So he gave her the letter and she took it and carrying it to the princess, said to her, "Read this letter and give me the answer thereto."

Now the liefest of all things to Mariyeh was the recitation of poems and verses and linked rhymes and the twanging [of the strings of the lute], and she was versed in all tongues; so she took the letter and opening it, read that which was therein and apprehended its purport. Then she cast it on the ground and said, "O nurse, I have no answer to make to this letter." Quoth the nurse, "Indeed, this is weakness in thee and a reproach unto thee, for that the people of the world have heard of thee and still praise thee for keenness of wit and apprehension; so do thou return him an answer, such as shall delude his heart and weary his soul." "O nurse," rejoined the princess, "who is this that presumeth upon me with this letter? Belike he is the stranger youth who gave my father the rubies." "It is himself," answered the woman, and Mariyeh said, "I will answer his letter on such a wise that thou shalt not bring me other than it [from him]." Quoth the nurse, "So be it." So the princess called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

O'erbold art thou in that to me, a stranger, thou hast sent
These verses; 'twill but add to thee unease and miscontent.
Now God forbid thou shouldst attain thy wishes! What care
I If thou have looked on me a look that caused thee languishment?
Who art thou, wretch, that thou shouldst hope to win me?
With thy rhymes What wouldst of me? Thy reason, sure, with passion is forspent.
If to my favours thou aspire and covet me, good lack!
What leach such madness can assain or what medicament?
Leave rhyming, madman that thou art, lest, bound upon the cross,
Thou thy presumption in the stead of abjectness repent.
Deem not, O youth, that I to thee incline; indeed, no part
Have I in those who walk the ways, the children of the tent.
In the wide world no house thou hast, a homeless wanderer thou:

To thine own place thou shall be borne, an object for lament.
Forbear thy verse-making, O thou that harbourest in the camp,
Lest to the gleemen thou become a name of wonderment.
How many a lover, who aspires to union with his love,
For all his hopes seem near, is baulked of that whereon he's bent!
Then get thee gone nor covet that which thou shall ne'er obtain;
So shall it be, although the time seem near and the event.
Thus unto thee have I set forth my case; consider well
My words, so thou mayst guided be aright by their intent.

When she had made an end of her verses, she folded the letter and delivered it to the nurse, who took it and went with it to El Abbas. When she gave it to him, he took it and breaking it open, read it and apprehended its purport; and when he came to the end of it, he swooned away. After awhile, he came to himself and said, "Praised be God who hath caused her return an answer to my letter! Canst thou carry her another letter, and with God the Most High be thy requital?" Quoth she, "And what shall letters profit thee, seeing she answereth on this wise?" But he said, "Belike, she may yet be softened." Then he took inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Thy letter reached me; when the words thou wrot'st therein
I read, My longing waxed and pain and woe redoubled on my head.
Yea, wonder-words I read therein, my trouble that increased
And caused emaciation wear my body to a shred.
Would God thou knewst what I endure for love of thee and how
My vitals for thy cruelty are all forspent and dead!
Fain, fain would I forget thy love. Alack, my heart denies
To be consoled, and 'gainst thy wrath nought standeth me in stead.
An thou'dst vouchsafe to favour me,'twould lighten my despair,
Though but in dreams thine image 'twere that visited my bed.
Persist not on my weakliness with thy disdain nor be
Treason and breach of love its troth to thee attributed;
For know that hither have I fared and come to this thy land,
By hopes of union with thee and near fruition led.
How oft I've waked, whilst over me my comrades kept the watch!
How many a stony waste I've crossed, how many a desert dread!
From mine own land, to visit thee, I came at love's command,
For all the distance did forbid,'twixt me and thee that spread.
Wherefore, by Him who letteth waste my frame, have ruth on me
And quench my yearning and the fires by passion in me fed.
In glory's raiment clad, by thee the stars of heaven are shamed
And in amaze the full moon stares to see thy goodlihead.
All charms, indeed, thou dost comprise; so who shall vie with thee
And who shall blame me if for love of such a fair I'm sped?

When he had made an end of his verses, he folded the letter and delivering it to the nurse, charged her keep the secret. So she took it and carrying it to Mariyeh, gave it to her. The princess broke it open and read it and apprehended its purport. Then said

she, "By Allah, O nurse, my heart is burdened with an exceeding chagrin, never knew I a dourer, because of this correspondence and of these verses." And the muse made answer to her, saying, "O my lady, thou art in thy dwelling and thy place and thy heart is void of care; so return him an answer and reck thou not" Accordingly, the princess called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Thou that the dupe of yearning art, how many a melting wight
In waiting for the unkept tryst doth watch the weary night!
If in night's blackness thou hast plunged into the desert's heart
And hast denied thine eyes the taste of sleep and its delight,
If near and far thy toiling feet have trod the ways and thou
Devils and Marids hast ensued nor wouldst be led aright,
And dar'dst, O dweller in the tents, to lift thine eyes to me,
Hoping by stress to win of me the amorous delight,
Get thee to patience fair, if thou remember thee of that
Whose issues (quoth the Merciful) are ever benedight.
How many a king for my sweet sake with other kings hath vied,
Still craving union with me and suing for my sight!
Whenas En Nebhan strove to win my grace, himself to me
With camel- loads he did commend of musk and camphor white,
And aloes-wood, to boot, he brought and caskets full of pearls
And priceless rubies and the like of costly gems and bright;
Yea, and black slaves he proffered me and slave-girls big with child
And steeds of price, with splendid arms and trappings rich bedight.
Raiment of silk and sendal, too, he brought to us for gift,
And me in marriage sought therewith; yet, all his pains despite,
Of me he got not what he sought and brideless did return,
For that estrangement and disdain were pleasing in my sight.
Wherefore, O stranger, dare thou not approach me with desire,
Lest ruin quick and pitiless thy hardihood requite.

When she had made an end of her verses, she folded the letter and delivered it to the nurse, who took it and carried it to El Abbas. He broke it open and read it and apprehended its purport; then took inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Indeed, thou'st told the tale of kings and men of might,
Each one a lion fierce, impetuous in the fight,
Whose wits (like mine, alack!) thou stalest and whose hearts
With shafts from out thine eyes bewitching thou didst smite.
Yea, and how slaves and steeds and good and virgin girls
Were proffered thee to gift, thou hast not failed to cite,
How presents in great store thou didst refuse and eke
The givers, great and small, with flouting didst requite.
Then came I after them, desiring thee, with me
No second save my sword, my falchion keen and bright.
No slaves with me have I nor camels swift of foot,

Nor slave-girls have I brought in curtained litters dight.
Yet, an thou wilt vouchsafe thy favours unto me,
My sabre thou shalt see the foemen put to flight;
Ay, and around Baghdad the horsemen shalt behold,
Like clouds that wall the world, full many a doughty knight,
All hearkening to my word, obeying my command,
In whatsoever thing is pleasing to my sight.
If slaves thou fain wouldst have by thousands every day
Or, kneeling at thy feet, see kings of mickle might,
And horses eke wouldst have led to thee day by day
And girls, high- breasted maids, and damsels black and white,
Lo under my command the land of Yemen is
And trenchant is my sword against the foe in fight.
Whenas the couriers came with news of thee, how fair
Thou wast and sweet and how thy visage shone with light,
All, all, for thy sweet sake, I left; ay, I forsook
Aziz, my sire, and those akin to me that hight
And unto Irak fared, my way to thee to make,
And crossed the stony wastes i' the darkness of the night.
Then sent I speech to thee in verses such as burn
The heart; reproach therein was none nor yet unright;
Yet with perfidiousness (sure Fortune's self as thou
Ne'er so perfidious was) my love thou didst requite
And deemedst me a waif, a homeless good-for-nought,
A slave-begotten brat, a wanton, witless wight.

Then he folded the letter and committed it to the nurse and gave her five hundred dinars, saying, "Accept this from me, for that indeed thou hast wearied thyself between us." "By Allah, O my lord," answered she, "my desire is to bring about union between you, though I lose that which my right hand possesseth." And he said, "May God the Most High requite thee with good!" Then she carried the letter to Mariyeh and said to her, "Take this letter; belike it may be the end of the correspondence." So she took it and breaking it open, read it, and when she had made an end of it, she turned to the nurse and said to her, "This fellow putteth off lies upon me and avoucheth unto me that he hath cities and horsemen and footmen at his command and submitting to his allegiance; and he seeketh of me that which he shall not obtain; for thou knowest, O nurse, that kings' sons have sought me in marriage, with presents and rarities; but I have paid no heed unto aught of this; so how shall I accept of this fellow, who is the fool of his time and possesseth nought but two caskets of rubies, which he gave to my father, and indeed he hath taken up his abode in the house of El Ghitrif and abideth without silver or gold? Wherefore, I conjure thee by Allah, O nurse, return to him and cut off his hope of me."

Accordingly the nurse returned to El Abbas, without letter or answer; and when she came in to him, he saw that she was troubled and noted the marks of chagrin on her face; so he said to her, "What is this plight?" Quoth she, "I cannot set out to thee

that which Mariyeh said; for indeed she charged me return to thee without letter or answer." "O nurse of kings," rejoined El Abbas, "I would have thee carry her this letter and return not to her without it." Then he took inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

My secret is disclosed, the which I strove to hide;
Of thee and of thy love enough have I abyed.
My kinsmen and my friends for thee I did forsake
And left them weeping tears that poured as 'twere a tide.
Yea, to Baghdad I came, where rigour gave me chase
And I was overthrown of cruelty and pride.
Repression's draught, by cups, from the beloved's hand
I've quaffed; with colocynth for wine she hath me plied.
Oft as I strove to make her keep the troth of love,
Unto concealment's ways still would she turn aside.
My body is dissolved with sufferance in vain;
Relenting, ay, and grace I hoped should yet betide;
But rigour still hath waxed on me and changed my case
And love hath left me bound, afflicted, weeping-eyed.
How long shall I anights distracted be for love Of thee?
How long th' assaults of grief and woes abide?
Thou, thou enjoy'st repose and comfortable sleep,
Nor of the mis'ries reckst by which my heart is wried.
I watch the stars for wake and pray that the belov'd
May yet to me relent and bid my tears be dried.
The pains of long desire have wasted me away;
Estrangement and disdain my body sore have tried.
"Be thou not hard of heart," quoth I. Had ye but deigned
To visit me in dreams, I had been satisfied.
But when ye saw my writ, the standard ye o'erthrew
Of faith, your favours grudged and aught of grace denied.
Nay, though ye read therein discourse that sure should speak
To heart and soul, no word thereunto ye replied,
But deemed yourself secure from every changing chance
Nor recked the ebb and flow of Fortune's treacherous tide.
Were my affliction thine, love's anguish hadst thou dreed
And in the flaming hell of long estrangement sighed.
Yet shall thou suffer that which I from thee have borne
And with love's woes thy heart shall yet be mortified.
The bitterness of false accusing shall thou taste
And eke the thing reveal that thou art fain to hide;
Yea, he thou lov'st shall be hard-hearted, recking not
Of fortune's turns or fate's caprices, in his pride.
Wherewith farewell, quoth I, and peace be on thee aye,
What while the branches bend, what while the stars abide.

When he had made an end of his verses, he folded the letter and gave it to the nurse, who took it and carried it to Mariyeh. When she came into the princess's presence, she saluted her; but Mariyeh returned not her salutation and she said, "O my lady, how hard is thy heart that thou grudgest to return the salutation! Take this letter, for that it is the last of that which shall come to thee from him." Quoth Mariyeh, "Take my warning and never again enter my palace, or it will be the cause of thy destruction; for I am certified that thou purposest my dishonour. So get thee gone from me." And she commanded to beat the nurse; whereupon the latter went forth fleeing from her presence, changed of colour and absent of wits, and gave not over going till she came to the house of El Abbas.

When the prince saw her in this plight, he was as a sleeper awakened and said to her, "What hath befallen thee? Set out to me thy case." "God on thee," answered she, "nevermore send me to Mariyeh, and do thou protect me, so may God protect thee from the fires of hell!" Then she related to him that which had bedded her with Mariyeh; which when he heard, there took him the shamefastness of the generous and this was grievous unto him. The love of Mariyeh fled forth of his heart and he said to the nurse, "How much hadst thou of Mariyeh every month?" "Ten dinars," answered she, and he said, "Be not concerned." Then he put his hand to his poke and bringing out two hundred dinars, gave them to her and said, "Take this for a whole year's wage and turn not again to serve any one. When the year is out, I will give thee two years' wage, for that thou hast wearied thyself with us and on account of the cutting off of thy dependence upon Mariyeh."

Moreover, he gave her a complete suit of clothes and raising his head to her, said, "When thou toldest me that which Mariyeh had done with thee, God rooted out the love of her from my heart, and never again will she occur to my mind; so extolled be the perfection of Him who turneth hearts and eyes! It was she who was the cause of my coming out from Yemen, and now the time is past for which I engaged with my people and I fear lest my father levy his troops and come forth in quest of me, for that he hath no child other than myself and cannot brook to be parted from me; and on like wise is it with my mother." When the nurse heard his words, she said to him, "O my lord, and which of the kings is thy father?" "My father is El Aziz, lord of Yemen and Nubia and the Islands of the Benou Kehtan and the Two Noble Sanctuaries (God the Most High have them in His keeping!)," answered El Abbas; "and whenas he taketh horse, there mount with him an hundred and twenty and four thousand horsemen, all smiters with the sword, let alone attendants and servants and followers, all of whom give ear unto my word and obey my commandment." "Why, then, O my lord," asked the nurse, "didst thou conceal the secret of thy rank and lineage and passedst thyself off for a wayfarer? Alas for our disgrace before thee by reason of our shortcoming in rendering thee thy due! What shall be our excuse with thee, and thou of the sons of the kings?" But he rejoined, "By Allah, thou hast not fallen short! Nay, it is incumbent on me to requite thee, what while I live, though I be far distant from thee."

Then he called his servant Aamir and said to him, "Saddle the horses." When the nurse heard his words and indeed [she saw that] Aamir brought him the horses and they were resolved upon departure, the tears ran down upon her cheeks and she said to him, "By Allah, thy separation is grievous to me, O solace of the eye!" Then said she,

"Where is the goal of thine intent, so we may know thy news and solace ourselves with thy report?" Quoth he, "I go hence to visit Akil, the son of my father's brother, for that he hath his sojourn in the camp of Kundeh ben Hisham, and these twenty years have I not seen him nor he me; wherefore I purpose to repair to him and discover his news and return hither. Then will I go hence to Yemen, if it be the will of God the Most High."

So saying, he took leave of the woman and her husband and set out, intending for Akil, his father's brother's son. Now there was between Baghdad and Akil's abiding-place forty days' journey; so El Abbas settled himself on the back of his courser and his servant Aamir mounted also and they fared forth on their way. Presently, El Abbas turned right and left and recited the following verses:

I am the champion-slayer, the warrior without peer;
My foes I slay, destroying the hosts, when I appear.
Tow'rds El Akil my journey I take; to visit him,
The wastes in praise and safety I traverse, without fear,
And all the desert spaces devour, whilst to my rede,
Or if in sport or earnest, still Aamir giveth ear.
Who letteth us or hind'reth our way, I spring on him,
As springeth lynx or panther upon the frighted deer;
With ruin I o'erwhelm him and abjectness and woe
And cause him quaff the goblet of death and distance drear.
Well-ground my polished sword is and thin and keen of edge
And trenchant, eke, for smiting and long my steel-barbed spear.
So fell and fierce my stroke is, if on a mountain high
It lit, though all of granite, right through its midst 'twould shear.
Nor troops have I nor henchmen nor one to lend me aid
Save God, to whom, my Maker, my voice in praise I rear.
'Tis He who pardoneth errors alike to slave and free;
On Him is my reliance in good and evil cheer.

Then they fell to journeying night and day, and as they went, behold, they sighted a camp of the camps of the Arabs. So El Abbas enquired thereof and was told that it was the camp of the Benou Zuhreh. Now there were around them sheep and cattle, such as filled the earth, and they were enemies to El Akil, the cousin of El Abbas, upon whom they still made raids and took his cattle; wherefore he used to pay them tribute every year, for that he availed not to cope with them. When El Abbas came near the camp, he dismounted from his courser and his servant Aamir also dismounted; and they set down the victual and ate their sufficiency and rested awhile of the day. Then said the prince to Aamir, "Fetch water and give the horses to drink and draw water for us in thy water-bag, by way of provision for the road."

So Aamir took the water-skin and made for the water; but, when he came to the well, behold, two young men with gazelles, and when they saw him, they said to him, "Whither wilt thou, O youth, and of which of the Arabs art thou?" "Harkye, lads," answered he, "fill me my water-skin, for that I am a stranger man and a wayfarer and I have a comrade who awaiteth me." Quoth they, "Thou art no wayfarer, but a spy from

El Akil's camp." Then they took him and carried him to [their king] Zuheir ben Shebib; and when he came before him, he said to him, "Of which of the Arabs art thou?" Quoth Aamir, "I am a wayfarer." And Zuheir said, "Whence comest thou and whither wilt thou?" "I am on my way to Akil," answered Aamir. When he named Akil, those who were present were agitated; but Zuheir signed to them with his eyes and said to him, "What is thine errand with Akil?" Quoth he, "We would fain see him, my friend and I."

When Zuheir heard his words, he bade smite off his head; but his Vizier said to him, "Slay him not, till his friend be present." So he commanded the two slaves to fetch his friend; whereupon they repaired to El Abbas and called to him, saying, "O youth, answer the summons of King Zuheir." "What would the king with me?" asked he, and they answered, "We know not." Quoth he, "Who gave the king news of me?" "We went to draw water," answered they, "and found a man by the water. So we questioned him of his case, but he would not acquaint us therewith; wherefore we carried him perforce to King Zuheir, who questioned him of his case and he told him that he was going to Akil. Now Akil is the king's enemy and he purposeth to betake himself to his camp and make prize of his offspring and cut off his traces." "And what," asked El Abbas, "hath Akil done with King Zuheir?" And they replied, "He engaged for himself that he would bring the king every year a thousand dinars and a thousand she-camels, besides a thousand head of thoroughbred horses and two hundred black slaves and fifty slave-girls; but it hath reached the king that Akil purposeth to give nought of this; wherefore he is minded to go to him. So hasten thou with us, ere the king be wroth with thee and with us."

Then said El Abbas to them, "O youths, sit by my arms and my horse till I return." But they answered, saying, "By Allah, thou prolongest discourse with that which beseemeth not of words! Make haste, or we will go with thy head, for indeed the king purposeth to slay thee and to slay thy comrade and take that which is with you." When the prince heard this, his skin quaked and he cried out at them with a cry that made them tremble. Then he sprang upon his horse and settling himself in the saddle, galloped till he came to the king's assembly, when he cried out at the top of his voice, saying ["To horse,] cavaliers!" And levelled his spear at the pavilion wherein was Zuheir. Now there were about him a thousand smiters with the sword; but El Abbas fell in upon them and dispersed them from around him, and there abode none in the tent save Zuheir and his vizier.

Then came up El Abbas to the door of the tent, and therein were four-and-twenty golden doves; so he took them, after he had beaten them down with the end of his lance. Then he called out, saying, "Harkye, Zuheir! Doth it not suffice thee that thou hast quelled El Akil's repute, but thou art minded to quell that of those who sojourn round about him? Knowest thou not that he is of the lieutenants of Kundeh ben [Hisham of the Benou] Sheiban, a man renowned for prowess? Indeed, covetise of him hath entered into thee and jealousy of him hath gotten possession of thee. Doth it not suffice thee that thou hast orphaned his children and slain his men? By the virtue of the Chosen Prophet, I will make thee drink the cup of death!" So saying, he drew his sword and smiting Zuheir on his shoulder, caused the steel issue, gleaming, from the tendons of his throat. Then he smote the vizier and clove his head in sunder.

As he was thus, behold, Aamir called out to him and said, "O my lord, come to my help, or I am a dead man!" So El Abbas went up to him and found him cast down on his back and chained with four chains to four pickets of iron. He loosed his bonds and said to him, "Go before me, O Aamir." So he fared on before him a little, and presently they looked, and behold, horsemen making to Zuheir's succour, to wit, twelve thousand cavaliers, with Sehl ben Kaab in their van, mounted upon a jet-black steed. He charged upon Aamir, who fled from him, then upon El Abbas, who said, "O Aamir, cleave fast to my horse and guard my back." Aamir did as he bade him, whereupon El Abbas cried out at the folk and falling upon them, overthrew their braves and slew of them nigh two thousand cavaliers, whilst not one of them knew what was to do nor with whom he fought. Then said one of them to other, "Verily, the king is slain; so with whom do we wage war? Indeed ye flee from him; so do ye enter under his banners, or not one of you will be saved."

Thereupon they all dismounted and putting off that which was upon them of harness of war, came before El Abbas and tendered him allegiance and sued for his protection. So he held his hand from them and bade them gather together the spoils. Then he took the riches and the slaves and the camels, and they all became his liegemen and his retainers, to the number (according to that which is said) of fifty thousand horse. Moreover, the folk heard of him and flocked to him from all sides; whereupon he divided [the spoil amongst them] and gave gifts and abode thus three days, and there came presents to him. Then he bade set out for Akil's abiding-place; so they fared on six days and on the seventh day they came in sight of the camp. El Abbas bade his man Aamir forego him and give Akil the glad news of his cousin's coming. So he rode on to the camp and going in to Akil, gave him the glad news of Zuheir's slaughter and the conquest of his tribe.

Akil rejoiced in the coming of El Abbas and the slaughter of his enemy and all in his camp rejoiced also and cast dresses of honour upon Aamir. Moreover, Akil bade go forth to meet El Abbas, and commanded that none, great or small, freeman or slave, should tarry behind. So they did his bidding and going forth all, met El Abbas at three parasangs' distance from the camp. When they met him, they all dismounted from their horses and Akil and he embraced and clapped hands. Then they returned, rejoicing in the coming of El Abbas and the slaughter of their enemy, to the camp, where tents were pitched for the new-comers and carpets spread and game killed and beasts slaughtered and royal guest-meals spread; and on this wise they abode twenty days, in the enjoyment of all delight and solace of life.

To return to King El Aziz. When his son El Abbas left him, he was desolated for him with an exceeding desolation, he and his mother; and when tidings of him tarried long and the appointed time passed [and the prince returned not], the king caused public proclamation to be made, commanding all his troops to make ready to mount and go forth in quest of his son El Abbas at the end of three days, after which time no cause of hindrance nor excuse should be admitted unto any. So on the fourth day, the king bade number the troops, and behold, they were four-and-twenty thousand horse, besides servants and followers. Accordingly, they reared the standards and the drums beat to departure and the king set out [with his army], intending for Baghdad; nor did he cease to fare on with all diligence, till he came within half a day's journey of the city

and bade his troops encamp in [a place there called] the Green Meadow. So they pitched the tents there, till the country was straitened with them, and set up for the king a pavilion of green brocade, broidered with pearls and jewels.

When El Aziz had sat awhile, he summoned the mamelukes of his son El Abbas, and they were five-and-twenty in number, besides half a score slave-girls, as they were moons, five of whom the king had brought with him and other five he had left with the prince's mother. When the mamelukes came before him, he cast over each of them a mantle of green brocade and bade them mount like horses of one and the same fashion and enter Baghdad and enquire concerning their lord El Abbas. So they entered the city and passed through the [streets and] markets, and there abode in Baghdad nor old man nor boy but came forth to gaze on them and divert himself with the sight of their beauty and grace and the goodliness of their aspect and of their clothes and horses, for that they were even as moons. They gave not over going till they came to the royal palace, where they halted, and the king looked at them and seeing their beauty and the goodliness of their apparel and the brightness of their faces, said, "Would I knew of which of the tribes these are!" And he bade the eunuch bring him news of them.

So he went out to them and questioned them of their case, whereupon, "Return to thy lord," answered they, "and question him of Prince El Abbas, if he have come unto him, for that he left his father King El Aziz a full-told year agone, and indeed longing for him troubleth the king and he hath levied a part of his army and his guards and is come forth in quest of his son, so haply he may light upon tidings of him." Quoth the eunuch, "Is there amongst you a brother of his or a son?" "Nay, by Allah!" answered they. "But we are all his mamelukes and the boughten of his money, and his father El Aziz hath despatched us to make enquiry of him. So go thou to thy lord and question him of the prince and return to us with that which he shall answer you." "And where is King El Aziz?" asked the eunuch; and they replied, "He is encamped in the Green Meadow."

The eunuch returned and told the king, who said, "Indeed, we have been neglectful with regard to El Abbas. What shall be our excuse with the king? By Allah, my soul misdoubted me that the youth was of the sons of the kings!" The Lady Afifeh, his wife, saw him lamenting for [his usage of] El Abbas and said to him, "O king, what is it thou regrettest with this exceeding regret?" Quoth he, "Thou knowest the stranger youth, who gave us the rubies?" "Assuredly," answered she; and he said, "Yonder youths, who have halted in the palace court, are his mamelukes, and his father King El Aziz, lord of Yemen, hath pitched his camp in the Green Meadow; for he is come with his army to seek him, and the number of his troops is [four-and-] twenty thousand men." [Then he went out from her], and when she heard his words, she wept sore for him and had compassion on his case and sent after him, counselling him to send for the mamelukes and lodge them [in the palace] and entertain them.

The king gave ear to her counsel and despatching the eunuch for the mamelukes, assigned them a lodging and said to them, "Have patience, till the king give you tidings of your lord El Abbas." When they heard his words, their eyes ran over with plenteous tears, of their much longing for the sight of their lord. Then the king bade the queen enter the privy chamber and let down the curtain [before the door thereof]. So she did

this and he summoned them to his presence. When they stood before him, they kissed the earth, to do him worship, and showed forth their breeding and magnified his dignity. He bade them sit, but they refused, till he conjured them by their lord El Abbas. So they sat down and he caused set before them food of various kinds and fruits and sweetmeats. Now within the Lady Afifeh's palace was an underground way communicating with the palace of the princess Mariyeh. So the queen sent after her and she came to her, whereupon she made her stand behind the curtain and gave her to know that El Abbas was the king's son of Yemen and that these were his mamelukes. Moreover, she told her that the prince's father had levied his troops and was come with his army in quest of him and that he had pitched his camp in the Green Meadow and despatched these mamelukes to make enquiry of their lord. So Mariyeh abode looking upon them and upon their beauty and grace and the goodliness of their apparel, till they had eaten their fill of food and the tables were removed; whereupon the king recounted to them the story of El Abbas and they took leave of him and went away.

As for the princess Mariyeh, when she returned to her palace, she bethought herself concerning the affair of El Abbas, repenting her of that which she had done, and the love of him took root in her heart. So, when the night darkened upon her, she dismissed all her women and bringing out the letters, to wit, those which El Abbas had written, fell to reading them and weeping. She gave not over weeping her night long, and when she arose in the morning, she called a damsel of her slave-girls, Shefikeh by name, and said to her, "O damsel, I purpose to discover to thee mine affair, and I charge thee keep my secret; to wit, I would have thee betake thyself to the house of the nurse, who used to serve me, and fetch her to me, for that I have grave occasion for her."

Accordingly, Shefikeh went out and repairing to the nurse's house, found her clad in apparel other than that which she had been wont to wear aforetime. So she saluted her and said to her, "Whence hadst thou this dress, than which there is no goodlier?" "O Shefikeh," answered the nurse, "thou deemest that I have gotten no good save of thy mistress; but, by Allah, had I endeavoured for her destruction, I had done [that which was my right], for that she did with me what thou knowest and bade the eunuch beat me, without offence of me committed; wherefore do thou tell her that he, on whose behalf I bestirred myself with her, hath made me quit of her and her humours, for that he hath clad me in this habit and given me two hundred and fifty dinars and promised me the like thereof every year and charged me serve none of the folk."

Quoth Shefikeh, "My mistress hath occasion for thee; so come thou with me and I will engage to restore thee to thy dwelling in weal and safety." But the nurse answered, saying, "Indeed, her palace is become forbidden to me and never again will I enter therein, for that God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He!) of His favour and bounty hath rendered me independent of her." So Shefikeh returned to her mistress and acquainted her with the nurse's words and that wherein she was of affluence; whereupon Mariyeh confessed the unseemliness of her dealing with her and repented, whenas repentance profited her not; and she abode in that her case days and nights, whilst the fire of longing flamed in her heart.

Meanwhile, El Abbas abode with his cousin Akil twenty days, after which he made ready for the journey to Baghdad and letting bring the booty he had gotten of

King Zuheir, divided it between himself and his cousin. Then he set out for Baghdad, and when he came within two days' journey of the city, he called his servant Aamir and bade him mount his charger and forego him with the baggage-train and the cattle. So Aamir [took horse and] fared on till he came to Baghdad, and the season of his entering was the first of the day; nor was there little child or hoary old man in the city but came forth to divert himself with gazing on those flocks and herds and upon the goodliness of those slave-girls, and their wits were amazed at what they saw. Presently the news reached the king that the young man El Abbas, who had gone forth from him, was come back with herds and rarities and slaves and a mighty host and had taken up his sojourn without the city, whilst his servant Aamir was presently come to Baghdad, so he might make ready dwelling- places for his lord, wherein he should take up his abode.

When the king heard these tidings of Aamir, he sent for him and let bring him before him; and when he entered his presence, he kissed the earth and saluted and showed forth his breeding and greeted him with the goodliest of compliments. The king bade him raise his head and questioned him of his lord El Abbas; whereupon he acquainted him with his tidings and told him that which had betided him with King Zuheir and of the army that was become at his commandment and of the spoil that he had gotten. Moreover, he gave him to know that El Abbas was coming on the morrow, and with him more than fifty thousand cavaliers, obedient to his commandment. When the king heard his speech, he bade decorate Baghdad and commanded [the inhabitants] to equip themselves with the richest of their apparel, in honour of the coming of El Abbas. Moreover, he sent to give King El Aziz the glad tidings of his son's return and acquainted him with that which he had heard from the prince's servant.

When the news reached El Aziz, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy in the coming of his son and straightway took horse, he and all his army, what while the trumpets sounded and the musicians played, that the earth quaked and Baghdad also trembled, and it was a notable day. When Mariyeh beheld all this, she repented with the uttermost of repentance of that which she had wroughten against El Abbas his due and the fires still raged in her vitals. Meanwhile, the troops sallied forth of Baghdad and went out to meet those of El Abbas, who had halted in a meadow called the Green Island. When he espied the approaching host, he knew not what they were; so he strained his sight and seeing horsemen coming and troops and footmen, said to those about him, "Among yonder troops are ensigns and banners of various kinds; but, as for the great green standard that ye see, it is the standard of my father, the which is reserved [unto him and never displayed save] over his head, and [by this] I know that he himself is come out in quest of me." And he was certified of this, he and his troops.

[So he fared on towards them] and when he drew near unto them, he knew them and they knew him; whereupon they lighted down from their horses and saluting him, gave him joy of his safety and the folk flocked to him. When he came to his father, they embraced and greeted each other a long time, whilst neither of them availed unto speech, for the greatness of that which betided them of joy in reunion. Then El Abbas bade the folk mount; so they mounted and his mamelukes surrounded him and they entered Baghdad on the most magnificent wise and in the highest worship and glory.

The wife of the shopkeeper, to wit, the nurse, came out, with the rest of those who came out, to divert herself with gazing upon the show, and when she saw El Abbas and beheld his beauty and the goodliness of his army and that which he had brought back with him of herds and slaves and slave-girls and mamelukes, she improvised and recited the following verses:

El Abbas from Akil his stead is come again;
Prize hath he made of steeds and many a baggage-train;
Yea, horses hath he brought, full fair of shape and hue,
Whose collars, anklet-like, ring to the bridle-rein.
Taper of hoofs and straight of stature, in the dust
They prance, as like a flood they pour across the plain;
And on their saddles perched are warriors richly clad,
That with their hands do smite on kettle-drums amain.
Couched are their limber spears, right long and lithe of point,
Keen- ground and polished sheer, amazing wit and brain.
Who dares with them to cope draws death upon himself;
Yea, of the deadly lance incontinent he's slain.
Come, then, companions mine, rejoice with me and say,
"All hail to thee, O friend, and welcome fair and fain!"
For whoso doth rejoice in meeting him shall have
Largesse and gifts galore at his dismounting gain.

When the troops entered Baghdad, each of them alighted in his pavilion, whilst El Abbas encamped apart in a place near the Tigris and commanded to slaughter for the troops, each day, that which should suffice them of oxen and sheep and bake them bread and spread the tables. So the folk ceased not to come to him and eat of his banquet. Moreover, all the people of the country came to him with presents and rarities and he requited them many times the like of their gifts, so that the lands were filled with his tidings and the report of him was bruited abroad among the folk of the deserts and the cities.

Then, when he rode to his house that he had bought, the shopkeeper and his wife came to him and gave him joy of his safety; whereupon he ordered them three swift thoroughbred horses and ten dromedaries and an hundred head of sheep and clad them both in sumptuous dresses of honour. Then he chose out ten slave-girls and ten black slaves and fifty horses and the like number of she- camels and three hundred head of sheep, together with twenty ounces of musk and as many of camphor, and sent all this to the King of Baghdad. When this came to Ins ben Cais, his wit fled for joy and he was perplexed wherewithal to requite him. Moreover, El Abbas gave gifts and largesse and bestowed dresses of honour upon great and small, each after the measure of his station, save only Mariyeh; for unto her he sent nothing.

This was grievous to the princess and it irked her sore that he should not remember her; so she called her slave- girl Shefikeh and said to her, "Go to El Abbas and salute him and say to him, 'What hindereth thee from sending my lady Mariyeh her part of thy booty?'" So Shefikeh betook herself to him and when she came to his door, the chamberlains refused her admission, until they should have gotten her leave

and permission. When she entered, El Abbas knew her and knew that she had somewhat of speech [with him]; so he dismissed his mamelukes and said to her, "What is thine errand, O handmaid of good?" "O my lord," answered she, "I am a slave-girl of the Princess Mariyeh, who kisseth thy hands and commendeth her salutation to thee. Indeed, she rejoiceth in thy safety and reproacheth thee for that thou breakest her heart, alone of all the folk, for that thy largesse embraceth great and small, yet hast thou not remembered her with aught of thy booty. Indeed, it is as if thou hadst hardened thy heart against her." Quoth he, "Extolled be the perfection of him who turneth hearts! By Allah, my vitals were consumed with the love of her [aforetime] and of my longing after her, I came forth to her from my native land and left my people and my home and my wealth, and it was with her that began the hardheartedness and the cruelty. Nevertheless, for all this, I bear her no malice and needs must I send her somewhat whereby she may remember me; for that I abide in her land but a few days, after which I set out for the land of Yemen."

Then he called for a chest and bringing out thence a necklace of Greek handiwork, worth a thousand dinars, wrapped it in a mantle of green silk, set with pearls and jewels and inwrought with red gold, and joined thereto two caskets of musk and ambergris. Moreover, he put off upon the girl a mantle of Greek silk, striped with gold, wherein were divers figures and semblants depictured, never saw eyes its like. Therewithal the girl's wit fled for joy and she went forth from his presence and returned to her mistress. When she came in to her, she acquainted her with that which she had seen of El Abbas and that which was with him of servants and attendants and [set out to her] the loftiness of his station and gave her that which was with her.

Mariyeh opened the mantle, and when she saw that necklace, and indeed the place was illumined with the lustre thereof, she looked at her slave-girl and said to her, "By Allah, O Shefikeh, one look at him were liefer to me than all that my hand possesseth! Would I knew what I shall do, whenas Baghdad is empty of him and I hear no tidings of him!" Then she wept and calling for inkhorn* and paper and pen of brass, wrote the following verses:

Still do I yearn, whilst passion's fire flames in my liver aye;
For parting's shafts have smitten me and done my strength away.
Oft for thy love as I would be consoled, my yearning turns
To-thee- ward still and my desires my reason still gainsay.
My transports I conceal for fear of those thereon that spy;
Yet down my cheeks the tears course still and still my case bewray.
No rest is there for me, no life wherein I may delight,
Nor pleasant meat nor drink avails to please me, night or day.
To whom save thee shall I complain, of whom relief implore,
Whose image came to visit me, what while in dreams I lay?
Reproach me not for what I did, but be thou kind to one
Who's sick of body and whose heart is wasted all away.
The fire of love-longing I hide; severance consumeth me,
A thrall of care, for long desire to wakefulness a prey.
Midmost the watches of the night I see thee, in a dream;

A lying dream, for he I love my love doth not repay.
Would God thou knewest that for love of thee which I endure!
It hath indeed brought down on me estrangement and dismay.
Read thou my writ and apprehend its purport, for my case
This is and fate hath stricken me with sorrows past allay.
Know, then, the woes that have befall'n a lover, neither grudge
Her secret to conceal, but keep her counsel still, I pray.

Then she folded the letter and giving it to her slave-girl, bade her carry it to El Abbas and bring back his answer thereto. Accordingly, Shefikeh took the letter and carried it to the prince, after the doorkeeper had sought leave of him to admit her. When she came in to him, she found with him five damsels, as they were moons, clad in [rich] apparel and ornaments; and when he saw her, he said to her, "What is thine occasion, O handmaid of good?" So she put out her hand to him with the letter, after she had kissed it, and he bade one of his slave-girls receive it from her. Then he took it from the girl and breaking it open, read it and apprehended its purport; whereupon "We are God's and to Him we return!" exclaimed he and calling for ink- horn and paper, wrote the following verses:

I marvel for that to my love I see thee now incline,
What time my heart, indeed, is fain to turn away from thine.
Whilere, the verses that I made it was thy wont to flout,
Saying, "No passer by the way hath part in me or mine.
How many a king to me hath come, of troops and guards ensued,
And Bactrian camels brought with him, in many a laden line,
And dromedaries, too, of price and goodly steeds and swift
Of many a noble breed, yet found no favour in my eyne!"
Then, after them came I to thee and union did entreat
And unto thee set forth at length my case and my design;
Yea, all my passion and desire and love-longing in verse,
As pearls in goodly order strung it were, I did enshrine.
Yet thou repaidst me with constraint, rigour and perfidy,
To which no lover might himself on any wise resign.
How many a bidder unto love, a secret-craving wight,
How many a swain, complaining, saith of destiny malign,
"How many a cup with bitterness o'erflowing have I quaffed!
I make my moan of woes, whereat it boots not to repine."
Quoth thou, "The goodliest of things is patience and its use:
Its practice still mankind doth guide to all that's fair and fine."
Wherefore fair patience look thou use, for sure 'tis praiseworthy;
Yea, and its issues evermore are blessed and benign;
And hope thou not for aught from me, who reck not with a folk
To mix, who may with abjectness infect my royal line.
This is my saying; apprehend its purport, then, and know
I may in no wise yield consent to that thou dost opine.

Then he folded the letter and sealing it, delivered it to the damsel, who took it and carried it to her mistress. When the princess read the letter and apprehended its contents, she said, "Meseemeth he recalleth to me that which I did aforetime." Then she called for inkhorn and paper and wrote the following verses:

Me, till I stricken was therewith, to love thou didst excite,
And with estrangement now, alas! heap'st sorrows on my spright.
The sweet of slumber after thee I have forsworn; indeed
The loss of thee hath smitten me with trouble and affright.
How long shall I, in weariness, for this estrangement pine,
What while the spies of severance do watch me all the night?
My royal couch have I forsworn, sequestering myself
From all, and have mine eyes forbid the taste of sleep's delight.
Thou taught'st me what I cannot bear; afflicted sore am I;
Yea, thou hast wasted me away with rigour and despite.
Yet, I conjure thee, blame me not for passion and desire,
Me whom estrangement long hath brought to sick and sorry plight.
Sore, sore doth rigour me beset, its onslaughts bring me near
Unto the straitness of the grave, ere in the shroud I'm dight.
So be thou kind to me, for love my body wasteth sore,
The thrall of passion I'm become its fires consume me quite.

Mariyeh folded the letter and gave it to Shefikeh, bidding her carry it to El Abbas. So she took it and going with it to his door, would have entered; but the chamberlains and serving-men forbade her, till they had gotten her leave from the prince. When she went in to him, she found him sitting in the midst of the five damsels aforesaid, whom his father had brought him. So she gave him the letter and he took it and read it. Then he bade one of the damsels, whose name was Khefifeh and who came from the land of China, tune her lute and sing upon the subject of separation. So she came forward and tuning the lute, played thereon in four-and-twenty modes; after which she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses:

Upon the parting day our loves from us did fare
And left us to endure estrangement and despair.
Whenas the burdens all were bounden on and shrill
The camel-leader's call rang out across the air,
Fast flowed my tears; despair gat hold upon my soul
And needs mine eyelids must the sweet of sleep forbear.
I wept, but those who spied to part us had no ruth
On me nor on the fires that in my vitals flare.
Woe's me for one who burns for love and longing pain!
Alas for the regrets my heart that rend and tear!
To whom shall I complain of what is in my soul,
Now thou art gone and I my pillow must forswear?
The flames of long desire wax on me day by day
And far away are pitched the tent-poles of my fair.
O breeze of heaven, from me a charge I prithee take

And do not thou betray the troth of my despair;
Whenas thou passest by the dwellings of my love,
Greet him for me with peace, a greeting debonair,
And scatter musk on him and ambergris, so long
As time endures; for this is all my wish and care.

When the damsel had made an end of her song, El Abbas swooned away and they sprinkled on him rose-water, mingled with musk, till he came to himself, when he called another damsel (now there was on her of linen and clothes and ornaments that which beggareth description, and she was endowed with brightness and loveliness and symmetry and perfection, such as shamed the crescent moon, and she was a Turkish girl from the land of the Greeks and her name was Hafizeh) and said to her, "O Hafizeh, close thine eyes and tune thy lute and sing to us upon the days of separation." She answered him with "Hearkening and obedience" and taking the lute, tuned its strings and cried out from her head, in a plaintive voice, and sang the following verses:

O friends, the tears flow ever, in mockery of my pain;
My heart is sick for sev'rance and love-longing in vain.
All wasted is my body and bowels tortured sore;
Love's fire on me still waxeth, mine eyes with tears still rain.
Whenas the fire of passion flamed in my breast, with tears,
Upon the day of wailing, to quench it I was fain.
Desire hath left me wasted, afflicted, sore afraid,
For the spy knows the secret whereof I do complain.
When I recall the season of love-delight with them,
The sweet of sleep forsakes me, my body wastes amain.
Those who our parting plotted our sev'rance still delights;
The spies, for fearful prudence, their wish of us attain.
I fear me for my body from sickness and unrest,
Lest of the fear of sev'rance it be betrayed and slain.

When Hafizeh had made an end of her song, El Abbas said to her, "Well done! Indeed, thou quickenest hearts from sorrows." Then he called another damsel of the daughters of the Medes, by name Merjaneh, and said to her, "O Merjaneh, sing to me upon the days of separation." "Hearkening and obedience," answered she and improvising, sang the following verses:

"Fair patience practise, for thereon still followeth content."
So runs the rede 'mongst all that dwell in city or in tent.
How oft of dole have I made moan for love and longing pain,
What while my body for desire in mortal peril went!
How oft I've waked, how many a cup of sorrow have I drained,
Watching the stars of night go by, for sleepless languishment!
It had sufficed me, had thy grace with verses come to me;
My expectation still on thee in the foredawns was bent.
Then was my heart by that which caused my agitation seared,
And from mine eyelids still the tears poured down without relent.

Yea, nevermore I ceased from that wherewith I stricken was;
My night with wakefulness was filled, my heart with dreariment.
But now hath Allah from my heart blotted the love of thee,
After for constancy I'd grown a name of wonderment.
Hence on the morrow forth I fare and leave your land behind;
So take your leave of us nor fear mishap or ill event.
Whenas in body ye from us are far removed, would God
I knew who shall to us himself with news of you present!
And who can tell if ever house shall us together bring
In union of life serene and undisturbed content?

When Merjaneh had made an end of her song, the prince said to her, "Well done, O damsel! Indeed, thou sayest a thing that had occurred to my mind and my tongue was like to speak it." Then he signed to the fourth damsel, who was a Cairene, by name Sitt el Husn, and bade her tune her lute and sing to him upon the [same] subject. So she tuned her lute and sang the following verses:

Fair patience use, for ease still followeth after stress
And all things have their time and ordinance no less.
Though Fortune whiles to thee belike may be unjust,
Her seasons change and man's excused if he transgress.
In her revolving scheme, to bitter sweetness still
Succeeds and things become straight, after crookedness.
Thine honour, therefore, guard and eke thy secret keep,
Nor save to one free-born and true thy case confess.
The Lord's alternatives are these, wherewith He's wont
The needy wretch to ply and those in sore duresse.

When El Abbas heard her verses, they pleased him and he said to her, "Well done, O Sitt el Husn! Indeed, thou hast done away trouble from my heart and [banished] the things that had occurred to my mind." Then he heaved a sigh and signing to the fifth damsel, who was from the land of the Persians and whose name was Merziyeh (now she was the fairest of them all and the sweetest of speech and she was like unto a splendid star, endowed with beauty and loveliness and brightness and perfection and justness of shape and symmetry and had a face like the new moon and eyes as they were gazelle's eyes) and said to her, "O Merziyeh, come forward and tune thy lute and sing to us on the [same] subject, for indeed we are resolved upon departure to the land of Yemen." Now this damsel had met many kings and had consorted with the great; so she tuned her lute and sang the following verses:

May the place of my session ne'er lack thee I Oh, why,
My heart's love, hast thou saddened my mind and mine eye?
By thy ransom, who dwellest alone in my heart,
In despair for the loss of the loved one am I.
So, by Allah, O richest of all men in charms,
Vouchsafe to a lover, who's bankrupt well-nigh
Of patience, thy whilom endearments again,

That I never to any divulged, nor deny
The approof of my lord, so my stress and unease
I may ban and mine enemies' malice defy,
Thine approof which shall clothe me in noblest attire
And my rank in the eyes of the people raise high.

When she had made an end of her song, all who were in the assembly wept for the daintiness of her speech and the sweetness of her voice and El Abbas said to her, "Well done, O Merziyeh I Indeed, thou confoundest the wits with the goodliness of thy verses and the elegance of thy speech." All this while Shefikeh abode gazing upon her, and when she beheld El Abbas his slave-girls and considered the goodliness of their apparel and the nimbleness of their wits and the elegance of their speech, her reason was confounded. Then she sought leave of El Abbas and returning to her mistress Mariyeh, without letter or answer, acquainted her with his case and that wherein he was of puissance and delight and majesty and venerance and loftiness of rank. Moreover, she told her what she had seen of the slave-girls and their circumstance and that which they had said and how they had made El Abbas desireful of returning to his own country by the recitation of verses to the sound of the strings.

When the princess heard this her slave-girl's report, she wept and lamented and was like to depart the world. Then she clave to her pillow and said, "O Shefikeh, I will instruct thee of somewhat that is not hidden from God the Most High, and it is that thou watch over me till God the Most High decree the accomplishment of His commandment, and when my days are ended, take thou the necklace and the mantle that El Abbas gave me and return them to him. Indeed, I deem not he will live after me, and if God the Most High decree against him and his days come to an end, do thou give one charge to shroud us and bury us both in one grave."

Then her case changed and her colour paled; and when Shefikeh saw her mistress in this plight, she repaired to her mother and told her that the lady Mariyeh refused meat and drink. "Since when hath this befallen her?" asked the queen, and Shefikeh answered, "Since yesterday;" whereat the queen was confounded and betaking herself to her daughter, that she might enquire into her case, found her as one dead. So she sat down at her head and Mariyeh opened her eyes and seeing her mother sitting by her, sat up for shamefastness before her. The queen questioned her of her case and she said, "I entered the bath and it stupefied me and weakened me and left an exceeding pain in my head; but I trust in God the Most High that it will cease."

When her mother went out from her, Mariyeh fell to chiding the damsel for that which she had done and said to her, "Verily, death were leifer to me than this; so look thou discover not my affair to any and I charge thee return not to the like of this fashion." Then she swooned away and lay awhile without life, and when she came to herself, she saw Shefikeh weeping over her; whereupon she took the necklace from her neck and the mantle from her body and said to the damsel, "Lay them in a napkin of damask and carry them to El Abbas and acquaint him with that wherein I am for the persistence of estrangement and the effects of forbiddance." So Shefikeh took them and carried them to El Abbas, whom she found in act to depart, for that he was about to take horse for Yemen. She went in to him and gave him the napkin and that which was

therein, and when he opened it and saw what it contained, to wit, the mantle and the necklace, his vexation was excessive and his eyes were distorted, [so that the whites thereof appeared] and his rage was manifest in them.

When Shefikeh saw that which betided him, she came forward and said to him, "O bountiful lord, indeed my mistress returneth not the mantle and the necklace despitefully; but she is about to depart the world and thou hast the best right to them." "And what is the cause of this?" asked he. Quoth Shefikeh, "Thou knowest. By Allah, never among the Arabs nor the barbarians nor among the sons of the kings saw I a harder of heart than thou! Is it a light matter to thee that thou troublest Mariyeh's life and causest her mourn for herself and depart the world on account of thy youth? Indeed, thou wast the cause of her acquaintance with thee and now she departeth the world on thine account, she whose like God the Most High hath not created among the daughters of the kings."

When El Abbas heard these words from the damsel, his heart irked him for Mariyeh and her case was grievous to him; so he said to Shefikeh, "Canst thou avail to bring me in company with her, so haply I may discover her affair and allay that which aileth her?" "Yes," answered the damsel, "I can do that, and thine will be the bounty and the favour." So he arose and followed her, and she forewent him, till they came to the palace. Then she [opened and] locked behind them four-and-twenty doors and made them fast with bolts; and when he came to Mariyeh, he found her as she were the setting sun, cast down upon a rug of Taifi leather, among cushions stuffed with ostrich down, and not a limb of her quivered. When her maid saw her in this plight, she offered to cry out; but El Abbas said to her, "Do it not, but have patience till we discover her affair; and if God the Most High have decreed the ending of her days, wait till thou have opened the doors to me and I have gone forth. Then do what seemeth good to thee."

So saying, he went up to the princess and laying his hand upon her heart, found it fluttering like a doveling and the life yet clinging to her bosom. So he laid his hand upon her cheek, whereupon she opened her eyes and beckoning to her maid, signed to her, as who should say, "Who is this that treadeth my carpet and transgresseth against me?" "O my lady," answered Shefikeh, "this is Prince El Abbas, for whose sake thou departest the world." When Mariyeh heard speak of El Abbas, she raised her hand from under the coverlet and laying it upon his neck, inhaled his odour awhile. Then she sat up and her colour returned to her and they sat talking till a third part of the night was past.

Presently, the princess turned to her maid and bade her fetch them somewhat of food and sweetmeats and dessert and fruits. So Shefikeh brought what she desired and they ate and drank [and abode on this wise] without lewdness, till the night departed and the day came. Then said El Abbas, "Indeed, the day is come. Shall I go to my father and bid him go to thy father and seek thee of him in marriage for me, in accordance with the Book of God the Most High and the Institutes of His Apostle (whom may He bless and keep!) so we may not enter into transgression?" And Mariyeh answered, saying, "By Allah, it is well counselled of thee!" So he went away to his lodging and nought befell between them; and when the day lightened, she improvised and recited the following verses:

O friends, the East wind waxes, the morning draweth near;
A plaintive voice bespeaks me and I rejoice to hear.
Up, to our comrade's convent, that we may visit him
And drink of wine more subtle than dust; our trusty fere
Hath spent thereon his substance, withouten stint; indeed,
In his own cloak he wrapped it, he tendered it so dear.
Whenas its jar was opened, the singers prostrate fell
In worship of its brightness, it shone so wonder-clear.
The priests from all the convent came flocking onto it:
With cries of joy and welcome their voices they did rear.
We spent the night in passing the cup, my mates and I,
Till in the Eastward heaven the day-star did appear.
No sin is there in drinking of wine, for it affords
All that's foretold of union and love and happy cheer.
O morn, our loves that sunder'st, a sweet and easeful life
Thou dost for me prohibit, with thy regard austere.
Be gracious, so our gladness may be fulfilled with wine
And we of our beloved have easance, without fear.
The best of all religions your love is, for in you
Are love and life made easeful, untroubled and sincere.

Meanwhile, El Abbas betook himself to his father's camp, which was pitched in the Green Meadow, by the side of the Tigris, and none might make his way between the tents, for the much interlacement of the tent-ropes. When the prince reached the first of the tents, the guards and servants came out to meet him from all sides and escorted him till he drew near the sitting-place of his father, who knew of his coming. So he issued forth of his pavilion and coming to meet his son, kissed him and made much of him. Then they returned together to the royal pavilion and when they had seated themselves and the guards had taken up their station in attendance on them, the king said to El Abbas, "O my son, make ready thine affair, so we may go to our own land, for that the folk in our absence are become as they were sheep without a shepherd." El Abbas looked at his father and wept till he swooned away, and when he recovered from his swoon, he improvised and recited the following verses:

I clipped her in mine arms and straight grew drunken with the scent
Of a fresh branch that had been reared in affluence and content.
'Twas not of wine that I had drunk; her mouth's sweet honeyed dews
It was intoxicated me with bliss and ravishment.
Upon the table of her cheek beauty hath writ, "Alack, Her charms!
'Twere well thou refuge sought'st with God incontinent."
Since thou hast looked on her, mine eye, be easy, for by
God Nor mote nor ailment needst thou fear nor evil accident.
Beauty her appanage is grown in its entirety,
And for this cause all hearts must bow to her arbitrament.
If with her cheek and lustre thou thyself adorn, thou'lt find
But chrysolites and gold, with nought of baser metal blent.

When love-longing for her sweet sake I took upon myself,
The railers flocked to me anon, on blame and chiding bent;
But on no wise was I affrayed nor turned from love of her;
So let the railer rave of her henceforth his heart's content.
By God, forgetfulness of her shall never cross my mind,
What while I wear the bonds of life nor when of death they're rent
An if I live, in love of her I'll live, and if I die
Of love and longing for her sight, O rare! O excellent!

When El Abbas had made an end of his verses, his father said to him, "I seek refuge for thee with God, O my son! Hast thou any want unto which thou availest not, so I may endeavour for thee therein and lavish my treasures in quest thereof?" "O father mine," answered El Abbas, "I have, indeed, an urgent want, on account whereof I came forth of my native land and left my people and my home and exposed myself to perils and stresses and became an exile from my country, and I trust in God that it may be accomplished by thine august endeavour." "And what is thy want?" asked the king. Quoth El Abbas, "I would have thee go and demand me in marriage Mariyeh, daughter of the King of Baghdad, for that my heart is distraught with love of her." And he recounted to his father his story from first to last.

When the king heard this from his son, he rose to his feet and calling for his charger of state, took horse with four-and-twenty amirs of the chief officers of his empire. Then he betook himself to the palace of the King of Baghdad, who, when he saw him coming, bade his chamberlains open the doors to him and going down himself to meet him, received him with all worship and hospitality and entreated him with the utmost honour. Moreover, he carried him [and his suite] into the palace and causing make ready for them carpets and cushions, sat down upon a chair of gold, with traverses of juniper- wood, set with pearls and jewels. Then he bade bring sweetmeats and confections and odoriferous flowers and commanded to slaughter four-and-twenty head of sheep and the like of oxen and make ready geese and fowls, stuffed and roasted, and pigeons and spread the tables; nor was it long before the meats were set on in dishes of gold and silver. So they ate till they had enough and when they had eaten their fill, the tables were removed and the wine-service set on and the cups and flagons ranged in order, whilst the mamelukes and the fair slave- girls sat down, with girdles of gold about their middles, inlaid with all manner pearls and diamonds and emeralds and rubies and other jewels. Moreover, the king bade fetch the musicians; so there presented themselves before him a score of damsels, with lutes and psalteries and rebecks, and smote upon instruments of music, on such wise that they moved the assembly to delight.

Then said El Aziz to the King of Baghdad, "I would fain speak a word to thee; but do thou not exclude from us those who are present. If thou consent unto my wish, that which is ours shall be thine and that which is incumbent on thee shall be incumbent on us, and we will be to thee a mighty aid against all enemies and opposites." Quoth Ins ben Cais, "Say what thou wilt, O King, for indeed thou excellest in speech and attainest [the mark] in that which them sayest" So El Aziz said to him," I desire that thou give thy daughter Mariyeh in marriage to my son El Abbas, for thou knowest that wherewithal he is gifted of beauty and loveliness and brightness and perfection and

how he beareth himself in the frequentation of the valiant and his constancy in the stead of smiting and thrusting." "By Allah, O king," answered Ins ben Cais, "of my love for Mariyeh, I have appointed her disposal to be in her own hand; wherefore, whomsoever she chooseth of the folk, I will marry her to him."

Then he arose and going in to his daughter, found her mother with her; so he set out to them the case and Mariyeh said, "O father mine, my wish is subject unto thy commandment and my will ensueth thy will; so whatsoever thou choosest, I am still obedient unto thee and under thy dominion." Therewithal the King knew that Mariyeh inclined unto El Abbas; so he returned forthright to King El Aziz and said to him, "May God amend the King! Verily, the occasion is accomplished and there is no opposition unto that which thou commandest" Quoth El Aziz, "By God's leave are occasions accomplished. How deemest thou, O King, of fetching El Abbas and drawing up the contract of marriage between Mariyeh and him?" And Ins ben Cais answered, saying, "Thine be it to decide."

So El Aziz sent after his son and acquainted him with that which had passed; whereupon El Abbas called for four-and-twenty males and half a score horses [and as many camels] and loaded the mules with pieces of silk and rags of leather and boxes of camphor and musk and the camels [and horses] with chests of gold and silver. Moreover, he took the richest of the stuffs and wrapping them in pieces of gold-striped silk, laid them on the heads of porters, and they fared on with the treasures till they reached the King of Baghdad's palace, whereupon all who were present dismounted in honour of El Abbas and escorting him to the presence of King Ins ben Cais, displayed unto the latter all that they had with them of things of price. The king bade carry all this into the harem and sent for the Cadis and the witnesses, who drew up the contract and married Mariyeh to Prince El Abbas, whereupon the latter commanded to [slaughter] a thousand head of sheep and five hundred buffaloes. So they made the bride-feast and bade thereto all the tribes of the Arabs, Bedouins and townsfolk, and the tables abode spread for the space of ten days.

Then El Abbas went in to Mariyeh in a happy and praiseworthy hour and found her an unpierced pearl and a goodly filly that had never been mounted; wherefore he rejoiced and was glad and made merry, and care and sorrow ceased from him and his life was pleasant and trouble departed and he abode with her in the gladsomest of case and in the most easeful of life, till seven days were past, when King El Aziz determined to set out and return to his kingdom and bade his son seek leave of his father-in-law to depart with his wife to his own country. [So El Abbas bespoke King Ins of this] and he granted him the leave he sought; whereupon he chose out a red camel, taller than the [other] camels, and mounting Mariyeh in a litter thereon, loaded it with apparel and ornaments.

Then they spread the ensigns and the standards, whilst the drums beat and the trumpets sounded, and set out upon the homeward journey. The King of Baghdad rode forth with them and brought them three days' journey on their way, after which he took leave of them and returned with his troops to Baghdad. As for King El Aziz and his son, they fared on night and day and gave not over going till there abode but three days' journey between them and Yemen, when they despatched three men of the couriers to the prince's mother [to acquaint her with their return], safe and laden with

spoil, bringing with them Mariyeh, the king's daughter of Baghdad. When the queen-mother heard this, her wit fled for joy and she adorned El Abbas his slave-girls after the goodliest fashion. Now he had ten slave-girls, as they were moons, whereof his father had carried five with him to Baghdad, as hath aforetime been set out, and other five abode with his mother. When the dromedary-posts came, they were certified of the approach of El Abbas, and when the sun rose and their standards appeared, the prince's mother came out to meet her son; nor was there great or small, old man or infant, but went forth that day to meet the king.

The drums of glad tidings beat and they entered in the utmost of worship and magnificence. Moreover, the tribes heard of them and the people of the towns and brought them the richest of presents and the costliest of rarities and the prince's mother rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Then they slaughtered beasts and made mighty bride-feasts to the people and kindled fires, that it might be visible afar to townsman [and Bedouin] that this was the house of the guest-meal and the wedding, festival, to the intent that, if any passed them by, [without partaking of their hospitality], it should be of his own fault So the folk came to them from all parts and quarters and on this wise they abode days and months.

Then the prince's mother bade fetch the five slave-girls to that assembly; whereupon they came and the ten damsels foregathered. The queen seated five of them on her son's right hand and other five on his left and the folk assembled about them. Then she bade the five who had remained with her speak forth somewhat of verse, so they might entertain therewith the assembly and that El Abbas might rejoice therein. Now she had clad them in the richest of raiment and adorned them with trinkets and ornaments and wroughten work of gold and silver and collars of gold, set with pearls and jewels. So they came forward, with harps and lutes and psalteries and recorders and other instruments of music before them, and one of them, a damsel who came from the land of China and whose name was Baoutheh, advanced and tightened the strings of her lute. Then she cried out from the top of her head and improvising, sang the following verses:

Unto its pristine lustre your land returned and more,
Whenas ye came, dispelling the gloom that whiles it wore.
Our stead, that late was desert, grew green and eke our trees,
That barren were, grew loaded with ripened fruits galore.
Yea, to the earth that languished for lack of rain, the clouds
Were bounteous; so it flourished and plenteous harvests bore;
And troubles, too, forsook us, who tears like dragons' blood,
O lordings, for your absence had wept at every pore.
Indeed, your long estrangement hath caused my bowels yearn.
Would God I were a servant in waiting at your door!

When she had made an end of her song, all who were present were moved to delight and El Abbas rejoiced in this. Then he bade the second damsel sing somewhat on the like subject. So she came forward and tuning the strings of her harp, which was of balass ruby, warbled a plaintive air and improvising, sang the following verses;

The absent ones' harbinger came us unto
With tidings of those who had caused us to rue.
"My soul be thy ransom,"quoth I,"for thy grace!
Indeed, to the oath that thou swor'st thou wast true."
On the dear nights of union, in you was our joy,
But afflicted were we since ye bade us adieu.
You swore you'd be faithful to us and our love,
And true to your oath and your troth-plight were you;
And I to you swore that a lover I was;
God forbid that with treason mine oath I ensue!
Yea, "Welcome! Fair welcome to those who draw near!"
I called out aloud, as to meet you I flew.
The dwellings, indeed, one and all, I adorned,
Bewildered and dazed with delight at your view;
For death in your absence to us was decreed;
But, when ye came back, we were quickened anew.

When she had made an end of her verses, El Abbas bade the third damsel, who came from Samarcand of the Persians and whose name was Rummaneh, sing, and she answered with "Hearkening and obedience." Then she took the psaltery and crying out from the midst of her bead improvised and sang the following verses:

My watering lips, that cull the rose of thy soft cheek, declare
My basil, lily mine, to be the myrtles of thy hair.
Sandhill and down betwixt there blooms a yellow willow-flower,
Pomegranate-blossoms and for fruits pomegranates that doth bear.
His eyelids' sorcery from mine eyes hath banished sleep; since he
From me departed, nought see I except a drowsy fair.
He shot me with the shafts of looks launched from an eyebrow's bow;
A chamberlain betwixt his eyes hath driven me to despair.
My heart belike shall his infect with softness, even as me
His body with disease infects, of its seductive air.
Yet, if with him forgotten be the troth-plight of our loves,
I have a king who of his grace will not forget me e'er.
His sides the tamarisk's slenderness deride, so lithe they are,
Whence for conceit in his own charms still drunken doth he fare.
Whenas he runs, his feet still show like wings, and for the wind
When was a rider found, except King Solomon it were?

Therewithal El Abbas smiled and her verses pleased him. Then he bade the fourth damsel come forward and sing. Now she was from the land of Morocco and her name was Belekhsha. So she came forward and taking the lute and the psaltery, tightened the strings thereof and smote thereon in many modes; then returned to the first mode and improvising, sang the following verses:

When in the sitting-chamber we for merry-making sate,
With thine eyes' radiance the place thou didst illuminate

And pliedst us with cups of wine, whilst from the necklace pearls
A strange intoxicating bliss withal did circulate,
Whose subtleness might well infect the understanding folk;
And secrets didst thou, in thy cheer, to us communicate.
Whenas we saw the cup, forthright we signed to past it round
And sun and moon unto our eyes shone sparkling from it straight.
The curtain of delight, perforce, we've lifted through the friend,
For tidings of great joy, indeed, there came to us of late.
The camel-leader singing came with the belov'd; our wish
Accomplished was and we were quit of all the railers' prate.
When clear'd my sky was by the sweet of our foregathering
And not a helper there remained to disuniting Fate,
I shut myself up with my love; no spy betwixt us was;
We feared no enemies' despite, no envious neighbour's hate.
Life with our loves was grown serene, estrangement was at end:
Our dear ones all delight of love vouchsafed to us elate,
Saying, "Thy fill of union take; no spy is there on us,
Whom we should fear, nor yet reproach our gladness may abate."
Our loves are joined and cruelty at last is done away;
Ay, and the cup of love-delight 'twixt us doth circulate.
Upon yon be the peace of God! May all prosperity,
For what's decreed of years and lives, upon you ever wait!

When Belekhsha had made an end of her verses, all present were moved to delight and El Abbas said to her, "Well done, O damsel!" Then he bade the fifth damsel come forward and sing. Now she was from the land of Syria and her name was Rihaneh; she was surpassing of voice and when she appeared in an assembly, all eyes were fixed upon her. So she came forward and taking the rebeck (for that she was used to play upon [all manner] instruments) improvised and sang the following verses:

Your coming to-me-ward, indeed, with "Welcome! fair welcome!" I hail.
Your sight to me gladness doth bring and banisheth sorrow and bale;
For love with your presence grows sweet, untroubled and life is serene
And the star of our fortune burns bright, that clouds in your absence did veil.
Yea, by Allah, my longing for you ne'er waneth nor passeth away;
For your like among creatures is rare and sought for in mountain and vale.
Ask mine eyes whether slumber hath lit on their lids since the hour of your loss
Or if aye on a lover they've looked. Nay, an ye believe not their tale,
My heart, since the leave-taking day afflicted, will tell of my case,
And my body, for love and desire grown wasted and feeble and frail.
Could they who reproach me but see my sufferings, their hearts would relent;
They'd marvel, indeed, at my case and the loss of my loved ones bewail.
Yea, they'd join me in pouring forth tears and help me my woes to lament,
And like unto me they'd become all wasted and tortured and pale.
How long did the heart for thy love that languished with longing endure
A burden of passion, 'neath which e'en mountains might totter and fail!

By Allah, what sorrows and woes to my soul for thy sake were decreed!
My heart is grown hoar, ere eld's snows have left on my tresses their trail.
The fires in my vitals that rage if I did but discover to view,
Their ardour the world to consume, from the East to the West, might avail.
But now unto me of my loves accomplished are joyance and cheer
And those whom I cherish my soul with the wine of contentment regale.
Our Lord, after sev'rance, with them hath conjoined us, for he who doth good
Shall ne'er disappointed abide and kindnesses kindness entail.

When King El Aziz heard the damsel's song, her speech and her verses pleased him and he said to El Abbas, "O my son, verily, these damsels are weary with long versifying, and indeed they make us yearn after the dwellings and the homesteads with the goodliness of their songs. Indeed, these five have adorned our assembly with the excellence of their melodies and have done well in that which they have said before those who are present; wherefore we counsel thee to enfranchise them for the love of God the Most High." Quoth El Abbas, "There is no commandment but thy commandment;" and he enfranchised the ten damsels in the assembly; whereupon they kissed the hands of the king and his son and prostrated themselves in thanksgiving to God the Most High. Then they put off that which was upon them of ornaments and laying aside the lutes [and other] instruments of music, clave to their houses, veiled, and went not forth.

As for King El Aziz, he lived after this seven years and was admitted to the mercy of God the Most High; whereupon his son El Abbas carried him forth to burial on such wise as beseemeth unto kings and let make recitations and readings of the Koran, in whole or in part, over his tomb. He kept up the mourning for his father a full-told month, at the end of which time he sat down on the throne of the kingship and judged and did justice and distributed silver and gold. Moreover, he loosed all who were in the prisons and abolished grievances and customs dues and did the oppressed justice of the oppressor; wherefore the people prayed for him and loved him and invoked on him endurance of glory and kingship and length of continuance [on life] and eternity of prosperity and happiness. Moreover, the troops submitted to him and the hosts from all parts of the kingdom, and there came to him presents from all the lands. The kings obeyed him and many were his troops and his grandees, and his subjects lived with him the most easeful and prosperous of lives.

Meanwhile, he ceased not, he and his beloved, Queen Mariyeh, in the most delightsome of life and the pleasantest thereof, and he was vouchsafed by her children; and indeed there befell friendship and love between them and the longer their companionship was prolonged, the more their love waxed, so that they became unable to endure from each other a single hour, save the time of his going forth to the Divan, when he would return to her in the utterest that might be of longing. Aud on this wise they abode in all solace and delight of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies. So extolled be the perfection of Him whose kingdom endureth for ever, who is never heedless neither dieth nor sleepeth! This is all that hath come down to us of their story, and so peace [be on you!]

Shehrzad and Shehriyar.

KING Shehriyar marvelled [at this story] and said "By Allah, verily, injustice slayeth its folk!" And he was edified by that wherewith Shehrzad bespoke him and sought help of God the Most High. Then said he to her, "Tell me another of thy stories, O Shehrzad; let it be a pleasant one and this shall be the completion of the story-telling." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad. "It hath reached me, O august King, that a man once said to his fellows, 'I will set forth to you a means of security against vexation. A friend of mine once related to me and said, "We attained [whiles] to security against vexation,and the origin of it was other than this; to wit, it was as follows.

The Two Kings and the Vizier's Daughters.

[AFORETIME] I journeyed in [many] lands and climes and towns and visited the great cities and traversed the ways and [exposed myself to] dangers and hardships. Towards the last of my life, I entered a city [of the cities of China], wherein was a king of the Chosroes and the Tubbas and the Caesars. Now that city had been peopled with its inhabitants by means of justice and equitable dealing; but its [then] king was a tyrant, who despoiled souls and [did away] lives; there was no wanning oneself at his fire, for that indeed he oppressed the true believers and wasted the lands. Now he had a younger brother, who was [king] in Samarcand of the Persians, and the two kings abode a while of time, each in his own city and place, till they yearned unto each other and the elder king despatched his vizier in quest of his younger brother.

When the vizier came to the King of Samarcand [and acquainted him with his errand], he submitted himself to the commandment [of his brother and made answer] with 'Hearkening and obedience.' Then he equipped himself and made ready for the journey and brought forth his tents and pavilions. A while after midnight, he went in to his wife, that he might take leave of her, and found with her a strange man, sleeping with her in one bed. So he slew them both and dragging them out by the feet, cast them away and set forth incontinent on his journey. When he came to his brother's court, the latter rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and lodged him in the pavilion of entertainment, [to wit, the guest-house,] beside his own palace. Now this pavilion overlooked a garden belonging to the elder king and there the younger brother abode with him some days. Then he called to mind that which his wife had done with him and remembered him of her slaughter and bethought him how he was a king, yet was not exempt from the vicissitudes of fortune; and this wrought upon him with an exceeding despite, so that it caused him abstain from meat and drink, or, if he ate anything, it profited him not.

When his brother saw him on this wise, he doubted not but that this had betided him by reason of severance from his people and family and said to him, 'Come, let us go forth a-hunting.' But he refused to go with him; so the elder brother went forth to the chase, whilst the younger abode in the pavilion aforesaid. As he was diverting himself by looking out upon the garden from the window of the palace, behold, he saw his brother's wife and with her ten black slaves and as many slave-girls. Each slave laid hold of a damsel [and swived her] and another slave [came forth and] did the like with the queen; and when they had done their occasions, they all returned whence they came. Therewithal there betided the King of Samarcand exceeding wonder and solacement and he was made whole of his malady, little by little.

After a few days, his brother returned and finding him healed of his sickness, said to him, 'Tell me, O my brother, what was the cause of thy sickness and thy pallor, and what is the cause of the return of health to thee and of rosiness to thy face after this?' So he acquainted him with the whole case and this was grievous to him; but they concealed their affair and agreed to leave the kingship and fare forth pilgrim-wise, wandering at a venture, for they deemed that there had befallen none the like of this

which had befallen them. [So they went forth and wandered on at hazard] and as they journeyed, they saw by the way a woman imprisoned in seven chests, whereon were five locks, and sunken in the midst of the salt sea, under the guardianship of an Afrit; yet for all this that woman issued forth of the sea and opened those locks and coming forth of those chests, did what she would with the two brothers, after she had circumvented the Afrit.

When the two kings saw that woman's fashion and how she circumvented the Afrit, who had lodged her at the bottom of the sea, they turned back to their kingdoms and the younger betook himself to Samarcand, whilst the elder returned to China and established unto himself a custom in the slaughter of women, to wit, his vizier used to bring him a girl every night, with whom he lay that night, and when he arose in the morning, he gave her to the vizier and bade him put her to death. On this wise he abode a great while, whilst the people murmured and the creatures [of God] were destroyed and the commons cried out by reason of that grievous affair whereinto they were fallen and feared the wrath of God the Most High, dreading lest He should destroy them by means of this. Still the king persisted in that fashion and in that his blameworthy intent of the killing of women and the despoilment of the curtained ones, wherefore the girls sought succour of God the Most High and complained to Him of the tyranny of the king and of his oppressive dealing with them.

Now the king's vizier had two daughters, own sisters, the elder of whom had read books and made herself mistress of [all] sciences and studied the writings of the sages and the histories of the boon-companions, and she was possessed of abundant wit and knowledge galore and surpassing apprehension. She heard that which the folk suffered from the king and his despiteous usage of their children; whereupon compassion gat hold upon her for them and jealousy and she besought God the Most High that He would bring the king to renounce that his heresy, and God answered her prayer. Then she took counsel with her younger sister and said to her, 'I mean to contrive somewhat for the liberation of the people's children; and it is that I will go up to the king [and offer myself to him], and when I come to his presence, I will seek thee. When thou comest in to me and the king hath done his occasion [of me], do thou say to me, 'O my sister, let me hear and let the king hear a story of thy goodly stories, wherewithal we may beguile the waking hours of our night, till we take leave of each other.' 'It is well,' answered the other. 'Surely this contrivance will deter the king from his heresy and thou shalt be requited with exceeding favour and abounding recompense in the world to come, for that indeed thou adventurest thyself and wilt either perish or attain to thy desire.'

So she did this and fair fortune aided her and the Divine favour was vouchsafed unto her and she discovered her intent to her father, who forbade her therefrom, fearing her slaughter. However, she repeated her speech to him a second and a third time, but he consented not. Then he cited unto her a parable, that should deter her, and she cited him a parable in answer to his, and the talk was prolonged between them and the adducing of instances, till her father saw that he availed not to turn her from her purpose and she said to him, 'Needs must I marry the king, so haply I may be a sacrifice for the children of the Muslims; either I shall turn him from this his heresy or I shall die.' When the vizier despaired of dissuading her, he went up to the king and

acquainted him with the case, saying, 'I have a daughter and she desireth to give herself to the king.' Quoth the king, 'How can thy soul consent unto this, seeing that thou knowest I lie but one night with a girl and when I arise on the morrow, I put her to death, and it is thou who slayest her, and thou hast done this again and again?' 'Know, O king,' answered the vizier, 'that I have set forth all this to her, yet consented she not unto aught, but needs must she have thy company and still chooseth to come to thee and present herself before thee, notwithstanding that I have cited to her the sayings of the sages; but she hath answered me to the contrary thereof with more than that which I said to her.' And the king said, 'Bring her to me this night and to-morrow morning come thou and take her and put her to death; and by Allah, an thou slay her not, I will slay thee and her also!'

The vizier obeyed the king's commandment and going out from before him, [returned to his own house. When it was night, he took his elder daughter and carried her up to the king; and when she came into his presence,] she wept; whereupon quoth he to her, 'What causeth thee weep? Indeed, it was thou who willedst this.' And she answered, saying, 'I weep not but for longing after my little sister; for that, since we grew up, I and she, I have never been parted from her till this day; so, if it please the king to send for her, that I may look on her and take my fill of her till the morning, this were bounty and kindness of the king.'

Accordingly, the king bade fetch the girl [and she came]. Then there befell that which befell of his foregathering with the elder sister, and when he went up to his couch, that he might sleep, the younger sister said to the elder, 'I conjure thee by Allah, O my sister, an thou be not asleep, tell us a story of thy goodly stories, wherewithal we may beguile the watches of our night, against morning come and parting.' 'With all my heart,' answered she and fell to relating to her, whilst the king listened. Her story was goodly and delightful, and whilst she was in the midst of telling it, the dawn broke. Now the king's heart clave to the hearing of the rest of the story; so he respited her till the morrow, and when it was the next night, she told him a story concerning the marvels of the lands and the extraordinary chances of the folk, that was yet stranger and rarer than the first. In the midst of the story, the day appeared and she was silent from the permitted speech. So he let her live till the ensuing night, so he might hear the completion of the story and after put her to death.

Meanwhile, the people of the city rejoiced and were glad and blessed the vizier's daughter, marvelling for that three days had passed and that the king had not put her to death and exulting in that, [as they deemed,] he had turned [from his purpose] and would never again burden himself with blood-guiltiness against any of the maidens of the city. Then, on the fourth night, she related to him a still more extraordinary story, and on the fifth night she told him anecdotes of kings and viziers and notables. On this wise she ceased not [to do] with him [many] days and nights, what while the king still said in himself, 'When I have heard the end of the story, I will put her to death,' and the people waxed ever in wonder and admiration. Moreover, the folk of the provinces and cities heard of this thing, to wit, that the king had turned from his custom and from that which he had imposed upon himself and had renounced his heresy, wherefore they rejoiced and the folk returned to the capital and took up their abode therein, after they had departed thence; yea, they were constant in prayer to God

the Most High that He would stablish the king in that his present case; and this," said Shehrzad, "is the end of that which my friend related to me."

"O Shehrzad," quoth Shehriyar, "finish unto us the story that thy friend told thee, for that it resembleth the story of a king whom I knew; but fain would I hear that which betided the people of this city and what they said of the affair of the king, so I may return from that wherein I was." "With all my heart," answered Shehrzad. "Know, O august king and lord of just judgment and praiseworthy excellence and exceeding prowess, that, when the folk heard that the king had put away from him his custom and returned from that which had been his wont, they rejoiced in this with an exceeding joy and offered up prayers for him. Then they talked with one another of the cause of the slaughter of the girls, and the wise said, 'They are not all alike, nor are the fingers of the hand alike.'"

SHEHRZAD AND SHEHRIYAR.
(Conclusion)

When King Shehriyar heard this story, he came to himself and awaking from his drunkenness, said, "By Allah, this story is my story and this case is my case, for that indeed I was in wrath and [danger of] punishment till thou turnedst me back from this into the right way, extolled be the perfection of the Causer of causes and the Liberator of necks! Indeed, O Shehrzad," continued he, "thou hast awakened me unto many things and hast aroused me from mine ignorance."

Then said she to him, "O chief of the kings, the wise say, 'The kingship is a building, whereof the troops are the foundation,' and whenas the foundation is strong, the building endureth; wherefore it behoveth the king to strengthen the foundation, for that they say, 'Whenas the foundation is weak, the building falleth.' On like wise it behoveth the king to care for his troops and do justice among his subjects, even as the owner of the garden careth for his trees and cutteth away the weeds that have no profit in them; and so it behoveth the king to look into the affairs of his subjects and fend off oppression from them. As for thee, O king," continued Shehrzad, "it behoveth thee that thy vizier be virtuous and versed in the knowledge of the affairs of the folk and the common people; and indeed God the Most High hath named his name in the history of Moses (on whom be peace!) whenas He saith, [Quoth Moses] 'And make me a vizier of my people, Aaron [my brother]. Could a vizier have been dispensed withal, Moses ben Imran had been worthier [than any of this dispensation].

As for the vizier, the sultan discovereth unto him his affairs, private and public; and know, O king, that the similitude of thee with the people is that of the physician with the sick man; and the condition of the vizier is that he be truthful in his sayings, trustworthy in all his relations, abounding in compassion for the folk and in tender solicitude over them. Indeed, it is said, O king, that good troops are like the druggist; if his perfumes reach thee not, thou still smallest the sweet scent of them; and ill troops are like the black-smith; if his sparks burn thee not, thou smellest his nauseous smell. So it behoveth thee take unto thyself a virtuous vizier, a man of good counsel, even as thou takest unto thee a wife displayed before thy face, for that thou hast need of the man's righteousness for thine own amendment, seeing that, if thou do righteously, the commons will do likewise, and if thou do evil, they also will do evil."

When the king heard this, drowsiness overcame him and he slept and presently awaking, called for the candles. So they were lighted and he sat down on his couch and seating Shehrzad by him, smiled in her face. She kissed the earth before him and said, "O king of the age and lord of the time and the day, extolled be the perfection of [God] the Forgiving One, the Bountiful Giver, who hath sent me unto thee, of His favour and beneficence, so I have informed thee with longing after Paradise; for that this which thou wast used to do was never done of any of the kings before thee. As for women, God the Most High [in His Holy Book] maketh mention of them, [whenas He saith, 'Verily, men who submit [themselves unto God] and women who submit] and true-believing men and true-believing women and obedient men and obedient women and soothfast men and soothfast women [and long-suffering men and long-suffering women and men who order themselves humbly and women who order themselves humbly and charitable men and charitable women and men who fast and women who fast] and men who guard their privities and women who guard their privities [and men who are constantly mindful of God and women who are constantly mindful, God hath prepared unto them forgiveness and a mighty recompense].

As for that which hath befallen thee, verily, it hath befallen [many] kings before thee and their women have played them false, for all they were greater of puissance than thou, yea, and mightier of kingship and more abounding in troops. If I would, I could relate unto thee, O king, concerning the wiles of women, that whereof I could not make an end all my life long; and indeed, aforetime, in all these my nights that I have passed before thee, I have told thee [many stories and anecdotes] of the artifices of women and of their craft and perfidy; but indeed the things abound on me; wherefore, if it like thee, O king, I will relate unto thee [somewhat] of that which befell kings of old time of the perfidy of their women and of the calamities which overtook them by reason of these latter." "How so?" asked the king. "Tell on." "Hearkening and obedience,"answered Shehrzad."It hath been told me, O king, that a man once related to a company and spoke as follows:

The Favourite and Her Lover.

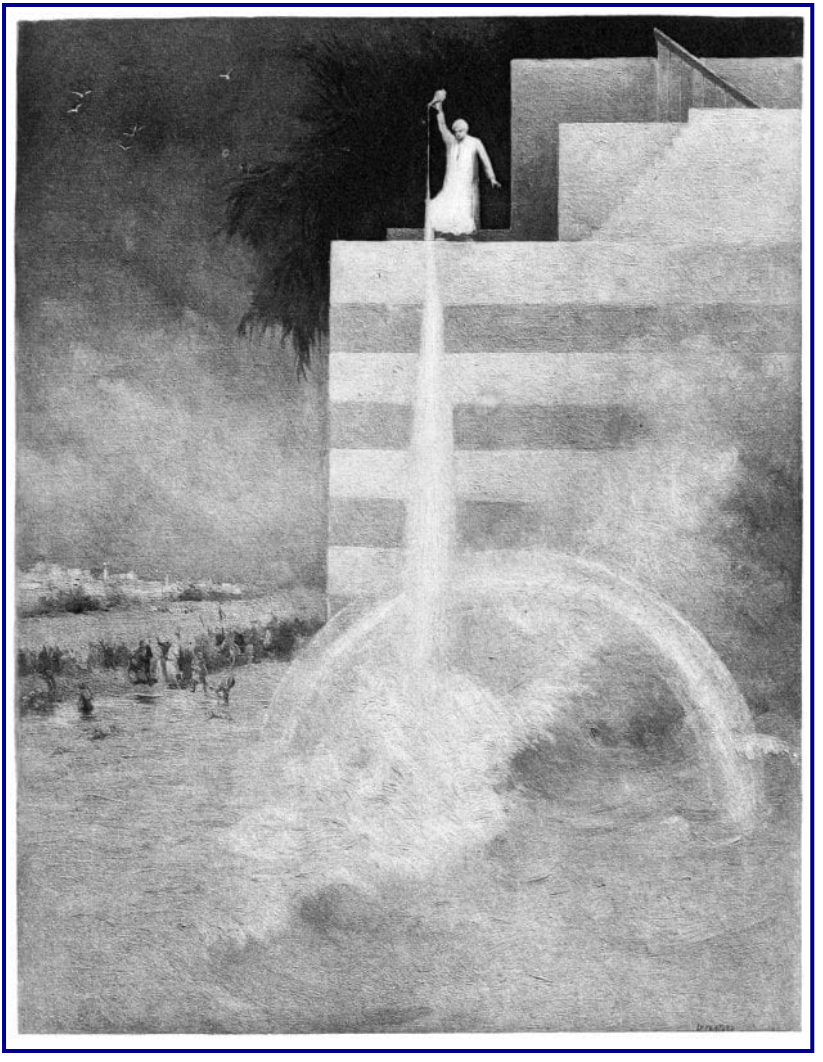
ONE day, a day of excessive heat, as I stood at the door of my house, I saw a fair woman approaching, and with her a slave-girl carrying a parcel. They gave not over going till they came up to me, when the woman stopped and said to me, 'Hast thou a draught of water?' 'Yes,' answered I. 'Enter the vestibule, O my lady, so thou mayst drink.' Accordingly, she entered and I went up into the house and fetched two mugs of earthenware, perfumed with musk and full of cold water. She took one of them and discovered her face, [that she might drink]; whereupon I saw that she was as the shining sun or the rising moon and said to her, 'O my lady, wilt thou not come up into the house, so thou mayst rest thyself till the air grow cool and after go away to thine own place?' Quoth she, 'Is there none with thee?' 'Indeed,' answered I, 'I am a [stranger] and a bachelor and have none belonging to me, nor is there a living soul in the house.' And she said, 'An thou be a stranger, thou art he in quest of whom I was going about.'

Then she went up into the house and put off her [walking] clothes and I found her as she were the full moon. I brought her what I had by me of meat and drink and said to her, 'O my lady, excuse me: this is that which is ready.' Quoth she, 'This is abundant kindness and indeed it is what I sought' And she ate and gave the slave-girl that which was left; after which I brought her a casting-bottle of rose-water, mingled with musk, and she washed her hands and abode with me till the season of afternoon-prayer, when she brought out of the parcel that she had with her a shirt and trousers and an upper garment and a kerchief wroughten with gold and gave them to me; saying, 'Know that I am one of the favourites of the Khalif, and we are forty favourites, each one of whom hath a lover who cometh to her as often as she would have him; and none is without a lover save myself, wherefore I came forth to-day to find me a gallant and behold, I have found thee. Thou must know that the Khalif lieth each night with one of us, whilst the other nine-and-thirty favourites take their ease with the nine-and-thirty men, and I would have thee be with me on such a day, when do thou come up to the palace of the Khalif and wait for me in such a place, till a little eunuch come out to thee and say to thee a [certain] word, to wit, "Art thou Sendel?" And do thou answer, "Yes," and go with him.'

Then she took leave of me and I of her, after I had strained her to my bosom and embraced her and we had kissed awhile. So she went away and I abode expecting the appointed day, till it came, when I arose and went forth, intending for the trysting-place; but a friend of mine met me by the way [and would have me go home with him. So I accompanied him to his house] and when I came up [into his sitting-chamber] he locked the door on me and went forth to fetch what we might eat and drink. He was absent till mid-day, then till the hour of afternoon-prayer, whereat I was sore disquieted. Then he was absent till sundown, and I was like to die of chagrin and impatience; [and indeed he returned not] and I passed my night on wake, nigh upon death, for that the door was locked on me, and my soul was like to depart my body on account of the tryst.

At daybreak, my friend returned and opening the door, came in, bringing with him meat-pottage and fritters and bees' honey, and said to me, 'By Allah, thou must needs excuse me, for that I was with a company and they locked the door on me and have but now let me go.' But I returned him no answer. Then he set before me that which was with him and I ate a single mouthful and went out, running, so haply I might overtake that which had escaped me. When I came to the palace, I saw over against it eight-and-thirty gibbets set up, whereon were eight-and-thirty men crucified, and under them eight-and-thirty concubines as they were moons. So I enquired of the reason of the crucifixion of the men and concerning the women in question, and it was said unto me, 'The men [whom thou seest] crucified the Khalif found with yonder damsels, who are his favourites.' When I heard this, I prostrated myself in thanksgiving to God and said, 'God requite thee with good, O my friend!' For that, had he not invited me [and kept me perforce in his house] that night, I had been crucified with these men, wherefore praise be to God!

Thus," continued Shehrzad, "none is safe from the calamities of fortune and the vicissitudes of time, and [in proof of this], I will relate unto thee yet another story still rarer and more extraordinary than this. Know, O King, that one said to me, 'A friend of mine, a merchant, told me the following story. Quoth he,



The Merchant of Cairo and the Favourite of the Khalif El Mamoun El Hakim Bi Amrillah.

AS I sat one day in my shop, there came up to me a fair woman, as she were the moon at its rising, and with her a slave-girl. Now I was a handsome man in my time; so the lady sat down on [the bench before] my shop and buying stuffs of me, paid down the price and went away. I questioned the girl of her and she said, "I know not her name." Quoth I, "Where is her abode?" "In heaven," answered the slave-girl; and I said, "She is presently on the earth; so when doth she ascend to heaven and where is the ladder by which she goeth up?" Quoth the girl, "She hath her lodging in a palace between two rivers, to wit, the palace of El Mamoun el Hakim bi Amrillah." Then said I, "I am a dead man, without recourse; "but she replied, "Have patience, for needs must she return unto thee and buy stuffs of thee yet again." "And how cometh it," asked I, "that the Commander of the Faithful trusteth her to go out?" "He loveth her with an exceeding love," answered she, "and is wrapped up in her and gainsayeth her not."

Then the girl went away, running, after her mistress, whereupon I left the shop and set out after them, so I might see her abiding-place. I followed after them all the way, till she disappeared from mine eyes, when I returned to my place, with a heart on fire. Some days after, she came to me again and bought stuffs of me. I refused to take the price and she said, "We have no need of thy goods." Quoth I, "O my lady, accept them from me as a gift;" but she said, "[Wait] till I try thee and make proof of thee." Then she brought out of her pocket a purse and gave me therefrom a thousand dinars, saying, "Trade with this till I return to thee." So I took the purse and she went away [and returned not to me] till six months had passed by. Meanwhile, I traded with the money and sold and bought and made other thousand dinars profit [on it].

Presently, she came to me again and I said to her, "Here is thy money and I have gained [with it] other thousand dinars." Quoth she, "Keep it by thee and take these other thousand dinars. As soon as I have departed from thee, go thou to Er Rauzeh and build there a goodly pavilion, and when the building thereof is accomplished, give me to know thereof." So saying, she left me and went away. As soon as she was gone, I betook myself to Er Rauzeh and addressed myself to the building of the pavilion, and when it was finished, I furnished it with the goodliest of furniture and sent to the lady to tell her that I had made an end of its building; whereupon she sent back to me, saying, "Let him meet me to-morrow at daybreak at the Zuweyleh gate and bring with him a good ass." So I got me an ass and betaking myself to the Zuweyleh gate, at the appointed time, found there a young man on horse- back, awaiting her, even as I awaited her.

As we stood, behold, up came the lady, and with her a slave-girl. When she saw the young man, she said to him, "Art thou here?" And he answered, "Yes, O my lady." Quoth she, "To-day I am bidden by this man. Wilt thou go with us?" And he replied, "Yes." Then said she, "Thou hast brought me [hither] against my will and perforce. Wilt thou go with us in any event?" "Yes, yes," answered he and we fared on, [all three,]

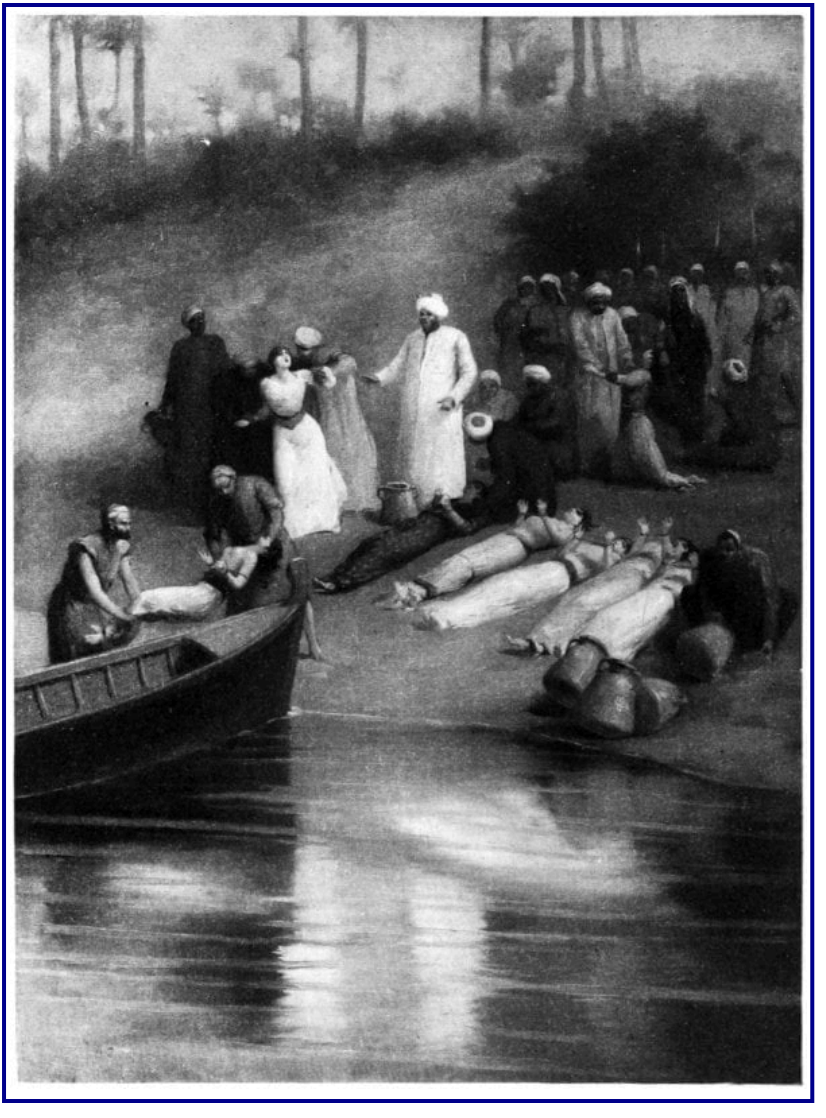
till we came to Er Rauzeh and entered the pavilion. The lady diverted herself awhile with viewing its ordinance and furniture, after which she put off her [walking-]clothes and sat down [with the young man] in the goodliest and chiefest place. Then I went forth and brought them what they should eat at the first of the day; moreover, I went out also and fetched them what they should eat at the last of the day and brought them wine and dessert and fruits and flowers. On this wise I abode in their service, standing on my feet, and she said not unto me, "Sit," nor "Take, eat" nor "Take, drink," what while she and the young man sat toying and laughing, and he fell to kissing her and pinching her and hopping about upon the ground and laughing.

They abode thus awhile and presently she said, "Up to now we have not become drunken; let me pour out." So she took the cup and gave him to drink and plied him with liquor, till he became drunken, when she took him and carried him into a closet. Then she came out, with his head in her hand, what while I stood silent, fixing not mine eyes on hers neither questioning her of this; and she said to me, "What is this?" "I know not," answered I; and she said, "Take it and cast it into the river." I obeyed her commandment and she arose and stripping herself of her clothes, took a knife and cut the dead man's body in pieces, which she laid in three baskets, and said to me, "Throw them into the river."

I did as she bade me and when I returned, she said to me, "Sit, so I may relate to thee yonder fellow's case, lest thou be affrighted at that which hath befallen him. Thou must know that I am the Khalif's favourite, nor is there any more in honour with him than I; and I am allowed six nights in each month, wherein I go down [into the city and take up my abode] with my [former] mistress, who reared me; and when I go down thus, I dispose of myself as I will. Now this young man was the son of neighbours of my mistress, when I was a virgin girl. One day, my mistress was [engaged] with the chief [officers] of the palace and I was alone in the house. When the night came on, I went up to the roof, so I might sleep there, and before I was aware, this youth came up from the street and falling upon me, knelt on my breast. He was armed with a poniard and I could not win free of him till he had done away my maidenhead by force; and this sufficed him not, but he must needs disgrace me with all the folk, for, as often as I came down from the palace, he would lie in wait for me by the way and swive me against my will and follow me whithersoever I went. This, then, is my story, and as for thee, thou pleasest me and thy patience pleaseth me and thy good faith and loyal service, and there abideth with me none dearer than thou." Then I lay with her that night and there befell what befell between us till the morning, when she gave me wealth galore and fell to coming to the pavilion six days in every month.

On this wise we abode a whole year, at the end of which time she was absent from me a month's space, wherefore fire raged in my heart on her account. When it was the next month, behold, a little eunuch presented himself to me and said, "I am a messenger to thee from such an one," [naming my mistress], "who giveth thee to know that the Commander of the Faithful hath sentenced her to be drowned, her and those who are with her, six-and-twenty slave-girls, on such a day at Deir et Tin, for that they have confessed against one another of lewdness, and she biddeth thee look how thou mayst do with her and how thou mayst contrive to deliver her, even if thou gather together all her money and spend it upon her, for that this is the time of manhood."

Quoth I, “I know not this woman; belike it is other than I [to whom this message is addressed]; so beware, O eunuch, lest thou cast me into stress.” Quoth he, “Behold, I have told thee [that which I had to say,”] and went away, leaving me in concern [on her account].



[When the appointed day arrived], I arose and changing my clothes and favour, donned sailor's apparel; then I took with me a purse full of gold and buying good [victual for the] morning-meal, accosted a boatman [at Deir et Tin] and sat down and ate with him; after which said I to him, "Wilt thou hire me thy boat?" Quoth he, "The Commander of the Faithful hath commanded me to be here;" and he told me the story of the concubines and how the Khalif purposed to drown them that day. When I heard this from him, I brought out to him half a score dinars and discovered to him my case, whereupon quoth he to me, "O my brother, get thee empty calabashes, and when thy mistress cometh, give me to know of her and I will contrive the trick."

I kissed his hand and thanked him, and as I was walking about, [waiting,] up came the guards and eunuchs with the women, who were weeping and crying out and taking leave of one another. The eunuchs cried out to us, whereupon we came with the boat, and they said to the boatman, "Who is this?" "This is my mate," answered he, "[whom I have brought,] to help me, so one of us may keep the boat, whilst another doth your service." Then they brought out to us the women, one by one, saying, "Throw them [in] by the Island;" and we answered, "It is well." Now each of them was shackled and they had made a jar of sand fast about her neck. We did as the eunuchs bade us and ceased not to take the women, one after another, and cast them in, till they gave us my mistress and I winked to my comrade. So we took her and carried her out into mid-stream, where I gave her the empty calabashes and said to her, "Wait for me at the mouth of the canal." Then we cast her in, after we had loosed the jar of sand from her neck and done off her fetters, and returned.

Now there remained one after her; so we took her and drowned her and the eunuchs went away, whilst we dropped down the river with the boat till we came to the mouth of the canal, where I saw my mistress awaiting me. So we took her up into the boat and returned to our pavilion on Er Rauzeh. Then I rewarded the boatman and he took his boat and went away; whereupon quoth she to me, "Thou art indeed a friend in need." And I abode with her some days; but the shock wrought upon her so that she sickened and fell to wasting away and redoubled in languishment and weakness till she died. I mourned for her with an exceeding mourning and buried her; after which I removed all that was in the pavilion to my own house [and abandoned the former].

Now she had brought to the pavilion aforetime a little brass coffer and laid it in a place whereof I knew not; so, when the inspector of inheritances came, he searched the pavilion and found the coffer, with the key in the lock. So he opened it and finding it full of jewels and jacinths and earrings and seal-rings and precious stones, such as are not found save with kings and sultans, took it, and me with it, and ceased not to put me to the question with beating and torment till I confessed to them the whole affair from beginning to end, whereupon they carried me to the Khalif and I told him all that had passed between me and her; and he said to me, "O man, depart from this city, for I acquit thee for thy valiance sake and because of thy [constancy in] keeping thy secret and thy daring in exposing thyself to death." So I arose forthright and departed his city; and this is what befell me.'"

Shehrzad and Shehriyar.

KING Shehriyar marvelled at these things and Shehrzad said to him, "Thou marvelledst at that which befell thee on the part of women; yet hath there befallen the kings of the Chosroes before thee what was more grievous than that which befell thee, and indeed I have set forth unto thee that which betided khalifs and kings and others than they with their women, but the exposition is long and hearkening groweth tedious, and in this [that I have already told thee] is sufficiency for the man of understanding and admonishment for the wise."

Then she was silent, and when the king heard her speech and profited by that which she said, he summoned up his reasoning faculties and cleansed his heart and caused his understanding revert [to the right way] and turned [with repentance] to God the Most High and said in himself, "Since there befell the kings of the Chosroes more than that which hath befallen me, never, whilst I abide [on life], shall I cease to blame myself [for that which I did in the slaughter of the daughters of the folk]. As for this Shehrzad, her like is not found in the lands; so extolled be the perfection of Him who appointed her a means for the deliverance of His creatures from slaughter and oppression!" Then he arose from his session and kissed her head, whereat she rejoiced with an exceeding joy, she and her sister Dinarzad.

When the morning morrowed, the king went forth and sitting down on the throne of the kingship, summoned the grandees of his empire; whereupon the chamberlains and deputies and captains of the host went in to him and kissed the earth before him. He distinguished the vizier with his especial favour and bestowed on him a dress of honour and entreated him with the utmost kindness, after which he set forth briefly to his chief officers that which had betided him with Shehrzad and how he had turned from that his former usance and repented him of what he had done aforetime and purposed to take the vizier's daughter Shehrzad to wife and let draw up the contract of marriage with her.

When those who were present heard this, they kissed the earth before him and offered up prayers for him and for the damsel Shehrzad, and the vizier thanked her. Then Shehriyar made an end of the session in all weal, whereupon the folk dispersed to their dwelling-places and the news was bruited abroad that the king purposed to marry the vizier's daughter Shehrzad. Then he proceeded to make ready the wedding gear, and [when he had made an end of his preparations], he sent after his brother King Shahzeman, who came, and King Shehriyar went forth to meet him with the troops. Moreover, they decorated the city after the goodliest fashion and diffused perfumes [from the censing-vessels] and [burnt] aloes-wood and other perfumes in all the markets and thoroughfares and rubbed themselves with saffron, what while the drums beat and the flutes and hautboys sounded and it was a notable day.

When they came to the palace, King Shehriyar commanded to spread the tables with beasts roasted [whole] and sweetmeats and all manner viands and bade the crier make proclamation to the folk that they should come up to the Divan and eat and drink and that this should be a means of reconciliation between him and them. So

great and small came up unto him and they abode on that wise, eating and drinking, seven days with their nights. Then the king shut himself up with his brother and acquainted him with that which had betided him with the vizier's daughter [Shehrzad] in those three years [which were past] and told him what he had heard from her of saws and parables and chronicles and pleasant traits and jests and stories and anecdotes and dialogues and histories and odes and verses; whereat King Shahzeman marvelled with the utterest of marvel and said, "Fain would I take her younger sister to wife, so we may be two own brothers to two own sisters, and they on likewise be sisters unto us; for that the calamity which befell me was the means of the discovering of that which befell thee and all this time of three years past I have taken no delight in woman, save that I lie each night with a damsel of my kingdom, and when I arise in the morning, I put her to death; but now I desire to marry thy wife's sister Dinarzad."

When King Shehriyar heard his brother's words he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and arising forthright, went in to his wife Shehrzad and gave her to know of that which his brother purposed, to wit, that he sought her sister Dinarzad in marriage; whereupon, "O king of the age," answered she, "we seek of him one condition, to wit, that he take up his abode with us, for that I cannot brook to be parted from my sister an hour, because we were brought up together and may not brook severance from each other. If he accept this condition, she is his handmaid." King Shehriyar returned to his brother and acquainted him with that which Shehrzad had said; and he answered, saying, "Indeed, this is what was in my mind, for that I desire nevermore to be parted from thee. As for the kingdom, God the Most High shall send unto it whom He chooseth, for that there abideth to me no desire for the kingship."

When King Shehriyar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, "Verily, this is what I had wished, O my brother. So praised be God who hath brought about union between us!" Then he sent after the Cadis and learned men and captains and notables, and they married the two brothers to the two sisters. The contracts were drawn up and the two kings bestowed dresses of honour of silk and satin on those who were present, whilst the city was decorated and the festivities were renewed. The king commanded each amir and vizier and chamberlain and deputy to decorate his palace and the folk of the city rejoiced in the presage of happiness and content. Moreover, King Shehriyar bade slaughter sheep and get up kitchens and made bride-feasts and fed all comers, high and low.

Then the eunuchs went forth, that they might perfume the bath [for the use of the brides]; so they essenced it with rose-water and willow-flower-water and bladders of musk and fumigated it with Cakili aloes-wood and ambergris. Then Shehrzad entered, she and her sister Dinarzad, and they cleansed their heads and clipped their hair. When they came forth of the bath, they donned raiment and ornaments, [such as were] prepared for the kings of the Chosroes; and among Shehrzad's apparel was a dress charactered with red gold and wroughten with semblants of birds and beasts. Moreover, they both encircled their necks with necklaces of jewels of price, in the like whereof Iskender rejoiced not, for therein were great jewels such as amazed the wit and the eye, and the thought was bewildered at their charms, for indeed, each of them was brighter than the sun and the moon. Before them they kindled lighted flambeaux in torch-holders of gold, but their faces outshone the flambeaux, for that they had eyes sharper

than drawn swords and the lashes of their eyelids ensorcelled all hearts. Their cheeks were rosy and their necks and shapes swayed gracefully and their eyes wantoned. And the slave-girls came to meet them with instruments of music.

Then the two kings entered the bath, and when they came forth, they sat down on a couch, inlaid with pearls and jewels, whereupon the two sisters came up to them and stood before them, as they were moons, swaying gracefully from side to side in their beauty and grace. Presently they brought forward Shehrzad and displayed her, for the first dress, in a red suit; whereupon King Shehriyar rose to look upon her and the wits of all present, men and women, were confounded, for that she was even as saith of her one of her describers:

Like a sun at the end of a cane in a hill of sand,
She shines in a dress of the hue of pomegranate flower.
She gives me to drink of her cheeks and her honeyed lips
And quenches the worst of the fires that my heart devour.

Then they attired Dinarzad in a dress of blue brocade and she became as she were the full moon, whenas it shineth forth. So they displayed her in this, for the first dress, before King Shahzeman, who rejoiced in her and well-nigh took leave of his wits for longing and amorous desire; yea, he was distraught with love for her, whenas he saw her, for, indeed, she was as saith of her one of her describers in the following verses:

She comes in a robe the colour of ultramarine,
Blue as the stainless sky, unflecked with white;
I view her with yearning eyes and she seems to me
A moon of the summer, set in a winter's night.

Then they returned to Shehrzad and displayed her in the second dress. They clad her in a dress of surpassing goodliness, and veiled her face to the eyes with her hair. Moreover, they let down her side locks and she was even as saith of her one of her describers in the following verses:

Bravo for her whose loosened locks her cheeks do overcloud!
She slays me with her cruelty, so fair she is and proud.
Quoth I, "Thou overcurtainest the morning with the night;"
And she, "Not so; it is the moon that with the dark I shroud."

Then they displayed Dinarzad in a second and a third and a fourth dress and she came forward, as she were the rising sun, and swayed coquettishly to and fro; and indeed she was even as saith the poet of her in the following verses:

A sun of beauty she appears to all who look on her,
Glorious in arch and amorous grace, with coyness beautified;
And when the sun of morning sees her visage and her smile,
O'ercome. he hasteneth his face behind the clouds to hide.

Then they displayed Shehrzad in the third dress and the fourth and the fifth, and she became as she were a willow-wand or a thirsting gazelle, goodly of grace and perfect of attributes, even as saith of her one in the following verses:

Like the full moon she shows upon a night of fortune fair,
Slender of shape and charming all with her seductive air.
She hath an eye, whose glances pierce the hearts of all mankind,
Nor can cornelian with her cheeks for ruddiness compare.
The sable torrent of her locks falls down unto her hips;
Beware the serpents of her curls, I counsel thee, beware!
Indeed her glance, her sides are soft; but none the less, alas!
Her heart is harder than the rock; there is no mercy there.
The starry arrows of her looks she darts above her veil;
They hit and never miss the mark, though from afar they fare.

Then they returned to Dinarzad and displayed her in the fifth dress and in the sixth, which was green. Indeed, she overpassed with her loveliness the fair of the four quarters of the world and outshone, with the brightness of her countenance, the full moon at its rising; for she was even as saith of her the poet in the following verses:

A damsel made for love and decked with subtle grace;
Thou'dst deem the very sun had borrowed from her face.
She came in robes of green, the likeness of the leaf
That the pomegranate's flower doth in the bud encase.
"How call'st thou this thy dress?" quoth we, and she replied
A word wherein the wise a lesson well might trace;
"Breaker of hearts," quoth she, "I call it, for therewith
I've broken many a heart among the amorous race."

Then they displayed Shehrzad in the sixth and seventh dresses and clad her in youths' apparel, whereupon she came forward, swaying coquettishly from side to side; and indeed she ravished wits and hearts and ensorcelled with her glances [all who looked on her]. She shook her sides and wagged her hips, then put her hair on the hilt of her sword and went up to King Shehriyar, who embraced her, as the hospitable man embraces the guest, and threatened her in her ear with the taking of the sword; and indeed she was even as saith of her the poet in these verses:

Were not the darkness still in gender masculine,
As oftimes is the case with she-things passing fine,
Tirewomen to the bride, who whiskers, ay, and beard
Upon her face produce, they never would assign.

On this wise they did with her sister Dinarzad, and when they had made an end of displaying the two brides, the king bestowed dresses of honour on all who were present and dismissed them to their own places. Then Shehrzad went in to King Shehriyar and Dinarzad to King Shahzeman and each of them solaced himself with the company of his beloved and the hearts of the folk were comforted. When the morning morrowed, the vizier came in to the two kings and kissed the ground before them; wherefore they thanked him and were bountiful to him. Then they went forth and sat down upon couches of estate, whilst all the viziers and amirs and grandees and the chief officers of the realm and the household presented themselves before them and

kissed the earth. King Shehriyar ordered them dresses of honour and largesse and they offered up prayers for the abiding continuance [on life] of the king and his brother.

Then the two kings appointed their father-in-law the vizier to be viceroy in Samarcand and assigned him five of the chief amirs to accompany him, charging them attend him and do him service. The vizier kissed the earth and prayed that they might be vouchsafed length of life. Then he went in to his daughters, whilst the eunuchs and ushers walked before him, and saluted them and bade them farewell. They kissed his hands and gave him joy of the kingship and bestowed on him treasures galore. Then he took leave of them and setting out, journeyed days and nights till he came within three days' journey of Samarcand, where the townspeople met him and rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy. So he entered Samarcand and they decorated the city, and it was a notable day. He sat down on the throne of his kingship and the viziers did him homage and the grandees and amirs of Samarcand and prayed that he might be vouchsafed justice and victory and length of continuance [on life]. So he bestowed on them dresses of honour and entreated them with worship and they made him Sultan over them.

As soon as his father-in-law had departed for Samarcand, King Shehriyar summoned the grandees of his realm and made them a magnificent banquet of all manner rich meats and exquisite sweetmeats. Moreover, he bestowed on them dresses of honour and guerdoned them and divided the kingdoms between himself and his brother in their presence, whereat the folk rejoiced. Then the two kings abode, ruling each a day in turn and they accorded with each other, what while their wives continued in the love of God the Most High and in thanksgiving to Him; and the subjects and the provinces were at peace and the preachers prayed for them from the pulpits, and their report was bruited abroad and the travellers bore tidings of them [to all countries].

Moreover, King Shehriyar summoned chroniclers and copyists and bade them write all that had betided him with his wife, first and last; so they wrote this and named it "The Stories of the Thousand Nights and One Night." The book came to thirty volumes and these the king laid up in his treasury. Then the two kings abode with their wives in all delight and solace of life, for that indeed God the Most High had changed their mourning into joyance; and on this wise they continued till there took them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Companies, he who maketh void the dwelling-places and peopleth the tombs, and they were translated to the mercy of God the Most High; their houses were laid waste and their palaces ruined and the kings inherited their riches.

Then there reigned after them an understanding king, who was just, keen-witted and accomplished and loved stories, especially those which chronicle the doings of kings and sultans, and he found [in the treasuries of the kings who had foregone him] these marvellous and rare and delightful stories, [written] in the thirty volumes aforesaid. So he read in them a first book and a second and a third and [so on] to the last of them, and each book pleased him more than that which forewent it, till he came to the end of them. Then he marvelled at that which he had read [therein] of stories and discourse and witty traits and anecdotes and moral instances and reminiscences and bade the folk copy them and publish them in all lands and climes; wherefore their

report was bruited abroad and the people named them "The marvels and rarities of the Thousand Nights and One Night." This is all that hath come down to us of [the history of] this book, and God is All-Knowing.

Calcutta (1814-18) Text. 183

Sindbad the Sailor and Hindbad the Porter

Note.

AS the version of the sixth and seventh voyages of Sindbad the Sailor contained in the Calcutta Edition (1814-18) of the first two hundred Nights and in the text of the Voyages published by M. Langles (Paris, 1814) differs very materially from that of the complete Calcutta (1839-42) Edition (which is, in this case, practically identical with those of Boulac and Breslau), adopted by me as my standard text in the translation of "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," the story of the seventh voyage in particular turning upon an altogether different set of incidents, related nearly as in the old version of M. Galland, I now give a translation of the text of the two voyages in question afforded by the Calcutta (1814-18) Edition, corrected and completed by collation with that of M. Langles, from which it differs only in being slightly less full. It will be observed that in this version of the story the name Sindbad is reserved for the Sailor, the porter being called Hindbad.

Sindbad the Sailor and Hindbad the Porter.

ON the morrow they returned to their place, as of their wont, and betook themselves to eating and drinking and merry-making and sporting till the last of the day, when Sindbad bade them hearken to his relation concerning his sixth voyage, the which (quoth he) is of the most extraordinary of pleasant stories and the most startling [for that which it compriseth] of tribulations and disasters. Then said he,

The Sixth Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

"WHEN I returned from my fifth voyage, I gave myself up to eating and drinking and passed my time in solace and delight and forgot that which I had suffered of stresses and afflictions, nor was it long before the thought of travel again presented itself to my mind and my soul hankered after the sea. So I brought out the goods and binding up the bales, departed from Baghdad, [intending] for certain of the lands, and came to the sea-coast, where I embarked in a stout ship, in company with a number of other merchants of like mind with myself, and we [set out and] sailed till we came among certain distant islands and found ourselves in difficult and dangerous case.

[One day], as the ship was sailing along, and we unknowing where we were, behold, the captain came down [from the mast] and casting his turban from his head, fell to buffeting his face and plucking at his beard and weeping and supplicating [God for deliverance]. We asked him what ailed him, and he answered, saying, 'Know, O my masters, that the ship is fallen among shallows and drifteth upon a sand-bank of the sea. Another moment [and we shall be upon it]. If we clear the bank, [well and good]; else, we are all dead men and not one of us will be saved; wherefore pray ye to God the Most High, so haply He may deliver us from these deadly perils, or we shall lose our lives.' So saying, he mounted [the mast] and set the sail, but at that moment a contrary wind smote the ship, and it rose upon the crest of the waves and sank down again into the trough of the sea.

Now there was before us a high mountain, rising [abruptly] from the sea, and the ship fell off into an eddy, which bore it on till presently it struck upon the skirt of the mountain and broke in sunder; whereupon the captain came down [from the mast], weeping, and said, 'God's will be done! Take leave of one another and look yourselves out graves from to-day, for we have fallen into a predicament from which there is no escape, and never yet hath any been cast away here and come off alive.' So all the folk fell a-weeping and gave themselves up for lost, despairing of deliverance; friend took leave of friend and sore was the mourning and lamentation; for that hope was cut off and they were left without guide or pilot. Then all who were in the ship landed on the skirt of the mountain and found themselves on a long island, whose shores were strewn with [wrecks], beyond count or reckoning, [of] ships that had been cast away [there] and whose crews had perished; and there also were dry bones and dead bodies, heaped upon one another, and goods without number and riches past count So we abode confounded, drunken, amazed, humbling ourselves [in supplication to God] and repenting us [of having exposed ourselves to the perils of travel]; but repentance availed not in that place.

In this island is a river of very sweet water, issuing from the shore of the sea and entering in at a wide cavern in the skirt of an inaccessible mountain, and the stones of the island are all limpid sparkling crystal and jacinths of price. Therein also is a spring of liquid, welling up like [molten] pitch, and when it cometh to the shore of the island, the fish swallow it, then return and cast it up, and it becometh changed from its condition and that which it was aforetime; and it is crude ambergris. Moreover, the

trees of the island are all of the most precious aloes-wood, both Chinese and Comorin; but there is no way of issue from the place, for it is as an abyss midmost the sea; the steepness of its shore forbiddeth the drawing up of ships, and if any approach the mountain, they fall into the eddy aforesaid; nor is there any resource in that island.

So we abode there, daily expecting death, and whoso of us had with him a day's victual ate it in five days, and after this he died; and whoso had with him a month's victual ate it in five months and died also. As for me, I had with me great plenty of victual; so I buried it in a certain place and brought it out, [little by little,] and fed on it; and we ceased not to be thus, burying one the other, till all died but myself and I abode alone, having buried the last of my companions, and but little victual remained to me. So I said in myself, 'Who will bury me in this place?' And I dug me a grave and abode in expectation of death, for that I was in a state of exhaustion. Then, of the excess of my repentance, I blamed and reproached myself for my much [love of] travel and said, 'How long wilt thou thus imperil thyself?' And I abode as I were a madman, unable to rest; but, as I was thus melancholy and distracted, God the Most High inspired me with an idea, and it was that I looked at the river aforesaid, as it entered in at the mouth of the cavern in the skirt of the mountain, and said in myself, 'Needs must this water have issue in some place.'

So I arose and gathering wood and planks from the wrecks, wrought of them the semblance of a boat [to wit, a raft,] and bound it fast with ropes, saying, 'I will embark thereon and fare with this water into the inward of the mountain. If it bring me to the mainland or to a place where I may find relief and safety, [well and good]; else I shall [but] perish, even as my companions have perished.' Then I collected of the riches and gold and precious stuffs, cast up there, whose owners had perished, a great matter, and of jacinths and crude ambergris and emeralds somewhat past count, and laid all this on the raft [together with what was left me of victual]. Then I launched it on the river and seating myself upon it, put my trust in God the Most High and committed myself to the stream.

The raft fared on with me, running along the surface of the river, and entered into the inward of the mountain, where the light of day forsook me and I abode dazed and stupefied, unknowing whither I went. Whenas I hungered, I ate a little of the victual I had with me, till it was all spent and I abode expecting the mercy of the Lord of all creatures. Presently I found myself in a strait [channel] in the darkness and my head rubbed against the roof of the cave; and in this case I abode awhile, knowing not night from day, whilst anon the channel grew straiter and anon widened out; and whenas my breast was straitened and I was confounded at my case, sleep took me and I knew neither little nor much.

When I awoke and opened my eyes, I found myself [in the open air] and the raft moored to the bank of the stream, whilst about me were folk of the blacks of Hind. When they saw that I was awake, they came up to me, to question me; so I rose to them and saluted them. They bespoke me in a tongue I knew not, whilst I deemed myself in a dream, and for the excess of my joy, I was like to fly and my reason refused to obey me. Then there came to my mind the verses of the poet and I recited, saying:

Let destiny with loosened rein its course appointed fare
And lie thou down to sleep by night, with heart devoid of care;
For 'twixt the closing of an eye and th'opening thereof,
God hath it in His power to change a case from foul to fair.

When they heard me speak in Arabic, one of them came up to me and saluting me [in that language], questioned me of my case. Quoth I, 'What [manner of men] are ye and what country is this?' 'O my brother,' answered he, 'we are husbandmen and come to this river, to draw water, wherewithal to water our fields; and whilst we were thus engaged to-day, as of wont, this boat appeared to us on the surface of the water, issuing from the inward of yonder mountain. So we came to it and finding thee asleep therein, moored it to the shore, against thou shouldst awake. Acquaint us, therefore, with thy history and tell us how thou camest hither and whence thou enteredst this river and what land is behind yonder mountain, for that we have never till now known any make his way thence to us.' But I said to them, 'Give me somewhat to eat and after question me.' So they brought me food and I ate and my spirits revived and I was refreshed. Then I related to them all that had befallen me, whereat they were amazed and confounded and said, 'By Allah, this is none other than a marvellous story, and needs must we carry thee to our king, that thou mayst acquaint him therewith.' So they carried me before their king, and I kissed his hand and saluted him.

Now he was the king of the land of Serendib, and he welcomed me and entreated me with kindness, bidding me be seated and admitting me to his table and converse. So I talked with him and called down blessings upon him and he took pleasure in my discourse and showed me satisfaction and said to me, 'What is thy name?' 'O my lord,' answered I, 'my name is Sindbad the Sailor;' and he said, 'And what countryman art thou?' Quoth I, 'I am of Baghdad.' 'And how earnest thou hither?' asked he. So I told him my story and he marvelled mightily thereat and said, 'By Allah, O Sindbad, this thy story is marvellous and it behoveth that it be written in characters of gold.'

Then they brought the raft before him and I said to him, 'O my lord, I am in thy hands, I and all my good.' He looked at the raft and seeing therein jacinths and emeralds and crude ambergris, the like whereof was not in his treasuries, marvelled and was amazed at this. Then said he, 'O Sindbad, God forbid that we should covet that which God the Most High hath vouchsafed unto thee! Nay, it behoveth us rather to further thee on thy return to thine own country.' So I called down blessings on him and thanked him. Then he signed to one of his attendants, who took me and established me in a goodly lodging, and the king assigned me a daily allowance and pages to wait on me. And every day I used to go in to him and he entertained me and entreated me friendly and delighted in my converse; and as often as our assembly broke up, I went out and walked about the town and the island, diverting myself by viewing them.

Now this island is under the Equinoctial line; its night is still twelve hours and its day the like. Its length is fourscore parasangs and its breadth thirty, and it is a great island, stretching between a lofty mountain and a deep valley. This mountain is visible at a distance of three days' journey and therein are various kinds of jacinths and other precious stones and metals of all kinds and all manner spice-trees, and its soil is of

emery, wherewith jewels are wrought. In its streams are diamonds, and pearls are in its rivers. I ascended to its summit and diverted myself by viewing all the marvels therein, which are such as beggar description; after which I returned to the king and sought of him permission to return to my own country. He gave me leave, after great pressure, and bestowed on me abundant largesse from his treasuries. Moreover, he gave me a present and a sealed letter and said to me, 'Carry this to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid and salute him for us with abundant salutation.' And I said, 'I hear and obey.'

Now this letter was written with ultramarine upon the skin of the hog-deer, the which is goodlier than parchment or paper and inclineth unto yellow, and was to the following effect: 'From the King of Hind, before whom are a thousand elephants and on the battlements of his palace a thousand jewels, [to the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, greeting]. To proceed: we send thee some small matter of presents, which do thou accept and be to us as a brother and a friend, for that the love of thee aboundeth in our heart and we would have thee to know that we look to thee for an answer. Indeed, we are sharers with thee in love and fear, ceasing never to do thee honour; and for a beginning, we send thee the Book of the Quintessence of Balms and a present after the measure of that which is fallen to our lot. Indeed, this is unworthy of thy rank, but we beseech thee, O brother, to favour us by accepting it, and peace be on thee!'

Now this present was a cup of ruby, a span high and a finger's length broad, full of fine pearls, each a mithcal in weight and a bed covered with the skin of the serpent that swalloweth the elephant, marked with spots, each the bigness of a dinar, whereon whoso sitteth shall never sicken; also an hundred thousand mithcals of Indian aloes-wood and thirty grains of camphor, each the bigness of a pistachio-nut, and a slave-girl with her paraphernalia, a charming creature, as she were the resplendent moon. Then the king took leave of me, commending me to the merchants and the captain of the ship, and I set out, with that which was entrusted to my charge and my own good, and we ceased not to pass from island to island and from country to country, till we came to Baghdad, when I entered my house and foregathered with my family and brethren.

Then I took the present and a token of service from myself to the Khalif and [presenting myself before him], kissed his hands and laid the whole before him, together with the King of Hind's letter. He read the letter and taking the present, rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and entreated me with the utmost honour. Then said he to me, 'O Sindbad, is this king, indeed, such as he avoucheth in this letter?' I kissed the earth and answered, saying, 'O my lord, I myself have seen the greatness of his kingship to be manifold that which he avoucheth in his letter. On the day of his audience, there is set up for him a throne on the back of a huge elephant, eleven cubits high, whereon he sitteth and with him are his officers and pages and session-mates, standing in two ranks on his right hand and on his left. At his head standeth a man, having in his hand a golden javelin, and behind him another, bearing a mace of the same metal, tipped with an emerald, a span long and an inch thick. When he mounteth, a thousand riders take horse with him, arrayed in gold and silk; and whenas he rideth forth, he who is before him proclaimeth and saith, "This is the king, mighty of estate and high of dominion!" And he proceedeth to praise him on this wise and endeth by saying, "This is the king, lord of the crown the like whereof nor Solomon nor Mihraj possessed!" Then is he silent, whilst he who is behind the king proclaimeth

and saith, "He shall die! He shall die! And again I say, he shall die!" And the other rejoineth, saying, "Extolled be the perfection of the Living One who dieth not!" And by reason of his justice and judgment and understanding, there is no Cadi in his [capital] city; but all the people of his realm distinguish truth from falsehood and know [and practise] truth and right for themselves.'

The Khalif marvelled at my speech and said, 'How great is this king! Indeed, his letter testifieth of him; and as for the magnificence of his dominion, thou hast acquainted us with that which thou hast seen; so, by Allah, he hath been given both wisdom and dominion.' Then he bestowed on me largesse and dismissed me, so I returned to my house and paid the poor-rate and gave alms and abode in my former easy and pleasant case, forgetting the grievous stresses I had suffered. Yea, I cast out from my heart the cares of travel and traffic and put away travail from my thought and gave myself up to eating and drinking and pleasure and delight."

Sindbad the Sailor and Hindbad the Porter.

WHEN Sindbad the Sailor had made an end of his story, all who were present marvelled at that which had befallen him. Then he bade his treasurer give the porter an hundred mithcals of gold and dismissed him, charging him return on the morrow, with the rest of the folk, to hear the history of his seventh voyage. So the porter went away to his house, rejoicing; and on the morrow he presented himself with the rest of the guests, who sat down, as of their wont, and occupied themselves with eating and drinking and merry-making till the end of the day, when their host bade them hearken to the story of his seventh voyage. Quoth Sindbad the Sailor,

The Seventh Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor.

"WHEN I [returned from my sixth voyage, I] forswore travel and renounced commerce, saying in myself, 'What hath befallen me sufficeth me.' So I abode at home and passed my time in pleasance and delight, till, one day, as I sat at mine ease, plying the wine-cup [with my friends], there came a knocking at the door. The doorkeeper opened and found without one of the Khalif's pages, who came in to me and said, 'The Commander of the Faithful biddeth thee to him.' So I accompanied him to the presence of the Khalif and kissing the earth before him, saluted him. He bade me welcome and entreated me with honour and said to me, 'O Sindbad, I have an occasion with thee, which I would have thee accomplish for me.' So I kissed his hand and said, 'O my lord, what is the lord's occasion with the slave?' Quoth he, 'I would have thee go to the King of Serendib and carry him our letter and our present, even as he sent us a present and a letter.'

At this I trembled and replied, 'By the Most Great God, O my lord, I have taken a loathing to travel, and whenas any maketh mention to me of travel by sea or otherwise, I am like to swoon for affright, by reason of that which hath befallen me and what I have suffered of hardships and perils. Indeed, I have no jot of inclination left for this, and I have sworn never again to leave Baghdad.' And I related to him all that had befallen me, first and last; whereat he marvelled exceedingly and said, 'By the Most Great God, O Sindbad, never was heard from time immemorial of one whom there betided that which hath betided thee and well may it behove thee never again to mention travel! But for my sake go thou this once and carry my letter to the King of Serendib and return in haste, if it be the will of God the Most High, so we may not remain indebted to the king for favour and courtesy.' And I answered him with 'Hearkening and obedience,' for that I dared not gainsay his commandment

Then he gave me the present and letter and money for my expenses. So I kissed his hand and going out from before him, repaired to the sea-coast, where I took ship with many other merchants and we sailed days and nights, till, after a prosperous voyage, God vouchsafed us a safe arrival at the island of Serendib. We landed and went up to the city, where I carried the letter and present to the king and kissing the earth fell [prostrate before him], invoking blessings on him. When he saw me, 'Welcome to thee, O Sindbad!' quoth he. 'By the Most Great God, we have longed for thy sight and the day is blessed on which we behold thee once more.' Then he took my hand and seating me by his side, welcomed me and entreated me friendly and rejoiced in me with an exceeding joy; after which he fell to conversing with me and caressing me and said, 'What brings thee to us, O Sindbad?' I kissed his hand and thanking him, said, 'O my lord, I bring thee a present and a letter from my lord the Khalif Haroun er Reshid.' Then I brought out to him the present and the letter and he read the latter and accepted the former, rejoicing therein with an exceeding joy.

Now this present was a horse worth ten thousand dinars and all its housings and trappings of gold set with jewels, and a book and five different kinds of suits of apparel and an hundred pieces of fine white linen cloths of Egypt and silks of Suez and Cufa and Alexandria and a crimson carpet and another of Tebaristan make and an hundred

pieces of cloth of silk and flax mingled and a goblet of glass of the time of the Pharaohs, a finger-breadth thick and a span wide, amiddleward which was the figure of a lion and before him an archer kneeling, with his arrow drawn to the head, and the table of Solomon son of David, on whom be peace; and the contents of the letter were as follows: 'From the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, unto whom and to his forefathers (on whom be peace) God hath vouchsafed the rank of the noble and exceeding glory, to the august, God-aided Sultan, greeting. Thy letter hath reached us and we rejoiced therein and have sent thee the book [called] "The Divan of Hearts and the Garden of Wits," of the translation whereof when thou hast taken cognizance, its excellence will be established in thine eyes; and the superscription of this book we have made unto thee. Moreover, we send thee divers other kingly presents; so do thou favour us by accepting them, and peace be on thee!'

When the king had read this letter, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and bestowed on me great store of presents and entreated me with the utmost honour. Some days after this, I sought of him leave to depart, but he granted it not to me save after much pressing. So I took leave of him and shipped with divers merchants and others, intending for my own country and having no desire for travel or traffic. We sailed on, without ceasing, till we had passed many islands; but, one day, as we fared on over a certain tract of the sea, there came forth upon us a multitude of boats full of men like devils, clad in chain-mail and armed with swords and daggers and bows and arrows, and surrounded us on every side. They entreated us after the cruellest fashion, smiting and wounding and slaying those who made head against them, and taking the ship, with the crew and all that were therein, carried us to an island, where they sold us all for a low price. A rich man bought me and taking me into his house, gave me to eat and drink and clothed me and entreated me kindly, till my heart was comforted and I was somewhat restored.

One day my master said to me, 'Knowest thou not some art or handicraft?' And I answered, saying, 'O my lord, I am a merchant and know nought but traffic.' Quoth he, 'Knowest thou how to shoot with a bow and arrows?' And I replied, 'Yes, I know that.' So he brought me a bow and arrows and mounting me behind him on an elephant, set out with me, at the last of the night, and fared on till we came to a forest of great trees; whereupon he made me climb a high and stout tree and giving me the bow and arrows, said to me, 'Sit here, and when the elephants come hither by day, shoot at them, so haply thou shalt hit one of them; and if any of them fall, come at nightfall and tell me.' Then he went away and left me trembling and fearful. I abode hidden in the tree till the sun rose, when the elephants came out and fared hither and thither among the trees, and I gave not over shooting at them with arrows, till I brought down one of them. So, at eventide, I went and told my master, who rejoiced in me and rewarded me; then he came and carried away the dead elephant.

On this wise I abode a while of time, every day shooting an elephant, whereupon my master came and carried it away, till, one day, as I sat hidden in the tree, there came up elephants without number, roaring and trumpeting, so that meseemed the earth trembled for the din. They all made for the tree whereon I was and the girth whereof was fifty cubits, and compassed it about. Then a huge elephant came up to the tree and winding his trunk about it, tugged at it, till he plucked it up by the roots and cast it to

the ground. I fell among the elephants, and the great elephant, coming up to me, as I lay aswoon for affright, wound his trunk about me and tossing me on to his back, made off with me, accompanied by the others; nor did he leave faring on with me, and I absent from the world, till he brought me to a certain place and casting me down from off his back, went away, followed by the rest. I lay there awhile, till my trouble subsided and my senses returned to me, when I sat up, deeming myself in a dream, and found myself on a great hill, stretching far and wide and all of elephants' bones. So I knew that this was their burial-place and that they had brought me thither on account of the bones.

Then I arose and fared on a day and a night, till I came to the house of my master, who saw me pale and disfeatured for fear and hunger. He rejoiced in my return and said to me, 'By Allah, thou hast made my heart ache on thine account; for I went and finding the tree torn up by the roots, doubted not but the elephants had destroyed thee. Tell me then how it was with thee.' So I told him what had befallen me and he marvelled exceedingly and rejoiced, saying, 'Knowst thou where this hill is?' 'Yes, O my lord,' answered I. So he took me up with him on an elephant and we rode till we came to the elephants' burial-place.

When he saw those many bones, he rejoiced therein with an exceeding joy and carried away what he had a mind to thereof. Then we returned to his house and he entreated me with increased favour and said to me, 'Verily, O my son, thou hast directed us to a passing great gain, may God requite thee with all good! Thou art free for the sake of God the Most High. Every year these elephants used to kill of us much people on account of these bones; but God delivered thee from them and thou hast done us good service in the matter of these bones, of which thou hast given us to know; wherefore thou meritest a great recompense, and thou art free.' 'O my lord,' answered I, 'may God free thy neck from the fire! I desire of thee that thou give me leave to return to my own country.' 'So be it,' replied he; 'but we have a fair, on occasion whereof the merchants come hither to us and take of us these elephants' bones. The time of the fair is now at hand, and when they come to us, I will send thee with them and give thee somewhat to bring thee to thine own country.'

I blessed him and thanked him and abode with him in all honour and consideration, till, after a little, the merchants came, even as he had said, and bought and sold and bartered; and when they were about to depart, my master came to me and said, 'The merchants are about to depart; arise, that thou mayst go with them to thy country.' So I betook myself to the folk, and behold, they had bought great store of elephants' bones and bound up their loads and embarked in the ship; and my master took passage for me with them and paid my hire and all that was chargeable upon me. Moreover, he gave me great store of goods and we set sail and passed from island to island, till we traversed the sea and arrived at the port of our destination; whereupon the merchants brought out their goods and sold; and I also brought out that which was with me and sold it at a good profit.

Then I bought of the best and finest of the produce and rarities of the country and all I had a mind to and a good hackney and we set out again and traversed the deserts from country to country till we came to Baghdad. Then I went in to the Khalif and saluted him and kissed his hand; after which I acquainted him with all that had

passed and that which had befallen me. He rejoiced in my deliverance and thanked God the Most High; then he caused write my story in letters of gold and I betook myself to my house and foregathered with my brethren and family. This, then," added Sindbad, "is the last of that which befell me in my travels, and praise be to God, the One, the Creator, the Maker!"

When Sindbad the Sailor had made an end of his story, he bade his servant give the porter an hundred mithcals of gold and said to him, "How now, my brother! Hast ever in the world heard of one whom such calamities have betided as have betided me and hath any suffered that which I have suffered of afflictions or undergone that which I have undergone of hardships? Wherefore it behoveth that I have these pleasures in requital of that which I have undergone of travail and humiliations." So the porter came forward and kissing the merchant's hands, said to him, "O my lord, thou hast indeed suffered grievous perils and hast well deserved these bounteous favours [that God hath vouchsafed thee]. Abide, then, O my lord, in thy delights and put away from thee [the remembrance of] thy troubles; and may God the Most High crown thine enjoyments with perfection and accomplish thy days in pleasance until the hour of thine admission [to His mercy]!"

Therewithal Sindbad the Sailor bestowed largesse upon him and made him his boon-companion, and he abode, leaving him not night or day, to the last of their lives. Praise be to God the Glorious, the Omnipotent, the Strong, the Exalted of estate, Creator of heaven and earth and land and sea, to whom belongeth glorification! Amen. Amen. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds! Amen.

Note.

As stated In the Prefatory Note to my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," four printed Editions (of which three are more or less complete) exist of the Arabic text of the original work, namely those of Calcutta (1839-42), Boulac (Cairo), Breslau (Tunis) and Calcutta (1814-18). The first two are, for purposes of tabulation, practically identical, one whole story only, of those that occur in the Calcutta (1839-42) Edition, (which is the most complete of all,) being omitted from that of Boulac; and I have, therefore, given but one Table of Contents for these two Editions. The Breslau Edition, though differing widely from those of Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac in contents, resembles them in containing the full number (a thousand and one) of Nights, whilst that of Calcutta (1814-18) is but a fragment, comprising only the first two hundred Nights and the Voyages of Sindbad, as a separate Tale.

The subscribers to my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night" and the present "Tales from the Arabic" have now before them a complete English rendering (the first ever made) of all the tales contained in the four printed (Arabic) Texts of the original work and I have, therefore, thought it well to add to this, the last Volume of my Translation, full Tables of Contents of these latter, a comparison of which will show the exact composition of the different Editions and the particulars in which they differ from one another, together with the manner in which the various stories that make up the respective collections are distributed over the Nights. In each Table, the titles of the stories occurring only in the Edition of which it gives the contents are printed in Italics and each Tale is referred to the number of the Night on which it is begun.

The Breslau Edition, which was printed from a Manuscript of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night alleged to have been furnished to the Editor by a learned Arab of Tunis, whom he styles "Herr M. Annaggar" (Qućre En Nejjar, the Carpenter), the lacunes found in which were supplemented from various other MS. sources indicated by Silvestre de Sacy and other eminent Orientalists, is edited with a perfection of badness to which only German scholars (at once the best and worst editors in the world) can attain. The original Editor, Dr. Maximilian Habicht, was during the period (1825- 1839) of publication of the first eight Volumes, engaged in continual and somewhat acrimonious controversy concerning the details of his editorship with Prof. H. L. Fleischer, who, after his death, undertook the completion of his task and approved himself a worthy successor of his whilom adversary, his laches and shortcomings in the matter of revision and collation of the text being at least equal in extent and gravity to those of his predecessor, whilst he omitted the one valuable feature of the latter's work, namely, the glossary of Arabic words, not occurring in the dictionaries, appended to the earlier volumes.

As an instance of the extreme looseness with which the book was edited, I may observe that the first four Vols. were published without tables of contents, which were afterwards appended en bloc to the fifth Volume. The state of corruption and

incoherence in which the printed Text was placed before the public by the two learned Editors, who were responsible for its production, is such as might well drive a translator to despair: the uncorrected errors of the press would alone fill a volume and the verse especially is so corrupt that one of the most laborious of English Arabic scholars pronounced its translation a hopeless task. I have not, however, in any single instance, allowed myself to be discouraged by the difficulties presented by the condition of the text, but have, to the best of my ability, rendered into English, without abridgment or retrenchment, the whole of the tales, prose and verse, contained in the Breslau Edition, which are not found in those of Calcutta (1839-42) and Boulac. In this somewhat ungrateful task, I have again had the cordial assistance of Captain Burton, who has (as in the case of my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night") been kind enough to look over the proofs of my translation and to whom I beg once more to tender my warmest thanks.

Some misconception seems to exist as to the story of Seif dhoul Yezen, a fragment of which was translated by Dr. Habicht and included, with a number of tales from the Breslau Text, in the fourteenth Vol. of the extraordinary gallimaufry published by him in 1824-5 as a complete translation of the 1001 Nights and it has, under the mistaken impression that this long but interesting Romance forms part of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, been suggested that a complete translation of it should be included in the present publication. The Romance in question does not, however, in any way, belong to my original and forms no part of the Breslau Text, as will be at once apparent from an examination of the Table of Contents of the latter (see post,), by which all the Nights are accounted for. Dr. Habicht himself tells us, in his preface to the first Vol. of the Arabic Text, that he found the fragment (undivided into Nights) at the end of the fifth Volume of his MS., into which other detached tales, having no connection with the Nights, appear to have also found their way. This being the case, it is evident that the Romance of Seif dhoul Yezen in no way comes within the scope of the present work and would (apart from the fact that its length would far overpass my limits) be a manifestly improper addition to it. It is, however, possible that, should I come across a suitable text of the work, I may make it the subject of a separate publication; but this is, of course, a matter for future consideration.

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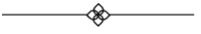

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VOLUME XIII.
Alaeddin and the Enchanted Lamp

To
Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton, K.C.M.G.,
H.B.M. CONSUL, TRIESTE.

My Dear Burton,

I give myself the pleasure of placing your name in the forefront of another and final volume of my translation of the Thousand and One Nights, which, if it have brought me no other good, has at least been the means of procuring me your friendship.
Believe me,

Yours always,
JOHN PAYNE.

Twelve years this day, – a day of winter, dreary
With drifting snows, when all the world seemed dead
To Spring and hope, – it is since, worn and weary
Of doubt within and strife without, I fled

From the mean workday miseries of existence,
From spites that slander and from hates that lie,
Into the dreamland of the Orient distance
Under the splendours of the Syrian sky,

And in the enchanted realms of Eastern story,
Far from the lovelessness of modern times,
Garnered the rainbow-remnants of old glory
That linger yet in those ancestral climes;

And now, the tong task done, the journey over,
From that far home of immemorial calms,
Where, as a mirage, on the sky-marge hover
The desert and its oases of palms,

Lingering, I turn me back, with eyes reverted
To this stepmother world of daily life,
As one by some long pleasant dream deserted,
That wakes anew to dull unlovely strife:

Yet, if non' other weal the quest have wrought me.
The long beloved labour now at end,
This gift of gifts the untravelled East hath brought me,
The knowledge of a new and valued friend.

5th Feb. 1889.

Introduction.

I.

The readers of my translation of the Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night will remember that, in the terminal essay (1884) on the history and character of the collection, I expressed my conviction that the eleven (so-called) "interpolated" tales, though, in my judgment, genuine Oriental stories, had (with the exception of the Sleeper Awakened and Aladdin) no connection with the original work, but had been procured by Galland from various (as yet) unidentified sources, for the purpose of supplying the deficiencies of the imperfect MS. of the Nights from which he made his version. My opinion as to these talcs has now been completely confirmed by the recent discovery (by M. Zotenberg, Keeper of Oriental MSS. in the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris) of two Arabic MSS. of the Nights, both containing three of the missing stories, i.e. (1) Zeyn Alasnam, (3) The Sleeper Awakened and (4) Aladdin, and by the publication (also by M. Zotenberg) of certain extracts from Galland's diary, giving particulars of the circumstances under which the "interpolated" tales were incorporated with his translation of the Arabian Nights. The Arabic text of the Story of Aladdin, as given by the completer and more authentic of the newly-discovered MSS., has recently been made by M. Zotenberg the subject of a special publication, in the preface to which (an exhaustive bibliographical essay upon the various Texts of the Thousand and One Nights, considered in relation to Galland's translation) he gives, in addition to the extracts in question from Galland's Diary, a detailed description of the two MSS. aforesaid, the more interesting particulars of which I now proceed to abstract for the benefit of my readers.

II.

The first MS. commences precisely where the third volume of Galland's MS. ends, to wit, (see my Terminal essay, , note1) with the 281st Night, in the middle of the story of Camaralzaman and contains, (inter alia) besides the continuation of this latter (which ends with Night CCCXXIX), the stories of the Sleeper Awakened (Nights CCCXXX-CCCC), Ganem (Nights CCCCXXVIII-CCCCLXX1V), Zeyn Alasnam (Nights CCCCLXXV-CCCCXCI), Aladdin (Nights CCCCXCII-DLXIX) and three others not found in Galland's version. The MS. ends in the middle of the 631st night with the well-known Story of King Bekhtzad (Azadbekht) and his son or the Ten Viziers, (which will be found translated in my "Tales from the Arabic," Vol. I. p et seq.) and contains, immediately after Night CCCCXXVII and before the story of Ganem, a note in Arabic, of which the following is a translation:

"The fourth volume of the wonders and marvels of the stories of the Thousand Nights and One Night was finished by the hand of the humblest of His' servants in the

habit of a minister of religion (Kahin, lit. a diviner, Cohen), the [Christian] priest Dionysius Shawish, a scion (selil) of the College of the Romans (Greeks, Europeans or Franks, er Roum), by name St. Athanasius, in Rome the Greatest (or Greater, utsma, fem. of aatsem, qu re Constantinople?) on the seven-and-twentieth of the month Shubat (February) of the year one thousand seven hundred fourscore and seven, [he being] then teacher of the Arabic tongue in the Library of the Sultan, King of France, at Paris the Greatest."

From this somewhat incoherent note we may assume that the MS. was written in the course of the year 1787 by the notorious Syrian ecclesiastic Dom Denis Chavis, the accomplice of Cazotte in the extraordinary literary atrocity shortly afterward perpetrated by the latter under the name of a sequel or continuation of the Thousand and One Nights (v. Cabinet des Fees, vols. xxxviii – xli), and in all probability (cf. the mention in the above note of the first part, i.e. Nights CCLXXXI-CCCCXXVII, as the fourth volume) to supply the place of Galland's missing fourth volume for the Bibliotheque Royale; but there. is nothing, except a general similarity of style and the occurrence in the former of the rest of Camaralzaman and (though not in the same order) of four of the tales supposed to have been contained in the latter, to show that Dom Chavis made his copy from a text identical with that used by the French savant. In the notes to his edition of the Arabic text of Aladdin, M. Zotenberg gives a number of extracts from this MS., from which it appears that it is written in a very vulgar modern Syrian style and abounds in grammatical errors, inconsistencies and incoherences of every description, to say nothing of the fact that the Syrian ecclesiastic seems, with the characteristic want of taste and presumption which might be expected from the joint-author of "Les Veillees Persanes," to have, to a considerable extent, garbled the original text by the introduction of modern European phrases and turns of speech a la Galland. For the rest, the MS. contains no note or other indication, on which we can found any opinion as to the source from which the transcriber (or arranger) drew his materials; but it can hardly be doubted, from internal evidence, that he had the command of some genuine text of the Nights, similar to, if not identical with, that of Galland, which he probably "arranged" to suit his own (and his century's) distorted ideas of literary fitness. The discovery of the interpolated tales contained in this MS. (which has thus presumably lain unnoticed for a whole century, under, as one may say, the very noses of the many students of Arabic literature who would have rejoiced in such a find) has, by a curious freak of fortune, been delayed until our own day in consequence of a singular mistake made by a former conservator of the Paris Bibliotheque, the well-known Orientalist, M. Reinaud, who, in drawing up the Catalogue of the Arabic MSS. in the collection described (or rather misdescribed) it under the following heading:

"Supplement Arabe 1716. Thousand and One Nights, 3rd and 4th parts. This volume begins with Night CCLXXXII and ends with Night DCXXXI. A copy in the handwriting of Chavis. It is from this copy and in accordance with the instructions (d'apres la indications) of this Syrian monk that Cazotte composed (redigea) the Sequel to the Thousand and One Nights, Cabinet des Fees, xxxvii et xl (should be tt. xxxviii-xli)."

It is of course evident that M. Reinaud had never read the MS. in question nor that numbered 1723 in the Supplement Arabe, or he would at once have recognized that the latter, though not in the handwriting of the Syrian ecclesiastic, was that which served for the production of the "Sequel" in question; but, superficial as was the mistake, it sufficed to prevent the examination by students of the MS. No. 1716 and so retarded the discovery of the Arabic originals of Aladdin and its fellows till the acquisition (some two years ago) by the Bibliotheque Nationale of another (and complete) MS. of the Thousand and One Nights, which appears to have belonged to the celebrated Orientalist M. Caussin de Perceval, although the latter could not have been acquainted with it at the time (1806) he published his well-known edition and continuation of Galland's translation, in the eighth and ninth volumes of which, by the by, he gives a correct version of the tales so fearfully garbled by Chavis and Cazotte in their so-called translation as well nigh to defy recognition and to cause Orientalists in general to deny the possibility of their having been derived from an Oriental source until the discovery of the actual Arabic originals so barbarously maltreated

This MS. is in the handwriting of of Sebbagh, the well-known Syrian collaborator of Silvestre de Sacy, and is supposed to have been copied by him at Paris between the years 1805 and 1810 for some European Orientalist (probably de Perceval himself) from a Baghdad MS. of the early part of the 18th century, of which it professes to be an exact reproduction, as appears from a terminal note, of which the following is a translation:

"And the finishing of it was in the first tenth (decade) of Jumada the Latter [in the] year one thousand one hundred and fifteen of the Hegira (October, 1703) in the handwriting of the neediest of the faithful unto God the Most High, Ahmed ibn Mohammed et Teradi, in the city of Baghdad, and he the Shafiy by sect and the Mosuli by birth and the Baghdadi by sojourn, and indeed he wrote it for himself and set upon it his seal, and God bless and keep our lord Mohammed and his companions! Kebikej (ter)."

This MS. contains the three "interpolated" tales aforesaid, i.e. the Sleeper Awakened (Nights CCCXXXVII-LXXXVI), Zeyn Alasnam (Nights CCCCXCVII-DXIII) and Aladdin (Nights DXIV-XCI), the last two bearing traces of a Syrian origin, especially Aladdin, which is written in a much commoner and looser style than Zeyn Alasnam. The two tales are evidently the work of different authors, Zeyn Alasnam being incomparably superior in style and correctness to Aladdin, which is defaced by all kinds of vulgarisms and solecisms and seems, moreover, to have been less correctly copied than the other. Nevertheless, the Sebbagh text is in every respect preferable to that of Shawish (which appears to abound in faults and errors of every kind, general and particular,) and M. Zotenberg has, therefore, exercised a wise discretion in selecting the former for publication.

III.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of M. Zorenberg's long and interesting introduction is a series of extracts from the (as yet unpublished) MS. Diary regularly kept by Galland, the last four volumes (1708-15) of which are preserved in the

Bibliotheque Nationale. These extracts effectually settle the question of the origin of the interpolated tales, as will be seen from the following abstract.

On the 25th March, 1709, Galland records having that day made the acquaintance of a Maronite scholar, by name Youhenna Diab, who had been brought from Aleppo to Paris by Paul Lucas, the celebrated traveller, and with whom he evidently at once broached the question of the Nights, probably complaining to him of the difficulty (or rather impossibility) of obtaining a perfect copy of the work; whereupon Hanna (as he always calls him) appears to have volunteered to help him to fill the lacune by furnishing him with suitable Oriental stories for translation in the same style as those already rendered by him and then and there (says Galland) "told me some very fine Arabian tales, which he promised to put into writing for me." There is no fresh entry on the subject till May 5 following, when (says Galland) "The Maronite Hanna finished telling me the tale of the Lamp."

Hanna appears to have remained in Paris till the autumn of the year 1709 and during his stay, Galland's Diary records the communication by him to the French savant of the following stories, afterwards included in the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth volumes of the latter's translation, (as well as of several others which he probably intended to translate, had he lived,) i.e. (May 10, 1709) "Babe Abdalla" and "Sidi Nouman," (May 13, 1709) "The Enchanted Horse," (May 22, 1709) "Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou," (May 25, 1709) "The Two Sisters who envied their younger Sister," (May 27, 1709) "All Baba and the Forty Thieves," (May 29, 1709) "Cogia Hassan Alhabbal" and (May 31, 1709) "Ali Cogia." The Maronite seems to have left for the East in October, 1709, (Galland says under date October 25, "Received this evening a letter from Hanna, who writes me from Marseilles, under date the 17th, in Arabic, to the effect that he had arrived there in good health,") but not without having at least in part fulfilled his promise to put in writing the tales communicated by him to Galland, as appears by the entry of November 3, 1710, "Began yesterday to read the Arabian story of the Lamp, which had been written me in Arabic more than a year ago by the Maronite of Damascus whom M. Lucas brought with him, with a view to putting it into French. Finished reading it this morning. Here is the title of this tale, 'Story of Aladdin, son of a tailor, and that which befell him with an African Magician on account of (or through) a lamp.'" (The Diary adds that he began that evening to put his translation into writing and finished it in the course of the ensuing fortnight.) And that of January 10, 1711, "Finished the translation of the tenth volume of the 1001 Nights after the Arabic text which I had from the hand (de la main) of Hanna or Jean Dipi, whom M. Lucas brought to France on his return from his last journey in the Levant." The only other entry bearing upon the question is that of August 24, 1711, in which Galland says, "Being quit of my labours upon the translation etc. of the Koran, I read a part of the Arabian Tales which the Maronite Hanna had told me and which I had summarily reduced to writing, to see which of them I should select to make up the eleventh volume of the Thousand and One Nights."

From these entries it appears beyond question that Galland received from the Maronite Hanna, in the Spring and Summer of 1709, the Arabic text of the stories of Aladdin, Baba Abdalla, Sidi Nouman and Cogia Hassan Alhabbal, i.e. the whole of the tales included in his ninth and tenth volumes (with the exception of The Sleeper

Awakened, of which he does not speak) and that he composed the five remaining tales contained in his eleventh and twelfth volumes (i.e. Ali Baba, Ali Cogia, The Enchanted Horse, Prince Ahmed and Pari Banou and The Two Sisters who envied their younger Sister,) upon the details thereof taken down from Hanna's lips and by the aid of copious summaries made at the time. These entries in Galland's diary dispose, therefore, of the question of the origin of the "interpolated" tales, with the exception (1) of The Sleeper Awakened (with which we need not, for the present, concern ourselves farther) and (2) of Nos. 1 and 2a and b, i.e. Zeyn Alasnam, Codadad and his brothers and The Princess of Deryabar (forming, with Ganem, his eighth volume), as to which Galland, as I pointed out in my terminal essay (), cautions us, in a prefatory note to his ninth volume, that these two stories form no part of the Thousand and One Nights and that they had been inserted and printed without the cognizance of the translator, who was unaware of the trick that had been played him till after the actual publication of the volume, adding that care would be taken to expunge the intrusive tales from the second edition (which, however, was never done, Galland dying before the republication and it being probably found that the stranger tales had taken too firm a hold upon public favour to be sacrificed, as originally proposed); and the invaluable Diary supplies the necessary supplemental information as to their origin. "M. Petis de la Croix," says Galland under date of January 17, 1710, "Professor and King's Reader of the Arabic tongue, who did me the honour to visit me this morning, was extremely surprised to see two of the Turkish Tales of his translation printed in the eighth volume of the 1001 Nights, which I showed him, and that this should have been done without his participation."

Petis de la Croix, a well-known Orientalist and traveller of the time, published in the course of the same year (1710) the first volume of a collection of Oriental stories, similar in form and character to the 1001 Nights, but divided into "Days" instead of "Nights" and called "The Thousand and One Days, Persian Tales," the preface to which (ascribed to Cazotte) alleges him to have translated the tales from a Persian work called Hezar [o] Yek Roz, i.e. "The Thousand and One Days," the MS. of which had in 1675 been communicated to the translator by a friend of his, by name Mukhlis, (Cazotte styles him "the celebrated Dervish Mocles, chief of the Soufis of Ispahan") during his sojourn in the Persian capital. The preface goes on to state that Mukhlis had, in his youth, translated into Persian certain Indian plays, which had been translated into all the Oriental languages and of which a Turkish version existed in the Bibliotheque Royale, under the title of Alfaraga Badal-Schidda (i.e. El Ferej bad esh Shiddeh), which signified "Joy after Affliction"; but that, wishing to give his work an original air, he converted the aforesaid plays into tales. Cazotte's story of the Indian plays savours somewhat of the cock and the bull and it is probable that the Hezar o Yek Roz (which is not, to my knowledge, extant) was not derived from so recondite a source, but was itself either the original of the well-known Turkish collection or (perhaps) a translation of the latter. At all events, Zeyn Alasnam, Codadad and the Princess of Deryabar occur in a copy (cited by M. Zotenberg), belonging to the Bibliotheque Nationale, of El Ferej bad esh Shidded (of which they form the eighth, ninth and sixth stories respectively) and in a practically identical form, except that in Galland's vol. viii. the two latter stories are fused into one. Sir William Ouseley is said to have brought from Persia a MS. copy of a portion of the Hezar o Yek Roz which he describes as agreeing with the

French version, but, in the absence of documentary proof and in view of the fact that, notwithstanding the unauthorized incorporation of three of the tales of his original with Galland's Vol. viii, the published version of the Thousand and One Days is apparently complete and shows no trace of the omission, I am inclined to suspect Petis de la Croix of having invented the division into Days, in order to imitate (and profit by the popularity of) his fellow savant's version of the Thousand and One Nights. Galland's publisher was doubtless also that of Petis de la Croix and in the latter capacity had in hand a portion of the MS. of the 1001 Days, from which, no doubt weary of waiting till Galland (who was now come to the end of his genuine Arabic MS. of the 1001 Nights and was accordingly at a standstill, till he met with Hanna,) should have procured fresh material to complete the copy for his eighth volume, of which Ganem only was then ready for publication, he seems to have selected (apparently on his own responsibility, but, it must be admitted, with considerable taste and judgment,) the three tales in question from the MS. of the 1001 Days, to fill up the lacune. It does not appear whether he found Codadad and the Princess of Deryabar arranged as one story ready to his hand or himself performed (or procured to be performed) the process of fusion, which, in any case, was executed by no unskilful hand. Be this as it may, Galland was naturally excessively annoyed at the publisher's unceremonious proceeding, so much so indeed as for a time to contemplate renouncing the publication of the rest of the work, to spare himself (as he says in his Diary, under date of Dec. 12, 1709) similar annoyances (mortifications) to that which the printing of the eighth volume had caused him. Indeed, the effect of this incident was to induce him, not only to change his publisher, but to delay the publication of the next volume (which, as we learn from the Diary, was ready for the press at the end of November or the beginning of December, 1709) for a whole year, at the end of which time (Diary, November 21, 1710) he made arrangements with a new (and presumably more trustworthy) publisher, M. Florentin de Laune, for the printing of Vol. ix.

IV.

Notwithstanding the discovery, as above set out, of three of the doubtful tales, Zeyn Alasnam, Aladdin and The Sleeper Awakened, in two MSS. (one at least undoubtedly authentic) of the Thousand Nights and One Night, I am more than ever of opinion that none of the eleven "interpolated" stories properly belongs to the original work, that is to say, to the collection as first put into definite form somewhere about the fourteenth century. "The Sleeper Awakened" was identified by the late Mr. Lane as a historical anecdote given by the historian El Ishaki, who wrote in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and the frequent mention of coffee in both MSS. of Aladdin justifies us in attributing the composition of the story to (at earliest) the sixteenth century, whilst the modern vulgarisms in which they abound point to a still later date. Zeyn Alasnam (in the Sebbagh MS. at least) is written in a much purer and more scholarly style than Aladdin, but its pre-existence in El Ferej bad esh Shiddeh (even if we treat as apocryphal Petis de la Croix's account of the Hezar o Yek Roz) is sufficient, in the absence of contrary evidence, to justify us in refusing to consider it as belonging to the Thousand Nights and One Night proper. As shown by Galland's own experience, complete copies of the genuine work were rarely to be met with, collections

of “silly stories” (as the Oriental savant, who inclines to regard nothing in the way of literature save theology, grammar and poetry, would style them), being generally considered by the Arab bibliographer undeserving of record or preservation, and the fragmentary copies which existed were mostly in the hands of professional story-tellers, who were extremely unwilling to part with them, looking upon them as their stock in trade, and were in the habit of incorporating with the genuine text all kinds of stories and anecdotes from other sources, to fill the place of the missing portions of the original work. This process of addition and incorporation, which has been in progress ever since the first collection of the Nights into one distinct work and is doubtless still going on in Oriental countries, (especially such as are least in contact with European influence,) may account for the heterogeneous character of the various modern MSS. of the Nights and for the immense difference which exists between the several texts, as well in actual contents as in the details and diction of such stories as are common to all. The Tunis MS. of the 1001 Nights (which is preserved in the Breslau University Library and which formed the principal foundation of Habicht’s Edition of the Arabic text) affords a striking example of this process, which we are here enabled to see in mid-operation, the greater part of the tales of which it consists having not yet been adapted to the framework of the Nights. It is dated A.H. 1144 (A.D. 1732) and of the ten volumes of which it consists, i, ii (Nights I — CCL) and x (Nights DCCCLXXXV-MI) are alone divided into Nights, the division of the remaining seven volumes (i.e. iii — ix, containing, inter alia, the Story of the Sleeper Awakened) being the work of the German editor. It is my belief, therefore, that the three “interpolated” tales identified as forming part of the Baghdad MS. of 1703 are comparatively modern stories added to the genuine text by Rawis (story-tellers) or professional writers employed by them, and I see no reason to doubt that we shall yet discover the Arabic text of the remaining eight, either in Hanna’s version (as written down for Galland) or in some as yet unexamined MS. of the Nights or other work of like character.

V.

M. Zotenberg has, with great judgment, taken as his standard for publication the text of Aladdin given by the Sebbagh MS., inasmuch as the Shawish MS. (besides being, as appears from the extracts given. far inferior both in style and general correctness,) is shown by the editor to be full of modern European phrases and turns of speech and to present so many suspicious peculiarities that it would be difficult, having regard, moreover, to the doubtful character and reputation of the Syrian monkish adventurer who styled himself Dom Denis Chavis, to resist the conviction that his MS. was a forgery, i.e. professedly a copy of a genuine Arabic text, but in reality only a translation or paraphrase in that language of Galland’s version, — were it not that the Baghdad MS. (dated before the commencement, in 1704, of Galland’s publication and transcribed by a man — Mikhail Sebbagh — whose reputation, as a collaborator of Silvestre de Sacy and other distinguished Orientalists, is a sufficient voucher for the authenticity of the copy in the Bibliotheque Nationale,) contains a text essentially identical with that of Shawish. Moreover, it is evident, from a comparison with Galland’s rendering and making allowance for the latter’s system of translation, that the Arabic version of Aladdin given him by Hanna must either have been derived

from the Baghdad text or from some other practically identical source, and it is therefore probable that Shawish, having apparently been employed to make up the missing portion of Galland's Arabic text and not having the Hanna MS. at his command, had (with the execrable taste and want of literary morality which distinguished Cazotte's monkish coadjutor) endeavoured to bring his available text up to what he considered the requisite standard by modernizing and Gallicizing its wording and (in particular) introducing numerous European phrases and turns of speech in imitation of the French translator. The whole question is, of course, as yet a matter of more or less probable hypothesis, and so it must remain until further discoveries and especially until the reappearance of Galland's missing text, which I am convinced must exist in some shape or other and cannot much longer, in the face of the revived interest awakened in the matter and the systematic process of investigation now likely to be employed, elude research.

M. Zotenberg's publication having been confined to the text of Aladdin, I have to thank my friend Sir R. F. Burton for the loan of his MS. copy of Zeyn Alasnam, (the Arabic text of which still remains unpublished) as transcribed by M. Houdas from the Sebbagh MS.

Zein Ul Asnam and the King of the Jinn.

THERE was [once] in the city of Bassora a mighty Sultan and he was exceeding rich, but he had no child who should be his successor after him. For this he grieved sore and fell to bestowing alms galore upon the poor and the needy and upon the friends of God and the devout, seeking their intercession with God the Most High, so He to whom belong might and majesty should of His favour vouchsafe him a son. And God accepted his prayer, for his fostering of the poor, and answered his petition; so that one night of the nights he lay with the queen and she went from him with child. When the Sultan knew this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, and as the time of her child-bearing drew nigh, he assembled all the astrologers and those who smote the sand and said to them, "It is my will that ye enquire concerning the child that shall be born to me this month, whether it will be male or female, and tell me what will betide it of chances and what will proceed from it." So the geomancers smote their [tables of] sand and the astrologers took their altitudes and observed the star of the babe [un]born and said to the Sultan, "O King of the age and lord of the time and the tide, the child that shall be born to thee of the queen is a male and it beseemeth that thou name him Zein ul Asnam." And as for those who smote upon the sand, they said to him, "Know, O King, that this babe will become a renowned brave, but he shall happen in his time upon certain travail and tribulation; yet, an he endure with fortitude against that which shall befall him, he shall become the richest of the kings of the world." And the King said to them, "Since the babe shall become valiant as ye avouch, the toil and travail which will befall him are nought, for that tribulations teach the sons of kings."

Accordingly, after a few days, the queen gave birth to a male child, extolled be the perfection of Him who created him surpassing in grace and goodliness! His father named him Zein ul Asnam, and he was as say of him certain of his praisers in verse:

He shows and "Now Allah be blessed!" men say: "Extol we his Maker and Fashioner aye!

The king of the fair this is, sure, one and all; Ay, his thralls, every one, and his liegemen are they."

The boy grew and flourished till he came to the age of five years, when his father the Sultan assigned him a governor skilled and versed in all sciences and philosophies, and he proceeded to teach him till he excelled in all manner of knowledge and became a young man. Then the Sultan bade bring him before himself, and assembling all the grandees of his realm and the chiefs of his subjects, proceeded to admonish him before them, saying to him, "O my son Zein ul Asnam, behold, I am grown stricken in years and am presently sick; and belike this sickness will be the last of my life in this world and thou shalt sit in my stead; [wherefore I desire to admonish thee]. Beware, O my son, lest thou oppress any or turn a deaf ear to the complaining of the poor; but do thou justify the oppressed after the measure of thy might. And look thou believe not all that shall be said to thee by the great ones of the people, but trust thou still for the most part to the voice of the common folk; for the great will deceive thee, seeing they

seek that which befitteth themselves, not that which befitteth the subject." Then, after a few days, the Sultan's sickness redoubled on him and he accomplished his term and died; and as for his son Zein ul Asnam, he arose and donning the raiment of woe, [mourned] for his father the space of six days. On the seventh day he arose and going forth to the Divan, sat down on the throne of the sultanate and held a court, wherein was a great assemblage of the folk, and the viziers came forward and the grandees of the realm and condoled with him for his father and called down blessings upon him and gave him joy of the kingship and the sultanate, beseeching God to grant him continuance of glory and prosperity without end.

When Zein ul Asnam saw himself in this great might and wealth, and he young in years, he inclined unto prodigality and to the converse of springalds like himself and fell to squandering vast sums upon his pleasures and left governance and concern for his subjects. The queen his mother proceeded to admonish him and to forbid him from his ill fashions, bidding him leave that manner of life and apply himself governance and administration and the ordinance of the realm, lest the folk reject him and rise up against him and expel hira; but he would hear not a word from her and abode in his ignorance and folly. At this the people murmured, for that the grandees of the realm put out their hands unto oppression, whenas they saw the king's lack of concern for his subjects; so they rose up in rebellion against Zein ul Asnam and would have laid violent hands upon him, had not the queen his mother been a woman of wit and judgment and address, and the people loved her; so she appeased the folk and promised them good. Then she called her son Zein ul Asnam to her and said to him, "See, O my son; said I not to thee that thou wouldest lose thy kingship and eke thy life, an thou persistedst in this thine ignorance and folly, in that thou givest the ordinance of the sultanate into the hands of raw youths and eschewest the old and wastest thy substance and that of the realm, squandering it all upon lewdness and the lust of thy soul?"

Zein ul Asnam hearkened to his mother's rede and going out forthright to the Divan, committed the manage of the realm into the hands of certain old men of understanding and experience; save that he did this only after Bassora had been ruined, inasmuch as he turned not from his folly till he had spent and squandered all the treasures of the sultanate and was become exceeding poor. Then he betook himself to repentance and to sorrowing over that which he had done, so that he lost the solace of sleep and eschewed meat and drink, till one night of the nights, — and indeed he had spent it in mourning and lamentation and melancholy thought until the last of the night, — his eyes closed for a little and there appeared to him in his sleep a venerable old man, who said to him, "O Zein ul Asnam, grieve not, for that nought followeth after grief save relief from stress, and an thou desire to be delivered from this thine affliction, arise and betake thee to Cairo, where thou wilt find treasuries of wealth which shall stand thee in stead of that thou hast squandered, ay, and twofold the sum thereof." When he awoke from his sleep, he acquainted his mother with all that he had seen in his dream, and she fell to laughing at him; but he said to her, "Laugh not, for needs must I journey to Cairo." "O my son," answered she, "put not thy trust in dreams, for that they are all vain fancies and lying imaginations." And he said to her,

"Nay, my dream was a true one and the man whom I saw is of the Friends of God and his speech is very sooth."

Accordingly, he left the sultanate and going forth a-journeying one night of the nights, took the road to Egypt [and fared on] days and nights till he came to the city of Cairo. So he entered it and saw it a great and magnificent city; then, being perished for weariness, he took shelter in one of its mosques. When he had rested awhile, he went forth and bought him somewhat to eat; and after he had eaten, he fell asleep in the mosque, of the excess of his weariness, nor had he slept but a little when the old man appeared to him in his sleep and said to him, "O Zein ul Assam, thou hast done as I said to thee, and indeed I made proof of thee, that I might see an thou wert valiant or not; but now I know thee, inasmuch as thou hast put faith in my rede and hast done according thereto. So now return to thine own city and I will make thee a king rich after such a measure that neither before thee nor after thee shall [any] of the kings be like unto thee." So Zein ul Asnam arose from his sleep and said, "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful! What is this old man who hath wearier me, so that I came to Cairo, and I trusted in him and deemed of him that he was the Prophet (whom God bless and keep) or one of the pious Friends of God? But there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme. By Allah. I did well in that I acquainted none with my sallying forth neither related my dream unto any! Indeed. I believed in this old man and meseemed by that which appeared to me, he was none of mankind, extolled be His perfection and magnified be He who [alone] knoweth the truth! By Allah, I will leave trusting in this old man [neither will I comply with him] in that which he would have me do!" Accordingly, he lay [the rest of] that night [in the mosque] and at daybreak he arose and mounting his courser, set out on his return to Bassora, [the seat of] his kingship, where, after a few days, he arrived and went in that same night to his mother, who asked him if aught had befallen him of that which the old man had promised him. He acquainted her with that which he had seen [in his sleep] and she fell to condoling with him and comforting him, saying, "Grieve not, O my son, for, an God the Most High have appointed thee aught of [good] fortune, thou wilt attain thereto without either travail or toil; but I would have thee be understanding and discreet and leave these things which have brought thee to poverty, O my son, and eschew singing-wenches and the commerce of youths and women; all this is for the baser sort, not for kings' sons like thee." And he swore to her that he would never more gainsay her commandment, but would observe all that she should say to him and would turn his mind to the governance and the kingship and leave that wherefrom she forbade him. Then he slept that night and what while he was on sleep, the old man appeared to him and said to him, "O Zein ul Asnam, O valiant one, whenas thou arisest from thy sleep this day, I will accomplish my promise to thee; wherefore take thou a pickaxe and go to the palace of thy father Such-an-one in such a place and dig there in the earth and thou wilt find that which shall enrich thee."

When Zein ul Asnam awoke from his sleep, he hastened to his mother, rejoicing, and acquainted her with his dream; whereupon she fell again to laughing at him and said to him, "O my son, indeed this old man laugheth at thee, nought else; wherefore do thou turn thy thought from him." But he said to her, "Nay, mother mine, indeed he is soothfast and lieth not; for that, in the first of his dealing, he tried me and now his

intent is to accomplish unto me his promise." "In any case," rejoined she, "the thing is not toilsome; so do that which thou wilt, even as he said to thee, and make proof of the matter, and God willing, thou shalt return to me rejoicing; but methinketh thou wilt return to me and say, 'Thou saidst sooth, O my mother, in thy rede.'" The prince accordingly took a pickaxe and going down to the palace where his father was buried, fell a-delving in the earth; nor had he dug long when, behold, there appeared to him a ring fixed in a slab of marble. He raised the slab and seeing a stair, descended thereby and found a great vault, all builded with columns of marble and alabaster; then, proceeding innerward, he found within the vault a hall which ravished the wit, and therein eight jars of green jasper; and he said, "What be these jars and what is in them?" So he went up and uncovering them, found them all full of old gold; whereupon he took a little in his hand and going to his mother, gave her thereof and said to her, "Thou seest, O my mother." She marvelled at this thing and said to him, "Beware, O my son, lest thou squander it, like as thou squanderedst other than this." And he swore to her, saying, "Be not concerned, O my mother, and let not thy heart be other than easy on my account, for I would fain have thee also content with me."

Then she arose and went with him, and they descended into the vault and entered the [underground] hall, where she beheld that which ravished the wit and saw the jars of gold. What while they diverted themselves with gazing upon these latter, behold, they espied a little jar of fine jade; so Zein ul Asnam opened it and found in it a golden key. Whereupon quoth his mother to him, "O my son, needs must there be a door here which this key will open." Accordingly they sought in all parts of the vault and the hall, so they might see an there were a door or what not else to be found there, and presently espied a bolted lock, to which they knew that this must be the key. So Zein ul Asnam went up and putting the key in the lock, turned it and opened a door which admitted them into a second hall, more magnificent than the first; and it was all full of a light which dazzled the sight, yet was there no flambeau kindled therein, no, nor any window there, whereat they marvelled and looking farther, saw eight images of jewels, each one piece, and that of noble jewels, pure and precious.

Zein ul Asnam was amazed at this and said to his mother, "How came my father by these things?" And they fell to looking and considering, till presently the queen espied a curtain of silk, whereon were these words written: "O my son, marvel not at these great riches, whereto I have won by dint of sore travail; but know that there existeth also another image whose worth is more than that of these [eight] images twenty times told. Wherefore, an thou wouldst come thereby, get thee to Cairo, where thou wilt find a slave of mine, by name Mubarek, who will take thee and bring thee in company with the ninth image. When thou enterest Cairo, the first man whom thou encounterest will direct thee to Mubarek's house, for he is known in all Egypt." When Zein ul Asnam read this inscription, he said, "O my mother, it is my wish to journey to Cairo, so I may make search for the ninth image. Tell me, how deemest thou of my dream? Was it true or was it not? Wilt thou still say to me, 'These be idle tales'? But I, O my mother, needs must I journey to Cairo." "O my son," answered the queen, "since thou art under the safeguard of the Apostle of God (whom God bless and keep), go thou in peace, and I [and] thy Vizier, we will govern the realm in thine absence, against thou shalt return."

So Zein ul Asnam went forth and equipping himself [for travel, set out] and journeyed till he came to Cairo, where he enquired for Mubarek's house and the folk said to him, "O my lord, this is a man than whom there is none richer in [all Cairo]; no, nor is there a more abounding than he in bounty and beneficence, and his house is [still] open to the stranger." So they directed him thither and he went till he came to the house and knocked at the door; whereupon there came out to him one of Mubarek's slaves and opening the door, said to him, "Who art thou and what wiliest thou?" Quoth Zein ul Asnam, "I am a stranger, a man from a far country, and I heard tell of your lord, Mubarek, and how he is renowned for hospitality and beneficence; so I came to him, that I may be a guest with him." The slave entered and told his lord Mubarek; then returned and said to Zein ul Asnam, "O my lord, blessing hath descended upon us in thy coming. Enter, for my lord Mubarek awaiteth thee." So Zein ul Asnam entered into a courtyard, exceeding spacious and all [full] of trees and waters, and the slave brought him into the pavilion where Mubarek sat. When he entered, the latter arose forthright and coming to meet him, received him with cordiality and said to him, "Blessing hath descended upon us and this night is the most auspicious of nights in thy coming to us! But who art thou, O youth, and whence comest thou and whither art thou bound?" The prince answered him, saying, "I am Zein ul Asnam and I seek Mubarek, slave to the Sultan of Bassora, who died a year agone and whose son I am." "What sayst thou?" cried Mubarek. "Art thou the king's son of Bassora?" "Yea, verily," replied Zein ul Asnam; "I am his son." Quoth Mubarek, "Nay, my lord the king of Bassora left no son; but what is thine age, O youth?" "About twenty years," replied Zein ul Asnam. "And thou," added he, "how long is it since thou wentest out from my father's house?" "I went out eighteen years agone," answered Mubarek. "But, O my son Zein ul Asnam, by what token canst thou certify me that thou art the son of my lord the king of Bassora?" Quoth Zein ul Asnam, "Thou knowest that my father builded under his palace a vault and therein [a hall in which] he set forty jars of fine jade and filled them with ancient gold; and within this hall he made a second hall, wherein he placed eight images of precious stones, each wroughten of a single jewel and seated upon a throne of virgin gold. Moreover, he wrote upon a curtain of silk there and I read the writ, whereby I found that he bade me come to thee, saying that thou wouldst acquaint me of the ninth image and where it is, the which, said he, was worth the eight, all of them."

When Mubarek heard these words, he threw himself at Zein ul Asnam's feet and fell to kissing them and saying, "Pardon me, O my lord! Verily, thou art the son of my lord." Then said he to the prince, "O my lord, I make to-day a banquet unto all the chief men of Cairo and I would fain have thy highness honour me [with thy presence] thereat." And Zein ul Asnam said, "With all my heart." So Mubarek arose and foregoing Zein ul Asnam, brought him into the saloon, which was full of the chief men of Cairo, assembled therein. There he sat down and seating the prince in the place of honour, called for the evening-meal. So they laid the tables and Mubarek stood to serve Zein ul Asnam, with his hands clasped behind him and whiles seated upon his knees [and heels]. The notables of Cairo marvelled at this, how Mubarek, the chiefest of them, should serve the youth, and were sore amazed thereat, knowing not [who or] whence he was. But, after they had eaten and drunken and supped and were of good cheer, Mubarek turned to the company and said to them, "O folk, marvel not that I

serve this youth with all worship and assiduity, for that he is the son of my lord the Sultan of Bassora, whose slave I was, for that he bought me with his money and died without setting me free; wherefore it behoveth me serve my lord, and all that my hand possesseth of monies and gear is his, nor is anywhit thereof mine." When the notables of Cairo heard this speech, they arose to Zein ul Asnam and did him exceeding great worship and saluted him with all reverence and prayed for him; and he said, "O company, I am before your presence and ye are witnesses [of that which I am about to do." Then, turning to his host,] "O Mubarek, [quoth he,] thou art free and all that is with thee of monies and gear appertaining unto us shall henceforth be thine and thou art altogether acquitted thereof and of every part thereof. Moreover, do thou ask of me whatsoever thou desirest by way of boon, for that I will nowise gainsay thee in aught thou mayst seek." Thereupon Mubarek arose and kissed the prince's hand and thanked him, saying, "O my lord, I will nought of thee save that thou be well; for indeed the wealth that I have is exceeding abundant upon me."

So Zein ul Asnam abode with Mubarek four days and every day the chief men of Cairo came to salute him, whenas it reached them that this was Mubarek's lord, the Sultan of Bassora; then, after he was rested, he said to his host, "O Mubarek, indeed the time is long upon me;" and Mubarek said to him, "Thou must know, O my lord, that this whereof thou art come in quest is a hard matter, nay, even unto danger of death, and I know not if thy fortitude may suffice thee for the achievement thereof." "Know, O Mubarek," rejoined Zein ul Asnam, "that wealth [is gotten] by blood and there betideth a man nought except by the will and foreordinance of the Creator (to whom belong might and majesty); so do thou take heart and concern not thyself on my account." Accordingly Mubarek forthright commended his slaves equip them for travel; so they made all ready and taking horse, journeyed days and nights in the foulest of deserts, witnessing daily things and matters which confounded their wits, — things such as never in their time had they seen, — until they drew near the place [of their destination]; whereupon they lighted down from their steeds and Mubarek bade the slaves and servants abide there, saying to them, "Keep watch over the beasts of burden and the horses till we return to you."

Then the twain set out together afoot and Mubarek said to Zein ul Asnam, "O my lord, now behoveth fortitude, for that thou art in the land of the image whereof thou comest in quest." And they gave not over walking till they drew near a great lake and a wide, whereupon quoth Mubarek to Zein ul Asnam, "Know, O my lord, that there will presently come to us a little boat, bearing a blue flag and builded all with planks of sandal and Comorin aloes-wood of price; and [thereanent] I have a charge to give thee, which it behoveth thee observe." "What is this charge?" asked the prince and Mubarek said to him, "In this boat thou wilt see a boatman, but his make is monstrous; wherefore be thou ware and again, I say, beware lest thou speak aught, for that he will incontinent drown us; and know that this place appertaineth to the King of the Jinn and that all thou seest is their handiwork." Then they came to the lake and behold, a little boat with planks of sandal and Comorin aloes-wood and in it a boatman, whose head was [as] the head of an elephant and the rest of his body [as that of] a wild beast. When he drew near them, he wrapped his trunk about them both and taking them with him into the boat, rowed out with them to the midst of the lake,

then fared on with them till he brought them to the other shore, where they landed and walking on, saw there trees of ambergris and aloes and sandal-wood and cloves and jessamine, full-grown and laden with ripe fruits and flowers whose fragrance dilated the breast and cheered the spright; and there [they heard] the voices of the birds twittering their various notes and ravishing the wit with their warblings. So Mubarek turned to Zein ul Asnam and said to him, "How deemest thou of this place, O my lord?" And the prince answered him, saying, "Methinketh, O Mubarek, this is the paradise which the Prophet (whom God bless and keep) promised us withal."

Then they fared on till they came to a magnificent palace, builded all with stones of emerald and rubies, and its doors were of sheer gold. Before it was a bridge, the length whereof was an hundred and fifty cubits and its breadth fifty cubits, and it was [wroughten] of the rib of a fish; whilst at the other end of the bridge were many warriors of the Jinn, gruesome and terrible of aspect, and all of them bore in their hands javelins of steel that flashed in the sun like winter lightning. Quoth Zein ul Asnam to Mubarek, "This is a thing that taketh the wits;" and Mubarek said to him, "It behoveth us abide in our place neither fare forward, lest a mischance betide us. O God, [vouchsafe us] safety!" Therewith he brought out of his pocket four pieces of yellow silken stuff and girded himself with one thereof; the second he laid on his shoulders and gave Zein ul Asnam other two pieces, with which he girded himself [and covered his shoulders] on like wise. Moreover, he spread before each of them a sash of white silk and bringing forth of his pocket precious stones and perfumes, such as ambergris and aloes-wood, (set them on the edges thereof) after which they sat down, each on his sash, and Mubarek taught Zein ul Asnam these words, which he should say to the King of the Jinn, to wit: "O my lord King of the Jinn, we are in thy safeguard." And Zein ul Asnam said to him, "And I will instantly conjure him that he accept of us."

Then said Mubarek, "O my lord, by Allah, I am exceeding fearful. But now hearken; an he be minded to accept of us without hurt, he will come to us in the semblance of a man accomplished in grace and goodliness; but, an he have no mind to us, he will come to us in a gruesome and a frightful aspect. An thou see him surpassing in beauty, arise forthright and salute him, but beware lest thou overpass thy sash." And Zein ul Asnam said to him, "Hearkening and obedience." "And be this thy salutation to him," continued Mubarek; "thou shalt say, 'O King of the Jinn and lord of the earth, my father, the Sultan of Bassora, the angel of death hath removed, as indeed is not hidden from thee. Now Thy Grace was still wont to take my father under thy protection, and I come to thee likewise to put myself under thy safeguard, even as did he.' Moreover, O my lord Zein ul Asnam," added he, "an the King of the Jinn receive us with a cheerful favour, he will without fail ask thee and say to thee, 'Seek of me that which thou wiliest and thou shalt forthright be given [it].' So do thou seek of him and say to him, 'O my lord, I crave of Thy Grace the ninth image, than which there is not the world a more precious; and indeed Thy Grace promised my father that thou wouldst give it to me.'"

Having thus taught his lord how he should speak with the King of the Jinn and seek of him the ninth image and how he should make his speech seemly and pleasant, Mubarek fell to conjuring and fumigating and reciting words that might not be

understanded; and no great while passed ere the world lightened and rain fell in torrents and it thundered and darkness covered the face of the earth; and after this there came a tempestuous wind and a voice like an earthquake of the earthquakes of the Day of Resurrection. When Zein ul Asnam saw these portents, his joints trembled and he was sore affrighted, for that he beheld a thing he had never in all his life seen nor heard. But Mubarek laughed at him and said to him, "Fear not, O my lord; this whereat thou art affrighted is that which we seek; nay, it is a presage of good to-us. So take heart and be of good cheer." After this there came a great clearness and serenity and there breathed pure and fragrant breezes; then, presently, behold, there appeared the King of the Jinn in the semblance of a man comely of favour, there was none like unto him in his goodliness, save He who hath no like and to whom belong might and majesty. He looked on Zein ul Asnam and Mubarek with a cheerful, smiling countenance; whereupon the prince arose forthright and proffered him his petition in the words which Mubarek had taught him.

The King of the Jinn turned to him, smiling, and said to him, "O Zein ul Asnam, indeed I loved thy father the Sultan of Bassora, and I used, whenassoever he came to me, to give him an image of those which thou hast seen, each wroughten of a single jewel, and thou also shalt stand in thy father's stead with me and shalt find favour in mine eyes, even as did he, ay, and more. Before he died, I caused him write the writ which thou sawest on the curtain of silk and promised him that I would take thee under my protection, even as himself, and would give thee the ninth image, which is more of worth than those which thou hast seen. Now it is my intent to perform the promise which I made to thy father, that I would take thee under my protection, and [know that] I was the old man whom thou sawest in thy sleep and it was I bade thee dig in the palace for the vault wherein thou foundest the jars of gold and the images of jewels. I know also wherefore thou art come hither; nay, I am he that was the cause of thy coming, and I will give thee that which thou seekest, albeit I had not given it to thy father; but on condition that thou swear to me a solemn oath and abide me constant thereto, to wit, that thou wilt return and bring me a girl of the age of fifteen years, with whom there shall be none to match in loveliness, and she must be a clean maid, who shall never have lusted after man, nor shall man have lusted after her. Moreover, thou must swear to me that thou wilt keep faith with her, coming, and beware lest thou play me false with her by the way."

So Zein ul Asnam swore a solemn oath to him of this and said to him, "O my lord, indeed, thou honourest me with this service; but methinketh it will be hard to find a girl like this. Nay, supposing I find a damsel fifteen years of age and beautiful exceedingly, according to Thy Grace's requirement, how shall I know that she hath never in her time lusted after man nor hath man lusted after her?" "O Zein ul Asnam," replied the King of the Jinn, "thou art in the right and certain it is that this knowledge is a thing unto which the sons of man may not avail; but I will give thee a mirror of my fashion, and when thou seest a girl and her beauty pleaseth thee and her grace, do thou open this mirror that I shall give thee, and if thou find her image therein clear and bright, thou shalt know forthright that she is pure without default and that all good qualities are in her; so do thou take her for me. If thou find her image in the mirror other than this, to wit, an it be troubled and clothed with uncleanness, know

that the girl is sullied and beware of her; but, an thou find one such as she whose qualities I have set out to thee, bring her to me and watch over her [by the way;] yet beware and again I say, beware of treason and bethink thee that, an thou keep not faith with me, thou wilt assuredly lose thy life."

So Zein ul Asnam made with him a stable and abiding covenant, the covenant of the sons of kings, that he would keep the plighted faith and never play him false, but would bring him the damsel with all continence. Then the King of the Jinn delivered him the mirror and said to him, "O my son, take this mirror whereof I bespoke thee, and now depart." Accordingly Zein ul Asnam and Mubarek arose and calling down blessings upon the King, returned upon their steps till they came to the lake, where they sat a little and behold, up came the boat which had brought them and the genie rowing therein, whose head was as the head of an elephant. Now this was by the commandment of the King of the Jinn; so they embarked with the genie and crossed with him to the other shore; after which they returned to Cairo and entering Mubarek's house, abode there awhile till they were rested from the fatigue of the journey.

Then Zein ul Asnam turned to Mubarek and said to him, "Come, let us go to the city of Baghdad, so we may seek for a girl who shall be according to the requirement of the King of the Jinn." And Mubarek said to him, "O my lord, we are in Cairo, the city of cities and the wonder of the world. I shall without fail find a girl here and it needeth not that we go to a far city." "Thou sayst sooth, O Mubarek," rejoined the prince; "but how shall we set about the matter and how shall we do to come by a girl like this and who shall go seeking her for us?" "O my lord," replied Mubarek, "concern not thyself for that, for I have with me here an old woman (upon her, [to speak] figuratively, be the malediction [of God]) who is a mistress of wiles and craft and guile and not to be baulked by any hindrance, however great." Then he sent to fetch the old woman and telling her that he wanted a damsel fifteen years old and fair exceedingly, so he might marry her to the son of his lord, promised her largesse galore, an she did her utmost endeavour in the matter; whereupon, "O my lord," answered she, "be easy; I will accomplish unto thee thy desire beyond thy wish; for that under my hand are damsels unpeered in grace and goodliness and all of them daughters of men of condition." But, O King of the time, the old woman had no knowledge of the affair of the mirror.

Then she arose and went out to go round about in the city and to run along its ways, seeking the girl for Prince Zein ul Asnam, and whenassoever she saw a fair damsel, accomplished in beauty, she proceeded to bring her to Mubarek; but, when he looked at her in the mirror, he would see her image troubled exceedingly and would leave her; so that the old woman brought him all the damsels of Cairo, but there was not found among them one whose image in the mirror was clear; wherefore he bethought him to go to Baghdad, since he found not one in Cairo who pleased him [or] who was a clean maid, like as the King of the Jinn had enjoined him. So he arose and equipping himself, [set out and] journeyed, he and Zein ul Asnam, till they came to the city of Baghdad, where they hired them a magnificent palace amiddleward the city and took up their abode therein. There the chief men of the city used to come to them every day and sat at their table, even to the comer and goer by night and by day. Moreover, when there remained aught from their table, they distributed it to the poor

and the afflicted and all the strangers in the mosques would come and eat with them. So the report was noised abroad in the land of their generosity and bounty and they became in high repute and fair fame throughout all Baghdad, nor did any talk but of Zein ul Asnam and his bounty and wealth.

Now it chanced that in one of the mosques was an Imam, corrupt, envious and despiteful in the extreme, and his lodging was near the palace wherein Mubatek and Zein ul Asnam had taken up their abode. When he heard of their bounty and generosity and of the goodliness of their repute, envy get hold upon him and jealousy of them, and he fell to bethinking himself how he should do, so he might bring some calamity upon them and despoil them of that their fair fortune, for it is of the wont of envy that it falleth not but upon the rich. So, one day of the days, as he stood in the mosque, after the mid-afternoon prayer, he came forward into the midst of the folk and said, "O my brethren, O ye of the True Faith, ye who ascribe unity to God, know that in this our quarter there be two men dwelling, strangers, and most like you are acquainted with them. Now these twain spend and squander wealth galore, passing all measure, and in my belief they are none other than thieves and highwaymen and are come hither with that which they stole from their own country, so they may squander it." Then "O people of Mohammed," added he, "I rede you for God's sake keep yourselves from these tricksters, lest belike the Khalif come presently to know of these two men and ye also fall with them into calamity. Now I have warned you and I wash my hands of your affair, for that I have forewarned and awakened you; so do that which you deem well." And they said to him, all who were present, with one voice, "We will do whatsoever thou wiliest, O Aboubekr!" When the Imam heard this from them, he arose and taking inkhorn and pen and paper, fell to writing a letter to the Commander of the Faithful, setting forth to him [the case] against Zein ul Asnam and Mubarek.

Now, as destiny willed it, the latter chanced to be in the mosque among the folk and heard the accursed Imam's discourse and that which he did by way of writing the letter to the Khalif; whereupon he tarried not, but, returning home forthwith, took an hundred diners and made him a parcel of price, all of silken clothes, wherewith he betook himself in haste to Aboubekr's house and knocked at the door. The Imam came out to him and opened the door; and when he saw him, he asked him surlily who he was and what he would; whereupon quoth the other, "O my lord the Imam Aboubekr, I am thy slave Mubarek and I come to thee on the part of my lord the Amir Zein ul Asnam. He hath heard of thy learning and of the excellence of thy repute in the city and would fain become acquainted with thee and do that which behoveth unto thee; wherefore he hath presently sent me with these things and this money for thine expenses and hopeth of thee that thou wilt not blame him, inasmuch as this is little for thy worth, but hereafter, God willing, he will not fail of that which is due unto thee." Aboubekr looked at [the coins and] at their impress and yellowness and at the parcel of clothes and said to Mubarek, "O my lord, [I crave] pardon of thy lord the Amir, for that I am presently abashed before him and it irketh me sore that I have not done my duty towards him; but I hope of thee that thou wilt intercede with him on my behalf, so he may of his favour pardon me my default; and (the Creator willing) I will to-morrow do that which behoveth me and will go do my service to him and

proffer him the respect which is due from me to him." "O my lord Aboubekr," replied Mubarek, "the extreme of my lord's desire is to look upon thy worship, so he may be honoured by thy presence and get of thee a blessing." So saying, he kissed the Imam's hand and returned to his lodging.

On the morrow, whilst Aboubekr was [engaged] in the Friday prayers at dawn, he stood up amongst the folk, in the midst of the mosque, and said, "O our brethren of the Muslims and people of Mohammed, all of you, verily envy falleth not save upon the rich and the noble and passeth by the poor and those of low estate. Know that of the two stranger men against whom I spoke yesterday one is an Amir, a man of great rank and noble birth, and the case is not as certain of the envious informed me concerning him, to wit, that he was a thief and a robber; for I have enquired into the matter and find that the report lieth. So beware lest any of you missay of the Amir or speak aught of evil against him, such as that which I heard yesterday, or you will cause me and yourselves fall into the gravest of calamities with the Commander of the Faithful; for that a man of high degree like this cannot sojourn in the city of Baghdad without the Khalif's knowledge." On this wise, then, the Imam Aboubekr did away from the minds of the folk the ill thought which he had planted [there] by his speech concerning Zein ul Asnam.

Moreover, when he had made an end of the prayers, he returned to his own house and donned his gabardine; then, weightening his skirts and lengthening his sleeves, he went forth and took his way to the prince's house. When he came in to Zein ul Asnam, the latter rose to him and received him with the utmost reverence. Now he was by nature religious, for all he was a youth of tender age; so he proffered the Imam all manner of honour and seating him by his side on a high divan, let bring him coffee with ambergris. Then the servants spread the table for breakfast and they took their sufficiency of meat and drink, and when they had finished, they fell to talking and making merry together. Presently the Imam asked the prince and said to him, "O my lord Zein ul Asnam, doth your highness purpose to sojourn long here in Baghdad?" "Yea, verily, O our Lord the Imam," answered Zein ul Asnam; "my intent is to sojourn here awhile, till such time as my requirement be accomplished." "And what," asked Aboubekr, "is the requirement of my lord the Amir? Belike, an I know it, I may avail to further him to his wish, though I sacrifice my life for him." And the prince said to him, "I seek a damsel fifteen years of age and fair exceedingly, that I may marry her; but she must be pure and chaste and a clean maid, whom no man hath anywise defiled nor in all her life hath she thought upon a man; and she must be unique in grace and goodliness."

"O my lord," rejoined the Imam, "this is a thing exceeding hard to find; but I know a damsel unique in her loveliness and her age is fifteen years. Her father was a Vizier, who resigned office of his own motion, and he abideth presently at home in his palace and is exceeding jealous over his daughter and her bringing up. Methinketh this damsel will suit your Highness's mind, and she will rejoice in an Amir like your Highness, as also will her parents." Quoth Zein ul Asnam, "God willing, this damsel whereof thou speakest will answer my requirement and the accomplishment of our desire shall be at thy hands; but, O our lord the Imam, before all things my wish is to see her, so I may know an she be chaste or not. As for her beauty, I am assured of your

worship's sufficiency and am content to trust to your word concerning her loveliness, to wit, that she is surpassing; but, for her chastity, you cannot avail to testify with certitude of her case." "And how," asked the Imam, "can it be possible unto you, O my lord the Amir, to know from her face that she is pure? An this be so, your highness is skilled in physiognomy. However, an your highness will vouchsafe to accompany me, I will carry you to her father's palace and make you known to the latter, and he shall bring her before you."

Accordingly, the Imam Aboubekr took Zein ul Asnam and carried him to the Vizier's house; and when they went in to him, the Vizier rose and welcomed the prince, especially when he knew that he was an Amir and understood from the Imam that he wished to marry his daughter. So he let bring the damsel before him, and when she came, he bade her raise the veil from her face. Accordingly she unveiled herself and Zein ul Asnam, looking upon her, was amazed at her grace and goodliness, for that never had he seen one to match with her in beauty; and he said in himself, "I wonder if I shall happen upon one like this damsel, since it is forbidden that she should be mine!" Then he brought out the mirror from his pocket and looked thereon; when, behold, its crystal was clear exceedingly, as it were virgin silver; and he observed her image in the mirror and saw it like a white dove. So he forthright concluded the match and sent for the Cadi and the witnesses, who wrote the writ and enthroned the bride; after which Zein ul Asnam took the Vizier, the bride's father, home with him to his house and sent the young lady jewels of great price. Then they celebrated the wedding and held high festival, never was the like thereof, whilst Zein ul Asnam proceeded to entertain the folk and made them banquets for the space of eight days. Moreover, he honoured Aboubekr the Imam and gave him gifts galore and brought the Vizier, the bride's father, presents and great rarities.

Then, the wedding festivities being ended, Mubarek said to Zein ul Asnam, "Come, O my lord, let us set out on our way, lest we waste the time in sloth, now we have found that whereof we were in search." And the prince answered him, saying, "Thou art in the right." So Mubarek arose and fell to equipping them for the journey; moreover, he let make the young lady a camel-litter with a travelling couch, and they set out. But Mubarek knew that Zein ul Asnam was sunken deep in love of the damsel; so he took him and said to him, "O my lord Zein ul Asnam, I would fain remind thee to watch over thyself; nay, again I say, have a care and keep the faith which thou plightedst to the King of the Jinn." "O Mubarek," answered the prince, "an thou knewest the transport which possesseth me for the love of this young lady and how I still think of nothing but of taking her to Bassora and going in [to her]!" And Mubarek said to him, "Nay, O my lord; keep thy troth and play not the traitor to thine oath, lest there befall thee a sore calamity and thou lose thy life and the young lady lose hers also. Bethink thee of the oath which thou sworest and let not lust get the mastery over thine understanding, lest thou lose guerdan and honour and life." "O Mubarek," rejoined Zein ul Asnam, "keep thou watch over her thyself and let me not see her." So Mubarek fell to keeping watch and ward over the bride in the prince's stead and guarded the latter also, lest he should look on her; and so they journeyed on past the road leading unto Egypt and fared on their way to the Island of the Jinn.

When the bride beheld the journey (and indeed it was long upon her) and saw not her husband in all this time since the night of the bridal, she turned to Mubarek and said to him, "God upon thee, O Mubarek, tell me, I conjure thee by the life of thy lord the Amir, are we yet far from the dominions of my bridegroom, the Amir Zein ul Asnam?" And he said to her, "Alack, O my lady, it irketh me for thee and I will discover to thee that which is hidden. To wit, thou deemest that Zein ul Asnam, King of Bassora, is thy bridegroom. Far be it! He is not thy bridegroom. The writing of the writ of his marriage with thee was but a pretext before thy parents and the folk; and now thou art going for a bride to the King of the Jinn, who sought thee from the Amir Zein ul Asnam." When the young lady heard these words, she fell a-weeping and Zein ul Asnam heard her and fell a-weeping also, a sore weeping, of the excess of his love for her. And she said to them, "Is there no pity in you and no clemency and have you no fear of God, that I, a stranger maid, you cast me into a calamity like this? What answer will you give unto God concerning this treason that you have wroughten with me?"

But her weeping and her words availed her nothing, and they ceased not to fare on with her till they came to the King of the Jinn, to whom they straightway presented her. When he beheld her, she pleased him and he turned to Zein ul Asnam and said to him. "Verily, the girl whom thou hast brought me is exceeding in beauty and surpassing in loveliness; but the goodliness of thy loyalty and shine overmastering of thyself for my sake is fairer than she in mine eyes. So return now to thy place and the ninth image that thou seekest of me thou shalt find, on thy return, beside the other images; for I will send it to thee by one of my slaves of the Jinn." Accordingly, Zein ul Asnam kissed the King's hand and returned with Mubarek to Cairo; but, when they came thither, he chose not to abide with Mubarek longer than a resting-while, of the excess of his longing and his yearning to see the ninth image. Withal he ceased not from mourning, bethinking him of the young lady and her grace and goodliness; and he fell to lamenting and saying, "Alas for the loss of my delights that were because of thee, O pearl of beauty and loveliness, thou whom I took from thy parents and presented to the King of the Jinn! Alack, the pity of it!" And he chid himself for the deceit and the perfidy which he had practised upon the young lady's parents and how he had brought her to the King of the Jinn.

Then he set out and gave not over journeying till he came to Bassora and entering his palace, saluted his mother and told her all that had befallen him; whereupon quoth she to him, "Arise, O my son, so thou mayst see this ninth image, for that I am exceeding rejoiced at its presence with us." So they both descended into the underground hall, wherein were the eight images, and found there a great marvel; to wit, instead of the ninth image, they beheld the young lady, resembling the sun in her loveliness. The prince knew her, when he saw her, and she said to him, "Marvel not to find me here in place of that which thou soughtest; methinketh thou wilt not repent thee an thou take me in the stead of the ninth image." "No, by Allah, oh my beloved!" replied Zein ul Asnam, "For that thou art the end of my seeking and I would not exchange thee for all the jewels in the world. Didst thou but know the grief which possessed me for thy separation, thou whom I took from thy parents by fraud and brought thee to the King of the Jinn!"

Scarce had the prince made an end of his speech when they heard a noise of thunder rending the mountains and shaking the earth and fear get hold upon the queen, the mother of Zein ul Asnam, yea, and sore trembling; but, after a little, the King of the Jinn appeared and said to her, "O lady, fear not, it is I who am thy son's protector and I love him with an exceeding love for the love his father bore me. Nay, I am he who appeared to him in his sleep and in this I purposed to try his fortitude, whether or not he might avail to subdue himself for loyalty's sake. Indeed the beauty of this young lady beguiled him and he could not avail to keep his covenant with me so strictly but that he desired her for his bride. However, I know the frailty of human nature and withal I think greatly of him that he guarded her and kept her unsullied and withdrew himself from her; wherefore I accept this his constancy and bestow her on him as a bride. She is the ninth image, which I promised him should be with him, and certes she is fairer than all these images of jewels, inasmuch as her like is rarely found in the world." Then the King of the Jinn turned to Zein ul Asnam and said to him, "O Prince Zein ul Asnam, this is thy bride; take her and go in to her, on condition that thou love her and take not unto her a second [wife]; and I warrant thee of the goodliness of her fidelity to-thee-ward." Therewithal he vanished from them and Zein ul Asnam went out, glad and rejoicing in the young lady; and of [the excess of] his love for her he went in to her that night and let celebrate the bridal and hold high festival in all the kingdom. Then he abode upon the throne of his kingship, judging and commanding and forbidding, whilst his bride became queen of Bassora; and after a little his mother died. So he made her funeral obsequies and mourned for her; after which he lived with his bride in all content till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Societies.

Alaeddin and the Enchanted Lamp.

THERE was [once] in a city of the cities of China a man, a tailor and poor, and he had a son by name Alaeddin, who was perverse and graceless from his earliest childhood. When he came to ten years of age, his father would fain have taught him his own craft, for that, because he was poor, he could not spend money upon him to have him taught [another] trade or art or the like; so he carried him to his shop, that he might teach him his craft of tailoring; but, forasmuch as the lad was perverse and wont still to play with the boys of the quarter, he would not sit one day in the shop; nay, he would watch his father till such time as he went forth the place to meet a customer or on some other occasion, when he would flee forth incontinent and go out to the gardens with the good-for-nothing lads like himself. This, then, was his case, and he would not obey his parents, nor would he learn a craft. His father sickened of his grief and chagrin for his son's perversity and died, whilst Alaeddin abode on that his wise. When his mother saw that her husband had departed this life and that her son was a scapegrace and a good-for-nought, she sold the shop and all she found therein and fell to spinning cotton and feeding herself and her graceless son Alaeddin with her toil. The latter, seeing himself quit of his father's danger, redoubled in his gracelessness and his perversity and would not abide in their house save eating-whiles; and his poor wretched mother supported him by the spinning of her hands till he came to fifteen years of age.

One day of the days, as he sat in the street, playing with the vagabond boys, behold, a Maugrabin dervish came up and stopping to look at the lads, singled out Alaeddin from his comrades and fell to gazing upon him and straitly considering his favour. Now this dervish was from the land of Hither Barbary and he was an enchanter who would cast mountain upon mountain with his sorcery and was skilled to boot in physiognomy. When he had well considered Alaeddin, he said in himself, "Certes, this boy is he whom I seek and he it is in quest of whom I came forth from my country." So he took one of the lads apart and asked him of Alaeddin, whose son he was, and questioned him of all his affairs; after which he went up to Alaeddin and taking him aside, said to him, "Harkye, boy, art thou not the son of such an one the tailor?" And he answered him, saying "Yes, O my lord; but my father died awhile agone." When the Maugrabin magician heard this, he threw himself upon Alaeddin and embracing him, fell to kissing him and weeping, that his tears ran down upon his cheek.

Alaeddin was astonished at the Maugrabin's behaviour; so he asked him and said to him, "What is the cause of thy weeping, O my lord, and whence knewest thou my father?" The Maugrabin answered him, in a mournful, broken voice, saying, "How, O my son, canst thou ask me this question, after telling me that thy father, my brother, is dead, for thy father was [indeed] my brother and I am newly come from my country and was rejoicing exceedingly, after this my strangerhood, of my expectation that I should see him and solace myself with him; and now thou tellest me that he is dead! Marry, blood discovered unto me that thou wast the son of my brother, and indeed I knew thee from amongst all the lads; although thy father, when I left him, was not yet married. And now, O my son Alaeddin," continued he, "I have lost my consolation

and my joy in thy father, my brother, whom I had hoped, after my strangerhood, to see ere I died; but separation hath afflicted me in him and there is no fleeing from that which is nor is there any resource against the ordinance of God the Most High."

Then he took Alaeddin and said to him, "O my son, I have no comfort but in thee and thou art [to me] in the stead of thy father, since thou art his successor and whoso leaveth [a successor] is not dead, O my son." With this he put his hand [to his pocket] and bringing out ten diners, gave them to Alaeddin, saying, "O my son, where is your house and where is thy mother, my brother's wife?" So Alaeddin took him and showed him the way to their house; and the magician said to him, "O my son, take these monies and give them to thy mother and salute her on my behalf and tell her that thine uncle is come back from his strangerhood; and God willing, to-morrow I will come visit you, so I may salute her and look upon the house wherein my brother dwelt and see where his tomb is." Alaeddin kissed his hand and hastened home, running in his joy, to his mother and entered, contrary to his wont, for that he was not used to go in to her save at eating-times. So he went in to her, rejoicing, and said to her, "O my mother, I bring thee glad news of my uncle, in that he is come back from his absence, and he saluteth thee." "O my son," quoth she, "meseemeth thou makest mock of me. Who is thine uncle and whence hast thou an uncle on life?" And he said to her, "O my mother, why didst thou tell me that I had no uncles and no kinsfolk on life? Indeed, this man is my uncle and he embraced me and kissed me, weeping, and bade me tell thee of this." And she answered him, saying, "Yes, O my son, I knew thou hadst an uncle, but he is dead and I know not that thou hast a second uncle."

As for the Maugrabin enchanter, he went forth at dawn and fell to searching for Alaeddin, for that he might not brook parting from him; and as he went about in the thoroughfares of the city, he came upon the lad, who was playing with the vagabonds, as of his wont. So he went up to him and taking him by the hand, embraced him and kissed him; then he brought out of his purse two diners and said to Alaeddin, "Go to thy mother and give her these two diners and say to her, 'My uncle would fain sup with us; so take these two diners and make a good supper.' But first show me once more the way to your house." "On my head and eyes, O my uncle," answered Alaeddin and foregoing him, showed him the way to the house. Then the Maugrabin left him and went his way, whilst Alaeddin returned home and telling his mother [what had passed], gave her the two diners and said to her, "My uncle would fain sup with us." So she arose forthright and went out to the market, where she bought all that was needful and returning home, borrowed of her neighbours that which she required of platters and the like and proceeded to make ready for supper.

When the time of the evening-meal came, she said to Alaeddin, "O my son, the supper is ready and maybe shine uncle knoweth not the way to the house. Go thou and meet him." And he answered her with "Hearkening and obedience." But, whilst they were in talk, behold, there came a knocking at the door; whereupon Alaeddin went out and opening, found the Maugrabin enchanter, and with him a slave bearing wine and fruits. So he brought them in and the slave went his way, whilst the Maugrabin entered and saluted Alaeddin's mother; then he fell a-weeping and said to her, "Where is the place in which my brother was wont to sit?" She pointed him to her husband's sitting-place, whereupon he went thither and prostrating himself, fell to kissing the earth and

saying, "Alas, how scant is my delight and how sorry my fortune, since I have lost thee, O my brother and apple of mine eye!" And the abode on this wise, weeping and lamenting, till Alaeddin's mother was certified that he was in earnest and that he was like to swoon of the excess of his wailing and his lamentation. So she came to him and raised him from the ground, saying, "What profiteth it that thou shouldst kill thyself?" And she proceeded to comfort him and made him sit down.

Then, before she laid the table, the Maugrabin fell to relating to her [his history] and said to her, "O wife of my brother, let it not amaze thee that in all thy days thou never sawest me neither knewest of me in my late brother's lifetime, for that I left this country forty years agone and became an exile from my native land. I journeyed to the lands of Hind and Sind and all the country of the Arabs and coming presently into Egypt, sojourned awhile in the magnificent city [of Cairo], which is the wonder of the world. Ultimately I betook myself to the land of Hither Barbary and sojourned there thirty years' space, till one day of the days, as I sat, O wife of my brother, I bethought me of my country and my native place and of my late brother and longing waxed on me to see him and I fell a-weeping and lamenting over my strangerhood and distance from him. In fine, my yearning for him importuned me till I resolved to journey to this country, the which was the falling-place of my head and my native land, that I might see my brother. And I said in myself, "O man, how long wilt thou be an exile from thy country and thy native place, whenas thou hast an only brother and no more? Arise and journey and look upon him ere thou die. Who knoweth the calamities of fate and the vicissitudes of the days? Sore pity 'twere that thou shouldst die and not see thy brother. Moreover, Allah (praised be He) hath given thee abundant wealth and it may be thy brother is in poor case and straitened, and thou wilt help him, an thou see him." So I arose forthright and equipped myself for travel; then, reciting the Fatiheh , I took horse, after the Friday prayer, and came, after many hardships and fatigues, — which I suffered, till the Lord (to whom belong might and majesty) protected [me], — to this city. I entered it and as I went about its thoroughfares the day before yesterday, I saw my brother's son Alaeddin playing with the boys; and by Allah the Great, O wife of my brother, when I saw him, my heart crave to him, for that blood yearneth unto blood, and my soul foreboded me he was my brother's son. At his sight I forgot all my toils and troubles and was like to fly for joy; then, when he told me that my late brother had departed to the mercy of God the Most High, I swooned away for stress of grief and chagrin; and most like he hath told thee of that which overcame me. But I comforted myself somewhat with Alaeddin, who standeth in stead of the departed, for that whoso leaveth [a successor] dieth not."

Then, when he saw her weeping at this speech, he turned to Alaeddin, by way of making her forget the mention of her husband and feigning to comfort her, so he might the better accomplish his device upon her, and said to him, "O my son Alaeddin, what hast thou learned of crafts and what is thy business? Hast thou learned thee a trade whereby thou mayst live, thou and thy mother?" At this Alaeddin was confounded and abashed and hung down his head, bowing it to the ground, whilst his mother said to the Maugrabin, "How? By Allah, he knoweth nought at all! So graceless a lad I never saw. All day long he goeth about with the vagabond boys of the quarter like himself; nay, his father, woe is me, died not but of his chagrin concerning him;

and now, as for me, my case is woeful. I spin cotton and toil night and day, to earn two cakes of bread, that we may eat them together. This, then, is his condition, O my brother-in-law, and by thy life, he cometh not in to me save at eating-times, and I am thinking to bolt the door of my house and not open to him and let him go seek his living for himself, for that I am grown an old woman and have no strength left to toil and provide for the maintenance of a fellow like this. By Allah, I get mine own livelihood, I that need one who shall maintain me."

Therewithal the Maugrabin turned to Alaeddin and said to him, "How is this, O son of my brother? It is a disgrace to thee to go vagabonding about in this abjection. This befitteth not men like thee. Thou art gifted with understanding, O my son, and the child of [reputable] folk; I and it is a shame upon thee that thy mother, who is an old woman, should toil for thy maintenance, now thou art grown a man. Nay, it behoveth thee get thee some means whereby thou mayst maintain thyself, O my son. See, by God's grace, (praised be He) here in our city be masters of crafts, nowhere is there a place more abounding in them: choose, then, the craft which pleaseth thee and I will establish thee therein, so that, when thou growest up, O my son, thou mayst find thee thy craft whereby thou shalt live. Belike thou hast no mind to thy father's trade; so choose other than it. Tell me the craft which pleaseth thee and I will help thee in all that is possible, O son of my brother." Then, seeing that Alaeddin was silent and answered him nothing, he knew that he had no mind to any craft at all and recked of nothing but vagabondage and said to him, "O son of my brother, be not abashed at me; if so be withal thou caress not to learn a trade, I will open thee a merchant's shop of the costliest stuffs and thou shalt make thyself acquainted with the folk and shalt give and take and sell and buy and become known in the city."

When Alaeddin heard these words of his uncle the Maugrabin, to wit, that it was his intent to make him a merchant, a trader, he rejoiced exceedingly, well knowing that all merchants' apparel is neat and elegant; so he looked at the Maugrabin and smiled and bowed his head, as who should say, "I am content." The magician, seeing him smile, knew that he was content to be a merchant and said to him, "Since thou art content that I should make thee a merchant and open thee a shop, be a man, O son of my brother, and to-morrow, God willing, I will take thee first to the market and let cut thee an elegant suit of clothes such as merchants wear; and after that I will look thee out a shop and perform my promise to thee." Now Alaeddin's mother was in some little doubt as to the Maugrabin; but, when she heard his promise to her son that he would open him a shop as a merchant with stuffs and capital and what not else, she concluded that he was in very deed her brother-in-law, inasmuch as a stranger would not do thus with her son. So she fell to admonishing her son and exhorting him to put away ignorance and folly from his head and be a man, and bade him still yield obedience to his uncle, as he were his father, and apply himself to make up the time which he had wasted in idleness [with] those who were like him, after which she arose and laying the table, spread the evening-meal and they all sat down and fell to eating and drinking, whilst the Maugrabin talked with Alaeddin upon matters of merchandry and the like. Then, when he saw that the night was far spent, he arose and went to his lodging, promising to return in the morning and take Alaeddin, so he might let cut him a merchant's suit.

Alaeddin slept not that night for joy and when it was morning, behold, the Maugrabin knocked at the door. The lad's mother arose and opened to him; however, he would not enter, but sought Alaeddin, that he might take him with him to the market. So Alaeddin went out to him and gave him good-morning and kissed his hand; whereupon the Maugrabin took him by the hand and going with him to the market, entered the shop of a seller of all manner of clothes and demanded a suit of costly stuffs. The merchant brought him what he sought, all sewn and ready, and the Maugrabin said to Alaeddin, "Choose that which pleaseth thee, O my son." Alaeddin rejoiced exceedingly, when he saw that his uncle gave him his choice, and chose clothes to his mind, such as pleased him. The Maugrabin at once paid the merchant their price and going out, carried Alaeddin to the bath, where they bathed and came forth and drank wine. Then Alaeddin arose and donned the new suit; whereat he rejoiced and was glad and coming up to his uncle, kissed his hand and thanked him for his bounties. After this the Maugrabin carried him to the bazaar of the merchants and showed him the market and the selling and buying and said to him, "O my son, it behoveth thee consort with the folk, especially with the merchants, so thou mayst learn of them merchandry, since this is become thy craft."

Then he took him again and showed him the city and the mosques and all the sights of the place; after which he carried him to a cook's shop, where the morning-meal was set before them in silver platters. So they ate and drank till they had enough and going forth, fared on, whilst the Maugrabin proceeded to show Alaeddin the pleasaunces and fine buildings, going in with him to the Sultan's palace and showing him all the fair and fine quarters [of the city]; after which he carried him to the Khan of the stranger merchants, where he himself lodged. and invited certain of the merchants who were in the Khan. Accordingly they came and sat down to supper, and he informed them that this was his brother's son and that his name was Alaeddin. Then, after they had eaten and drunken, the night being now come, the Maugrabin arose and taking Alaeddin, carried him back to his mother.

When she saw her son as he were one of the merchants, her wit fled [and she waxed] sorrowful for gladness and fell to extolling the Maugrabin's bounty and saying to him, "O my brother-in-law, I might not suffice [to thy deserts,] though I thanked thee all my life long and praised thee for the good thou hast done with my son." "O wife of my brother," answered he, "this is no manner of kindness in me, for that this is my son and it behoveth me stand in the stead of my brother his father; so be thou easy." Quoth she, "I pray God, by the glory of the ancients and the moderns, that He let thee [live] and continue thee, O my brother-in-law, and prolong me thy life, so thou mayst be [as] a wing to this orphan boy; and he shall still be under thine obedience and thy commandment and shall do nought but that which thou biddest him." "O wife of my brother," rejoined the Maugrabin, "Alaeddin is a man of understanding and [the son of] decent folk, and my hope is in God that he will follow in his father's footsteps and be the solace of shine eyes; but it irketh me that, to-morrow being Friday, I cannot open him a shop. It being congregation day, all the merchants will go out after prayers to the gardens and pleasaunces; but, God willing, on Saturday, an it please the Creator, we will do our business. Tomorrow I will come to you and take Alaeddin, that I may show him the gardens and pleasaunces without the city, — it may be he hath

not yet seen them, — and he shall see the merchant-folk and the notables a-pleasuring there, so he may become acquainted with them and they with him."

The Maugrabin lay the night in his lodging; and on the morrow he came to the tailor's house and knocked at the door. Alaeddin — of the excess of his joy in the clothes he had donned and of the pleasures he had enjoyed on the past day, what with the bath and eating and drinking and viewing the folk and the thought that his uncle was coming in the morning to take him and show him the gardens — slept not that night neither closed an eye and thought the day would never break. So, when he heard a knocking at the door, he went out at once in haste, like a spark of fire, and opening, found his uncle the Maugrabin. The latter embraced him and kissed him and took him by the hand, saying, "O son of my brother, to-day I will show thee a thing such as thou never sawest in thy life." Then they went off together and the Maugrabin fell to making merry with Alaeddin and amusing him with familiar talk. They went forth the gate of the city and the Maugrabin proceeded to walk with him among the gardens and to show him the fine pleasaunces and marvellous high-builded palaces; and whenassoever they looked upon a garden or a palace or a pavilion, he would stand and say to Alaeddin, "Doth this please thee, O my son Alaeddin?"

Alaeddin was like to fly for joy, inasmuch as he saw that which he had never in his life seen, and they gave not over walking and gazing till they were weary, when they entered a fine garden there, that cheered the heart and brightened the eye with its springs welling up among flowers and its waters issuing from the mouths of lions of brass like unto gold, and sitting down by a lake, rested awhile. As for Alaeddin, he rejoiced and was exceeding glad and fell a-jesting with the Mangrabin and making merry with him, as he were his uncle in very deed. Then the latter arose and loosing his girdle, brought out therefrom a bag full of victual and fruit and the like and said to Alaeddin, "O son of my brother, thou art maybe anhungred; come, eat what thou wilt." So Alaeddin proceeded to eat and the Maugrabin with him and they were gladdened and refreshed and their souls were cheered. Then said the Maugrabin, "Rise, O my son, an thou be rested, so we may walk a little and fare onward." So Alaeddin arose and the Maugrabin walked on with him from garden to garden till they had passed them all and came to a high mountain.

Now Alaeddin had never gone forth the gate of the city nor in all his life had he walked the like of that walk; so he said to the Maugrabin, "O my uncle, whither are we going? See, we have left all the gardens behind us and are come to the foot of a mountain. If the way be [yet] far, I have no strength left me for walking, for that I am worn out with fatigue and there remain no more gardens before us; so let us turn back and return to the city." "O my son," replied the Maugrabin, "this is the way and the gardens are not yet at an end, for we are going to view a garden, whose like is not with the kings and compared with which all these which thou hast seen are as nothing. So gird up thy loins for walking; praised be God, thou art a man." And he fell to amusing him with fair words and telling him rare stories, true and false, till they reached the place at which this Maugrabin enchanter aimed and in quest whereof he was come from Barbary to the land of China; whereupon, "O son of my brother," quoth he to Alaeddin, "sit and rest thee; this is the place for which we were making; and now, please God, I will show thee marvellous things, the like whereof no one in the world

hath seen, nor hath any looked upon that which thou art about to behold. But do thou, after thou art rested, arise and seek sticks and grass and reeds and such like matters as are small and dry, so we may kindle a fire, and I will cause thee look, O son of my brother, upon a thing which passeth understanding."

When Alaeddin heard this, he yearned to see what his uncle was about to do; so he forgot his fatigue and rising forthright, fell to gathering brushwood and dry sticks and gathered till the Maugrabin said to him, "Enough, O son of my brother." Then he brought out of his pocket a casket, from which he took what he needed of perfumes, and proceeded to make fumigations and conjurations, speaking words that might not be understanded; and straightway it darkened and thundered and the earth quaked and opened. At this Alaeddin was sore affrighted and would have fled; which when the Maugrabin enchanter saw, he was exceeding, incensed at him, for that without Alaeddin his labour was of none avail, since the treasure whereat he sought to come might not be opened save by means of the lad. So, when he saw him offer to flee, he rose to him and lifting his hand, smote him on his head, that he came nigh to knock out his teeth; whereupon Alaeddin swooned away and fell upon the earth; but, after a little, he recovered his senses, by the virtue of the Maugrabin's enchantments, and falling a-weeping, said to him, "O my uncle, what have I done to deserve from thee this blow?" The Maugrabin proceeded to soothe him and said to him, "O my son, it is my desire to make thee a man; so cross me not, for that I am thine uncle and as it were thy father; wherefore do thou obey me in that which I shall say to thee, and after a little thou shalt forget all this travail and annoy, whenas thou lookest upon things marvellous."

Now, when the earth clove in sunder before the enchanter, there appeared to him an alabaster slab and in it a ring of molten brass; so he turned to Alaeddin and said to him, "An thou do that which I shall tell thee, thou shalt become richer than all the kings; and on this account, O my son, I beat thee, for that here is a treasure and it is in thy name, and thou, thou wouldst fain have passed it by and fled. But now collect thy wits and see how I have opened the earth by my conjurations and incantations. Under yonder stone, wherein is the ring, is the treasure whereof I have told thee; so do thou put thy hand to the ring and lift the slab, for that none of mankind can open it but thou and none but thou can set his foot within this treasure, since it is guarded for thee. But needs must thou hearken from me that which I shall teach thee and lose not a syllable of my speech. Marry, all this, O my son, is for thy good, for that this is an exceeding great treasure, the kings of the world possess not its like, and it is thine and mine." So poor Alaeddin forgot fatigue and beating and weeping, of his amazement at the Maugrabin's speech and joy that he should become rich after such a measure that even the kings would be no wealthier than he, and said to him, "O my uncle, command me all thou wilt, for I will be obedient unto thy commandment." And the Maugrabin said to him, "O son of my brother, thou art as my very son, nay, dearer, for being my brother's son. I have no kindred other than thyself and thou art my natural heir and successor, O my son."

Therewith he came up to Alaeddin and kissed him saying, "All these my toils, whom do they concern? They are all for thy sake, O my son, that I may make thee a man rich and great exceedingly; so gainsay me not in aught that I shall tell thee; but go

up to yonder ring and raise it, as I bade thee." "O my uncle," quoth Alaeddin, "this stone is heavy; I cannot raise it of myself, so come thou also and help me raise it, for I am little of years." "O son of my brother," replied the Maugrabin, "it will not be possible for us to do aught, an I help thee, and our toil will be wasted in vain; but do thou put thy hand to the ring and raise it and it will immediately come up with thee; for, as I said to thee, none may handle it but thou. But, when thou raisest it, name thine own name and those of thy father and mother and it will straightway rise with thee, nor shalt thou feel its weight."

Accordingly, Alaeddin took courage and summoning his resolution, did as the Maugrabin bade him and raised the slab with all ease, whenas he pronounced his own name and those of his father and his mother. So the stone came up and he threw it aside; whereupon there appeared to him an underground place and its door, whereas one entered by a stair of some dozen steps, and the Maugrabin said to him, "O Alaeddin, give heed and do punctually that which I shall tell thee, neither fail of aught thereof. Go down with all circumspection into yonder vault till thou come to the bottom thereof and thou wilt find there a place divided into four chambers, in each of which thou wilt see four jars of gold and others of native ore and silver. Beware lest thou handle them or take aught therefrom, but pass them by till thou come to the fourth chamber, and let not thy clothes or thy skirts touch the jars, no, nor the walls, and stay not one moment; for, an thou do contrary to this, thou wilt forthright be transformed and wilt become a black stone. When thou comest to the fourth chamber, thou wilt find there a door; open it and speak the names which thou spokest over the slab; then enter and thou wilt find thyself in a garden, all adorned with trees and fruits. Thence do thou fare on some fifty cubits in the path thou wilt find before thee and thou wilt come to a dais, with a stair of some thirty steps. Above the dais thou wilt find a lamp hung up; take it and pour out the oil that is therein and put it in thy sleeve; and fear not for thy clothes therefrom, for that it is not oil. And as thou returnest, thou mayst pluck from the trees what thou wilt, for that it is thine, what while the lamp abideth in thy hand."

When the Maugrabin had made an end of his speech, he drew from his finger a ring and putting it on Alaeddin's finger, said to him, "And this ring, O, my son, shall deliver thee from all hurt and all fear that may betide thee, provided thou observe all that I have said to thee. So now arise and go down; gird thy loins and summon up thy resolution and fear not, for that thou art a man and not a child; and after this, O my son, thou shalt in a little time become the richest of mankind." So Alaeddin arose and going down into the underground, found the four chambers and in each four jars of gold. He passed them by with all care and precaution, even as the Maugrabin had bidden him, and entering the garden, fared on there through till he came to the dais and mounting the stair, entered and found the lamp. So he quenched it and pouring out the oil that was therein, put it in his sleeve; then, going down into the garden, he fell to gazing upon its trees, whereon were birds extolling with their songs the perfection of the Great Creator, and he had not seen them as he entered. Now the fruits of these trees were all precious stones, each tree bearing fruit of one colour and kind of jewel, and these fruits were of all colours, green and white and yellow and red and what not else of colours. Their glitterance outshone the rays of the sun in its

forenoon splendour and the bigness of each jewel overpassed description; suffice it that not one of them might be found with the greatest of the kings of the world, no, nor a gem half the bigness of the smallest that was there.

Alaeddin entered among the trees and proceeded to gaze upon them and upon these things which amazed the sight and ravished the sense and observing them, saw that, instead of fruits, they bore magnificent jewels from the mines, emeralds and diamonds and rubies and pearls and topazes and the like of precious stones, such as confounded the wit. Now, for that this was a thing Alaeddin had never in his life seen, neither was he of ripe age, so he should know the value of these jewels, by reason of his being yet a young lad, he thought that they were all glass or crystal; so he gathered of them what filled his sleeves and fell to looking an they were grapes or figs and the like of fruits that might be eaten or not; but, finding them like glass, he proceeded to gather in his sleeve of every kind that was upon the trees, albeit he knew not jewels nor their worth, saying in himself, since he had been baulked in his intent of eating, "I will gather of these fruits of glass and will play with them at home." Accordingly he proceeded to pluck and put in his pockets and his sleeves till he filled them; after which he filled his girdle with the fruits and girt himself withal; in fine, he carried off as much as he might, purposing to lay them up with him in the house by way of ornament, for that he thought them glass, as I have said. Then he quickened his pace, of his fear of his uncle the Maugrabin, and hastened through the four chambers and the [outer] vault nor looked, as he returned, at the jars of gold, albeit he might now have taken of them.

When he came to the stair and ascended it and there remained to him but a small matter, to wit, the last step, which was much higher than the others, he could not avail to mount it of himself, having regard to that which he was carrying; so he said to the Maugrabin, "O my uncle, give me thy hand and help me up." Quoth he, "O my son, give me the lamp and lighten thyself; maybe it is that which hindereth thee." "Nay, O my uncle," answered Alaeddin, "the lamp hindereth me nought; but do thou give me thy hand and when I am up, I will give thee the lamp." The enchanter, who wanted the lamp and that only, fell to urging Alaeddin to give it him; but the latter, having wrapped it within his clothes, with purses of jewel-fruits atop of it, could not reach it with his hand, so he might give it him. The Maugrabin was instant with him to give him the lamp and was like to lose his wits for rage, seeing he attained not his object, albeit Alaeddin still promised him that he would give it him as soon as he was forth of the vault, [and that] without lying thought or ill intent. Then, when he saw that Alaeddin would not give it him, he was angry with an exceeding anger and abandoning all hope of the lamp, conjured and enchanted and cast perfumes into the midst of the fire; whereupon the slab immediately turned over and shut of itself by the might of his enchantments; the earth covered it like as it was before and Alaeddin abode under the ground, unable to come forth.

Thus the enchanter — forasmuch as he was a stranger and no uncle of Alaeddin, as he said, but had counterfeited himself and avouched leasing, so he might get the lamp by means of the lad, unto whom that treasure was fortuned by the stars-shut up the earth upon him and left him to die of hunger. Now this accursed Maugrabin wizard was from the city of Africa in Hither Barbary and had from his childhood been

addicted to magic and all the occult arts, for which the city in question is renowned. He ceased not from his tenderest years to study and learn in his native land Africa till he became versed in all sciences, and of the much skill and proficiency which he acquired, by dint of study and application for the space of forty years, in the matter of incantations and conjurations, it was discovered to him, one day of the days, that among the uttermost of the cities of China was a city called El Kelaas and in this city a vast treasure, the like whereof no king of the kings of the world ever possessed; but the rarest [was] that in this treasure [was] a wonderful lamp, whereat if one should come, there might no man be found on earth richer than he, whether in might or in wealth, nor might the greatest king in the world avail unto aught of the riches of this lamp and its puissance and virtue. Moreover he saw that this treasure was to be achieved by means of a lad of mean birth, by name Alaeddin, who was of the city aforesaid, and that it was eath to take and unarduous: so he tarried not, but equipped himself forthright for the voyage to China, as we have said, and did that which he did with Alaeddin, thinking to come by the lamp. But his endeavour was baffled and his expectation baulked and his toil wasted in vain; whereupon he sought to kill Alaeddin and closed up the earth upon him by his sorcery, so he might die (and the live hath no slayer); moreover, he purposed by this that Alaeddin should not come forth and that the lamp should not be brought up from under the earth. Then he went his ways and returned to his country Africa, woeful and despairing of his hope.

So much for the enchanter and as for what came of Alaeddin, after the earth closed over him, he fell to calling upon the Maugrabin, whom he thought his uncle, to give him his hand, so he might come forth the underground to the surface of the earth; but, when he found that none returned him an answer, he was ware of the cheat which the Maugrabin had put upon him and knew that he was none of his uncle, but a liar and a sorcerer. Therewith he despaired of his life and knew, to his woe, that there was no more going forth for him upon the face of the earth; so he fell to weeping and lamenting over that which had befallen him. Then, after a little, he arose and went down, that he might see if God the Most High had vouchsafed him a door whereby he might go forth; and he went seeking right and left, but saw nought save darkness and four walls shut upon him; for that the Maugrabin sorcerer had by his enchantments locked all the doors and had even shut up the garden, so he might leave him no door whereby he should come forth upon the face of the earth and so hasten his death upon him. Alaeddin's weeping redoubled and his lamentation waxed when he saw all the doors shut and eke the garden, for that he thought to solace himself with them a little; but he found them locked, so he fell to crying out and weeping, as he whose hope is cut off, and returning, sat down upon the steps of the stair whereby he had entered the vault, weeping and wailing; and indeed he had lost hope.

But it is a small matter for God (extolled be His perfection and exalted be He) whenas He willeth a thing, to say to it "Be," and it is; for that He createth relief out of the midst of stress; by token that, when the Maugrabin enchanter sent Alaeddin down into the vault, he gave him a ring and put it on his finger, saying, "This ring will deliver thee from all stress, an thou be in calamities or vicissitudes, and will remove from thee troubles; yea, it will be thy helper whereassoever thou art;" and this was by the foreordinance of God the Most High, so it might be the means of Alaeddin's

deliverance. So, as he sat weeping and bewailing his case and indeed his hope was cut off of life and despair was heavy upon him, he fell, of the excess of his anguish, to wringing his hands, after the wont of the woeful; then, raising them [to heaven], he made supplication to God, saying, "I testify that there is no God but Thou alone, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Conquering, the Giver of Life and Death, Creator and Accomplisher of necessities, Resolver of difficulties and perplexities and Dispeller thereof, Thou my sufficiency, Thou the most excellent Guardian, and I testify that Mohammed is Thy servant and Thine apostle. O my God, I conjure Thee, by his glory with Thee, deliver me from my extremity."

Whilst he was thus supplicating God and wringing his hands in the excess of his affliction for that which had befallen him of calamity, he chanced to rub upon the ring, and immediately, behold, a genie rose up before him and said to him, "Here am I; thy slave is before thee. Seek whatsoever thou wilt, for that I am his slave who hath the ring in hand, the ring of my lord." Alaeddin looked and saw a Marid, as he were of the Jinn of our lord Solomon, standing before him, and shuddered at his frightful aspect; but, when he heard the genie say to him, "Seek whatsoever thou wilt, for that I am thy slave, since the ring of my lord is on thy hand," he took heart and bethought him of the Maugrabin's speech to him, whenas he gave him the ring. So he rejoiced exceedingly and took courage and said to him, "O slave of the lord of the ring, I will of thee that thou bring me out upon the face of the earth." Hardly had he made an end of that his speech when, behold, the earth opened and he found himself without, at the door of the treasure, to wit, upon the surface of the earth.

Now, he had been three days under the earth, sitting in the treasure in the dark; so, when the light of day smote on his face and the rays of the sun, he might not unclose his eyes, but took to opening them little by little and shutting them again till they became stronger and grew used to the light and were cleared of the darkness. Then, seeing himself upon the surface of the earth, he rejoiced exceedingly, but marvelled to find himself overagainst the entrance of the treasure, whereby he went down, whenas the Maugrabin enchanter opened it; and now the stone was shut down and the earth levelled, nor was there any sign therein of a door. So he redoubled in wonderment and thought himself otherwhere; nor was he assured that he was in the very place, till he saw whereas they had kindled the fire of sticks and brushwood and whereas the Maugrabin enchanter had made his fumigations and conjurations. Then he turned right and left and saw the gardens afar off and looked at the way and knew it for that by which they had come. So he gave thanks to God the Most High, who had brought him out on the earth's face and had delivered him from death, after he had given up hope of life. Then he arose and fared homeward, by the way which he knew, till he came to the city and entering, betook himself to their house and went in to his mother. When he saw her, he fell down before her, of the greatness of the joy which possessed him for his deliverance, and swooned away for the affright and the weariness which he had suffered, more by token that he was weak with hunger.

Now his mother had been woebegone since he left her and sat wailing and weeping for him; so, when she saw him come in to her, she rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy, but grief overwhelmed her, whenas she saw him fall aswoon upon the earth. However, she wasted no time in vain lamentation, but hastened to sprinkle water

on his face and sought of her neighbours somewhat of perfumes, to which she made him smell. When he was a little recovered, he prayed her bring him somewhat to eat, saying to her, "O my mother, these three days past I have eaten nothing." So she arose and setting before him that which she had ready, said to him, "Rise, O my son, eat and restore thyself; and when thou art rested, tell me what hath happened to thee and what calamity hath befallen thee. I will not question thee now, because thou art weary." So, when he had eaten and drunken and had refreshed himself and was rested and restored, he said to her, "Alack, mother mine, I have a sore grief against thee in that thou leftest me to yonder accursed man, who strove for my destruction. Indeed, he sought to kill me; nay, I saw death face to face from that accursed wretch, whom thou deemedst mine uncle, and but for God the Most High, who delivered me from him, [I had perished]. Marry, both I and thou, O my mother, suffered ourselves to be deluded by him after the measure of that which the accursed promised to do with me of good and of the love which he professed for me. Know, then, O my mother, that this man is an accursed Maugrabin enchanter, a liar, a deceiver, an impostor and a hypocrite; methinketh the devils that be under the earth are not his match, may God put him to shame in every book! Hear, O my mother, what this accursed did; nay, all I shall tell thee is truth and soothfastness. Do but see the villain's duplicity; bethink thee of the promises he made me that he would do me all manner of good and the love he professed to me, and how he did all this that he might accomplish his purpose; nay, his intent was to kill me, and praised be God for my deliverance! Hearken, O my mother, and learn what this accursed one did."

Then he told her all that had befallen him from the time of his leaving her, weeping the while for excess of joy; how the Maugrabin brought him to the hill, wherein was the treasure, and how he conjured and fumigated. "And indeed. O my mother," said he, "there overcame me exceeding fear, whenas the hill clove in sunder and the earth opened before me by his enchantments; and I quaked with terror at the voice of the thunder which I heard and the darkness which befell of his spells and fumigations, and of my dismay at these portents, I would have fled. When he saw me offer to flee, he reviled me and smote me, dealing me a buffet which caused me swoon for pain but, inasmuch as the treasure was opened and he could not go down into it himself, seeing he had opened it by my means and that it was in name and not for him, he knew, being a foul sorcerer, that it might [only] be achieved through me and that this adventure was [reserved] for me. Accordingly he applied himself to make his peace with me, that he might send me down into the treasure, now it was opened, and attain his object by my means; and when he sent me down, he gave me a ring, which he had on his hand, and put it on my finger. So I descended into the treasure and found four chambers, all full of gold and silver and the like; but this all was nothing and the accursed one charged me take nought thereof. Thence I entered a magnificent garden, all full of high trees, whose fruits ravished the wits, O my mother, for that they were all of various-coloured crystal, and I fared on till I came to the pavilion wherein was this lamp; whereupon I took it forthright and quenching it, poured out that which was therein."

[So saying,] he pulled out the lamp from his sleeve and showed it to his mother. Moreover, he showed her the jewels which he had brought from the garden. Now there

were two great purses full of these jewels, whereof not one was to be found with the kings of mankind; and Alaeddin knew not their value, but thought that they were glass or crystal. "Then, O my mother," continued he, "after I had fetched the lamp and had gone forth [the garden] and came to the door of the treasure, I cried out to the accursed Maugrabin, who feigned himself my uncle, to give me his hand and pull me up, for I was laden with things which weighed me down, so that it was not possible for me to mount alone. However, he would not give me his hand, but said to me, 'Reach me the lamp that is with thee, and after I will give thee my hand and pull thee up.' I, seeing that I had put the lamp within my sleeve and the purses atop of it, could not reach it to give it to him and said to him, 'O my-uncle, I cannot give thee the lamp. When I come up, I will give it to thee.' But he would not help me up; nay, he would e'en have the lamp, and his intent was to take it from me and turn back the earth over me and destroy me, even as he did with me in the end. This, then, O my mother, was what befell me from that foul wizard." And he told her all that had passed between them from first to last and fell to reviling the Maugrabin with all rancour and heat of heart, saying, "Out on this accursed one, this foul sorcerer, this hard-hearted oppressor, this inhuman, perfidious, hypocritical villain, lacking all mercy and ruth!"

When Alaeddin's mother heard her son's speech and that which the accursed Maugrabin did with him, she said to him, "Yea, verily, O my son, he is a misbeliever and a hypocrite, who destroyeth folk with his sorcery; but glory to God the Most High, who hath delivered thee from the perfidy and guile of this accursed sorcerer, of whom I thought that he was in very deed thine uncle." Now, Alaeddin had passed three days without sleep and found himself drowsy; so he [withdrew to his chamber and] slept. His mother did likewise and Alaeddin ceased not to sleep till next day, near noontide, when he awoke and immediately sought somewhat to eat, for that he was anhungred; and his mother said to him, "O my son, I have nought to give thee to eat, for that all I had by me thou atest yesterday. But wait awhile; I have here a little yarn by me and I am going down to the market, so I may sell it and buy thee withal somewhat thou mayst eat." "O my mother," rejoined Alaeddin, "keep the yarn and sell it not; but give me the lamp which I brought home, so I may arise and sell it and with its price buy somewhat we may eat. Methinketh it will fetch more than the yarn." So she arose and fetched the lamp; but, finding it exceeding dirty, she said to him, "O my son, this lamp is dirty, and if we wash it and furbish it, it will sell for a better price." Accordingly she took a little sand and fell to scouring the lamp withal; but scarce had she begun to rub it when there appeared to her one of the Jinn, foul of favour and monstrous of make as he were of the giants, and said to her, "Say what thou wilt of me. Here am I, thy slave and the slave of whoso hath in his hand the lamp; and not I alone, but all the slaves of the wonderful lamp that is in thy hand." When she saw his frightful aspect, she trembled and fear get hold upon her and her tongue was tied, nor could she return an answer, for that she was not used to look upon apparitions like unto this; so she fell down aswoon of her terror.

Now Alaeddin her son was standing afar off and he had seen the slave of the ring which he had rubbed in the treasure; so, when he heard the genie's speech to his mother, he hastened to take the lamp from her hand and said to him, "O slave of the lamp, I am hungry; my will is that thou bring me somewhat I may eat, and be it

somewhat good past conceit." The genie was absent the twinkling of an eye and [returning,] brought him a great costly tray of sheer silver, whereon were twelve platters of various kinds and colours of rich meats and two silver cups and two flagons of clarified old wine and bread whiter than snow; all which he set before him and disappeared. So Alaeddin arose and sprinkled rosewater on his mother's face and made her smell to strong perfumes; whereupon she revived and he said to her, "Rise, O my mother, so we may eat of this food that God the Most High hath vouchsafed us." When she saw the great silver tray, she marvelled and said to Alaeddin, "O my son, who is the generous, the bountiful one that hath sought out our hunger and our poverty? Indeed, we are beholden to him. Apparently the Sultan hath heard of our case and our wretchedness and hath sent us this tray." "O my mother," answered Alaeddin, "this is no time for questioning; rise, so we may eat, for we are anhungred."

So they arose and sitting down to the tray, proceeded to eat, whilst Alaeddin's mother tasted food such as she had never in all her life eaten. And they ate diligently with all appetite, for stress of hunger, more by token that the food [was such as] is given to kings, nor knew they if the tray were precious or not, for that never in their lives had they seen the like of these things. When they had made an end of eating and were full (and there was left them, over and above what sufficed them, [enough] for the evening-meal and for the next day also), they arose and washing their hands, sat down to talk; whereupon Alaeddin's mother turned to her son and said to him, "O my son, tell me what befell of the genie, now that, praised be God, we have eaten of His bounty and are satisfied and thou hast no pretext for saying to me, 'I am anhungred.'" So he told her all that had passed between himself and the genie, whenas she fell down aswoon of her affright; whereat exceeding wonderment took her and she said to him, "It is true, then, that the Jinn appear to the sons of Adam, though I, O my son, in all my days, I have never seen them, and methinketh this is he who delivered thee, whenas thou west in the treasure." "Nay, O my mother," answered he, "this was not he; he who appeared to thee is the slave of the lamp." "How so, O my son?" asked she; and he said, "This slave is other of make than that. That was the servant of the ring and this thou sawest is the slave of the lamp which was in thy hand." When his mother heard this, "Well, well!" cried she. "Then the accursed who appeared to me and came nigh to kill me for affright is of the lamp?" "Ay is he," answered Alaeddin; and she said to him, "I conjure thee, O my son, by the milk thou suckedst of me, that thou cast away from thee both lamp and ring, for that they will be to us a cause of exceeding fear and I could not endure to see them a second time; nay, their commerce is forbidden unto us, for that the prophet (whom God bless and keep) warneth us against them." "O my mother," answered Alaeddin, "thy speech is on my head and eyes; but, as for this that thou sayest, it may not be that I should cast away either the lamp or the ring; nay, thou seest that which it did with us of good, whenas we were anhungred, and know, O my mother, that the lying Maugrabin enchanter, what time I went down into the treasure, sought nought of gold nor of silver, whereof the four places were full, but charged me bring him the lamp and that only, for that he knew the greatness of its virtues; and except he knew it to be exceeding of might, he had not toiled and travailed and come from his land to this in quest of it, nor had he shut the treasure on me, whenas he failed of the lamp, seeing I gave it him not. Wherefore, O my mother, it behoveth us keep this lamp and guard it with all care, for that this is our support and this it is shall

enrich us; and it behoveth us show it not unto any. On like wise, as for the ring, it may not be that I should put it off from my finger, forasmuch as, but for this ring, thou hadst not seen me again on life; nay, I had died under the earth within the treasure; so how can I put it off from my hand and who knoweth what may happen to me in time to come of error or calamity or shift of the shifts of mischance, from which the ring might deliver me? However, of regard for thy wish, I will lay up the lamp and let thee not see it henceforth." When his mother heard his words and pondered them, she saw them to be just and true and said to him, "O my son, do what thou wilt. For my part, I wish never to see them nor ever again to behold that loathsome aspect which I saw [but now]."

Alaeddin and his mother abode two days eating of the food which the genie had brought, and when it was finished and he knew that there was left them nothing to eat, he arose and taking a platter of those which the slave had brought on the tray (now they were of fine gold, but Alaeddin knew it not) went with it to the market, where a Jew, a man viler than devils themselves, accosted him and he gave him the platter. When the Jew saw it, he took Alaeddin aside, so none might see him, and examining the platter, found it of fine gold, but knew not if Alaeddin was ware of its worth or if he was ignorant thereof; so he said to him, "How much, O my lord, for this platter?" And Alaeddin answered him, saying, "Thou knowest how much it is worth." The Jew was perplexed how much he should give Alaeddin for the platter, by reason of his having made him an adroit answer, and bethought himself to give him little, but feared lest he should be aware of its value and debated with himself if he should give him much. Then said he in himself, "Most like he knoweth not its value;" so he brought out of his pocket a gold diner and gave it to him. When Alaeddin saw the diner in his hand, he took it and went off in haste, whereby the Jew knew that the lad was unaware of the value of the plate and repented him sore that he had given him a gold diner and not a carat of three-score:

Meanwhile Alaeddin tarried not, but went forthright to the baker and bought of him bread and changed the diner; then, returning to his mother, he gave her the bread and the rest of the money and said to her, "O my mother, go and buy us what we need." So she arose and going to the market, bought all that they needed and they ate and were cheered. Then, whenassoever the price of a platter was spent, Alaeddin would take another and carry it to the Jew; on which wise the accursed Jew bought them all of him for a small matter and would fain also have reduced the price; but, since he had given him a diner the first time, he feared to offer him less, lest the lad should go and sell to another and he lose that excessive profit. Accordingly, Alaeddin ceased not to sell him platter after platter till he had sold them all and there was left him only the tray whereon they had been; then, for that it was big and heavy, he went and fetched the Jew to the house and brought out to him the tray. When he saw it and noted its bigness, he gave Alaeddin ten diners, which he took, and the Jew went his way.

Alaeddin and his mother lived upon the ten diners till they came to an end; then he arose and bringing out the lamp, rubbed it, whereupon the slave of the lamp, to wit, the genie whom he had seen before, appeared to him and said to him, "Seek what thou wilt, O my lord, for that I am thy slave and the slave of whoso hath with him the lamp." Quoth Alaeddin, "It is my will that thou bring me a tray of food like unto that

which thou broughtest me erewhen, for that I am hungry;" and the slave brought him, in the twinkling of an eye, a tray like unto that which he had brought him before, and on it twelve magnificent platters full of rich meats, together with flagons of clarified wine and bread of the finest. Now Alaeddin's mother, when she knew that her son was minded to rub the lamp, had gone out, so she might not see the genie again; but, after a little, she came in to him and seeing the tray full of silver platters, whilst the whole house reeked with the fragrance of the rich meats, marvelled and rejoiced; and Alaeddin said to her, "O my mother, thou badest me throw away the lamp. See now its uses." "O my son," answered she, "may God prosper him; but fain would I not see him." Then they sat down to the tray and ate and drank till they were satisfied, laying up that which remained with them against the morrow.

Then, when that which was with them of food was finished, Alaeddin arose and taking one of the platters under his clothes, went in quest of the Jew, so he might sell it to him; but, as chance willed it, he passed by the shop of a goldsmith, an honest, pious man, who feared God. When the latter saw Alaeddin, he accosted him and said to him, "O my son, what wilt thou? This many a time have I seen thee pass hereby and betake thyself to such an one, a Jew, and I have seen thee give him certain things. Nay, methinketh even now thou hast somewhat with thee and art seeking him, so thou mayst sell it to him. But thou knowest not, O my son, that the good of the Muslims, believers in the unity of God the Most High, is lawful spoil in the eyes of Jews; nay, they still cheat the Muslims and especially this accursed one with whom thou dealest and into whose hands thou hast fallen. Wherefore, O my son, an thou have with thee aught thou wouldst sell, show it to me and fear nothing, for that, by the truth of God the Most High, I will give thee its price." Accordingly, Alaeddin brought out the platter to the old man, who took it and weighing it in his scales, said to him, "Was it the like of this thou usest to sell to the Jew?" "Ay," replied Alaeddin, "its like and its brother." "And how much," asked the goldsmith, "useth he to give thee to its price?" And Alaeddin said, "He useth to give me a diner."

When the goldsmith heard this, "Out on this accursed one," cried he, "who fleeceth the servants of God the Most High!" Then he looked at Alaeddin and said to him, "O my son, this Jew is a cheat, who hath cheated thee and laughed at thee, for that the silver of this thy platter is pure and fine; and I have weighed it and find its worth threescore diners and ten; so, an it please thee take its price, take [it]." Accordingly, he counted out to him seventy diners and he took them and thanked him for his kindness, in that he had shown him the Jew's trickery. Thenceforward, whenassoever the price of one platter was spent, he would carry another to the old goldsmith, and on this wise he and his mother increased in substance; but they ceased not to live at their sufficiency, midwise [betwixt rich and poor], without excessive spending or squandering. As for Alaeddin, he left idleness and the commerce of striplings and took to consorting with grown men; nay, he would go every day to the market of the merchants and sit with the great and the small of them and question of the ways and fashions of commerce and the prices of articles of merchandise and otherwhat. He used also to go to the market of the goldsmiths and the market of the jewellers, and there he would sit and look upon the different kinds of jewels and see them bought and sold; whereby he became aware that the fruits of the trees, wherewith

he had filled the purses, whenas he was in the treasure, were neither glass nor crystal, but jewels, and knew that he had happened upon great wealth, such as kings might nowise compass. Moreover, he noted all the jewels that were in the jewellers' market, but saw not [among] the biggest [of them] one to match with the smallest of those he had at home.

He ceased not to go daily to the market of the jewellers and to clap up acquaintance with the folk, making friends with them and questioning them of buying and selling and giving and taking and dear and cheap, till, one day of the days, he arose in the morning and donning his clothes, went forth, intending, as of wont, for the jewellers' market; but, as he went, he heard the crier proclaiming aloud on this wise, "By commandment of the Lord of Beneficence, the king of the age and monarch of the time and the tide, let all the folk shut their shops and stores and enter their houses, for that the Lady Bedrulbudour, daughter of the Sultan, purposeth to go to the bath, and whoso transgresseth the commandment, his punishment shall be death and his blood be on his own head." When Alaeddin heard this proclamation, he longed to look upon the Sultan's daughter and said in himself, "All the folk talk of her grace and goodliness, and the uttermost of my desire is to see her." So he cast about for a device how he might contrive to see the Lady Bedrulbudour and him-seemed he were best stand behind the door of the bath, that he might see her face, as she entered. Accordingly he betook himself to the bath, awhile in advance, and posted himself behind the door, whereas none of the folk might see him.

Presently, the Sultan's daughter came forth and went round about the city and its thoroughfares and diverted herself by viewing it; then she repaired to the bath and when she came thither, she lifted her face-veil, as she entered; whereupon her face shone out, as it were the resplendent sun or a precious pearl, and she was as saith of her one of her describers:

Who sprinkled the kohl of enchantment upon her eyes
And gathered the bloom of the rose from her cheeks, fruit-wise?
And who was it let down the curtained night of her hair
And eke through its glooms made the light of her forehead rise?

When she raised the veil from her face and Alaeddin saw her, he said, "Verily, her fashion glorifieth the Great Creator and extolled be the perfection of Him who made her and graced her with this beauty and goodliness!" And his back was cloven in sunder, when he saw her; his thought was confounded and his understanding dazed and the love of her gat hold upon his whole heart; so he turned back and returning home, went in to his mother, like one distraught. She bespoke him and he answered her neither yea nor nay; then she brought him the morning-meal, as he abode on this wise, and said to him, "O my son, what hath betided thee? Doth there ail thee aught? Tell me what hath befallen thee, for that, against thy wont, I bespeak thee and thou answerest me not."

Now Alaeddin had been used to think that women were all like his mother and he had heard of the beauty of the Lady Bedrulbudour, daughter of the Sultan, but had not known what beauty and grace were; so he turned to his mother and said to her, "Leave me;" but she was instant with him to come and eat. Accordingly, he came forward and

ate a little; then, rising, he threw himself on his bed and lay musing till break of morn; and on this wise he abode all next day. His mother was perplexed at his case, unknowing what had befallen him, and bethought herself that belike he was sick; so she came up to him and questioned him, saying, "O my son, an thou feel aught of pain or otherwhat, tell me, that I may go fetch thee a physician, more by token there is presently in the city a physician from the land of the Arabs, whom the Sultan hath sent to bring hither, and report saith of him that he is exceeding skilful; so [tell me] if thou art sick, that I may go and call him to thee."

When Alaeddin heard his mother offer to fetch him the physician, he said to her, "O my mother, I am well and not sick, but I had thought that women were all like unto thee. However, yesterday, I saw the Lady Bedrulbudour, the Sultan's daughter, as she went to the bath;" and he told her all that had happened to him, adding, "And most like thou heardest the crier proclaiming that none should open his shop nor stand in the road, so the Lady Bedrulbudour might pass to the bath; but I saw her even as she is, for that, when she came to the door of the bath, she lifted her veil, and when I noted her favour and viewed that noble form of hers, there befell me, O my mother, a passion of yearning for love of her and desire of her usurped mine every part; nor can I ever more have ease, except I get her, and I purpose, therefore, to demand her of the Sultan her father in the way of law and righteousness."

When Alaeddin's mother heard her son's speech, she thought little of his wit and said to him, "O my son, the name of God encompass thee! Meseemeth thou hast lost thy wit; return to thy senses, O my son, and be not like the madmen!" "Nay, O my mother," replied he, "I have not lost my wits nor am I mad; and this thy speech shall not change that which is in my mind, nor is rest possible to me except I get the darling of my heart, the lovely Lady Bedrulbudour. And my intent is to demand her of her father the Sultan." So she said to him, "O my son, my life upon thee, speak not thus, lest one hear thee and say of thee that thou art mad. Put away from thee this extravagance: who shall undertake an affair like this and demand it of the Sultan? Meknoweth not how thou wilt do to make this request of the Sultan, and if thou speak sooth, by whom wilt thou make it?" "O my mother," rejoined Alaeddin, "by whom [should I make] a request like this, when thou art at hand, and whom have I trustier than thyself? Wherefore my intent is that thou shalt make this request for me." "O my son," quoth she, "God deliver me from this! What, have I lost my wits like thee? Put away this thought from thy mind and bethink thee who thou art, O my son, — the son of a tailor, the poorest and least of the tailors in this city, and I also am thy mother and my folk are exceeding poor; so how wilt thou dare to demand the Sultan's daughter, whom her father would not vouchsafe to marry with kings' sons and Sultans, except they were his peers in puissance and rank and noblesse; nay, were they one degree less than he, he would not give them his daughter."

Alaeddin waited till his mother had made an end of her speech and said to her, "O my mother, all that thou thinkest I know; marry, I know full well that I am the son of poor folk, nor may all this thy talk anywise avail to move me from my purpose; but I beseech thee, an I be thy very son and thou love me, do me this kindness; else wilt thou lose me, for death hasteneth upon me, an I attain not my wish of the beloved of my heart. In any case, O my mother, I am thy son." When his mother heard his

speech, she wept of her concern for him and said to him, "Yes, O my son, I am thy mother and thou art my son and the darling of my heart; I have none other than thee and the extreme of my desire is to rejoice in thee and marry thee. So, an thou wilt, I will seek thee a bride of our own rank. But suppose [I do this], they [will] ask at once an thou have craft or land or trade or garden, so thou mayst live, and what shall I answer them. And if I cannot answer poor folk like ourselves, how, O my son, shall I dare to seek the King's daughter of China, who hath none before him and none after him? Wherefore do thou ponder this matter in thine understanding. And who seeketh her? The son of a tailor. Indeed, I know that, an I speak of this, it will but be for the increase of our ill luck, for that this affair will bring us in great danger with the Sultan and belike there will be death therein for thee and for me. As for me, how can I adventure upon this danger and this effrontery? Moreover, O my son, on what wise shall I demand thee his daughter of the Sultan and how shall I avail to go in to him? Nay, if they question me, what shall I answer them? Most like they will deem me a madwoman. And suppose I gain admission to the presence, what shall I take by way of offering to the Sultan's highness? It is true, O my son, that the Sultan is clement and rejecteth none that cometh to him for protection or craveth a boon of him, for that he is bountiful and beneficent unto all, great and small; but he bestoweth his favours upon those who are deserving thereof or who have done some feat of arms before him or have wrought for the service or defence of the realm; and thou, O my son, tell me, what hast thou done for the Sultan or the realm, that thou shouldst merit of him this boon? Again, this that thou cravest is beyond thy condition; so it cannot be that the king will grant thee that which thou seekest. Moreover, whoso presenteth himself before the Sultan and craveth favours of him, it behoveth him take in his hand somewhat that sorteth with the royal dignity; and as I said to thee, how canst thou presume to present thyself before the Sultan and seek of him his daughter, without aught thou mayst proffer him of that which sorteth with his rank?"

"O my mother," replied Alaeddin, "thou speakest justly and deemest that which is true, and it behoveth me consider all that whereof thou mindest me; but, O my mother, the love of the Sultan's daughter, the Lady Bedrulbudour, hath entered into the innermost of my heart; and there can be no rest for me, except I obtain her. Moreover, thou mindest me of somewhat I had forgotten, and that a thing which emboldeneth me to seek of him his daughter by thee. Thou sayst, O my mother, that I have no gift to present to the Sultan, according to the wont of the folk, whilst in fact I have by me a gift and an offering, the like whereof methinketh no king ever possessed, no, nor aught to match therewith; for thou must know, O my mother, that the fruits, which I brought in the purses from the treasure and which I deemed glass or crystal, are very jewels, methinketh all the kings of the world may not compass the least of them, and I, of my companying with the jewellers, know that they are precious stones. Wherefore, an thou please, have the goodness to rise and bring me such a China dish which we have by us, that I may fill it with these jewels, and thou shalt take it as a present to the Sultan. By this means I am assured that the thing will be easy to thee, and do thou stand before the Sultan and seek of him my desire; but, O my mother, an thou refuse to further me with thine endeavour for the attainment of my wish of the Lady Bedrulbudour, know that I am a dead man. Be not concerned for the gift, for these be exceeding precious jewels, and know, O my mother, that I have gone many a

time to the market of the jewellers and have seen them sell jewels, that had not an hundredth part of the beauty of these of ours, at exceeding high prices such as man's wit cannot conceive. When, therefore, I saw this, I said [in myself], 'Verily, the jewels that are with us are exceeding precious.' So now, O my mother, arise, as I bade thee, and fetch me the China dish whereof I bespoke thee, that we may range of these jewels therein and see how they show."

Accordingly, she arose and brought the China dish, saying in herself, "Let us see if my son's speech be true concerning these jewels or not." So she set the dish before Alaeddin and he brought out jewels of all kinds from the purses and proceeded to range them in the dish till he filled it. When it was full, his mother looked at the dish, but could not gaze fixedly thereon, for the radiance of the jewels and their lustre and the excess of their flashing; so she shut her eyes and her wit was confounded at them; yet was she not certified that their value was in very deed so great as her son had said, but bethought her that his speech might be true in that their like was not found with kings. Then Alaeddin turned to her and said, "See, O my mother, this is a magnificent present for the Sultan and I am assured that thou wilt get of him exceeding honour and that he will receive thee with all consideration. And now, O my mother, there remaineth to thee no excuse; so be good enough to take this dish and go with it to the palace."

"O my son," replied she, "true it is that the present is exceedingly costly and precious and as thou sayest, none hath the like thereof; but who shall dare to come forward and seek of the Sultan his daughter Bedrulbudour? Nay, I dare not adventure myself and say to him, 'I want thy daughter,' whenas he asketh me, 'What wouldst thou?' Marry, O my son,, my tongue will be tied. And grant that Allah make [the thing] possible and I take courage and say to him, 'I desire to ally myself to thee by [marrying] thy daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour with my son Alaeddin,' they will straightway deem me mad and will put me out with ignominy and reproach; nay, I need not tell thee that by this I shall fall into danger of death, and not I only, but thou also. Withal, O my son, of regard for thy wish, needs must I take courage and go; but, O my son, if the King receive me and honour me for the gift's sake and I seek of him that which thou wilt in the matter of marrying his daughter and he ask me, after the wont of the folk, what are thy possessions and thy revenues, what shall I say to him? And most like, O my son, he will ask me of this ere he ask me of thyself." And Alaeddin said to her, "Nay, it cannot be that the Sultan will ask this, whenas he seeth the jewels and their magnificence, and it booteth not to think of a thing that will not happen. Do thou but rise and seek me his daughter of him and proffer him these jewels and sit not magnifying the affair in thy thought beforehand. Moreover, O my mother, thou knowest of the lamp which is with me and which presently provideth for our livelihood; nay, all that I seek of it it will bring me, and I trust by its means I shall know how to answer the Sultan, an he ask me of this."

They abode in talk of the matter all that night and when the morning morrowed, Alaeddin's mother arose and fortified her heart, more by token that her son expounded to her somewhat of the properties of the lamp and its uses, in that it would bring them all they sought. But, when he saw that she heartened herself for that which he set forth to her of its virtues, he feared lest she should talk of this to the folk, so he said to her,

"O my mother, beware lest thou bespeak any of the lamp and its uses, for that this is our fortune; be careful and exceed not in speech thereof to any one, lest we lose it and lose this our present prosperity, for that it is from it." "Have no fear for that, O my son," answered she and rising, took the dish wherein were the jewels and wrapping it in a fine handkerchief, went forth betimes, so she might reach the Divan and enter, ere it became crowded. When she came to the palace, the Divan was not yet assembled and she saw the Vizier and certain of the chiefs of the state entering the presence-chamber. After a while, the Divan being complete with the Viziers and the chiefs of the state and officers and Amirs and grandees, the Sultan appeared and the Viziers and other the officials and notables ranged themselves before him, whilst he sat down on the throne of his kingship and all who were present in the Divan stood before him, with hands clasped behind them, awaiting his commandment to sit. So he bade them be seated and they all sat down, each in his several room; then the petitioners presented themselves before the Sultan and each affair was decided in its course, till the Divan came to an end, when the King rose and entered the palace and each went his way.

As for Alaeddin's mother, having come before all, she found room to enter, but withal none bespoke her, so he should bring her in before the Sultan; wherefore she ceased not standing till the Divan broke up and the Sultan rose and entered the palace and all went their ways. When she saw the Sultan rise from his throne and enter the harem, she took her way homeward and returning on her steps, entered her house. Alaeddin, seeing her with the dish in her hand, knew that most like some mischance had betided her, but cared not to question her till she entered and setting down the dish, told him what had passed and finally said to him, "God be praised, O my son, I mustered courage to find myself a place in the Divan, albeit I could not win to speak with the Sultan to day; but to-morrow, an it please God the Most High, I will bespeak him. To-day there were many other folk, like myself, unable to get speech of the Sultan; but be easy, O my son; to-morrow I will without fail bespeak him on thy behalf, and what happened not shall happen." When Alaeddin heard his mother's words, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy, albeit, of the excess of his love and longing for the Lady Bedrulbudour, he had looked for the matter to be accomplished then and there; nevertheless, he used patience.

They slept that night and on the morrow Alaeddin's mother arose and went with the dish to the Sultan's Divan, but found it closed; so she asked the folk and they said to her, "The Sultan holdeth a Divan but thrice a week;" wherefore she was compelled to return home. Then she proceeded to go every day, and whenas she found the Divan open, she would stand before the door, till it broke up, when she would return home; and whiles she went and found the Divan closed. On this wise she abode a week's space and the Sultan saw her at each Divan; so, when she went on the last day [of the week] and stood, according to her wont, before the Divan, till it was ended, but could not muster courage to enter or say aught, the Sultan arose and entering the harem, turned to his chief Vizier, who was with him, and said to him, "O Vizier, these six or seven days past I have seen yonder old woman come hither at every Divan and I note that she still carrieth somewhat under her veil. Hast thou any knowledge of her, O Vizier, and knowest thou what is her want?" "O our lord the Sultan," replied the Vizier, "verily women are little of wit; and most like this woman cometh to complain to thee of her

husband or one of her folk," The Sultan was not content with the Vizier's reply, but bade him, an she came again to the Divan, bring her before him forthright; whereupon the Vizier laid his hand on his head and answered, "Hearkening and obedience, O our lord the Sultan."

Meanwhile, Alaeddin's mother, albeit she was grown exceeding weary and dejected, yet made light of all weariness, for her son's sake, and continued, as of her wont, to go every court-day and stand in the Divan before the Sultan. Accordingly, one day of the days, she went to the Divan, as of her wont, and stood before the Sultan; and when he saw her, he called his Vizier and said to him, "Yonder is the woman of whom I bespoke thee yesterday; bring her now before me, so I may see what her suit is and accomplish unto her her occasion." So the Vizier arose forthright and let bring Alaeddin's mother in before the Sultan. When she came into the latter's presence, she made her obeisance to him and did him reverence, wishing him glory and continuance and eternity of prosperity and kissing the ground before him. Then said he to her, "O woman, I see thee come every day to the Divan and thou speakest not of aught. Tell me an thou have a want, that I may accomplish it unto thee;" whereupon she kissed the earth a second time and called down blessings upon him, then answered, "Ay, O King of the Age, as thy head liveth, I have indeed a want; but before all things do thou give me thine assurance, so I may make bold to prefer my suit to the hearing of our lord the Sultan, for that belike Thy Grace will find it a strange one."

The Sultan, that he might learn what her suit was and for that he was of his nature exceeding clement, gave her his assurance and bidding all who were with him go out forthright, abode alone [with her], he and the Grand Vizier. Then he turned to her and said, "Tell me thy suit, and the assurance of God the Most High be upon thee." Quoth she, "O King of the Age, I wish thy pardon also." And he said to her, "God pardon thee!" Then said she to him, "O our lord the Sultan, I have a son, whose name is Alaeddin, and one day of the days he heard the crier proclaim that none should open his shop nor show himself in the thoroughfares of the city, for that the Lady Bedrulbudour, the daughter of our lord the Sultan, was going to the bath. When my son heard this, he wished to see her; so he hid himself in a place, whence he might see her well, and this was behind the door of the bath. Accordingly, when she came up, he saw her and viewed her well, beyond his wish; and from that time till now, O King of the Age, life hath not been pleasant to him and he will e'en have me seek her of Thy Grace, so thou mayst marry her with him, and I cannot do away this conceit from his wit, for that the love of her hath gotten possession of his vitals, so that he saith to me, 'Know, O mother mine, that, except I attain my desire, assuredly I am a dead man.' Wherefore I crave Thy Grace's clemency and hope that thou wilt pardon me and my son this effrontery neither be wroth with us therefor."

When the King heard her story, he fell a-laughing, of his clemency, and asked her, "What is that thou hast with thee and what is that bundle?" Whereupon she, seeing that he was not angered at her words, but laughed, opened the handkerchief forthright and proffered him the dish of jewels. When the Sultan saw the jewels (and indeed, whenas she raised the handkerchief from them, the Divan became as it were all illumined with lamp-clusters and candlesticks), he was amazed and confounded at their radiance and fell a-marvelling at their lustre and bigness and beauty; and he said,

"Never saw I the like of these jewels for beauty and bigness and perfection, nor methinketh is one of them found in my treasuries." Then he turned to his Vizier and said to him, "How sayst thou, O Vizier? Sawest thou ever in thy life the like of these magnificent jewels?" "Never, O our lord the Sultan," replied the Vizier, "nor, methinketh, is the least of those which be here found in the treasuries of our lord the King." Quoth the Sultan, "Doth not he who giveth me these jewels deserve to be bridegroom to my daughter Bedrulbudour? Marry, by what I see, meseemeth none is worthier of her than he."

When the Vizier heard the Sultan's words, his tongue was tied for despite and he was overcome with exceeding chagrin, forasmuch as the King had promised him that he would marry his daughter to his son; so, after a little, he said to him, "O King of the age, Thy Grace condescended to promise me that the Lady Bedrulbudour should be my son's; wherefore it behoveth thine exalted highness appoint a delay of three months, and God willing, my son's present shall be greater than this." The King, for all he knew that this was a thing whereto the Vizier might not avail, no, nor the greatest King, nevertheless exercised his clemency and granted him the delay he sought; then, turning to the old woman, he said to her, "Go to thy son and tell him I give him [my] word that my daughter shall be in his name; but needs must I take order for her equipment; wherefore it behoveth him grant us a delay of three months."

Alaeddin's mother took the answer and thanked the Sultan and prayed for him, then went forth and fared homeward in haste, flying of her joy, till she came to the house and entered. Her son saw her laughing-faced and foreboded good news; more by token that she returned forthright and tarried not, as on each day past, neither brought back the dish. Accordingly he asked her and said to her, "God willing, O my mother, thou bringest me good news; the jewels and their value have wrought their work and thou wilt have found acceptance with the Sultan; yea, he will have shown thee favour and given ear unto thy suit." So she told him all that had passed and how the Sultan had received her and had marvelled, both he and his Vizier, at the size and beauty of the jewels, and how he had promised her that [quoth she] "his daughter shall be in thy name. But, O my son, ere he promised me, the Vizier whispered him somewhat, whereupon he appointed me for three months hence; and I am fearful lest the Vizier be a man of evil disposition, who will change the King's mind."

When Alaeddin heard his mother's words and how the Sultan had appointed her for three months [thence], his heart was lightened and he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, "Since the Sultan hath promised for three months [hence], true, it is long, but in any case my joy is great." Then he thanked her for her kindness and the pains she had taken and said to her, "By Allah, O my mother, it is as I were in a tomb and now thou hast raised me up therefrom; and I praise God the Most High, for I am presently certified that there is none richer or happier than I in the world." Then he waited till two of the three months were past, when his mother went out one day of the days, at sundown, to buy oil, and saw the markets closed and the city all decorated and the folk setting candles and flowers in their windows and saw troops, horse and foot, and mounted eunuchs drawn up in state, with cressets and lustres burning. At this wonder took her; he went to an oilman's shop there open and buying oil of him, said to him, "[I conjure thee] by thy life, O uncle, tell me what is toward to-day in this city,

that the folk are making this decoration and the markets [are shut] and the houses all adorned and the troops drawn up in state?" Quoth he, "O woman, methinketh thou art a stranger and art not of this city." "Nay," answered she, "but I am of this city;" and he said to her, "Thou art of this city and knowest not that this is the night of the going in of the Grand Vizier's son to the Lady Bedrulbudour, the Sultan's daughter? Nay, he is presently in the bath and yonder Amirs and troops are drawn up awaiting him, against he come forth, so they may carry him in procession to the palace of the Sultan's daughter."

When Alaeddin's mother heard this, she was troubled and perplexed in her wit how she should do to acquaint her son with this woeful news, for that the poor wretch was counting the hours till the three months should be ended. So she returned home forthright and going in to Alaeddin, said to him, "O my son, I have news to tell thee, but it irketh me for thy chagrin therefrom." Quoth he, "Speak; what is the news?" And she said to him, "The Sultan hath gone from his promise to thee in the matter of his daughter, the Lady Bedrulbudour, for that this very night the Vizier's son goeth in to her; and indeed methought at the time, O my son, the Vizier would change the Sultan's mind, even as I told thee that he bespoke him privily before me." "How knewest thou this," asked Alaeddin, "that the Vizier's son goeth in this night to the Lady Bedrulbudour?" So she told him all she had seen of the decorations in the city, whenas she went to buy the oil, and how the eunuchs and chiefs of the state were drawn up awaiting the Vizier's son, against he should come forth of the bath, for that this was the night of his going in. When Alaeddin heard this, he fell into a fever of chagrin; but presently he bethought him of the lamp and rejoiced and said to his mother, "By thy life, O my mother, methinketh the Vizier's son shall not rejoice in her, as thou deemest. But now leave us be with this talk and go lay us the evening-meal, so we may sup; then, when I shall have passed a while in my chamber, all shall yet be well."

Accordingly, after he had supped, he went into his chamber and locking the door on himself, fetched the lamp and rubbed it; whereupon the genie at once appeared to him and said, "Seek what thou wilt, for I am thy slave and the slave of whoso hath in his hand the lamp, I and all the slaves of the lamp." And Alaeddin said to him, "Harkye, I sought of the Sultan to marry his daughter, and he appointed me for three months' time; however, he abode not by his promise, but gave her to the Vizier's son, and the latter purposeth to go in [to her] this night. Wherefore I do presently command thee, as thou art a loyal servant of the lamp, that this night, whenas thou seest the bride and bridegroom abed together, thou take them up in their bed [and bring them] hither. This is what I seek of thee." "Hearkening and obedience," answered the genie, "and if thou have a service [to require of me] other than this, command me whatsoever thou seekest." And Alaeddin said to him, "I have no present requirement save that whereof I have bespoken thee." So the slave disappeared and Alaeddin returned to finish his supper with his mother.

When he deemed it time for the genie's coming, he arose and entered his chamber; and after a little, the Marid appeared with the bridal pair in their bed; whereat Alaeddin rejoiced with exceeding great joy and said to the slave, "Bear this gallowsbird hence and couch him in the house of easance." The genie accordingly took up the bridegroom and couched him in the draught-house; moreover, ere he left him,

he blew on him a blast wherewith he dried him up, and the Vizier's son abode in woeful case. Then he returned to Alaeddin and said to him, "An thou need otherwhat, tell me." And Alaeddin said to him, "Return in the morning, so thou mayst take them [back] to their place." "Hearkening and obedience," answered the genie and was gone; whereupon Alaeddin arose, — and indeed he had scarce believed that the thing should succeed with him, — and when he saw the Lady Bedrulbudour in his house, he entreated her with respect, albeit he had long burned for love of her, and said to her, "O princess of the fair, think not that I have brought thee hither to soil shine honour. God forbid! Nay, it was that I might not let others enjoy thee, for that thy father the Sultan gave me his word upon thee; so be thou in peace and assurance." As for the princess, when she found herself in that mean dark; house and heard Alaeddin's words, fear and trembling get hold upon her and she was confounded and could return him no answer. Then he arose and putting off his clothes, placed a sword between himself and her and lay down by her side in the bed, without treason; it sufficed him to prevent [the consummation of] her marriage with the Vizier's son. Nevertheless, the Lady Bedrulbudour passed the sorriest of nights, never in her life had she known a worse; whilst the Vizier's son lay in the draught-house and dared not stir for fear of the genie.

When it was morning, the genie presented himself before Alaeddin, without his rubbing the lamp, and said to him, "O my lord, an thou wish aught, command me withal, so I may do it on my head and eyes." And Alaeddin bade him go carry the bride and bridegroom to their own place. The genie did his bidding in the twinkling of an eye and laying the Vizier's son with the Lady Bedrulbudour, took them up and set them down in their place in the palace, without their seeing any one; but they were like to die of fright, when they felt themselves carried from place to place. Hardly had the genie set them down and gone out when the Sultan came to visit his daughter; and when the Vizier's son heard the door open, he straightway sprang out of bed, knowing that none might enter but the Sultan, and donned his clothes, albeit this irked him sore, for that he would fain have warmed himself a little, having had no time [to do so] since he left the draught-house. The Sultan came in to his daughter and kissing her between the eyes, gave her good-morrow and asked her of her bridegroom and if she was content with him; but she returned him no answer and looked at him with a dejected air. He bespoke her several times, but she was silent and answered him not a word; so he went out from her and going in to the Queen, told her what had passed between himself and the Lady Bedrulbudour.

The Queen, so she might not leave the Sultan angry with the Lady Bedrulbudour, said to him, "O King of the Age, this is the wont of most brides, on their wedding-day, to be shamefast and show somewhat of coyness. So be not vexed with her and after a day or two she will return to herself and proceed to speak with the folk; but now, O King of the Age, shame hindereth her from speaking. However, I purpose to go to her and see her." Accordingly she arose and donning her clothes, repaired to her daughter's apartment. Then, going up to her, she gave her good-morrow and kissed her between the eyes; but the Lady Bedrulbudour returned her no manner of answer and the Queen said in herself, "Needs must some strange thing have befallen her, to trouble her thus." So she asked her, saying, "O my daughter, what is the cause of this thy behaviour? Tell

me what aileth thee, that I come to thee and give thee good-morrow and thou returnest me no answer."

The Lady Bedrulbudour raised her head and said to her, "Blame me not, O my mother; indeed, it behoved me receive thee with all reverence and worship, since thou honourest me by coming to me; but I beseech thee hear the cause of this my case and see how this night I have passed hath been for me the sorriest of nights. Hardly had we lain down, O my mother, when one, whose fashion I know not, took up the bed and transported us to a place dark, foul and mean." Then she told her mother the queen all that had betided her that night and how they had taken her bridegroom, leaving her alone, and how after a little there came another youth and lay down in the place of her bridegroom, putting a sword between himself and her; "and in the morning" [quoth she] "he who had brought us thither returned and taking us up, carried us back to our place here: and hardly had he brought us hither and left us when my father the Sultan entered and I had neither heart nor tongue to answer him for stress of fright and trembling which possessed me. And belike my father is vexed with me; wherefore I prithee, O my mother, tell him the cause of this my case, so he be not wroth with me for my failure to answer him neither blame me, but excuse me."

When the queen heard the princess's story, she said to her, "O my daughter, beware of telling this tale before any, lest they say, 'Verily the Sultan's daughter hath lost her wits.' Marry, thou diddest well in that thou acquaintedst not thy father with this; and beware, yea [again I say,] beware, O my daughter, of telling him thereof." "O my mother," rejoined the Lady Bedrulbudour, "indeed, I bespoke thee in sober earnest and have not lost my wits; nay, this is what happened to me, and an thou believe it not from me, ask my bridegroom." Quoth the queen, "Rise, O my daughter, and put away these illusions from thy thought; nay, don thy clothes and see the rejoicing that is toward in the town on thine account and the festivities that they celebrate in the kingdom for thy sake and hear the drums and the singing and look upon the decorations, all in honour of thy nuptials, O my daughter." Accordingly, she summoned the tirewomen, who dressed the Lady Bedrulbudour and busked her; whilst the Queen went in to the Sultan and told him that there had that night betided the princess a dream and illusions, saying, "BIame her not for her failure to answer thee." Moreover, she sent for the Vizier's son privily and questioned him of the affair, whether the Lady Bedrulbudour's speech was true or not; but he, of his fear to lose his bride, lest she should go from his hand, said to her, "O my lady, I know nothing of that which thou sayest;" wherefore the queen was certified that there had betided her daughter illusions and a dream.

The wedding rejoicings continued all that day, with dancing-women and singing-women, and all the instruments of mirth and minstrelsy were smitten, whilst the queen and the Vizier and his son were exceeding assiduous in keeping up the festivities, so the Lady Bedrulbudour should rejoice and her chagrin be dispelled; nay, they left nought that day of that which exciteth unto liesse but they did it before her, so she should leave what was in her mind and be cheered. But all this had no effect on her and she was silent and thoughtful and confounded at that which had befallen her that night. True, the Vizier's son had fared worse than she, for that he was couched in the draught-house; but he belied the matter and put away that tribulation from his thought, of his

fear lest he should lose his bride and his rank, more by token that all the folk envied him his lot, for the much increase of honour it brought him, as also for the exceeding beauty and loveliness of the Lady Bedrulbudour.

As for Alaeddin, he went out that day and saw the rejoicings toward in the city and the palace and fell a-laughing, especially when he heard the folk speak of the honour which had betided the Vizier's son and the greatness of his good luck, in that he was become the Sultan's son-in-law, and the exceeding pomp used in his marriage and bridal festivities; and he said in himself, "Ye know not, good simple folk that ye are, what befell him last night, that ye envy him." Then, when the night came in and it was the season of sleep, Alaeddin arose and entering his chamber, rubbed the lamp, whereupon the genie appeared to him forthright and he bade him bring the princess and her bridegroom, as on the past night, ere the Vizier's son should take her maidenhead. The genie delayed not, but was absent a little while; and when it was the appointed time, he returned with the bed and therein the Lady Bedrulbudour and the Vizier's son. With the latter he did as he had done the past night, to wit, he took him and couched him in the draught-house, where he deft him parched for excess of fright and dismay; whilst Alaeddin arose and placing the sword between himself and the Lady Bedrulbudour, lay down and slept till the morning, when the genie appeared and restored the twain to their place, leaving Alaeddin full of joy at [the discomfiture of] the Vizier's son.

When the Sultan arose in the morning, he bethought himself to visit his daughter Bedrulbudour and see an she should do with him as she had done on the past day; so, as soon as he awoke from his sleep, he rose and donning his clothes, went to his daughter's chamber and opened the door. Whereupon the Vizier's son arose forthright and coming down from the bed, fell to donning his clothes, with ribs cracking for cold; for that, when the Sultan entered, it was no great while since the genie had brought them back. The Sultan went up to his daughter, the Lady Bedrulbudour, as she lay abed, and raising the curtain, gave her good morning and kissed her between the eyes and asked her how she did. She frowned and returned him no answer, but looked at him sullenly, as she were in sorry case. He was wroth with her, for that she made him no answer, and thought that something had betided her; so he drew the sword and said to her, "What hath befallen thee? Either thou shalt tell me what aileth thee or I will do away thy life this very moment. Is this the respect that is due to my rank and the honour in which thou holdest me, that I bespeak thee and thou answerest me not a word?"

When the Lady Bedrulbudour knew that her father was angry and saw the naked sword in his hand, she was like to swoon for fear; so she raised her head and said to him, "Dear my father, be not wroth with me, neither be thou hasty in thine anger, for that I am excusable in that which thou hast seen from me. Do but hearken what hath betided me and I am well assured that, whenas thou hearest my story of that which hath happened to me these two nights past, thou wilt excuse me and Thy Grace will be moved to compassion upon me, as I know from thy love for me." Then she acquainted him with all that had befallen her and said to him, "O my father, an thou believe me not, ask my bridegroom and he will resolve Thy Grace of everything, albeit I know not what they did with him, when they took him from my side, nor where they set him."

When the Sultan heard his daughter's story, he was sore concerned and his eyes brimmed with tears; then, sheathing the sword and coming up to her, he kissed her and said to her, "O my daughter, why didst thou not tell me yesterday, so I might have warded off from thee the torment and affright which have befallen thee this night? But no matter; arise and put away from thee this thought, and to-night I will set over thee those who shall guard thee, so there shall not again befall thee that which befell yesternight." Then he returned to his pavilion and sent at once for the Vizier, who came and stood before him, awaiting his commands; and the Sultan said to him, "O Vizier, how deemest thou of this affair? Most like thy son hath told thee what happened to him and to my daughter." "O King of the Age," answered the Vizier, "I have not seen my son or yesterday or to-day." Whereupon the Sultan acquainted him with all that his daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour had told him and said to him, "It is now my will that thou enquire of thy son the truth of the case, for it may be my daughter knoweth not for fright what happened to her, though methinketh her tale is all true." So the Vizier arose and sending for his son, asked him of all that the Sultan had told him, if it were true or not. Whereupon, "O my father the Vizier," replied the youth, "[God] preserve the Lady Bedrulbudour from leasing! Indeed, all she saith is true and these two nights past have been for us the sorriest of nights, instead of being nights of pleasance and delight. Marry, that which befell me was yet worse, for that, instead of sleeping with my bride in bed, I lay in the draught-house, a place dark and frightful, noisome of smell and accursed, and my ribs were straitened with cold." Brief, he told the Vizier all that had befallen him and ultimately said to him; "Dear my father, I beseech thee speak with the Sultan that he release me from this marriage. True, it is great honour for me to be the Sultan's son-in-law, more by token that the love of the Lady Bedrulbudour hath gotten possession of my vitals, but I cannot avail to endure one more night like the two that are past."

When the Vizier heard his son's words, he grieved and was exceeding chagrined, for that he had thought to greaten his son and advance him by making him the King's son-in-law; so he bethought himself and was perplexed anent the matter and what was to do therein; and indeed it irked him sore that the marriage should be dissolved, for that he had long besought the Ten that he might compass the like of that affair; so he said to his son, "Have patience, O my son, so we may see [how it will be] to-night, and we will set over you guards to guard you; but do not thou let slip this great honour, for that it hath fallen to none other than thyself." Therewith he left him and returning to the Sultan, told him that the Lady Bedrulbudour's story was true; whereupon quoth the Sultan, "Since the case is thus, we need no wedding-festivities." And he bade forthright break off the rejoicings and the marriage was dissolved. The folk and the people of the city marvelled at this strange thing, especially when they saw the Vizier and his son go forth the palace in a pitiable plight for stress of chagrin and despite, and they fell to asking, "What hath happened and why is the marriage avoided and the rejoicings broken off?" But none knew what was to do save Alaeddin, the suitor, who laughed in his sleeve. So the marriage was annulled; but the Sultan had forgotten his promise to Alaeddin's mother and never again bethought him thereof, neither he nor the Vizier; nor knew they whence came that which had happened.

Alaeddin waited till the three months had elapsed, after which the Sultan had promised that he would marry him to his daughter, the Lady Bedrulbudour, then despatched his mother to the Sultan to require him of the performance of his promise. So she repaired to the palace and when the Sultan came to the Divan and saw her standing before him, he remembered his promise to her, that after three months he would marry his daughter to her son, and turning to the Vizier, said to him, "O Vizier, yonder is the woman who presented us with the jewels and we gave her our word that after three months [we would marry our daughter to her son]. Bring her before me forthright." So the Vizier went and brought Alaeddin's mother before the Sultan; and when she came into the presence, she made her obeisance to him and prayed God to vouchsafe him glory and endurance of prosperity. The Sultan asked her if she had a need, and she said to him, "O King of the Age, the three months are ended, after which thou didst promise me thou wouldst marry my son Alaeddin to thy daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour." The Sultan was perplexed at this her claim, more by token that he saw her in poor case, as she were the meanest of the folk; but the present which she had made him was exceeding magnificent [and indeed] beyond price; so he turned to the Vizier and said to him, "How deemest thou? What shall we do? It is true I gave her my word, but meseemeth they are poor folk and not of the chiefs of the people."

The Vizier, who was like to die of envy and chagrin for that which had befallen his son, said in himself, "How shall one like this marry the Sultan's daughter and my son lose this honour?" So he said to the Sultan, "O my lord, it is an easy matter to rid ourselves of this vagabond, for that it would not beseem Thy Grace to give thy daughter to a man like this, of whom it is not known what he is." Quoth the Sultan, "On what wise shall we rid ourselves of this man, seeing I have given him my word and a King's word is his bond?" "O my lord," answered the Vizier, "my counsel is that thou require of him forty dishes of pure virgin gold, full of jewels, such as she brought thee the other day, and forty slave-girls to bear the dishes and forty black slaves." "By Allah, O Vizier," rejoined the Sultan, "'thou speakest rightly; for that this is a thing to which he may not avail and so we shall be rid of him by [fair] means." So he said to Alaeddin's mother, "Go and tell thy son that I abide by the promise which I made him, but an if he avail unto my daughter's dowry; to wit, I require of him forty dishes of pure gold, which must all be full of jewels [such as] thou broughtest me [erst], together with forty slave-girls to carry them and forty male slaves to escort and attend them. If, then; thy son avail unto this, I will marry him to my daughter."

Alaeddin's mother returned home, shaking her head and saying, "Whence shall my poor son get these dishes of jewels? Supposing, for the jewels and the dishes, that he return to the treasure and gather the whole from the trees, — and withal methinketh not it is possible to him; but say that he fetch them, — whence [shall he get] the slaves and slave-girls?" And she gave not over talking to herself till she reached the house, where Alaeddin awaited her, and when she came in to him, she said to him, "O my son, said I not to thee, 'Think not to attain to the Lady Bedrulbudour'? Indeed, this is a thing that is not possible unto folk like ourselves." Quoth he, "Tell me what is the news." And she said to him, "O my son, the Sultan received me with all courtesy, according to his wont, and meseemeth he meant fairly by us, but [for] thine accursed enemy the Vizier; for that, after I had bespoken the Sultan in thy name, even as thou

badest me, reminding him that the term for which he had appointed us was past and saying to him, 'If Thy Grace would vouchsafe to give commandment for the marriage of thy daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour with my son Alaeddin,' — he turned to the Vizier and spoke to him. The Vizier replied to him in a whisper and after that the Sultan returned me an answer." Then she told him what the Sultan required of him and added, "O my son, he would fain have present answer of thee; but methinketh we have no answer to give him."

When Alaeddin heard his mother's speech, he laughed and said, "O my mother, thou sayest we have no answer to make him and deemest the thing exceeding hard; but now be good enough to rise and fetch us somewhat to eat, and after we have dined, thou shalt (an it please the Compassionate) see the answer. The Sultan like thyself, thinketh he hath sought of me an extraordinary matter, so he may divert me from the Lady Bedrulbudour; but the fact is that he seeketh a thing less than I had looked for. But go now and buy us somewhat we may eat and leave me to fetch thee the answer." Accordingly, she arose and went out to buy her need from the market, so she might make ready the morning-meal; whilst Alaeddin entered his chamber and taking the lamp, rubbed it. The genie immediately appeared to him and said, "Seek what thou wilt, O my lord;" whereupon quoth Alaeddin, "I seek the Sultan's daughter in marriage and he requireth of me forty dishes of pure gold, each ten pounds in weight and full of the jewels which be in the garden of the treasure, the forty dishes to be borne by forty slave girls and each slave-girl to be accompanied by a male slave; wherefore I will have thee bring me this, all of it." "Hearkening and obedience, O my lord," replied the genie and disappearing, was absent awhile, then returned with the forty slave-girls, each attended by a male slave and bearing on her head a dish of pure gold, full of precious jewels. So he brought them before Alaeddin and said to him, "Here is that which thou soughtest. Tell me an thou need thing or service other than this." Quoth Alaeddin, "I need nothing [more]; if I need aught, I will summon thee and tell thee."

Accordingly, the genie vanished and after a little, Alaeddin's mother returned and entering the house, saw the slaves and slave-girls; whereat she marvelled and said, "All this is of the Lamp; God continue it unto my son!" Then, before she put off her veil, Alaeddin said to her, "O my mother, this is thy time, ere the Sultan enter his palace [and withdraw] to his harem. Take him what he seeketh, and that forthright, so he may know that I can avail unto that which he requireth, ay, and more, and that he was deluded by the Vizier; albeit he thought to baffle me, he and his Vizier." Then he arose and opening the house-door, let out the damsels and the slaves, pair by pair, each damsel with a slave by her side, so that they filled the street. His mother forewent them and the people of the quarter, when they saw that rare and magnificent sight, stood looking and marvelling and gazing upon the faces of the slave-girls and their grace and goodliness [and their apparel], for that they were clad in clothes all inwoven with gold and studded with jewels; nay, the least one's clothes of them were worth thousands. Moreover they looked at the dishes and saw flashing therefrom a radiance that outshone the light of the sun, albeit each dish was covered with a piece of brocade, gold-inwrought and studded eke with precious jewels. Alaeddin's mother fared on and the damsels and slaves followed after her, in all fair ordinance and disposition, whilst

the folk stood to gaze on the beauty of the slave-girls and extolled the perfection of the Almighty Creator, till she reached the palace and entered it with them.

When the eunuchs and chamberlains and captains of the guard saw them, wonder took them and they were breathless for amaze at this sight, the like whereof they had never in their lives seen, and especially at the slave girls, each one of whom would ravish the wit of an anchorite. Withal, the chamberlains and captains of the Sultan's guards were all of them sons of grandees and Amirs; and they marvelled yet more at the damsels' costly raiment and the dishes which they bore on their heads and on which they might not open their eyes, for the excess of their flashing and radiance. Then the guards entered and told the Sultan, who bade bring them before him forthright into the Divan. So Alaeddin's mother entered with them and when they came before the Sultan, they all did obeisance to him with the utmost courtliness and gravity and invoked on him glory and prosperity; then, raising the dishes from their heads, they set them down before him and stood with their hands clasped behind them, after they had removed the covers.

The Sultan wondered with an exceeding wonderment and was confounded at the beauty of the girls and their loveliness, which overpassed description; his wit was bewildered, when he saw the golden dishes, full of jewels that dazzled the sight, and he was amazed at this marvel, so that he became as one dumb, unable to speak aught, of the excess of his wonderment; nay, his wit was the more perplexed, forasmuch as this had all been accomplished in an hour's time. Then he bade carry the slave-girls and their burdens to the pavilion of the Lady Bedrulbudour; so the damsels took up the dishes and entered; whereupon Alaeddin's mother came forward and said to the Sultan, "O my lord, this is no great matter for the Lady Bedrulbudour's exalted rank; nay, she deserveth manifold this." So the Sultan turned to the Vizier and said to him, "How sayst thou, O Vizier? He that can in so short a time avail unto riches like these, is he not worthy to be the Sultan's son-in-law and to have his daughter to bride?" Now the Vizier marvelled at the greatness of these riches yet more than the Sultan, but envy was killing him and waxed on him more and more, when he saw that the Sultan was content with the bride-gift and the dowry; withal he could not gainstand the [manifest] truth and say to the Sultan, "He is not worthy;" so he cast about to work upon him by practice, that he might hinder him from giving his daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour to Alaeddin, and accordingly said to him, "O my lord, all the treasures of the world were not worth a paring of thy daughter Bedrulbudour's nails; indeed, Thy Highness overrateth this upon her."

When the Sultan heard the Vizier's words, he knew that this his speech arose from the excess of his envy; so he turned to Alaeddin's mother and said to her, "O woman, go to thy son and tell him that I accept of him the marriage-gift and abide by my promise to him and that my daughter is his bride and he my son-in-law; so bid him come hither, that I may make acquaintance with him. There shall betide him from me nought but all honour and consideration and this night shall be the beginning of the bridal festivities. But, as I said to thee, let him come hither to me without delay." So she returned home swiftlier than the wind, of her haste to bring her son the good news; and she was like to fly for joy at the thought that her son was to become the Sultan's son-in-law. As soon as she had taken her leave, the Sultan bade break up the Divan and

entering the Lady Bedrulbudour's pavilion, commanded to bring the damsels and the dishes before his daughter and himself, so she should see them. So they brought them and when the Lady Bedrulbudour saw the jewels, she was amazed and said, "Methinketh there is not one of these jewels found in the treasuries of the world." Then she looked at the damsels and marvelled at their beauty and grace and knew that this was all from her new bridegroom and that he had proffered it to her service. So she rejoiced, albeit she had been sad and sorry for her [whilom] bridegroom the Vizier's son, — she rejoiced, [I say], with an exceeding joy, when she saw the jewels and the beauty of the damsels, and was cheered; whilst her father rejoiced exceedingly in her joy, in that he saw her put off chagrin and dejection. Then he said to her, "O my daughter Bedrulbudour, doth this please thee? Indeed, methinketh this thy bridegroom is goodlier than the Vizier's son, and God willing, O my daughter, thou shalt rejoice with him abundantly."

So much for the Sultan and as for Alaeddin, when his mother came to the house and entered and he saw her laughing of the excess of her joy, he foreboded good news and said, "To God Everlasting be praise! Accomplished is that which I sought." And she said to him, "Glad tidings, O my son! Let thy heart rejoice and thine eye be solaced in the attainment of thy desire, for that the Sultan accepteth thine offering, to wit, the bride gift and the dowry of the Lady Bedrulbudour, and she is thy bride and this, O my son, is the night of your bridal and thy going in to the Lady Bedrulbudour. Nay, the Sultan, that he might certify me of his word, proclaimed thee his son-in-law before the folk and declared that this should be the wedding-night; but he said to me, 'Let thy son come hither to me, so I may make acquaintance with him, and I will receive him with all honour and worship.' And now, O my son, my office is ended, whatsoever remaineth is a matter for thee."

Alaeddin kissed his mother's hand and thanked her amain for her kindness; then he arose and entering his chamber, took the lamp and rubbed it; whereupon the genie presented himself and said to him, "Here am I; seek what thou wilt." Quoth Alaeddin, "My will is that thou take me to a bath, whose like is not in the world, and fetch me a suit of royal raiment and exceeding costly, such as no king can boast." "Hearkening and obedience," replied the Marid and taking him up, brought him intro a bath, never saw King nor Kisra its like, for it was of alabaster and agate and full of marvellous limnings that ravished the sight, and therein was a saloon all embossed with precious jewels. None was there; but, when Alaeddin entered, there came in to him one of the Jinn in human semblance and washed him and bathed him to the utmost of the wish: after which he went forth the bath to the outer saloon, where he found his clothes taken away and in their stead a suit of the richest royal apparel. Then sherbets were brought him and coffee with ambergris and he drank and arose; whereupon there came to him a troop of slaves and clad him in those sumptuous clothes and he dressed and perfumed himself with essences and sweet-scented smoke. Now thou knowest that Alaeddin was the son of a poor man, a tailor: yet now none had thought it, but had said, "This is the chiefest of the sons of the kings," extolled be the perfection of Him who changeth and is not changed!

Then the slave of the lamp came to him and taking him up, set him down in his house and said to him, "O my lord, dost thou need aught?" "Yes," answered Alaeddin;

"I will have thee bring me eight-and-forty mamelukes, four-and-twenty to walk before me and four-and-twenty to walk behind me, with their horses and clothes and arms, and let all that is upon them and their horses be of stuffs costly and precious exceedingly, such as are not found in kings' treasuries. Then bring me a stallion fit for the riding of the Chosroes and be his trappings all of gold, embossed with noble jewels; and bring me eight-and-forty thousand diners, in each mameluke's hand a thousand, for that I purpose presently to visit the Sultan; wherefore delay thou not on me, since I cannot go thither without all that whereof I have bespoken thee. Bring me also twelve slave-girls, who must be unique in loveliness and clad in the richest of raiment, so they may attend my mother to the Sultan's palace, and let each slave-girl have with her a suit of apparel fit for the wearing of kings' wives."

"Hearkening and obedience," replied the genie and disappearing, brought him in the twinkling of an eye all that he had commanded him withal, whilst in his hand he held a stallion, whose like is not among the horses of the Arabs of the Arabs, with housings of the richest stuffs brocaded with gold; whereupon Alaeddin called his mother forthright and delivered her the twelve slave-girls and gave her the [twelve] suits, so she might dress herself and go with them to the Sultan's palace. Then he despatched one of the mamelukes thither, to see an the Sultan were come forth of the harem or not; so he went and returning, swiftlier than lightning, said to him, "O my lord, the Sultan awaiteth thee." Accordingly he arose and mounting, [set forth], whilst the mamelukes rode before him and after him, (extolled be the perfection of the Lord who created them with that which clothed them of beauty and grace!), strewing gold upon the folk before their lord Alaeddin, who overpassed them all of his grace and goodliness, and ask thou not of kings' sons, extolled be the perfection of the Giver, the Eternal! Now all this was of the virtue of the wonderful lamp, which gifted whoso possessed it with goodliness and grace and wealth and wisdom.

The folk marvelled at Alaeddin's bounty and at the excess of his munificence and were amazed when they saw that which graced him of beauty and goodliness and his courtliness and dignity; yea, they extolled the perfection of the Compassionate One for this His noble creature and all of them great and small called down blessings on him, albeit they knew him for the son of such an one the tailor; yet none envied him, but all said, "He is deserving." So he fared on his way, with the mamelukes before him and behind him, scattering gold upon the folk, till he came to the palace.

Now the Sultan had summoned to his presence the chiefs of his state and telling them that he had passed his word for the marriage of his daughter to Alaeddin, bade them await the latter, commanding them that, when he came, they should all go out to meet him; moreover, he assembled the amirs and viziers and chamberlains and guards and captains of the troops and they were all awaiting Alaeddin at the door of the palace. When he arrived, he would have dismounted at the door, but there came up to him one of the Amirs, whom the Sultan had deputed to that office, and said to him, "O my lord, the commandment is that thou enter, riding on thy charger, so thou mayst alight at the door of the Divan." So they all forewent him and he entered till they brought him to the door of the Divan. There sundry of them came forward and held his stirrup, whilst some supported him on both sides and other some took him by the hand, and so they dismounted him. Then the Amirs and officers of state forewent him

and brought him into the Divan, till he drew near the Sultan's throne; whereupon the latter came down forthright from his seat and embracing him, hindered him from kissing the carpet and seated him beside himself on his right hand. Alaeddin did that which behoveth and befitteth unto kings of obeisance and invocation and said to him, "O our lord the Sultan, thy Grace's munificence hath vouchsafed to accord me the Lady Bedrulbudour thy daughter, albeit I am unworthy of this great favour, for that I am of the lowliest of thy slaves; wherefore I beseech God that He keep and continue thee. Indeed, O King, my tongue faileth to thank thee [as were behoving] for the greatness of this boon, overpassing its competence, wherewith thou hast favoured me, and I beseech Thy Grace to vouchsafe me ground, such as is meet, so I may build thereon a palace that shall be fit for the Lady Bedrulbudour."

The Sultan was amazed when he saw Alaeddin in this regal array and beheld his grace and goodliness and the mamelukes standing in attendance upon him in all their comeliness and fair favour; yea, and his wonderment redoubled when Alaeddin's mother came up attired in rich and costly raiment, as she were a queen, and he saw twelve slave-girls in her service, preceding her, their hands clasped behind their backs, with all worship and observance. Moreover, he noted Alaeddin's eloquence and the elegance of his speech and was amazed thereat, he and all who were present with him in the Divan, whilst fire was kindled in the Vizier's heart for envy of Alaeddin, so that he was like to die. Then, after the Sultan had heard Alaeddin's compliment and had seen the greatness of his quality and his modesty and eloquence, he strained him to his bosom and kissed him, saying, "It irketh me, O my son, that I have not known thee before to-day." So, when he saw Alaeddin on this fashion, he rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and at once bade the music and the drums strike up; then, rising, he took him by the hand and carried him into the palace, where the evening-meal had been made ready and the servants set the tables. There he sat down and seated Alaeddin on his right hand; whereupon the viziers and chiefs of the state and the grandees of the realm sat also, each in his several room, whilst the drums beat and they held high festival in the palace.

The Sultan proceeded to make familiar with Alaeddin and to talk with him, and Alaeddin answered him with all courtliness and fluency, as he had been bred in kings' palaces or as he were their constant associate; and the more the talk was prolonged between them, the more gladness and joy redoubled on the Sultan for that which he heard of the goodliness of Alaeddin's answers and the sweetness of his speech. Then, when they had eaten and drunken and the tables were removed, the Sultan bade fetch the Cadis and the witnesses; so they came and knotted the knot and wrote the writ [of marriage] between Alaeddin and the Lady Bedrulbudour. Therewith Alaeddin arose and would have taken leave; but the Sultan laid hold on him and said to him, "Whither away, O my son? The bride-feast is toward and the bride present; the knot is knotted and the writ written." "O my lord the king," answered Alaeddin, "I would fain build the Lady Bedrulbudour a palace, besorting her rank and station, and it may not be that I should go in to her without this; but, God willing, the building shall, by the diligent endeavour of thy slave and by Thy Grace's auspice, be right speedily despatched. Indeed, I long for present enjoyment of the Lady Bedrulbudour; but it behoveth me [first] apply myself to that which is incumbent on me for her service."

Quoth the Sultan, "O my son, look thyself out the ground which thou deemest apt to thine end and take it. All is in thy hand; , but here before my palace is a spacious piece of ground, which meseemeth were best; so, if it please thee, build thou the palace thereon." And Alaeddin answered him, saying, "Indeed, it is my utmost desire to be near Thy Grace."

Then he took leave of the Sultan and going forth, mounted and rode, with his mamelukes before him and behind him, whilst the folk all prayed for him and said, "By Allah, he is deserving!" till he came to his house and alighting from his stallion, entered his chamber and rubbed the lamp; whereupon the genie stood before him and said to him, "Seek what thou wilt, O my lord" Quoth Alaeddin, "I desire of thee an important service, to wit, that thou build me with all speed a palace before that of the Sultan, which shall be marvellous in its building, never saw kings its like, and be it complete with all its requisites of kingly and magnificent furniture and so forth." "Hearkening and obedience," replied the genie and disappeared; but, before the dawn broke, he came to Alaeddin and said to him, "O my lord, the palace is finished to the utmost of the wish; wherefore, an thou wouldst see it, arise forthright and look on it." So Alaeddin arose and the genie carried him, in the twinkling of an eye, to the palace, which when he saw, he was amazed at its building, for that all its stones were of jade and alabaster and porphyry and mosaic. The genie carried him into a treasury full of all manner of gold and silver and precious jewels past count or reckoning, price or estimation; then he brought him into another place, where he saw all the requisites of the table, platters and spoons and ewers and basins and cups, of gold and silver, and thence to the kitchen, where he found cooks, with their cooking-gear and utensils, all on like wise of gold and silver. Moreover, he brought him into a place, which he found full of coffers overflowing with royal raiment, such as ravished the wit, gold-inwoven stuffs, Indian and Chinese, and brocades, and he showed him also many other places, all full of that which beggareth description, till at last he brought him into a stable, wherein were horses whose like is not found with the kings of the world; and therewithin he showed him a storehouse, full of housings and saddles of price, all broidered with pearls and precious stones and so forth.

Alaeddin was amazed and bewildered at the greatness of these riches, whereunto the mightiest king in the world might not avail, and all the work of one night; more by token that the palace was full of slaves and slave girls such as would bewitch a saint with their loveliness. But the most marvellous of all was that he saw in the palace an upper hall and a belvedere with four-and-twenty oriels, all wroughten of emeralds and rubies and other jewels, and of one of these oriels the lattice-work was by his desire left unfinished, so the Sultan should fail of its completion. When he had viewed the palace, all of it, he rejoiced and was exceeding glad; then he turned to the genie and said to him, "I desire of thee one thing which is lacking and whereof I had forgotten to bespeak thee." Quoth the slave, "Seek what thou wilt, O my lord;" and Alaeddin said to him, "I will have thee bring me a carpet Of fine brocade, all inwoven with gold, and spread it from my palace to that of the Sultan, so the Lady Bedrulbudour, whenas she cometh hither, may walk thereon and not upon the earth." So the genie was absent a little and returning, said to him, "O my lord, that which thou soughtest of me is here." Therewithal he took him and showed him the carpet, which ravished the wit, and it

was spread from the Sultan's palace to that of Alaeddin; then taking him up, he set him down in his own house.

It was now grown high day; so the Sultan arose from sleep and opening a window of his pavilion, looked forth and saw buildings before his palace; whereupon he fell to rubbing his eyes and opening them wide and looking farther, saw a magnificent palace, that bewildered the wits, and a carpet spread therefrom to his own palace; as on like wise did the doorkeepers and all who were in the palace, and their wits were bewildered at the sight. At this juncture the Vizier presented himself and as he entered, he espied the new palace and the carpet and marvelled also; so, when he came in to the Sultan, the twain fell to talking of this strange matter and marvelling, for that they saw a thing which amazed the beholder and dilated the heart; and they said, "Verily, methinketh kings may not avail unto the building of the like of this palace." Then the Sultan turned to the Vizier and said to him, "How now? Deemest thou Alaeddin worthy to be bridegroom to my daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour? Hast thou seen and considered this royal building and all these riches which man's wit cannot comprehend?" The Vizier, of his envy of Alaeddin, answered him, saying, "O King of the Age, indeed this palace and its building and all these riches may not be but by means of enchantment, for that no man among men, no, not the mightiest of them in dominion or the greatest in wealth, might avail to upraise and stablish [the like of] this building in one night." Quoth the Sultan, "I marvel at thee how thou still deemest evil of Alaeddin; but methinketh it ariseth from thine envy of him, for that thou wast present when he sought of me a place whereon to build a palace for my daughter and I accorded him, before thee, [leave to build] a palace on this ground; and he who brought me, to my daughter's dower, jewels such that no kings possess one thereof, shall he lack ableness to build a palace like this?" When the Vizier heard the Sultan's speech and understood that he loved Alaeddin greatly, his envy of him increased; withal he availed not to do aught against him, so he was dumb and could make the Sultan no answer.

Meanwhile Alaeddin — seeing that it was high day and that the time was come when he should go to the palace, for that his wedding-festivities were toward and the Amirs and Viziers and chiefs of the state were all with the Sultan, so they might be present at the bridal — arose and rubbed the lamp; whereupon the genie presented himself and said to him, "O my lord, seek what thou wilt, for that I am before thee, at thy service." Quoth Alaeddin, "I purpose presently to go to the Sultan's palace, and to-day is the wedding; wherefore I have occasion for ten thousand diners, which I will have thee bring me." The slave was absent the twinkling of an eye and returned to him with the money; whereupon Alaeddin arose and taking horse, with his mamelukes behind him and before him, rode to the palace, scattering gold upon the folk, as he passed, so that they were fulfilled with the love of him and the greatness of his munificence. When he came to the palace and the Amirs and eunuchs and soldiers, who were standing awaiting him, saw him, they hastened forthright to the Sultan and told him; whereupon he arose and coming to meet him, embraced him and kissed him; then he took him by the hand and carried him into the palace where he sat down and seated him on his right hand.

Now the city was all adorned and the instruments [of music] were smiting in the palace and the singing-women singing. Then the Sultan trade serve the morning-meal;

so the slaves and mamelukes hastened to spread the table and it was such as kings might take example by. The Sultan sat with Alaeddin and the officers of state and the chiefs of the realm and they ate and drank till they were satisfied; and great was the rejoicing in the palace and the city. Glad were all the chiefs of the state and the folk rejoiced in all the realm, whilst there came from far regions the notables of the provinces and the governors of the cities, so they might see Alaeddin's wedding and his bride-feast. The Sultan still marvelled in himself at Alaeddin's mother, how she had come to him in poor clothes, whilst her son had command of this exceeding wealth; and as for the folk, who came to the Sultan's palace, to gaze upon the wedding-festivities, when they saw Alaeddin's palace and the goodliness of its building, there took them great wonderment how so magnificent a building had been upreared in one night and they fell all to praying for Alaeddin and saying, "God prosper him! By Allah, he is deserving. God's blessing on his days!"

Meanwhile Alaeddin, having made an end of the morning-meal, arose and taking leave of the Sultan, mounted with his mamelukes and rode to his palace, so he might prepare for the reception of his bride, the Lady Bedrulbudour. As he passed, all the folk cried out to him with one voice, saying, "God gladden thee! God increase thee in glory! God continue thee!" And so they brought him home in great procession, what while he showered gold on them. When he came to his palace, he alighted and entering, sat down in the Divan, whilst the mamelukes stood before him with clasped hands. After a little they brought him sherbets and he gave commandment to his mamelukes and slave-girls and eunuchs and all who were in his palace that they should make ready to receive the Lady Bedrulbudour, his bride. Then, when it was the time of the midafternoon prayer and the air grew cool and the heat of the sun abated, the Sultan bade the troops and the Amirs and the Viziers go down to the horse-course. So they all repaired thither and with them the Sultan himself; whereupon Alaeddin also arose and mounting with his mamelukes, went down into the plain and showed his horsemanship; then he fell to playing in the tilting-ground and there was none could stand before him. Now he was riding a stallion whose like is not among the horses of the Arabs of the Arabs and his bride the Lady Bedrulbudour was looking upon him from the window of her pavilion, and when she saw his grace and goodliness and knightly prowess, she was overcome with his love and was like to fly for joy in him. Then, after they had played [some] bouts in the plain and each had shown what was in him of horsemanship, (but Alaeddin overpassed them all,) the Sultan went to his palace and Alaeddin on like wise returned home.

When it was eventide, the chiefs of the state and the Viziers went and taking Alaeddin, carried him in procession to the Royal Bath, the Renowned; so he entered and bathed and perfumed himself, then, coming forth, he donned a suit yet richer than the first and mounted, whilst the troops rode before him and the Amirs and Viziers. So they fared on with him in great state, with four of the Viziers for his sword-bearers, whilst all the troops and people of the city, both townsfolk and strangers, walked in procession before him, carrying flambeaux and drums and flutes and instruments of mirth and music, till they brought him to his palace, when he alighted and entering, sat down, as did also the Viziers and Amirs who were in his company, whilst the mamelukes brought sherbets and sweetmeats and gave all who were with him

in the procession to drink, albeit they were a multitude of folk whose number might not be told. Moreover, he gave commandment unto his mamelukes, and they went out to the door of the palace and fell to showering gold upon the folk.

Meanwhile, when the Sultan returned from the horse-course and entered his palace, he bade forthright carry his daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour in procession to the palace of her bridegroom Alaeddin. So the troops forthright mounted with the officers of state, who had been in Alaeddin's procession, and the slave-girls and eunuchs went out with flambeaux and carried the Lady Bedrulhudour in great state to her bridegroom's palace, Alaeddin's mother by her side and before her the women of the Viziers and Amirs and grandees and notables. Moreover, she had with her eight and-forty slave-girls, whom Alaeddin had presented to her, in each one's hand a great candle of camphor and ambergris, set in a candlestick of gold, studded with jewels; and all the men and women in the palace went out with her and fared on before her, till they brought her to her bridegroom's palace and carrying her up to her pavilion, attired her in various robes and displayed her. Then, after they had made an end of displaying her, they carried her to the pavilion of her groom Alaeddin and he went in to her. Now his mother was with the Lady Bedrulbudour, and when he came up and did off her veil, she fell to gazing upon the bride's beauty and grace and looked at the pavilion, the which was all wroughten of gold and jewels and therein were golden lustres, all embossed with emeralds and rubies; and she said in herself, "Methought the Sultan's palace was magnificent; but, for this pavilion alone, I doubt me the greatest of the Chosroes and the kings never owned its match; nor, methinketh, might all mankind avail to make the like thereof." And the Lady Bedrulbudour also fell to looking and marvelling at the palace and its magnificence. Then the table was laid and they ate and drank and made merry; and presently there appeared before them fourscore slave-girls, each with an instrument in her hand of the instruments of mirth and music. So they plied their finger-tips and touching their strings, struck up with plaintive airs, till they clove in sunder the hearts of the listeners, whilst the Lady Bedrulbudour redoubled in wonderment and said in herself, "Never in my life heard I the like of these songs;" so that she forgot to eat and fell to listening. As for Alaeddin, he proceeded to pour to her the wine and give her to drink with his own hand, and mirth and good cheer and delight went round among them and it was a rare night, such as Iskender of the Horns never in his time spent. Then, after they had made an end of eating and drinking, the tables were removed from before them and Alaeddin arose and went in to his bride.

When it was the morning, Alaeddin arose and his treasurer brought him a costly suit of the richest of kings' raiment; so he donned it and sat down; whereupon coffee was brought him with ambergris and he drank thereof and called for the horses. Accordingly, they were saddled and he mounted and rode, with his mamelukes behind him and before him, to the Sultan's palace. When he reached it and entered, the eunuchs went in and acquainted the Sultan with his presence; which when he heard, he arose forthwith and coming to meet Alaeddin, embraced him and kissing him, as he were his son, seated him on his right hand. Moreover the Viziers and Amirs and officers of state and grandees of the realm invoked blessings on him and the Sultan gave him joy and prayed God prosper him. Then he bade lay breakfast; so they laid [it] and they all broke their fast; and after they had eaten and drunken their sufficiency

and had finished and the servants had removed the tables from before them, Alaeddin turned to the Sultan and said to him, "O my lord, [belike] Thy Grace will vouchsafe to honour me this day at the morning-meal with the Lady Bedrulbudour, thy precious daughter, and be Thy Grace's company all thy viziers and the chief officers of thy state." Quoth the Sultan, (and indeed he rejoiced in him), "Gladly, O my son," and bidding the Viziers and officers of state and grandees attend him, arose forthright and mounted; whereupon Alaeddin and the others mounted also and they all rode till they came to Alaeddin's palace.

When the Sultan entered the palace and viewed its building and ordinance and saw its stones, which were of jade and agate, he was amazed and his wit was bewildered at that affluence and wealth and magnificence; so he turned to the Vizier and said to him, "How sayst thou, O Vizier? Hast thou in all thy days seen aught like this? Are there found with the greatest of the kings of the world riches and gold and jewels such as these we see in this palace?" "O my lord the King," answered the Vizier, "this is a thing beyond the competence of a king of the sons of Adam, nor might all the people of the earth together avail to build a palace like this; nay, there are no craftsmen living able to do work like this, except it be, as I said to Thy Grace, by might of magic." The Sultan knew that the Vizier, in seeking to convince him that this was not by might of men, but all of it enchantment, still spoke not but of his envy of Alaeddin; so he said to him, "Enough, O Vizier; let us have no more of thy talk. I know the cause which maketh thee speak on this wise."

Then Alaeddin forewent the Sultan till he brought him to the high pavilion and he looked at the belvedere and its oriols and lattices, all wroughten of emeralds and rubies and other precious stones, and was amazed and astonied; his wit was bewildered and he abode perplexed in his thought. Then he fell to going round about the pavilion and viewing these things that ravished the sight, till presently he espied the casement which Alaeddin had purposely left wanting and unfinished. When the Sultan examined it and saw that it was unfinished, he said, "Woe is me for thee, O casement, that thou art not perfect!" Then, turning to the Vizier, he said to him, "Knowest thou the reason of the lack of completion of this casement and its lattices?" "O my lord," answered the Vizier, "methinketh it is because Thy Grace hastened upon Alaeddin with the wedding and he had no time to complete it." Now Alaeddin had meanwhile gone in to his bride, the Lady Bedrulbudour, to acquaint her with the coming of her father the Sultan; and when he returned, the Sultan said to him, "O my son Alaeddin, what is the reason that the lattice[-work] of yonder oriel is not completed?" "O King of the Age," replied Alaeddin, "by reason of the haste made with the bridal, the craftsmen might not avail to finish it." Quoth the Sultan to him, "It is my wish to finish it myself." And Alaeddin answered, saying, "God prolong thy glory, O King; so shall there remain unto thee a remembrance in thy daughter's palace."

Accordingly the Sultan bade straightway fetch jewellers and goldsmiths and commanded to give them from the treasury all that they needed of gold and jewels and [precious] metals; so they came and he bade them do that which was wanting of the lattice-work of the [unfinished] oriel. Meanwhile, the Lady Bedrulbudour came out to receive her father the Sultan, and when she came up to him and he saw her smiling-faced he embraced her and kissed her and taking her [by the hand], went in with her to

her pavilion. So they entered all, for that it was the appointed time of the morning-meal and they had set one table for the Sultan and the Lady Bedrulbudour and Alaeddin and another for the Vizier and the officers of state and grandees of the realm and captains and chamberlains and deputies. The Sultan sat between his daughter, the Lady Bedrulbudour, and his son-in-law Alaeddin, and when he put his hand to the food and tasted it, wonder took him at the richness of the meats and the exquisiteness of their seasonings. Now there stood before them fourscore damsels, each as it were she said to the full moon, "Rise, so I may sit in thy place;" and in each one's hand was an instrument of mirth and music. So they tuned their instruments and touched their strings and struck up with plaintive airs that dilated the mourning heart. The Sultan was cheered and the time was pleasant to him and he rejoiced and said, "Verily, Kings and Kaisers would fail of this thing."

Then they fell to eating and drinking and the cup went round among them till they had taken their sufficiency, when there came sweetmeats and various kinds of fruits and so forth; and these were laid in another saloon. So they removed thither and took their fill of those dainties; after which the Sultan arose, that he might see if the work of the jewellers and goldsmiths likened that of the palace. So he went up to them and viewed their work and how they wrought and saw that they were far from availing to do work like that [of the rest] of Alaeddin's palace. Moreover they told him that all they found in his treasury they had brought and it sufficed not; whereupon he bade open the Great Treasury and give them what they needed and that, if it sufficed not, they should take that which Alaeddin had given him. So they took all the jewels assigned them by the Sultan and wrought with them, but found that these also sufficed them not, nor might they complete withal the half of that which lacked of the lattice work of the oriel; whereupon the Sultan bade take all the jewels which should be found with the Viziers and chiefs of the state; and accordingly they took them all and wrought therewith; but this also sufficed not.

When it was morning, Alaeddin went up to view the jewelers' work and saw that they had not completed half the lacking lattice-work; whereupon he bade them incontinent undo all that they had wrought and restore the jewels to their owners. Accordingly, they undid it all and sent to the Sultan that which was his and to the Viziers [and others] that which was theirs. Then they went to the Sultan and told him that Alaeddin had commanded them of this; whereupon he asked them, "What said he to you and why would he not have the lattice-work finished and why undid he that which you had done?" And they said to him, "O my lord, we know nothing, save that he bade us undo all that we had done." Whereupon the Sultan immediately called for the horses and arising, mounted and rode to Alaeddin's palace.

Meanwhile Alaeddin, after dismissing the goldsmiths and the jewellers, entered his closet and rubbed the lamp; whereupon the genie forthwith appeared and said to him, "Seek what thou wilt; thy slave is before thee." And Alaeddin said to him, "It is my will that thou complete the lacking lattice-work of the oriel." "On my head and eyes [be it]," replied the slave and disappearing, returned after a little and said to him, "O my lord, that whereof thou commandedst me I have performed." So Alaeddin went up to the belvedere and found all its lattices perfect; and whilst he was viewing them, behold the [chief] eunuch came in to him and said to him, "O my lord, the Sultan

cometh to visit thee and is at the palace-door." So he came down forthright and went to meet the Sultan, who said to him, when he saw him, "Wherefore, O my son, hast thou done thus, and why sufferedst thou not the jewellers complete the lattice-work of the oriel, so there might not remain a place in thy palace defective?" "O King of the Age," answered Alaeddin, "I left it not imperfect but of my free will, nor did I lack of ableness to complete it. However, I could not brook that Thy Grace should honour me [with thy presence] in a palace wherein there was somewhat lacking; wherefore, so thou mayst know that it was not for lack of ableness that I left it uncomplete, let Thy Grace go up and see the lattice-work of the kiosk, an there be aught lacking thereto."

The Sultan accordingly went up to the pavilion and entering the kiosk, viewed it right and left and saw no manner defect in its lattices, but found them all perfect; whereat he was astounded and embracing Alaeddin, fell a-kissing him and saying, "O my son, what is this extraordinary thing? In one night thou dost a work wherefrom the jewellers would fail in months! By Allah, methinketh thou hast not thy fellow in the world!" Quoth Alaeddin, "God prolong thy life and perpetuate thy continuance! Thy slave is not worthy of this praise." "By Allah, O my son," rejoined the Sultan, "thou deservest all praise, in that thou hast done a thing wherefrom [all the] craftsmen of the world would fail." Then he went down and entering the pavilion of his daughter, the Lady Bedrulbudour, found her rejoicing exceedingly over this great magnificence wherein she was; and after he had rested with her awhile, he returned to his palace.

Now Alaeddin used every day to mount and ride through the town, with his mamelukes behind him and before him, strewing gold upon the people, right and left, and the folk, stranger and neighbour, near and far, were fulfilled with the love of him for the excess of his munificence and his bounty. Moreover he exceeded in benefaction of the poor and the indigent and used himself to distribute his alms to them with his own hand. After this fashion he won himself great renown in all the realm and the most of the chiefs of the state and the Amirs used to eat at his table and swore not but by his precious life. Moreover, he fell to going everywhile to the chase and the horse course and to practicing horsemanship and archery before the Sultan, whilst the Lady Bedrulbudour redoubled in love of him, whenassoever she saw him disporting himself a horseback, and thought in herself that God had wrought exceeding graciously by her in that there had befallen her what befell with the Vizier's son, so He might keep her for her true bridegroom Alaeddin. So he went daily waxing in goodliness of repute and in praise and the love of him redoubled in the hearts of the common folk and he was magnified in men's eyes.

Now in those days certain of the Sultan's enemies took horse against him; so he levied troops to repel them and made Alaeddin chief thereof. Alaeddin set out with his host and fared on till he drew near the enemy, whose troops were exceeding many; where upon he drew his sword and fell upon them and there befell battle and slaughter and sore was the stress of the mellay; but Alaeddin broke them and routed them and slew the most part of them. Moreover, he plundered their goods and possessions and gat him spoil beyond count or reckoning, wherewith he returned in triumph, [having gained] a great victory, and entered the city, which had adorned itself for him of its joy in him. The Sultan came out to meet him and give him joy and embraced him and kissed him, and there was high festival holden in the kingdom and great rejoicing.

Then the Sultan and Alaeddin betook themselves to the latter's palace; whereupon his bride, the Lady Bedrulbudour, came out to meet him, rejoicing in him, and kissed him between the eyes, and he went in with her to her pavilion; whither after a little came the Sultan and they sat down and the slave-girls brought sherbets. So they drank and the Sultan commanded that all the realm should be decorated for Alaeddin's victory over the enemy; whilst it became [a saying] with the commons and the troops and the folk, all of them, "Allah in heaven and Alaeddin on earth." and they loved him yet more, having regard not only to the excess of his bounty and munificence, but to his knightly prowess, in that he had done battle for the kingdom and had routed the enemy.

So much for Alaeddin, and now to return to the Mangrabin enchanter. When he returned to his country, he abode all this time, bewailing that which he had endured of toil and stress, so he might compass the lamp, yet had his travail all been wasted and the morsel had escaped from his hand, after it had reached his mouth; and he still thought upon all this, bemoaning himself and reviling Alaeddin of the excess of his anger against him; and whiles he said in himself, "Since yonder whoreson is dead under the earth, I am content withal and I have hopes of the lamp, that I may yet achieve it, inasmuch as it is still safeguarded." Then, one day of the days, he smote the sand and extracting the figures, set them down after the most approved fashion and adjusted them, so he might see and certify himself of the death of Alaeddin and the safe keeping of the lamp under the earth; and he looked well into the figures, both mothers and daughters, but saw not the lamp, whereupon rage overrode him and he smote the sand a second time, that he might certify himself of Alaeddin's death, but saw him not in the treasure; whereat he redoubled in wrath, and yet more when it was certified to him that the lad was alive upon the surface of the earth and he knew that he had come forth from under the ground and had gotten the lamp, on account whereof he himself had suffered toil and torment such as passeth man's power to endure. So he said in himself, "I have suffered many hardships for the sake of the lamp and have endured fatigues such as none but I might brook, and now yonder accursed one taketh it without stress and it is evident [that], an he have learned the use thereof, there will be none in the world richer than he."

Then, when he saw and was certified that Alaeddin had come forth from under the earth and had happened upon the good of the Lamp, he said in himself, "Needs must I go about to kill him." So he smote the sand once more and examining its figures, saw that Alaeddin had gotten him exceeding wealth and had married the Sultan's daughter; whereat he was all afire for rage and envy and arising then and there, equipped himself for travel and set out for the land of China. When he came to the city of the sultanate, wherein was Alaeddin, he entered and alighting at one of the khans, heard the folk talking of nought but the magnificence of Alaeddin's palace; then, after he was rested from his journey, he changed his clothes and went down to go round about in the thoroughfares of the city. He passed no folk but they were descanting upon the palace and its magnificence and talking of Alaeddin's grace and comeliness and his bounty and munificence and the goodliness of his manners and disposition; so he went up to one of those who were extolling Alaeddin on this wise and said to him, "Prithee, fair youth, who is this whom you describe and praise?" "O

man," replied the other, "meseemeth thou art a stranger and comest from afar; but, granting thou art from a far country, hast thou not heard of the Amir Alaeddin, whose repute, methought, filled the earth, and of his palace, a wonder of the world, whereof both far and near have heard? How is it thou hast heard nought of this nor of the name of Alaeddin, whom Our Lord increase in glory and prosper?" Quoth the Maugrabin, "Marry, it is the utmost of my wish to look upon the palace; so, an thou wouldst do me a kindness, direct me thither, for that I am a stranger." "Hearkening and obedience," replied the other and going before him, guided him to Alaeddin's palace.

The Maugrabin fell to examining it and knew that this all of it was the work of the Lamp; so he said, "Alack! Alack! Needs must I dig a pit for this accursed one, this tailor's son, who could not come by a night's supper; but, an destiny enable me, I will send his mother back to spin at her wheel, like as she did erst, and as for him, it shall cost him his life." Then he returned to the khan in a woeful state of chagrin and colour and despite, for envy of Alaeddin, and taking his geomantic instruments, smote his [tablet of] sand, so he might learn where the lamp was, and found that it was in the palace and not with Alaeddin; whereat he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said, "Now it will be an easy matter for me to bereave this accursed of his life and I have a way to come at the lamp." Accordingly he went to a coppersmith and said to him, "Make me so many lamps and take of me their worth in full; but I will have thee despatch them quickly." "Hearkening and obedience," replied the smith and falling to work on them, speedily despatched them for him. When they were finished, the Maugrabin paid him their price, even that which he sought, and taking the lamps, carried them to the khan, where he laid them in a basket and fell to going round about in the markets and thoroughfares of the city and crying out, "Ho! who will barter an old lamp for a new lamp?" When the folk heard him crying this, they laughed at him and said, "Certes, this man is mad, since he goeth about, bartering new lamps for old." Moreover, people followed him and the street-boys caught him up from place to place and laughed at him. However, he fended not himself neither took heed of this, but ceased not to go round about the city till he came under Alaeddin's palace, where he fell to crying his loudest, whilst the children called after him, "Madman! Madman!"

Now as fate willed it, the Lady Bedrulbudour was in the kiosk and hearing one crying out and the boys calling after him and understanding not what was toward, bade one of the slave-girls "Go see what is this man who crieth out and what he crieth." So the girl went and looking, saw one crying out, "Ho, who will barter an old lamp for a new lamp?" with the boys after him, laughing at him; so she returned and told her mistress, saying, "O my lady, this man crieth, 'Ho! who will barter an old lamp for a new lamp?' and the boys are following him and laughing at him;" and the Lady Bedrulbudour laughed also at this marvel. Now Alaeddin had forgotten the lamp in his pavilion, without locking it up in his treasury [as was his wont], and one of the girls had seen it; so she said to the princess, "O my lady, methinketh I have seen an old lamp in my lord Alaeddin's pavilion; let us barter it with this man for a new one, so we may see an his speech be true or leasing." And the princess said to her, "fetch the lamp whereof thou speakest." Now the Lady Bedrulbudour had no knowledge of the lamp and its properties, neither knew she that this it was which had brought Alaeddin her

husband to that great estate, and it was the utmost of her desire to prove and see the wit of this man who bartered new for old, nor was any one aware of the Maugrabin enchanter's craft and trickery. So the slave-girl went up into Alaeddin's pavilion and returned with the lamp to the Lady Bedrulbudour, who bade the Aga of the eunuchs go down and exchange it for a new one; so he took it and going down, gave it to the Maugrabin and took of him a new lamp, with which he returned to the princess, who examined it and finding it new and real, fell to laughing at the Maugrabin's [lack of] wit. Meanwhile, when the enchanter had gotten the lamp and knew it for that of the Treasure, he thrust it forthwith into his sleeve and leaving the rest of the lamps to the folk who were in act to barter of him, set off running, till he came without the city, and walked about the waste places, awaiting the coming of the night. Then, when he saw himself alone in the open country, he brought out the lamp from his sleeve and rubbed it; whereupon the Marid immediately appeared to him and said, "Here am I; thy slave [is] before thee. Seek of me what thou wilt." Quoth the Maugrabin, "My will is that thou take up Alaeddin's palace from its place, with its inhabitants and all that is therein and myself also, and set it down in my country of Africa. Thou knowest my town and I will have this palace be thereby among the gardens." "Hearkening and obedience," replied the Marid. "Shut [thine] eye and open [thine] eye, and thou wilt find thyself in thine own country with the palace." And immediately this befell in the twinkling of an eye and the Maugrabin was transported, with Alaeddin's palace and all that was therein, to the land of Africa.

So much for the enchanter, and now let us return to the Sultan and Alaeddin. The Sultan, of his love and affection for his daughter the Lady Bedrulbudour, was wont, every day, when he awoke from his sleep, to open the window and look at her therefrom; so he arose on the morrow, according to his wont, and opened his chamber-window, so he might see his daughter; but when he put out his head and looked for Alaeddin's palace, he beheld nothing but a place swept [and level], like as it was aforetime, and saw neither palace nor inhabitants; whereat amazement clad him and his wit was bewildered and he fell to rubbing his eyes, so haply they were bleared or dimmed. Then he proceeded to look closely till at last he was certified that there was neither trace nor sign left of the palace and knew not what was come of it; whereupon he redoubled in perplexity and smote hand upon hand and his tears ran down upon his beard, for that he knew not what had befallen his daughter. So he sent forthright to fetch the Vizier, who came in to him and seeing him in that woeful state, said to him, "Pardon, O King of the Age (God keep thee from harm!) why art thou woeful?" Quoth the Sultan, "Meseemeth thou knowest not of my affair." And the Vizier said to him, "By Allah, O my lord, I have no knowledge of aught whatsoever." "Then," rejoined the Sultan, "thou hast not looked towards Alaeddin's palace." "Nay, O my lord," replied the Vizier, "it is yet shut." And the Sultan said to him, "Since thou hast no news of aught, rise and look at it from the window and see where it is, this palace of Alaeddin's, whereof thou sayest that it is yet shut." The Vizier arose and looked from the window towards Alaeddin's palace, but could see nothing, neither palace nor aught else; so his wit was bewildered and he was amazed and returned to the Sultan, who said to him, "Now knowest thou the cause of my distress and seest Alaeddin his palace, whereof thou saddest that it was shut." "O King of the Age," rejoined the Vizier, "I told Thy

Grace aforetime that this palace and these affairs were all of them [the work of] enchantment."

At this the Sultan was fired with wrath and said to him, "Where is Alaeddin?" And he answered, "He is at the chase." Whereupon the Sultan bade sundry of his eunuchs and officers go straightway fetch him bound and shackled. So they went till they came to Alaeddin and said to him, "O our lord Alaeddin, blame us not, for that the Sultan hath bidden us carry thee to him, bound and shackled; wherefore we beseech thee of excusement, for that we are under a royal commandment and may not gainsay it." When Alaeddin heard their speech, wonderment took him and his tongue was tied, for that he knew not the cause; then he turned to the eunuchs and officers and said, "Prithee, sirs, have you no knowledge of the cause of this commandment of the Sultan? I know myself guiltless, forasmuch as I have done no sin against the Sultan nor against his realm." And they said to him, "O our lord, we have no manner of knowledge thereof." So Alaeddin lighted down from his stallion and said to them, "Do with me that which the Sultan biddeth you, for that his commandment is upon the head and eyes." Accordingly the officers shackled him and pinioning him, haled him along in irons and entered the city with him.

The folk, seeing Alaeddin pinioned and shackled with iron, knew that the Sultan was minded to cut off his head, and forasmuch as he was extraordinarily beloved of them, they all gathered together and taking up arms, came forth their houses and followed the troops, so they might see what was to do. When the officers came with Alaeddin to the palace, they entered and told the Sultan, who immediately bade the headsman go and cut off his head. But the commons, hearing of this his commandment, shut the gates of the palace and sent to say to the Sultan, "This very moment we will overthrow the palace upon thee and all who are therein, an the least harm happen to Alaeddin." So the Vizier went and told the Sultan and said to him, "O King of the Age, all will be over with us forthright; wherefore thou wert best pardon Alaeddin, lest some calamity befall us, for that the commons love him more than us." Now the headsman had spread the carpet of blood and seating Alaeddin thereon, had bound his eyes and gone round him three times, awaiting the King's final commandment. The Sultan looked at his subjects and seeing them swarming upon him and climbing up to the palace, that they might overthrow it, commanded the headsman to hold his hand from Alaeddin and bade the crier go forth among the people and proclaim that he pardoned Alaeddin and took him [again] into favour.

When Alaeddin found himself released and saw the Sultan sitting, he went up to him and said to him, "O my lord, since Thy Grace hath bountifully vouchsafed me my life, favour me [yet farther] and tell me the manner of my offence." "O traitor," replied the Sultan, "till [but] now I knew not thine offence;" then, turning to the Vizier, he said to him, "Take him, that he may see from the windows where his palace is." Accordingly the Vizier took him and Alaeddin looked from the windows in the direction of his palace and finding the place swept and clear, like as it was before he built the palace thereon, neither seeing any trace of the latter, he was amazed and bewildered, unknowing what had happened. When he returned, the King said to him, "What hast thou seen? Where is thy palace and where is my daughter, my heart's darling and mine only one, than whom I have none other?" And Alaeddin answered

him, saying, "O King of the Age, I have no knowledge thereof, neither know I what hath befallen." And the Sultan said to him, "Know, O Alaeddin, that I have pardoned thee, so thou mayst go and look into this affair and make me search for my daughter; and do not thou present thyself but with her; nay, an thou bring her not back to me, as my head liveth, I will cut off thine." "Hearkening and obedience, O King of the Age," replied Alaeddin. "Grant me but forty days' grace, and an I bring her not after that time, cut off my head and do what thou wilt." Quoth the Sultan to him, "I grant thee, according to thy request, the space of forty days; but think not to flee from my hand, for that I will fetch thee back, though thou wert above the clouds, not to say upon the face of the earth." "O my lord the Sultan," rejoined Alaeddin, "as I said to Thy Grace, an I bring her not to thee in this space of time, I will present myself before thee, that thou mayst cut off my head."

Now the commons and the folk, one and all, when they saw Alaeddin, rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy and were glad for his deliverance; but the ignominy which had befallen him and shame and the exultation of the envious had bowed down his head; so he went forth and fell to going round about the city, perplexed anent his case and unknowing how all this had happened. He abode in the city two days in the woefullest of case, knowing not how he should do to find his palace and the Lady Bedrulbudour, his bride, what while certain of the folk used to come to him privily with meat and drink. Then he went forth, wandering in the deserts and knowing not whitherward he should aim, and ceased not going till he came to a river; whereupon, his hope being cut off for stress of chagrin that possessed him, he thought to cast himself into the stream; but, for that he was a pious Muslim, professing the unity of God, he feared God in himself and stood on the bank; of the stream to perform the ablution. So he took of the water in his hands and proceeded to rub between his fingers; and in doing this, his rubbing chanced upon the ring, whereupon a Marid appeared to him and said to him, "Here am I; thy slave is before thee. Seek what thou wilt."

When Alaeddin saw the Marid, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said to him, "O slave, I will have thee bring me my palace, with my bride, the Lady Bedrulbudour, and all that is therein." "O my lord," replied the Marid, "it irketh me sore that what thou seekest of me is a thing unto which I cannot avail, for that it pertaineth unto the slaves of the Lamp and I may not adventure upon it." "Then," said Alaeddin, "since this is not possible unto thee, take me and set me down beside my palace, in what land soever it is." "Hearkening and obedience, O my lord," replied the Marid and taking him up, set him down, in the twinkling of an eye, beside his palace in the land of Africa and before his wife's pavilion. By this time, the night was come; so he looked at his palace and his cares and sorrows were dispelled from him and he trusted in God, after he had forsworn hope, that he should see his bride once again. Then he fell to thinking upon the hidden mercies of God (glorified be His might!) and how He had vouchsafed him the ring and how his hope had been cut off, except God had provided him with the slave of the Ring. So he rejoiced and all chagrin ceased from him; then, for that he had been four days without sleeping, of the stress of his chagrin and his trouble and his grief and the excess of his melancholy, he went to the side of the palace and lay down under a tree; for that, as I have said, the palace was among the gardens of

Africa without the city. He lay that night under the tree in all ease; but he whose head is in the headsman's hand sleepeth not anights. However, fatigue and lack of sleep for four days past caused slumber get the mastery over him; so he slept till break of morn, when he awoke at the chirp of the sparrows. He arose and going to a stream there which flowed into the city, washed his hands and face; then, making the ablution, he prayed the morning-prayer and after returned and sat under the windows of the Lady Bedrulbudour's pavilion.

Now the princess, of the excess of her grief for her separation from her husband and the Sultan her father and of her sore distress at that which had betided her with the accursed Maugrabin enchanter, used every day to arise, at the first peep of dawn, and sit weeping; nay, she slept not anights and forswore meat and drink. Her handmaid used to go in to her at the time of the Salutation, so she might dress her, and that morning, by the decree of destiny, the damsel opened the window at that time, thinking to solace her mistress with the sight of the trees and streams. So she looked out and seeing her lord Alaeddin sitting under the windows of the pavilion, said to the princess, "O my lady, my lady, here is my lord Alaeddin sitting under the pavilion!" Whereupon the Lady Bedrulbudour arose in haste and looking from the window, saw Alaeddin, and he raised his head and saw her; so she saluted him and he her and they were both like to fly for joy. Then said she to him, "Arise and come in to me by the privy door, for that the accursed one is not now here;" and she bade her handmaid go down and open the door. So the damsel went down and opened to Alaeddin, who arose and entered thereby. His wife, the Lady Bedrulbudour, met him at the door and they embraced and kissed each other with all joyance, till they fell a-weeping of the excess of their gladness.

Then they sat down and Alaeddin said to her, "O Lady Bedrulbudour, there is somewhat whereof I would ask thee, before all things. I used to lay an old copper lamp in such a place in my pavilion..." When the princess heard this, she sighed and answered him, saying, "O my beloved, it was that which was the cause of our falling into this calamity." Quoth he, "How came this about?" So she acquainted him with the whole matter from first to last, telling him how they had bartered the old lamp for a new one; "and next morning," added she, "we found ourselves in this country and he who had cozened me and changed the lamp told me that he had wroughten these tricks upon us of the might of his magic, by means of the lamp and that he is a Maugrabin from Africa and that we are now in his native land." When she had made an end of her story, Alaeddin said to her, "Tell me, what does this accursed one purpose with thee; what saith he to thee and of what doth he bespeak thee and what is his will of thee?" "Every day," answered the princess, "he cometh to me once and no more and seeketh to draw me to his love, willing me take him in thy stead and forget and renounce thee; nay, he told me that my father the Sultan had cut off thy head. Moreover, he useth to say to me of thee that thou art the son of poor folk and that he was the cause of thine enrichment and seeketh to cajole me with talk, but never hath he seen of me aught but tears and weeping or heard from me one soft word." Quoth Alaeddin, "Tell me where he layeth the lamp, an thou knowest." And she said, "He still carrieth it [about him] nor will part with it a moment; nay, when he acquainted me with that whereof I have told thee, he brought out the lamp from his sleeve and showed it to me"

When Alaeddin heard this, he rejoiced with an exceeding joy and said to her, "Harkye, Lady Bedrulbudour; it is my present intent to go out and return in disguise. Marvel thou not at this and let one of thy slave-girls abide await at the privy door, to open to me forthright, when she seeth me coming; and I will cast about for a device whereby I may slay this accursed one." Then he rose and going forth the [privy] door of his palace, walked on till he encountered a peasant by the way and said to him, "Harkye, sirrah, take my clothes and give me thine." The man demurred, but Alaeddin enforced him and taking his clothes from him, donned them and gave him his own costly apparel. Then he fared on in the high road till he came to the city and entering, betook himself to the drug-market, where for two diners he bought of [one of] the druggists two drachms of rare strong henbane, the son of its minute, and retracing his steps, returned to the palace. When the damsel saw him, she opened him the privy door and he went in to the Lady Bedrulbudour and said to her, "Harkye, I will have thee dress and tire thyself and put away melancholy from thee; and when the accursed Maugrabin cometh to thee, do thou receive him with 'Welcome and fair welcome' and go to meet him with a smiling face and bid him come sup with thee and profess to him that thou hast forgotten thy beloved Alaeddin and thy father and that thou lovest him with an exceeding love. Moreover, do thou seek of him wine, and that red, and make him a show of all joy and gladness and drink to his health. Then, when thou hast filled him two or three cups of wine, [watch] till thou take him off his guard; then put him this powder in the cup and fill it up with wine, and an he drink it, he will straightway turn over on his back, like a dead man." When the Lady Bedrulbudour heard Alaeddin's words, she said! to him, "This is a thing exceeding hard on me to do; but it is lawful to slay this accursed, so we may be delivered from his uncleanness who hath made me rue thy separation and that of my father." Then Alaeddin ate and drank with his wife that which stayed his hunger and rising at once, went forth the palace; whereupon the Lady Bedrulbudour summoned her tirewoman, who busked her and adorned her, and she rose and donned fine clothes and perfumed herself. Whilst she was thus engaged, the accursed Maugrabin presented himself and was exceeding rejoiced to see her on this wise, more by token that she received him with a smiling face, contrary to her wont; so he redoubled in distraction for her love and longing for her. Then she took him and seating him by her side, said to him, "O my beloved, an thou wilt, come hither to me this night and we will sup together. Enough of mourning; for that, an I sat grieving a thousand years, what were the profit? Alaeddin cannot return from the tomb and I have considered and believe that which thou saidst to me yesterday, to wit, that most like my father the Sultan hath slain him, in the excess of his grief for my loss. Nay, marvel not at me to-day, that I am changed since yesterday, for that I have bethought me to take thee to beloved and companion in Alaeddin's stead, seeing there is left me no man other than thou. Wherefore it is my hope that thou wilt come to-night, so we may sup together and drink somewhat of wine with each other, and I will have thee let me taste of the wine of thy country Africa, for that belike it is better [than ours]. Wine, indeed, I have by me; but it is that of our country, and I desire exceedingly to taste the wine of your country."

When the Maugrabin saw the love which the Lady Bedrulbudour professed to him and that she was changed from her whilom plight of grief, he thought that she had given up her hope of Alaeddin; so he rejoiced greatly and said to her, "O my soul,

hearkening and obedience unto all that which thou wiliest and biddest me withal. I have with me in my house a jar of the wine of our country, the which I have kept stored these eight years under the earth; so I go now to fill from it our sufficiency and will return to thee forthright." Therewithal the Lady Bedrulbudour, that she might beguile him more and more, said to him, "O my beloved, do not thou go thyself and leave me. Send one of thy servants to fill us from the jar and abide thou sitting with me, that I may take comfort in thee." "O my lady," answered he, "none knoweth the place of the jar save myself; but I will not keep thee waiting." So saying, he went out and returned after a little with their sufficiency of wine; and the Lady Bedrulbudour said to him, "Thou hast been at pains [for me], and I have put thee to unease, O my beloved." "Nay," answered he, "O [thou that art dear to me as] mine eyes, I am honoured by thy service." Then she sat down with him at table and they both fell to eating. Presently, the princess called for drink and the handmaid immediately filled her the cup; then she filled for the Maugrabin and the Lady Bedrulbudour proceeded to drink to his life and health, and he also drank to her life and she fell to carousing with him. Now she was unique in eloquence and sweetness of speech and she proceeded to beguile him and bespeak him with words significant and sweet, so she might entangle him yet straitlier in the toils of her love. The Maugrabin thought that all this was true and knew not that the love she professed to him was a snare set for him to slay him. So he redoubled in desire for her and was like to die for love of her, when he saw from her that which she showed him of sweetness of speech and coquetry; his head swam with ecstasy and the world became changed in his eyes.

When they came to the last of the supper and the princess knew that the wine had gotten the mastery in his head, she said to him, "We have in our country a custom, meknoweth not if you in this country use it or not." "And what is this custom?" asked the Maugrabin. "It is," answered she, "that, at the end of supper, each lover taketh the other's cup and drinketh it." So saying, she took his cup and filling it for herself with wine, bade the handmaid give him her cup, wherein was wine mingled with henbane, even as she had taught her how she should do, for that all the slaves and slave-girls in the palace wished his death and were at one against him with the Lady Bedrulbudour. So the damsel gave him the cup, and he, hearing the princess's words and seeing her drink in his cup and give him to drink in hers, deemed himself Iskender of the Horns, whenas he saw from her all this love. Then she bent towards him, swaying gracefully from side to side, and laying her hand on his, said, "O my life, here is thy cup with me and mine is with thee; thus do lovers drink one from other's cup." Then she kissed his cup and drinking it off, set it down and came up to him and kissed him on the cheek; whereat he was like to fly for joy and purposing to do even as she had done, raised the cup to his mouth and drank it all off, without looking if there were aught therein or not; but no sooner had he done this than he turned over on his back, like a dead man, and the cup fell from his hand.

The Lady Bedrulbudour rejoiced at this and the damsels ran, vying with each other in their haste, and opened the palace-door to Alaeddin, their lord; whereupon he entered and going up to his wife's pavilion, found her sitting at the table and the Maugrabin before her, as one slain. So he went up to the princess and kissed her and thanked her for this [that she had done] and rejoiced with an exceeding joy. Then said

he to her, "Get thee now into thine inner chamber, thou and thy damsels, and leave me alone, so I may consider of that which I have to do." Accordingly, the Lady Bedrulbudour tarried not, but entered the inner pavilion, she and her women; whereupon Alaeddin arose and locked the door on them and going up to the Maugrabin, put his hand to his sleeve and pulled out the lamp; after which he drew his sword and cut off the sorcerer's head. Then he rubbed the lamp and the Marid, its slave, appeared to him and said, "Here am I, O my lord; what wiliest thou?" Quoth Alaeddin, "I will of thee that thou take up this palace from this country and carry it to the land of China and set it in the place where it was erst, before the Sultan's palace." "Hearkening and obedience, O my lord," replied the Marid [and disappeared], whilst Alaeddin went in and sat with the Lady Bedrulbudour his bride and embraced her and kissed her and she him; and they sat talking and making merry, what while the Marid took up the palace with them and set it down in its place before the Sultan's palace.

Presently Alaeddin called for food; so the slave-girls set the tray before him and he sat, he and the Lady Bedrulbudour his wife, and ate and drank in all joy and gladness till they had taken their sufficiency. Then they removed to the chamber of wine and carousel, where they sat drinking and making merry and kissing one another with all eagerness, for that it was long since they had had easance together; and they ceased not from this till the sun of wine rose in their heads and sleep took them; whereupon they arose and lay down on their bed in all rest and delight. In the morning Alaeddin arose and aroused his wife, whereupon her women came to her and dressed her and busked her and adorned her; whilst he, on his part, donned the richest of raiment, and both were like to fly for joy at their reunion with each other, after their separation, whilst the Lady Bedrulbudour was especially glad, for that she looked to see her father that day.

So much for Alaeddin and the Lady Bedrulbudour; and as for the Sultan, after he had released Alaeddin, he ceased not to mourn for the loss of his daughter and to sit and weep for her, like a woman, at every time and tide; for that she was his only one and he had none other than her. And every day, whenas he arose from his sleep in the morning, he would go hastily to the window and opening it, look towards the place where Alaeddin's palace was erst and weep till his eyes were dried up and their lids ulcered. He arose that day at dawn, according to his wont, and opening the window, looked out and saw before him a building; so he fell to rubbing his eyes and looking closelier, was certified that it was Alaeddin's palace; whereupon he immediately called for the horses. Accordingly, they saddled them and he went down and mounting, rode to Alaeddin's palace. When the latter saw him coming, he went down and meeting him half-way, took him by the hand and carried him up to the pavilion of the Lady Bedrulbudour, his daughter. Now she also longed sore for her father; so she came down and met him at the stair-foot door, over against the lower hall; whereupon he embraced her and fell to kissing her and weeping and on this wise did she also. Then Alaeddin brought them up to the upper pavilion, where they sat down and the Sultan proceeded to question the princess of her case and of that which had befallen her, whilst she acquainted him with all that had happened to her and said to him, "O my father, I breathed not till yesterday, when I saw my husband, and he it is who delivered me from the bondage of a Maugrabin, an accursed sorcerer, methinketh there is not a filthier

than he on the face of the earth; and but for my beloved Alaeddin, I had not won free of him and thou hadst not seen me all thy life. Indeed, O my father, there possessed me grief and sore chagrin, not only for my severance from thee, but also for the loss of my husband, to whom I shall be beholden all the days of my life, seeing he delivered me from that accursed enchanter."

Then she went on to acquaint her father with all that had befallen her and to tell him of the Maugrabin's dealings and what he did with her and how he feigned himself a lampseller, who bartered new for old. "And when," [quoth she]; "I saw this [seeming] lack of wit in him, I fell to laughing at him, unknowing his perfidy and his intent; so I took an old lamp that was in my husband's pavilion and sent it by the eunuch, who exchanged it with him for a new lamp; and next day, O my father, at daybreak, we found ourselves in Africa, with the palace and all that was therein; and I knew not the properties of the lamp which I had exchanged, till my husband Alaeddin came to us and contrived against the Maugrabin a device whereby he delivered us from him. Now, except my husband had won to us, it was the accursed one's intent to go in to me perforce; but Alaeddin, my husband gave me a powder, the which I put for him in a cup of wine and gave it him to drink. So he drank it and fell-back as one dead; whereupon my husband Alaeddin came in to me and meknoweth not how he wrought, so that he transported us back from the land of Africa to our place here." And Alaeddin said to the Sultan, "O my lord, when I came up and saw him cast down like one slain and sleeping for the henbane, I said to the Lady Bedrulbudour, 'Go in, thou and thy women, to the inner pavilion.' So she arose and went in, she and her damsels, from that loathsome sight; whilst I went up to the accursed Maugrabin and putting my hand to his sleeve, pulled out the lamp, for that the Lady Bedrulbudour had told me he still carried it there. Then, when I had gotten it, I drew my sword and cut [off] the accursed's [head] and making use of the lamp, bade its servants take us up, with the palace and all that was therein, and set us down here in our place. And if Thy Grace be in doubt of my words, do thou come with me and see the accursed Maugrabin."

So the King arose and going in with Alaeddin to the pavilion, saw the Maugrabin [Iying]: whereupon he bade forthright take the carcase and burn it and scatter its ashes [to the winds]. Then he embraced Alaeddin and fell to kissing him and said to him, "Excuse me, O my son, for that I was going to bereave thee of thy life, through the wickedness of yonder accursed sorcerer who cast thee into this pit; and indeed, O my son, I was excusable in that which I did with thee, inasmuch as I saw myself bereft of my daughter and mine only one, who is dearer to me than my kingdom, and thou knowest how fathers' hearts yearn upon their children, more by token that I have but the Lady Bedrulbudour." And he went on to excuse himself to him and kiss him; and Alaeddin said to him, "O Lord of the Age, thou didst with me nothing contrary to the law and I also was guiltless of offence; but the thing came all of that vile Maugrabin enchanter." Then the Sultan bade decorate the city and hold festival and rejoicings and commanded the crier to cry in the city that that day was a great festival, wherefore rejoicings should be holden in all the realm during the space of a month, [to wit,] thirty days' time, for the return of the Lady Bedrulbudour his daughter and her husband Alaeddin.

This, then, is what befell Alaeddin with the Maugrabin; but Alaeddin, for all this, was not altogether quit of the accursed enchanter, withal his body had been burned and given to the winds; for that the accursed one had a brother viler than he [and yet more skilled] in magic and geomancy and astrology; [nay, they were even] as saith the proverb, "A bean and it was cloven in twain;" and each dwelt in one quarter of the world, so they might fill it with their sorcery and craft and guile. It chanced one day that the Maugrabin's brother was minded to know how it was with his brother; so he fetched his sand-board and smote it and extracted its figures; then he considered them and examining them throughly, found his brother in the house of the tomb; whereat he mourned and was certified that he was indeed dead. Then he smote the sand a second time, so he might learn how and where he died, and found that he had died in the land of China and by the foulest of deaths and knew that he who slew him was a youth by name Alaeddin. So he rose at once and equipping himself for travel, set out and traversed plains and deserts and mountains months and months, till he came to the land of China [and entering] the city of the sultanate, wherein was Alaeddin, repaired to the Strangers' Khan, where he hired him a lodging and rested there a little.

Then he arose to go round about the thoroughfares of the city, that he might spy him out a means of compassing his fell purpose, the which was to take vengeance of his brother on Alaeddin. So he entered a coffee-house in the market, a mighty fine place whither there resorted great plenty of folk, some to play tables, some draughts and other some chess and what not else. There he sat down and heard those who sat beside him talk of an old woman, an anchoress, by name Fatimeh, who still abode in her place without the city, serving [God], and came not down into the town but two days in the month, avouching her to be possessed of divine gifts galore. When the Maugrabin enchanter heard this, he said in himself, "Now have I found that which I sought. An it please God the Most High, I shall achieve my quest by means of this woman." So he went up to the folk who were speaking of the devout old woman's supernatural powers and said to one of them, "O uncle, I hear you talk of the divine gifts of one she-saint, by name Fatimeh. Who is she and where is her place?" "Wonderful!" cried the man. "What, thou art in our city and hast not heard of the divine gifts of my Lady Fatimeh? Apparently, good man, thou art a stranger, since thou hast never chanced to hear of the fasts of this holy woman and her abhorrence of the world and the goodliness of her piety." "Ay, my lord," replied the Maugrabin, "I am indeed a stranger and arrived but yesternight in this your town; wherefore I beseech thee tell me of the divine gifts of this holy woman and where her place is, for that I have fallen into a calamity and would fain go to her and crave her of prayer, so haply God (to whom belong might and majesty) may deliver me from my stress, by means of her intercession." The man accordingly told him of the divine gifts of the holy woman Fatimeh and her piety and the excellence of her devotion; then, taking him by the hand, he carried him without the city and showed him the way to her abiding-place, which was in a cavern on the top of a little hill; whereupon the Maugrabin thanked him amain for his kindness and returned to his place in the Khan.

Now, by the decree of destiny, Fatimeh came down on the morrow to the city and the enchanter, going forth the Khan in the morning, saw the folk crowding together; so he went up, to see what was toward, and found Fatimeh standing, whilst every one who

had a pain or an ache came to her, seeking her blessing and soliciting her prayers, and whenas she stroked him, he was made whole of his ailment. The Maugrabin followed her, till she returned to her cavern, and waited till nightfall, when he arose and entering a sherbet-sellers shop, drank a cup of liquor, then went forth the city, intending for the cavern of Fatimeh the recluse. When he came thither, he entered and saw her sleeping on her back on a piece of matting; so he went up to her and sitting down on her breast, drew his dagger and cried out at her; whereupon she awoke and opening her eyes, saw a man, a Maugrabin, with a drawn dagger, sitting on her breast and offering to kill her. So she feared and trembled and he said to her, "Harkye, an thou say aught or cry out, I will kill thee on the spot. Arise now and do all that I shall bid thee." And he swore an oath to her that, if she did for him that which he should bid her, he would not kill her.

Then he rose from her and she rose also, and he said to her, "Give me thy clothes and take mine." So she gave him her clothes and head-bands and her kerchief and veil; and he said to her, "Now must thou anoint me, to boot, with somewhat, so my face may become like unto shine in colour." Accordingly Fatimeh went within the cavern and bringing out a vial of ointment, took thereof in her palm and anointed his face withal, whereupon it became like unto hers in colour. Then she gave him her staff and taught him how he should walk and how he should do, whenas he went down into the city; moreover, she put her rosary on his neck and finally giving him the mirror, said to him, "Look now; thou differest not from me in aught." So he looked and saw himself as he were Fatimeh herself. Then, when he had gotten his desire, he broke his oath and sought of her a rope; so she brought him a rope and he took her and strangled her therewith in the cavern. When she was dead, he dragged her forth and cast her into a pit therewithout; then, returning to her cavern, he slept there till the day broke, when he arose and going down into the city, came under Alaeddin's pavilion.

The folk gathered about him, believing him to be Fatimeh the Recluse, and he proceeded to do like as she had been used to do, laying hands on those in pain and reciting for this one the Fatiheh and for that a[nother] chapter of the Koran and praying for a third. Then, for the much crowding upon him and the clamour of the folk, the Lady Bedrulbudour heard and said to her women, "See what is to do and what is the cause of this noise." So the Ada of the eunuchs went to see what was toward and returning, said to her, "O my lady, this clamour is because of the Lady Fatimeh. An it please thee bid me fetch her to thee, so thou mayst ask a blessing of her...." And the Lady Bedrulbudour said to him, "Go and bring her to me; marry, this long while past I have still heard of her gifts and excellences and have yearned to see her, so I may ask a blessing of her, for that the folk are beyond measure abundant [in talk] of her virtues." So the Aga went and brought the enchanter, disguised as Fatimeh, before the Lady Bedrulbudour; whereupon the Maugrabin offered up abundance of prayers for her, and none misdoubted of him but that he was Fatimeh the recluse. The princess rose and saluting him, seated him by her side and said to him, "O my Lady Fatimeh, I will have thee with me alway, that I may be blessed in thee and eke that I may learn of thee the ways of God-service and piety and model myself on thee."

Now this was what the accursed sorcerer aimed at; however, the better to accomplish his perfidious intent, he [dissembled and] said to her, "O my lady, I am a poor woman sitting in the desert and it beseemeth not that the like of me should abide

in kings' palaces." Quoth the Lady Bedrulbudour, "Have no manner of care, O my lady Fatimeh; I will give thee a place in my house, where thou shalt do thy devotions, and none shall ever go in to thee; nay, here shalt thou serve God better than in thy cavern." And the Maugrabin said to her, "Hearkening and obedience, O my lady; I will not gainsay thy commandment, for that the speech of princes may not be crossed neither disputed; but I beg of thee that my eating and drinking and sitting may be in my closet alone [and] that none may come in upon me. Moreover, I need no rich viands, but every day do thou favour me and send me by thy handmaid a piece of bread and a draught of water to my closet; and when I am minded to eat, I will eat in my closet alone." (Now this the accursed did, of his fear lest his chin veil should be raised, when he ate, and so his case be exposed and they know him for a man by his beard and moustaches.) "O my lady Fatimeh," rejoined the princess, "be easy; nothing shall betide save that which thou wiliest; so rise now [and come] with me, that I may show thee the pavilion which I purpose to order for thine inhabitance with us." So saying, she arose and carrying the sorcerer to the place which she had appointed him wherein to abide, said to him, "O my lady Fatimeh, here shalt thou dwell; this pavilion is in thy name and thou shalt abide therein in all quiet and ease of privacy." And the Maugrabin thanked her for her bounty and prayed for her.

Then the Lady Bedrulbudour took him and showed him the belvedere and the kiosk of jewels, with the four-and-twenty oriels, and said to him, "How deemest thou, O my Lady Fatimeh, of this wonderful pavilion?" "By Allah, O my daughter," replied he, "it is indeed marvellous in the extreme, nor methinketh is its like found in the world; nay, it is magnificent exceedingly; but oh, for one thing which would far increase it in beauty and adornment!" And the princess said to him, "O my Lady Fatimeh, what is lacking to it and what is this thing which would adorn it? Tell me of it; I had thought that it was altogether perfect." "O my lady," answered the sorcerer, "that which lacketh to it is the egg of the bird Roc, which being hung in its dome, there were no like unto this pavilion in all the world." "What is this bird." asked the princess, "and where shall we find its egg?" And the Moor said to her, "O my lady, this is a great bird that taketh up camels and elephants in its talons and flieth with them, of its bigness and greatness; it is mostly to be found in the mountain Caf and the craftsman who builded this palace is able to bring its egg." Then they left that talk and it was the time of the morning-meal. So the slave-girls laid the table and the Lady Bedrulbudour sat down and sought of the accursed sorcerer that he should eat with her; but he refused and rising, entered the pavilion which she had given him, whither the slave-girls carried him the morning-meal.

When it was eventide and Alaeddin returned from the chase, the Lady Bedrulbudour met him and saluted him: whereupon he embraced her and kissed her and looking in her face, saw that she was somewhat troubled and smiled not, against her wont. So he said to her, "What aileth thee, O my beloved? Tell me, hath there befallen thee aught to trouble thee?" And she answered him, saying, "There aileth me nothing; but, O my beloved, I had thought that our palace lacked of nought; however, O my eyes Alaeddin, were there hung in the dome of the upper pavilion an egg of the bird Roc, there were not its like in the world." "And wast thou concerned anent this?" rejoined Alaeddin. "This is to me the easiest of all things; so be easy, for it is enough

that thou tell me of that which thou wishest and I will fetch it thee from the abysses of the world on the speediest wise." Then after he had comforted the princess and promised her all she sought, he went straight to his closet and taking the lamp rubbed it; whereupon the Marid at once appeared and said to him, "Seek what thou wilt;" and Alaeddin, "I will have thee bring me a Roc's egg and hang it in the dome of the [upper] pavilion."

When the Marid heard Alaeddin's words, his face frowned and he was wroth and cried out with a terrible great voice, saying, "O denier of benefits, doth it not suffice thee that I and all the slaves of the Lamp are at thy service and wouldst thou eke have me bring thee our liege lady, for thy pleasure, and hang her in the dome of thy pavilion, to divert thee and thy wife? By Allah, ye deserve that I should forthright reduce you both to ashes and scatter you to the winds! But, inasmuch as ye are ignorant, thou and she, concerning this matter and know not its inward from its outward, I excuse you, for that ye are innocent. As for the guilt, it lieth with the accursed one, the surviving brother of the Maugrabin enchanter, who feigneth himself to be Fatimeh the Recluse; for lo, he hath slain Fatimeh in her cavern and hath donned her dress and disguised himself after her favour and fashion and is come hither, seeking thy destruction, so he may take vengeance on thee for his brother; and he it is who taught thy wife to seek this of thee." Therewith he disappeared, and as for Alaeddin, when he heard this, his wit fled from his head and his joints trembled at the cry wherewith the Marid cried out at him; but he took heart and leaving his closet, went in straightway to his wife and feigned to her that his head irked him, of his knowledge that Fatimeh was renowned for the secret of healing all aches and pains. When the Lady Bedrulbudour saw him put his hand to his head and complain of its aching, she asked him what was the cause and he said, "I know not, except that my head irketh me sore." Accordingly she sent forthwith to fetch Fatimeh, so she might lay her hand on his head; whereupon quoth Alaeddin, "Who is this Fatimeh?" And the princess told him how she had lodged Fatimeh the recluse with her in the palace.

Meanwhile the slave-girls went and fetched the accursed Maugrabin, and Alaeddin arose to him, feigning ignorance of his case, and saluted him, as he had been the true Fatimeh. Moreover he kissed the hem of his sleeve and welcomed him, saying, "O my Lady Fatimeh, I beseech thee do me a kindness, since I know thy usances in the matter of the healing of pains, for that there hath betided me a sore pain in my head." The Maugrabin could scarce believe his ears of this speech, for that this was what he sought; so he went up to Alaeddin, as he would lay his hand on his head, after the fashion of Fatimeh the recluse, and heal him of his pain. When he drew near-him, he laid one hand on his head and putting the other under his clothes, drew a dagger, so he might slay him withal. But Alaeddin was watching him and waited till he had all to-drawn the dagger, when he gripped him by the hand and taking the knife from him, planted it in his heart.

When the Lady Bedrulbudour saw this, she cried out and said to him, "What hath this holy anchoress done, that thou burthenest thyself with the sore burden of her blood? Hast thou no fear of God, that thou dost this and hast slain Fatimeh, who was a holy woman and whose divine gifts were renowned?" Quoth he to her, "I have not slain Fatimeh; nay, I have slain him who slew her; for that this is the brother of the

accursed Maugrabin enchanter, who took thee and by his sorcery transported the palace with thee to the land of Africa. Yea, this accursed one was his brother and came to this country and wrought these frauds, slaying Fatimeh and donning her clothes and coming hither, so he might take vengeance on me for his brother. Moreover, it was he who taught thee to seek of me a Roc's egg, so my destruction should ensue thereof; and if thou misdoubt of my word, come and see whom I have slain." So saying, he did off the Maugrabin's chin veil and the Lady Bedrulbudour looked and saw a man whose beard covered his face; whereupon she at once knew the truth and said to Alaeddin, "O my beloved, twice have I cast thee into danger of death;" and he said to her, "O Lady Bedrulbudour, thanks to thine eyes, no harm [hath betided me thereof; nay,] I accept with all joy everything that cometh to me through thee." When the princess heard this, she hastened to embrace him and kissed him, saying, "O my beloved, all this was of my love for thee and I knew not what I did; nor indeed am I negligent of thy love." Whereupon Alaeddin kissed her and strained her to his breast and love redoubled between them.

Presently, in came the Sultan; so they told him of all that had passed with the Maugrabin enchanter's brother and showed him the latter, as he lay dead; whereupon he bade burn him and scatter his ashes to the winds. Thenceforward Alaeddin abode with his wife the Lady Bedrulbudour in all peace and pleasure and was delivered from all perils. Then, after a while, the Sultan died and Alaeddin sat down on the throne of the kingdom and ruled and did justice among the people; and all the folk loved him and he lived with his wife, the Lady Bedrulbudour, in all cheer and solace and contentment till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Societies.

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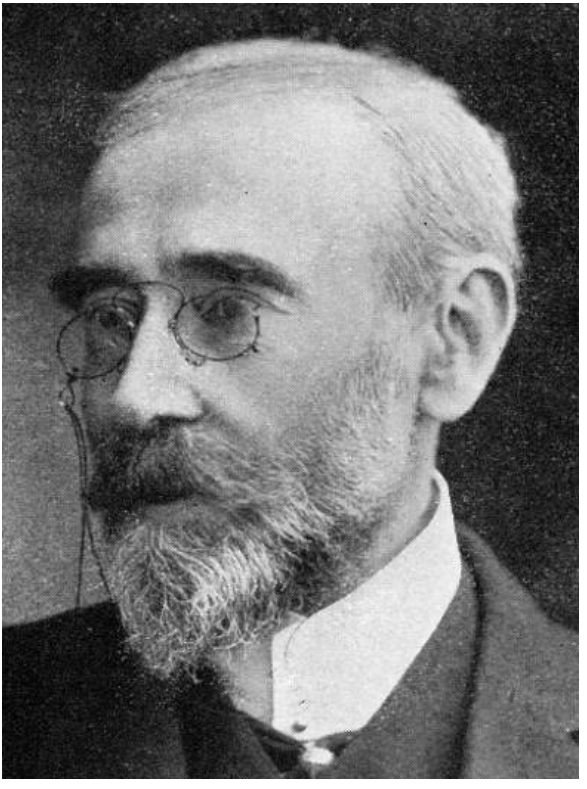

John Payne, 1904

John Payne (1842-1916) was an English poet and translator, who initially pursued a legal career and was associated with Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Later he became involved with limited edition publishing and the Villon Society. He is now best known for his translations of Boccaccio's *Decameron, The Arabian Nights* and the *Diwan Hafez*.

Payne's translation of *One Thousand and One Nights* was entirely from the Calcutta II manuscript, adding some tales from Calcutta I and Breslau. The text is unabridged and unexpurgated, originally published in 1882 in nine volumes.